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Sabbath Bible Lessons
Senior Division



Lessons from Philippians, Colossians and Thessalonians

Trials of endurance that build patience, joy and hope for believers today

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GENERAL CONFERENCE SABBATH SCHOOL

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

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Foreword

As we consider some epistles of Paul—specifically the books of Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians—there clearly resounds a vital, comprehensive message. Here we recognize our need for a high level of advancement in Christian character as well as to understand key doctrinal truths in preparation for our Lord's return.

These letters were penned nearly 2,000 years ago, yet they are highly relevant for us today. All written within a ten-year span, they each have a powerful message for our times. The epistle to the Philippians shares the apostle's joy even while imprisoned for the faith; Colossians—also written from prison—unveils a true doctrinal picture of Christianity, and the two epistles to the Thessalonians explain last-day events with unique clarity to souls who were themselves facing persecution.

"There are in the world today many who close their eyes to the evidences that Christ has given to warn men of His coming. They seek to quiet all apprehension, while at the same time the signs of the end are rapidly fulfilling, and the world is hastening to the time when the Son of man shall be revealed in the clouds of heaven. Paul teaches that it is sinful to be indifferent to the signs which are to precede the second coming of Christ. Those guilty of this neglect he calls children of the night and of darkness. He encourages the vigilant and watchful with these words: 'But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.' "—*The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 260.

"Just before us is the closing struggle of the great controversy when, with 'all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness,' Satan is to work to misrepresent the character of God, that he may 'seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.' If there was ever a people in need of constantly increasing light from heaven, it is the people that, in this time of peril, God has called to be the depositaries of His holy law and to vindicate His character before the world. Those to whom has been committed a trust so sacred must be spiritualized, elevated, vitalized, by the truths they profess to believe. Never did the church more sorely need, and never was God more solicitous that she should enjoy, the experience described in Paul's letter to the Colossians when he wrote: We 'do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be *filled with the knowledge of His will* in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.' "—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 5, p. 746. [Author's italics.]

May this be our experience!

The General Conference Sabbath School Department

First Sabbath Offering

Sabbath, October 3, 2026



for the Tanzanian Mission

The United Republic of Tanzania is an East African country known for its vast wilderness areas. Here are found the plains of Serengeti National Park, a safari mecca (populated by elephants, lions, leopards, buffalos, and rhinos) and Kilimanjaro National Park—home to Africa's highest mountain. Offshore lie the tropical islands of Zanzibar and Mafia, with a marine park home to whales, sharks, and coral reefs. In 2024, these picturesque attractions drew 1.8 million tourists.

As of 2025, the population of Tanzania itself was over 71 million. Although there are a total of 126 local languages, the official languages spoken are Swahili and English. The nation is divided into 30 regions, 25 of which are on the mainland and 5 in Zanzibar. Key economic drivers include infrastructure development, mining, oil, and gas. Over 60% of the population is involved in agriculture, whose practices here are currently undergoing modernization.

According to worldatlas.com, among the religious groups represented in Tanzania, 35% profess various forms of Islam, 31% Roman Catholicism, 27% Protestantism, 3.1% other forms of Christianity, 1.8% indigenous religions, and the remainder profess no specific religion at all.

The message of reformation reached Tanzania through our brethren from Kenya. We were also helped by our German brethren. The General Conference is printing Sabbath Bible Lessons in the Swahili language through the Rwanda Union, near Tanzania. Swahili is spoken throughout all East African countries.

The work has now progressed to the point where we need to develop our headquarters and establish a school. We believe that Dodoma will be the best place for this project. Dodoma is the country's fastest growing city and is now the new capital of the nation. We have purchased 12.4 acres and have already established a local church here. Our proposed project certainly has the potential to further the work here and especially to help our young people to study in peace, avoiding the difficulties currently faced in the public schools with regard to the Sabbath.

We appeal to all of our Sabbath School members around the world please to give generously to this project. Thank you in advance for your help. May God greatly repay your kindness toward His work in Tanzania!

Your brothers and sisters in the Tanzanian Mission

Beyond the Impossible

MEMORY VERSE: "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6).

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 5, pp. 263–267.

"To the soul weary of a life of sin, but knowing not where to find relief, present the compassionate Saviour. Take him by the hand, lift him up, speak to him words of courage and hope. Help him to grasp the hand of the Saviour."—*The Ministry of Healing,* p. 168.

1. TENDER HOPEFULNESS

Sun, Sep 27

a. How can we be inspired by Paul's salutation from a Roman dungeon? Philippians 1:1–5.

"Paul's letter to the Philippians, like the one to the Colossians, was written while he was a prisoner at Rome."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 479.

"Paul wrote to these brethren as 'saints in Christ Jesus;' but he was not writing to those who were perfect in character. He wrote to them as men and women who were striving against temptation and who were in danger of falling. He pointed them to 'the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep.' He assured them that 'through the blood of the everlasting covenant' He will 'make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ.'

"When one at fault becomes conscious of his error, be careful not to destroy his self-respect. Do not discourage him by indifference or distrust. Do not say, 'Before giving him my confidence, I will wait to see whether he will hold out.' Often this very distrust causes the tempted one to stumble. . . .

"We become too easily discouraged over the souls who do not at once respond to our efforts. Never should we cease to labor for a soul while there is one gleam of hope."—*The Ministry of Healing,* pp. 167, 168.

2. TRUSTING THE POWER OF GOD

Mon, Sep 28

a. How can our attitude toward our faulty, erring associates reveal the depth of our faith in the power of God? Philippians 1:6–8.

"We should strive to understand the weakness of others.

"We know little of the heart trials of those who have been bound in chains of darkness and who lack resolution and moral power. Most pitiable is the condition of him who is suffering under remorse; he is as one stunned, staggering, sinking into the dust. He can see nothing clearly. The mind is beclouded, he knows not what steps to take. Many a poor soul is misunderstood, unappreciated, full of distress and agony—a lost, straying sheep. He cannot find God, yet he has an intense longing for pardon and peace.

"Oh, let no word be spoken to cause deeper pain! . . .

"Precious souls cost our self-sacrificing Redeemer too dear a price to be lightly given up to the tempter's power. . . .

"We need to put ourselves in the place of the tempted ones. Consider the power of heredity, the influence of evil associations and surroundings, the power of wrong habits. Can we wonder that under such influences many become degraded? Can we wonder that they should be slow to respond to efforts for their uplifting?

"Often, when won to the gospel, those who appeared coarse and unpromising will be among its most loyal adherents and advocates. They are not altogether corrupt. Beneath the forbidding exterior there are good impulses that might be reached. Without a helping hand many would never recover themselves, but by patient, persistent effort they may be uplifted. Such need tender words, kind consideration, tangible help. They need that kind of counsel which will not extinguish the faint gleam of courage in the soul."—*The Ministry of Healing,* pp. 168, 169.

b. With what aims should we study God's word? Philippians 1:9–11.

"Every means of grace should be diligently improved that the love of God may abound in the soul more and more, 'that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness.' Your Christian life must take on vigorous and stalwart forms. You can attain to the high standard set before you in the Scriptures, and you must if you would be children of God. You cannot stand still; you must either advance or retrograde."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 5, p. 264.

3. SEEING THE BIG PICTURE

Tue, Sep 29

a. Describe how God often uses persecution and difficulties to spread His wonderful message of love and grace. Philippians 1:12–14.

"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. To them vice presented all its glittering allurements and held them willing captives. But from among the toilworn, 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."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 461.

"The grace of God sustained Paul in his imprisonment, enabling him to rejoice in tribulation. With faith and assurance he wrote to his Philippian brethren that his imprisonment had resulted in the furtherance of the gospel. . . .

"There is a lesson for us in this experience of Paul's, for it reveals God's way of working. The Lord can bring victory out of that which may seem to us discomfiture and defeat. We are in danger of forgetting God, of looking at the things which are seen, instead of beholding by the eye of faith the things which are unseen. When misfortune or calamity comes, we are ready to charge God with neglect or cruelty. If He sees fit to cut off our usefulness in some line, we mourn, not stopping to think that thus God may be working for our good. We need to learn that chastisement is a part of His great plan and that under the rod of affliction the Christian may sometimes do more for the Master than when engaged in active service."—Ibid., pp. 480, 481.

b. If tempted to feel disappointed over unconventional ways by which seeds of truth may be sown, what should we remember? Philippians 1:15–18.

"By the efforts of Satan to destroy it, the 'incorruptible' seed of the word of God, 'which liveth and abideth forever' (1 Peter 1:23), is sown in the hearts of men; through the reproach and persecution of His children the name of Christ is magnified and souls are saved. Great is the reward in heaven of those who are witnesses for Christ through persecution and reproach."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing,* p. 34.

4. HAVING ETERNITY IN VIEW

Wed, Sep 30

a. Why can we be inspired by the amazing testimony of Paul? Galatians 6:14; Philippians 1:19–21.

"The one who stands nearest to Christ will be he who on earth has drunk most deeply of the spirit of His self-sacrificing love—love that 'vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, . . . seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil' (1 Corinthians 13:4, 5)—love that moves the disciple, as it moved our Lord, to give all, to live and labor and sacrifice, even unto death, for the saving of humanity. This spirit was made manifest in the life of Paul. He said, 'For to me to live is Christ;' for his life revealed Christ to men; 'and to die is gain'—gain to Christ; death itself would make manifest the power of His grace, and gather souls to Him. 'Christ shall be magnified in my body,' he said, 'whether it be by life or by death.' Philipians 1:21,20. "—*The Desire of Ages,* p. 549.

"Paul was a living example of what every true Christian should be. He lived for God's glory. . . . He who was once a persecutor of Christ in the person of His saints now holds up before the world the cross of Christ. Paul's heart burned with a love for souls, and he gave all his energies for the conversion of men. There never lived a more self-denying, earnest, persevering worker. His life was Christ; he worked the works of Christ. All the blessings he received were prized as so many advantages to be used in blessing others."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, pp. 1112, 1113.

" 'For to me to live is Christ,' [Paul] declared. This is the most perfect interpretation in a few words, in all the Scriptures, of what it means to be a Christian. This is the whole truth of the gospel."—Ibid., vol. 7, p. 903.

b. What perspective should we have regarding our duties here on earth, in anticipation of Christ's return? Philippians 1:22–24; 2 Timothy 4:8; John 14:3.

"While the great final reward is given at Christ's coming, true-hearted service for God brings a reward, even in this life. Obstacles, opposition, and bitter, heartbreaking discouragements, the worker will have to meet. He may not see the fruit of his toil. But in face of all this he finds in his labor a blessed recompense. All who surrender themselves to God in unselfish service for humanity are in cooperation with the Lord of glory. This thought sweetens all toil, it braces the will, it nerves the spirit for whatever may befall."—*Christian Service,* p. 270.

5. FORTIFIED THROUGH FAITH

Thu, Oct 1

a. How can the attitude of Paul generate hope in us? Philippians 1:25–28.

"God's faithful messengers are to go steadily forward with their work. Clothed with the panoply of heaven, they are to advance fearlessly and victoriously, never ceasing their warfare until every soul within their reach shall have received the message of truth for this time."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 220.

b. How does the example of Christ strengthen us? Philippians 1:29, 30; Isaiah 53:8–11.

"What sustained the Son of God in His betrayal and trial? He saw of the travail of His soul and was satisfied. He caught a view of the expanse of eternity and saw the happiness of those who through His humiliation should receive pardon and everlasting life. He was wounded for their transgressions, bruised for their iniquities. The chastisement of their peace was upon Him, and with His stripes they were healed. His ear caught the shout of the redeemed. He heard the ransomed ones singing the song of Moses and the Lamb.

"We must have a vision of the future and of the blessedness of heaven. Stand on the threshold of eternity, and hear the gracious welcome given to those who in this life have cooperated with Christ, regarding it as a privilege and an honor to suffer for His sake. . . .

"There the redeemed ones greet those who directed them to the uplifted Saviour. They unite in praising Him who died that human beings might have the life that measures with the life of God. The conflict is over. All tribulation and strife are at an end. Songs of victory fill all heaven as the redeemed stand around the throne of God."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 8, pp. 43, 44.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Fri, Oct 2

1. Why must we persevere with fallen souls having at least a glimmer of hope?
2. How many times have I seen stubborn, wayward souls amazingly changed?
3. How can God use our trials to accomplish His good purpose?
4. Describe what was essentially the motto of Paul's existence.
5. In what ways should I better reflect the life of Paul and above all, Christ?

Christlike In All Circumstances

MEMORY VERSE: "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Philippians 2:3, 4).

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 5, pp. 167–177, 477–490.

"The cultivation of a uniform courtesy, a willingness to do to others as we would wish them to do to us, would annihilate half the ills of life. The spirit of self-aggrandizement is the spirit of Satan; but the heart in which the love of Christ is cherished, will possess that charity which seeketh not her own."—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* p. 133.

1. A NECESSARY QUALITY

Sun, Oct 4

a. Why should we appreciate Paul's expression of the value of true Christian harmony? Philippians 2:1, 2; Romans 15:5, 6.

"Christ is leading out a people, and bringing them into the unity of the faith, that they may be one, as He is one with the Father. Differences of opinion must be yielded, that all may come into union with the body, that they may have one mind and one judgment."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 1, p. 324.

b. Describe the joy to be reaped by such unity and how only it can be achieved. 1 Corinthians 1:10; Psalm 133:1–3.

"The cause of division and discord in families and in the church is separation from Christ. To come near to Christ is to come near to one another. The secret of true unity in the church and in the family is not diplomacy, not management, not a superhuman effort to overcome difficulties—though there will be much of this to do—but union with Christ."—*The Adventist Home,* p. 179.

2. A CHANGE IN ATTITUDE

Mon, Oct 5

a. What appeal comes to all Christian believers—and why? Philippians 2:3.

"Vainglory, selfish ambition, is the rock upon which many souls have been wrecked and many churches rendered powerless. Those who know least of devotion, who are least connected with God, are the ones who will most eagerly seek the highest place. They have no sense of their weakness and their deficiencies of character."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 5, p. 174.

"Men of various temperaments and defective characters can see the faults of others, but do not seem to have a knowledge of their own errors. . . . With ordinary humanity there is a selfishness, an ambition, that mars the work of God. Self-interest must be lost sight of."—Ibid., p. 419.

"A heart where the peace of Christ is not, is unhappy, full of discontent; the person sees defects in everything, and he would bring discord into the most heavenly music. A life of selfishness is a life of evil. Those whose hearts are filled with love of self will store away evil thoughts of their brethren and will talk against God's instrumentalities. Passions kept warm and fierce by Satan's promptings are a bitter fountain, ever sending forth bitter streams to poison the life of others. . . .

"Let each one who claims to follow Christ esteem himself less and others more. Press together, press together! In union there is strength and victory; in discord and division there is weakness and defeat."—Ibid., p. 488.

b. Explain the secret of genuine prosperity. Philippians 2:4.

"If our lives are filled with holy fragrance, if we honor God by having good thoughts toward others, and doing good deeds to bless others, it matters not whether we live in a cottage or a palace. Circumstances have but little to do with the experiences of the soul. It is the spirit cherished which gives coloring to all our actions. A man at peace with God and his fellow men cannot be made miserable. Envy will not be in his heart; evil surmising will find no room there; hatred cannot exist. The heart in harmony with God is lifted above the annoyances and trials of this life."—Ibid., vol. 5, p. 488.

"Success will increase in proportion as [our institutions] exercise disinterested liberality, sharing their abundance with institutions that are struggling for a foothold. Our prosperous institutions should help those institutions that God has said should live and prosper, but which are still struggling for an existence. There is among us a very limited amount of real, unselfish love."—Ibid., vol. 8, p. 137.

3. IN HIS FOOTSTEPS

Tue, Oct 6

a. At this stage in history, what should characterize our thinking and actions? 2 Corinthians 10:3–5; Philippians 2:5.

"To adorn the doctrine of Christ our Saviour, we must have the same mind which was in Christ. Our likes and dislikes, our desire to favor self to the disadvantage of others must be overcome. Let the peace of God rule in your hearts. Christ must be in us a living, working power."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 921.

"We are to enter the school of Christ, to learn from Him meekness and lowliness. Redemption is that process by which the soul is trained for heaven. This training means a knowledge of Christ. It means emancipation from ideas, habits, and practices that have been gained in the school of the prince of darkness. The soul must be delivered from all that is opposed to loyalty to God."—*The Desire of Ages,* p. 330.

b. How and why are we to reflect the attitude of Christ? Philippians 2:6–8.

"Jesus took upon Himself our nature, laid aside His glory, majesty, and riches to perform his mission, to save that which was lost. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister unto others. Jesus, when reviled, abused, and insulted, did not retaliate. 'Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again.' When the cruelty of man caused Him to suffer painful stripes and wounds, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him who judgeth righteously. The apostle Paul exhorted his Philippian brethren: 'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.' Is the servant greater than his master? Christ has given us His life as a pattern, and we dishonor Him when we become jealous of every slight, and are ready to resent every injury, supposed or real. It is not an evidence of a noble mind to be prepared to defend self, to preserve our own dignity. We would better suffer wrongfully a hundred times than wound the soul by a spirit of retaliation, or by giving vent to wrath. There is strength to be obtained of God. He can help. He can give grace and heavenly wisdom. If you ask in faith, you will receive; but you must watch unto prayer. Watch, pray, work, should be your watchword."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 2, pp. 426, 427.

4. PROACTIVE APPRECIATION

Wed, Oct 7

a. How does God the Father view the infinite sacrifice made by Christ—and how should we? Philippians 2:9–11.

"On whose side are we? The world cast Christ out, the heavens received Him. Man, finite man, rejected the Prince of life; God, our sovereign Ruler, received Him into the heavens. God has exalted Him. Man crowned Him with a crown of thorns, God has crowned Him with a crown of royal majesty. We must all think candidly. Will you have this man Christ Jesus to rule over you, or will you have Barabbas? . . . The death of Christ is hope and eternal life to all who receive Him and believe in Him."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1107.

b. Weak as we are in moral strength and willpower, why must we proactively surrender to the Saviour? Philippians 2:12, 13.

"If you have truly begun the life of faith you have given yourself to the Lord to be wholly His, and He has taken you to mold and fashion according to His purpose, that you may be a vessel unto honor. You should have an earnest desire to be pliable in His hands and to follow whithersoever He may lead you. You are then trusting Him to work out His designs, while at the same time you are cooperating with Him by working out your own salvation with fear and trembling. . . .

"Pure religion has to do with the will. The will is the governing power in the nature of man, bringing all the other faculties under its sway. The will is not the taste or the inclination, but it is the deciding power which works in the children of men unto obedience to God or unto disobedience."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 5, pp. 512, 513.

"You will be in constant peril until you understand the true force of the will. You may believe and promise all things, but your promises or your faith are of no value until you put your will on the side of faith and action. If you fight the fight of faith with all your will power, you will conquer. Your feelings, your impressions, your emotions, are not to be trusted, for they are not reliable. . . . .

"But you need not despair. . . . It is for you to yield up your will to the will of Jesus Christ; and as you do this, God will immediately take possession and work in you to will and to do of His good pleasure. Your whole nature will then be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ, and even your thoughts will be subject to Him."—Ibid., pp. 513, 514.

5. DAILY CHRISTIANITY

Thu, Oct 8

a. Name some common problems we must overcome. Philippians 2:14, 15.

"The love of God must pervade the soul, or the fruits of righteousness will not appear. It is not safe to indulge in vanity and pride, or love of power or gain. It is the worst phase of selfishness to fret and censure and complain because you have the power to do this and those whom you abuse in this way cannot prevent you. It is selfishness that causes variance in the family circle and in the church. Unchristian hearts will think they can discern great wrongs in others where none exist and will dwell upon little matters until they appear greatly magnified. The work of adjusting these little matters, which seem so large to some, God has left for His followers themselves to do. Let not those unhappy differences remain till they become a root of bitterness in the church, whereby many will be defiled. When Christ is in the heart it will be so softened and subdued by love for God and man that fretting, faultfinding, and contention will not exist there. The religion of Christ in the heart will gain for its possessor a complete victory over those passions that are seeking for the mastery."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 4, p. 610.

b. Of what vital reality should Paul's commendation of Epaphroditus remind us? Philippians 2:21, 25–27, 30.

"Christ did not send His angels to this fallen world, while He remained in heaven; but He Himself went without the camp, bearing the reproach. He became a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; Himself took our infirmities, and bore our weaknesses. And the absence of self-denial in His professed followers, God regards as a denial of the Christian name. Those who profess to be one with Christ, and indulge their selfish desires for rich and expensive clothing, furniture, and food, are Christians only in name. To be a Christian is to be Christlike."—*Counsels on Stewardship,* p. 54.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Fri, Oct 9

1. Why is Christian unity important, and how only is it achieved?
2. What is the secret of success, both for individuals and for institutions?
3. How might we summarize what Christ has done in behalf of humanity?
4. Despite our blemished record, what is Jesus willing to do for us—and how?
5. Why do I tend to complain—and what can help me overcome this vice?

Longing to Know Jesus Better

MEMORY VERSE: "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (Philippians 3:10, 11).

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 3, pp. 22–32; *The Story of Redemption,* pp. 310–314.

"As the student of the Bible beholds the Redeemer, there is awakened in the soul the mysterious power of faith, adoration, and love. Upon the vision of Christ the gaze is fixed, and the beholder grows into the likeness of that which he adores."—*Education,* p. 192.

1. RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH

Sun, Oct 11

a. How does Paul uplift the need of faith in Christ without trusting in supposed merits of the flesh? Philippians 3:1–3.

"The nearer we come to Jesus and the more clearly we discern the purity of His character, the more clearly we shall discern the exceeding sinfulness of sin and the less we shall feel like exalting ourselves. . . .

"None of the apostles or prophets ever claimed to be without sin. Men who have lived nearest to God, men who would sacrifice life itself rather than knowingly commit a wrong act, men whom God had honored with divine light and power, have confessed the sinfulness of their own 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.

"At every advance step in Christian experience our repentance will deepen. It is to those whom the Lord has forgiven, to those whom He acknowledges as His people, that He says, 'Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight.' Ezekiel 36:31. . . . Then our lips will not be opened in self-glorification. We shall know that our sufficiency is in Christ alone."—*Christ's Object Lessons,* p. 160.

2. JOY IN SERVING CHRIST

Mon, Oct 12

a. Describe Paul's former attitude before He was converted to Christ. Philippians 3:4–6.

"In the theological schools of Judea the word of God had been set aside for human speculations; it was robbed of its power by the interpretations and traditions of the rabbis. Self-aggrandizement, love of domination, jealous exclusiveness, bigotry and contemptuous pride, were the ruling principles and motives of these teachers.

"The rabbis gloried in their superiority, not only to the people of other nations, but to the masses of their own. With their fierce hatred of their Roman oppressors, they cherished the determination to recover by force of arms their national supremacy. The followers of Jesus, whose message of peace was so contrary to their schemes of ambition, they hated and put to death. In this persecution, Saul was one of the most bitter and relentless actors."—*Education,* pp. 64, 65.

b. What does Paul explain about the tremendous joy of full surrender to Jesus? Philippians 3:7, 8.

"The apostles counted not their lives dear unto themselves, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ. Paul and Silas suffered the loss of all things. They suffered scourging, and were in no gentle manner thrown upon the cold floor of a dungeon in a most painful position, their feet elevated and fastened in the stocks. Did repinings and complaints then reach the ear of the jailer? Oh, no! From the inner prison, voices broke the silence of midnight with songs of joy and praise to God. These disciples were cheered by a deep and earnest love for the cause of their Redeemer, for which they suffered.

"As the truth of God fills our hearts, absorbs our affections, and controls our lives, we also will count it joy to suffer for the truth's sake. No prison walls, no martyr's stake, can then daunt or hinder us in the great work. Come, O my soul, to Calvary. Mark the humble life of the Son of God. He was 'a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.' Behold His ignominy, His agony in Gethsemane, and learn what self-denial is. Are we suffering want? so was Christ, the Majesty of heaven. But His poverty was for our sakes. Are we ranked among the rich? so was He. But He consented for our sakes to become poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich. In Christ we have self-denial exemplified."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 3, pp. 406, 407.

3. THE GENUINE EXPERIENCE

Tue, Oct 13

a. What aim of Paul's should we be eager to reflect today? Philippians 3:9.

"The true Witness has said, 'Buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.' What is the shame of this nakedness and poverty? It is the shame of clothing ourselves with self-righteousness, and of separating ourselves from God, when He has made ample provision for all to receive His blessing."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 965.

"The soul that loves God, rises above the fog of doubt; he gains a bright, broad, deep, living experience, and becomes meek and Christlike. His soul is committed to God, hid with Christ in God. He will be able to stand the test of neglect, of abuse and contempt, because his Saviour has suffered all this. He will not become fretful and discouraged when difficulties press him, because Jesus did not fail or become discouraged. Every true Christian will be strong, not in the strength and merit of his good works, but in the righteousness of Christ, which through faith is imputed unto him. It is a great thing to be meek and lowly in heart, to be pure and undefiled, as was the Prince of heaven when He walked among men."—Ibid., p. 907.

b. Explain the focus of real Christian life. Philippians 3:10, 11; 1 Peter 2:21.

"[The apostles] pointed out the living way through self-denial and the cross. They had fellowship with their Saviour in His sufferings, and their greatest desire was to know Christ Jesus, and Him crucified. They considered not their own convenience, nor counted their lives dear unto themselves. They lived not to enjoy, but to do good, and to save souls for whom Christ died."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 3, p. 27.

"It is fellowship with Christ, personal contact with a living Saviour, that enables the mind and heart and soul to triumph over the lower nature. Tell the wanderer of an almighty hand that will hold him up, of an infinite humanity in Christ that pities him. It is not enough for him to believe in law and force, things that have no pity, and never hear the cry for help. He needs to clasp a hand that is warm, to trust in a heart full of tenderness. Keep his mind stayed upon the thought of a divine presence ever beside him, ever looking upon him with pitying love. Bid him think of a Father's heart that ever grieves over sin, of a Father's hand stretched out still."—*Christ's Object Lessons,* p. 388.

4. PERSEVERING AGAINST TEMPTATION

Wed, Oct 14

a. How does Paul describe the continual, daily calling of every follower of Christ? 2 Corinthians 7:1; Philippians 3:12–14; 1 Corinthians 15:31.

"There is a striking contrast between the boastful, self-righteous claims of those who profess to be without sin, and the modest language of the apostle. Yet it was the purity and faithfulness of his own life that gave such power to his exhortations to his brethren."—*The Sanctified Life,* p. 86.

"O that every one might make choice of the heavenly gift, become an heir of God to that inheritance whose title is secure from any destroyer, world without end! O, choose not the world, but choose the better inheritance! Press, urge your way toward the mark for the prize of your high calling in Christ Jesus."—*Fundamentals of Christian Education,* p. 235.

"We know not one day how strong will be our conflict the next. Satan lives, and is active, and every day we need to cry earnestly to God for help and strength to resist him. As long as Satan reigns we shall have self to subdue, besetments to overcome, and there is no stopping place, there is no point to which we can come and say we have fully attained. . . .

"The Christian life is constantly an onward march. Jesus sits as a refiner and purifier of His people; and when His image is perfectly reflected in them, they are perfect and holy, and prepared for translation."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 1, p. 340.

b. What physical temptation is often a spiritual trap? Philippians 3:18, 19.

"Self-denial and a restraint upon the animal appetites are necessary to elevate and establish an improved condition of health and morals, and purify corrupted society. Every violation of principle in eating and drinking blunts the perceptive faculties. . . . Temperance in all things is necessary to health and the development and growth of a good Christian character.

"Those who transgress the laws of God in their physical organism will not be less slow to violate the law of God spoken from Sinai.Those who will not, after the light has come to them, eat and drink from principle instead of being controlled by appetite, will not be tenacious in regard to being governed by principle in other things. The agitation of the subject of reform in eating and drinking will develop character and will unerringly bring to light those who make a 'god of their bellies.' "—*Counsels on Health,* pp. 38, 39.

5. A DIFFERENT CITIZENSHIP

Thu, Oct 15

a. What appeal and promise challenges our hearts today? Philippians 3:20, 21.

"The people of God—the true Israel—though scattered throughout all nations, are on earth but sojourners, whose citizenship is in heaven."—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* p. 447.

"Dear Brethren and Sisters: Do we believe with all the heart that Christ is soon coming and that we are now having the last message of mercy that is ever to be given to a guilty world? Is our example what it should be? Do we, by our lives and holy conversation, show to those around us that we are looking for the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who shall change these vile bodies and fashion them like unto His glorious body? I fear that we do not believe and realize these things as we should. Those who believe the important truths that we profess, should act out their faith. There is too much seeking after amusements and things to take the attention in this world; the mind is left to run too much upon dress, and the tongue is engaged too often in light and trifling conversation, which gives the lie to our profession, for our conversation is not in heaven, whence we look for the Saviour.

"Angels are watching over and guarding us; we often grieve these angels by indulging in trifling conversation, jesting, and joking, and also by sinking down into a careless, stupid state. Although we may now and then make an effort for the victory and obtain it, yet if we do not keep it, but sink down into the same careless, indifferent state, unable to endure temptations and resist the enemy, we do not endure the trial of our faith that is more precious than gold. We are not suffering for Christ's sake, and glorying in tribulation.

"There is a great lack of Christian fortitude and serving God from principle. We should not seek to please and gratify self, but to honor and glorify God, and in all we do and say to have an eye single to His glory."—*Early Writings,* pp. 111, 112.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Fri, Oct 16

1. What will keep me from becoming self-exalted?
2. Describe the amazing character transformation of Paul.
3. What should be the focus of my life?
4. How does excessive indulgence in appetite affect my spirituality?
5. What are some snares that may be hindering my Christian growth?

Fortified by Heaven

MEMORY VERSE: "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:12, 13).

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 2, pp. 594–597; *The Acts of the Apostles,* pp. 461–468.

"Remember that working with Christ as your personal Saviour is your strength and your victory. This is the part that all are to act. To those who do this comes the assurance: 'As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.' "—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 7, p. 39.

1. SYMPATHY

Sun, Oct 18

a. What should we learn from how Paul encouraged others? Philippians 4:1.

"[Paul] was not writing to those who were perfect in character. He wrote to them as men and women who were striving against temptation and who were in danger of falling. . . .

"When one at fault becomes conscious of his error, be careful not to destroy his self-respect. Do not discourage him by indifference or distrust. Do not say, 'Before giving him my confidence, I will wait to see whether he will hold out.' Often this very distrust causes the tempted one to stumble."—*The Ministry of Healing,* pp. 167, 168.

"The cheerful enlightenment of the mind and the soul temple by the assurance that we have reconciliation with God, the hope we have of everlasting life through Christ, and the pleasure of blessing others, are joys which bring no sorrow with them."—*My Life Today,* p. 177.

b. What was the significance of some of the individuals whom Paul mentioned? Philippians 4:2, 3; Revelation 20:15.

2. LIGHT IN DARKNESS

Mon, Oct 19

a. What remarkable appeal does Paul make from prison? Philippians 4:4.

"Praise the Lord even when you fall into darkness. Praise Him even in temptation. 'Rejoice in the Lord alway,' says the apostle; 'and again I say, Rejoice.' Will that bring gloom and darkness into your families? No, indeed; it will bring a sunbeam. You will thus gather rays of eternal light from the throne of glory and scatter them around you. Let me exhort you to engage in this work, scatter this light and life around you, not only in your own path, but in the paths of those with whom you associate. Let it be your object to make those around you better, to elevate them, to point them to heaven and glory, and lead them to seek, above all earthly things, the eternal substance, the immortal inheritance, the riches which are imperishable."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 2, pp. 593, 594.

"Whatever your disposition may be, God is able so to mold it that it will be sweet and Christlike. By the exercise of living faith you can separate from everything that is not in accordance with the mind of God, and thus bring heaven into your life here below. Doing this, you will have sunshine at every step. When the enemy seeks to enshroud the soul with darkness, sing faith and talk faith, and you will find that you have sung and talked yourself into the light.

"We open to ourselves the floodgates of woe or joy. If we permit our thoughts to be engrossed with the troubles and trifles of earth, our hearts will be filled with unbelief, gloom, and foreboding. If we set our affections on things above, the voice of Jesus will speak to our hearts, murmuring will cease, and vexing thoughts will be lost in praise to our Redeemer."—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students,* pp. 233, 234.

b. In a hurried, stressed-out world, what should we always keep in mind? Philippians 4:5–7.

"It is when we come into difficult places that He reveals His power and wisdom in answer to humble prayer. Have confidence in Him as a prayer-hearing, prayer-answering God. He will reveal Himself to you as One who can help in every emergency. He who created man, who gave him his wonderful physical, mental, and spiritual faculties, will not withhold that which is necessary to sustain the life He has given."—*The Ministry of Healing,* p. 199.

3. SPIRITUAL VIGOR

Tue, Oct 20

a. Name the vital components for victory through Christ. Philippians 4:8.

"As God works upon the heart by His Holy Spirit, man must cooperate with Him. The thoughts must be bound about, restricted, withdrawn from branching out and contemplating things that will only weaken and defile the soul. The thoughts must be pure, the meditations of the heart must be clean, if the words of the mouth are to be words acceptable to heaven, and helpful to your associates. . . .

"In the sermon on the mount, Christ presented before His disciples the far-reaching principles of the law of God. He taught His hearers that the law was transgressed by the thoughts before the evil desire was carried out in actual commission. We are under obligation to control our thoughts, and to bring them into subjection to the law of God. The noble powers of the mind have been given to us by the Lord, that we may employ them in contemplating heavenly things. God has made abundant provision that the soul may make continual progression in the divine life. He has placed on every hand agencies to aid our development in knowledge and virtue; and yet, how little these agencies are appreciated or enjoyed! How often the mind is given to the contemplation of that which is earthly, sensual, and base! We give our time and thought to the trivial and commonplace things of the world, and neglect the great interests that pertain to eternal life. The noble powers of the mind are dwarfed and enfeebled by lack of exercise on themes that are worthy of their concentration."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 3, p. 1145.

b. Describe the extraordinary mental discipline that Paul cultivated in his life. Philippians 4:11, 12.

"It is neither wealth nor intellect that gives happiness. It is moral worth. True goodness is accounted of Heaven as true greatness. The condition of the moral affections determines the worth of the man. A person may have property and intellect, and yet be valueless, because the glowing fire of goodness has never burned upon the altar of his heart, because his conscience has been seared, blackened, and crisped with selfishness and sin."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 2, p. 305.

"Godliness with contentment is great gain. Here is the true secret of happiness, and real prosperity of soul and body."—Ibid., vol. 1, p. 542.

4. STRENGTH AND BLESSING

Wed, Oct 21

a. By abiding in Christ, to what far-reaching extent are we transformed and empowered? John 15:5; Philippians 4:13.

"We cannot have a weak faith now; we cannot be safe in a listless, indolent, slothful attitude. Every jot of ability is to be used, and sharp, calm, deep thinking is to be done. The wisdom of any human agent is not sufficient for the planning and devising in this time. Spread every plan before God with fasting, [and] with the humbling of the soul before the Lord Jesus, and commit thy ways unto the Lord. The sure promise is, He will direct thy paths. He is infinite in resources. The Holy One of Israel, who calls the host of heaven by name, and holds the stars of heaven in position, has you individually in His keeping."—*Selected Messages,* bk. 2, p. 364.

"Let the self-distrustful, whose lack of self-reliance leads them to shrink from care and responsibility, be taught reliance upon God. Thus many a one who otherwise would be but a cipher [i.e., one having no influence or value] in the world, perhaps only a helpless burden, will be able to say with the apostle Paul, 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.' "—*Education,* p. 256.

"Whenever the church at any period have forsaken their sins, and believed and walked in the truth, they have been honored of God. There is in faith and humble obedience a power that the world cannot withstand. The order of God's providence in relation to His people is progression—continual advancement in the perfection of Christian character, in the way of holiness, rising higher and higher in the clear light and knowledge and love of God, to the very close of time."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 5, p. 484.

"Whatever the mistakes or failures of the past, we may, with the help of God, rise above them."—*The Ministry of Healing,* p. 516.

b. Explain the great value of thoughtful generosity. Philippians 4:14–19.

"He who has given his life to God in ministry to His children is linked with Him who has all the resources of the universe at His command. His life is bound up by the golden chain of the immutable promises with the life of God. The Lord will not fail him in the hour of suffering and need. . . . And in the hour of final need the merciful shall find refuge in the mercy of the compassionate Saviour and shall be received into everlasting habitations."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing,* p. 24.

5. FACING VILENESS

Thu, Oct 22

a. What special group of converts can be a real inspiration to all who find themselves in difficult environments, and why? Philippians 4:21, 22.

"Even in Nero's household, trophies of the cross were won. 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."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 463.

"Every Christian has something to do in the service of his Master. We are not to seek our own ease or convenience, but rather to make the upbuilding of Christ's kingdom our first consideration. . . .

"God has scattered His children in various communities that the light of truth may be kept shining amid the moral darkness that enshrouds the earth. The deeper the darkness around us, the greater the need that our light should shine for God. We may be placed in circumstances of great difficulty and trial, but this does not prove that we are not in the very position assigned us by Providence. Among the Christians at Rome in Paul's day the apostle mentions them 'that are of Caesar's household.' Nowhere could the moral atmosphere be more unfavorable to Christianity than at that Roman court under the cruel and profligate Nero. Yet those who had, while in the emperor's service, accepted Christ did not feel at liberty, after their conversion, to leave their post of duty. In the face of seductive temptations, fierce opposition, and appalling dangers they were faithful witnesses for Christ.

"Whoever will rely wholly upon divine grace may make his life a constant testimony for the truth. No one is so situated that he cannot be a true and faithful Christian. However great the obstacles, all who are determined to obey God will find the way opening as they go forward.

"Those who maintain their fidelity to God in the midst of opposing influences are gaining an experience of the highest value. Their strength increases with every obstacle surmounted, every temptation overcome."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 5, pp. 182, 183.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Fri, Oct 23

1. How can I be more effective in helping wayward souls?
2. Explain the tremendous impact found in choosing our thoughts.
3. What kinds of things should I think about—and not think about?
4. Explain the power that comes with abiding in Christ.
5. What can I learn from the Christians who lived in Caesar's household?

Walking Worthily

MEMORY VERSE: "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness" (Colossians 1:10, 11).

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 2, pp. 71–77; Ibid., vol. 8, pp. 286–289.

"Paul put into words his desire for the Colossian believers. How high the ideal that these words hold before the follower of Christ! They show the wonderful possibilities of the Christian life and make it plain that there is no limit to the blessings that the children of God may receive."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 471.

1. AN EXAMPLE FOR US

Sun, Oct 25

a. How does the apostle Paul express his deep confidence in the spiritual condition of the Colossian believers? Colossians 1:1–6.

"The first and second chapters of Colossians have been presented to me as an expression of what our churches in every part of the world should be."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 906.

b. What does this faith motivate the apostle to do? Colossians 1:7–11.

"[Colossians 1:9–11 quoted.] How complete this prayer is! There is no limit to the blessings that it is our privilege to receive. We may be 'filled with the knowledge of his will.' The Holy Ghost would never have inspired Paul to offer this prayer in behalf of his brethren, if it had not been possible for them to receive an answer from God in accordance with the request. Since this is so, we know that God's will is manifested to His people as they need a clearer understanding of His will."—Ibid.

2. CREATIVE POWER IN CHRIST

Mon, Oct 26

a. Describe the glorious experience the apostle portrays—and how we should keep our faith strong by abiding in it. Colossians 1:12–14.

"We should stand fast in the liberty wherewith He has set us free and rejoice in the truth. God is displeased with us when we go to listen to error, without being obliged to go; for unless He sends us to those meetings where error is forced home to the people by the power of the will, He will not keep us. The angels cease their watchful care over us, and we are left to the buffetings of the enemy, to be darkened and weakened by him and the power of his evil angels; and the light around us becomes contaminated with the darkness. . . .

"We have no time to throw away in listening to fables. Our minds should not be thus diverted, but should be occupied with the present truth, and seeking wisdom that we may obtain a more thorough knowledge of our position, that with meekness we may be able to give a reason of our hope from the Scriptures."—*Early Writings*, pp. 124, 125.

"God 'hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.' Colossians 1:13. It is all offered us in His word. If we receive the word, we have the deliverance."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 320.

b. How does comparing Scripture with Scripture clarify the concept of Christ's preeminence? Colossians 1:15, 18; compare the word "firstborn" in Psalm 89:20, 27; 1 Samuel 16:11–13.

"We have only one perfect photograph of God, and this is Jesus Christ."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 906.

c. What reveals Christ as God? Colossians 1:16, 17; John 1:1–3; Hebrews 1:2.

"Through Christ the Word, a personal God created man and endowed him with intelligence and power."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 415.

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

3. CHERISHING THE SACRIFICE

Tue, Oct 27

a. What do we need to understand about the deep significance of Christ's mission in coming as the Son of man? Colossians 1:19, 20; 2:9.

"In order to fully realize the value of salvation, it is necessary to understand what it cost. In consequence of limited ideas of the sufferings of Christ, many place a low estimate upon the great work of the atonement. . . . In this divine plan is seen the most marvelous manifestation of the love of God to the fallen race."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 2, p. 200.

"Although Christ's divine glory was for a time veiled and eclipsed by His assuming humanity, yet He did not cease to be God when He became man. The human did not take the place of the divine, nor the divine of the human. This is the mystery of godliness. The two expressions 'human' and 'divine' were, in Christ, closely and inseparably one, and yet they had a distinct individuality. Though Christ humbled Himself to become man, the Godhead was still His own. His deity could not be lost while He stood faithful and true to His loyalty. Surrounded with sorrow, suffering, and moral pollution, despised and rejected by the people to whom had been intrusted the oracles of heaven, Jesus could yet speak of Himself as the Son of man in heaven. He was ready to take once more His divine glory when His work on earth was done."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1129.

"Jesus placed the cross in line with the light coming from heaven, for it is there that it shall catch the eye of man. The cross is in direct line with the shining of the divine countenances, so that by beholding the cross men may see and know God and Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent. In beholding God we behold the One who poured out His soul unto death. In beholding the cross the view is extended to God, and His hatred of sin is discerned. But while we behold in the cross God's hatred of sin, we also behold His love for sinners, which is stronger than death."—Ibid., p. 1133.

b. How does the apostle summarize the work which Christ performs in behalf of those who fully surrender to Him? Colossians 1:21, 22.

"Christ has made provision that His church shall be a transformed body, illumined with the light of heaven, possessing the glory of Immanuel. It is His purpose that every Christian shall be surrounded with a spiritual atmosphere of light and peace. There is no limit to the usefulness of the one who, putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart and lives a life wholly consecrated to God."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 8, p. 19.

4. CONTINUALLY CALLED

Wed, Oct 28

a. Upon what important condition is the salvation of those who come to Christ fully assured? 1 Corinthians 15:1, 2; Colossians 1:23.

"We cannot possibly have a changing religion. The gospel is to be proclaimed and personally received. A general assent is not enough. There must be an intelligent heart reception of the truth wherein the receiver must stand and perseveringly communicate to others the knowledge received. The truth must be practiced in every respect, holding fast the word of life, 'by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain' (1 Corinthians 15:2).

"There is a declaration of the faith that is so diluted by man's natural traits of character that it has lost its saving virtue by losing its distinctive characteristic of Christlikeness. Although saying you are rich, you will find yourself in the end wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked. When there is a haphazard belief and practice that is not after the lessons of Christ, then you have a faith that is vain. Your heart must either contain the treasures of goodness or the treasures of that which is evil. Out of the good treasure of the heart the receiver of truth brings forth good things. The one who claims to believe, and does not practice, brings forth evil things which wound, discourage, and destroy.

"I ask you, my brother, not to act like a child in understanding. Act like a child who is practicing the Word of God. Christ says, 'Why call ye Me Master and Lord, and do not the things which I say?' The consistency of our conduct in words, in patience, in meekness, will reveal the Christ in the heart. Take yourself seriously in hand, my brother, and move steadily onward, step by step, to be an overcomer."—*Manuscript Releases,* vol. 9, pp. 213, 214.

b. How does Paul describe his calling? Colossians 1:24, 25; 2 Corinthians 11:28–30.

"Gain courage from the experience of the apostle Paul. He had many trials. He was an unwearied worker, and traveled constantly, sometimes through inhospitable regions, sometimes on the water, in storm and tempest. Far harder than ours was his lot, for traveling then had not the conveniences that it has now. But Paul allowed nothing to hinder him from his work."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments, vol. 6, p. 1106.

5. THE MYSTERY IN ACTION

Thu, Oct 29

a. How only can Christians exemplify the living gospel we are to share? Colossians 1:27–29.

"Through the power of Christ, men and women have broken the chains of sinful habit. They have renounced selfishness. The profane have become reverent, the drunken sober, the profligate pure. Souls that have borne the likeness of Satan have become transformed into the image of God. This change is in itself the miracle of miracles. A change wrought by the Word, it is one of the deepest mysteries of the Word. We cannot understand it; we can only believe, as declared by the Scriptures, it is 'Christ in you, the hope of glory.' "—*The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 476.

"Sanctified, self-sacrificing men are needed; men who will not shun trial and responsibility; men who are brave and true; men in whose hearts Christ is formed 'the hope of glory,' and who with lips touched with holy fire will 'preach the word.' For want of such workers the cause of God languishes, and fatal errors, like a deadly poison, taint the morals and blight the hopes of a large part of the human race."—Ibid., p. 507.

"If Christ is in you 'the hope of glory,' you will have no disposition to watch others, to expose their errors. Instead of seeking to accuse and condemn, it will be your object to help, to bless, and to save. In dealing with those who are in error, you will heed the injunction, Consider 'thyself, lest thou also be tempted.' Galatians 6:1. You will call to mind the many times you have erred and how hard it was to find the right way when you had once left it. You will not push your brother into greater darkness, but with a heart full of pity will tell him of his danger.

"He who looks often upon the cross of Calvary, remembering that his sins placed the Saviour there, will never try to estimate the degree of his guilt in comparison with that of others. He will not climb upon the judgment seat to bring accusation against another. There can be no spirit of criticism or self-exaltation on the part of those who walk in the shadow of Calvary's cross."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing,* p. 128.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Fri, Oct 30

1. What desire of Paul for the Colossians should we apply to ourselves today?
2. How does Scripture extol Christ as Creator of all things?
3. Why is an accurate understanding of the nature of Christ essential?
4. Although one may profess Christ, what neglect sabotages true faith in Him?
5. Why is Christ in us, the hope of glory, so greatly needed today?

First Sabbath Offering

Sabbath, November 7, 2026



for the GC Publishing Department

For the past years, on the first Sabbath of November, you have been accustomed to reading an appeal in this lesson containing some quotations from the Spirit of Prophecy related to literature distribution, especially emphasizing the need to expand this work—which is perfectly appropriate and timely.

This time, however, we would like to share with you some information for a better understanding of this need.

A few years ago, we were printing 10,000 *Sabbath Bible Lessons* in English (available to us at a large-quantity bulk rate.) Currently, this number has dropped to about 2,000 lessons, which unfortunately, involves a much higher production cost per unit. This decrease in printing occurred due to the convenience offered by free online applications (which, on the other hand, is a blessing of technological progress, of course.)

Following the global trend, the General Conference has invested in an app where you can study the *Sabbath Bible Lessons* of the week in your own language. We currently have 22 languages plus links to past lessons in English. You can find the app in the Google Play Store and the Apple App Store under the names "Sabbath Bible Lessons," "Church Hymnal," or "sdarm." The app also provides access to children's lessons and to the Week of Prayer magazine.

Our website "sdarm.org" gives you access to past lessons and currently offers the *Sabbath Bible Lessons* in 53 languages. We recognize and highly appreciate the dedicated work of our volunteer translators. The online presence is excellent, of course—and again, we indeed thank God for the technology.

However, it is also true that this does not replace the worldwide need for printed materials as well!

The Publishing Department of the General Conference sends free printed copies of the *Sabbath Bible Lessons, The Reformation Herald,* and the *Youth Messenger* magazines to more than 30 Missions around the world. This means that these shipments, as well as the printing, are subsidized by the offerings collected each November. At a simple glance, you can already conclude that these offerings do not cover all the costs.

For this Sabbath, please plan your offering for literature in advance, so that through it we may do our best to reach more people with the message!

General Conference Publishing Department

Strengthened by the Saviour

MEMORY VERSE: "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving" (Colossians 2:6, 7).

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 1, pp. 290–302.

"You have the Pattern, Christ Jesus; walk in His footsteps, and you will be qualified to fill any and every position that you may be called upon to occupy."—*Fundamentals of Christian Education,* p. 303.

1. THE SOLID SOURCE

Sun, Nov 1

a. In an age where so much information is available, where does the apostle bid us seek answers? Colossians 2:1–4.

"I am instructed to say to our people: Let us follow Christ. Do not forget that He is to be our pattern in all things. We may safely discard those ideas that are not found in His teaching. I appeal to our ministers to be sure that their feet are placed on the platform of eternal truth. Beware how you follow impulse, calling it the Holy Spirit. Some are in danger in this respect. I call upon them to be sound in the faith, able to give to everyone who asks a reason of the hope that is in them."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 8, p. 296.

"We are nearing the end of time, and we want now, not to meet the world's tastes and practices, but to meet the mind of God; to see what saith the Scriptures, and then to walk according to the light which God has given us. Our inclinations, our customs and practices, are not to have the preference. God's word is our standard."—Ibid., vol. 5, p. 506.

b. For what precious qualities does the apostle specifically commend the Colossian believers? Colossians 2:5.

2. LEARNING IN TODAY'S WORLD

Mon, Nov 2

a. How are we to grow at every step in our Christian walk—and how is this to guide us in educating the next generation as well? Colossians 2:6, 7.

"The best education that can be given to children and youth is that which bears the closest relation to the future, immortal life. This kind of education should be given by godly parents, by devoted teachers, and by the church, to the end that the youth in turn may become zealous missionaries for either home or foreign fields. They are to be earnestly instructed in the truths of the Bible, that they may become pillars in the church, champions for truth, rooted and grounded in the faith. They are to know whereof they believe, and to have such an experience in divine things that they will never become betrayers of sacred trusts. The youth should be educated by precept and example that they are to be agents for God, messengers of mercy, ready for every good word and work, that they are to be blessings to those who are ready to perish."—*Fundamentals of Christian Education,* p. 231.

b. Considering today's secular mindset, what vital perspective must we ever keep in mind? Colossians 2:8; 1 Corinthians 3:19.

"The most profound intellects of the world, when not enlightened by God's Word, become bewildered and lost while trying to investigate the matters of science and revelation. The Creator and His works are beyond finite comprehension, and men conclude that because they cannot explain the works and ways of God from natural causes, the Bible history is not reliable. Many are so intent upon excluding God from the exercise of sovereign will and power in the established order of the universe, that they demean man, the noblest of His creatures. The theories and speculations of philosophy would make us believe that man has come by slow degrees, not merely from a savage state, but from the very lowest form of the brute creation. They destroy man's dignity because they will not admit God's miraculous power.

"God has illuminated human intellects, and poured a flood of light on the world through discoveries in art and science. But those who view these from a merely human standpoint will most assuredly come to wrong conclusions. The thorns of error, skepticism, and infidelity are disguised by being covered with the garments of philosophy and science. Satan has devised this ingenious manner of winning souls away from the living God, away from the truth and religion."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 906.

3. A COMPLETE SAVIOUR

Tue, Nov 3

a. What must we realize about the nature of Christ? Colossians 2:9.

"Wondrous combination of man and God! . . . The eternal Word consented to be made flesh! God became man! It was a wonderful humility."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1127.

"Christ could not have come to this earth with the glory that He had in the heavenly courts. Sinful human beings could not have borne the sight. He veiled His divinity with the garb of humanity, but He did not part with His divinity. A divine-human Saviour, He came to stand at the head of the fallen race, to share in their experience from childhood to manhood.

"Christ had not exchanged His divinity for humanity; but He had clothed His divinity in humanity.

"Be careful, exceedingly careful as to how you dwell upon the human nature of Christ. Do not set Him before the people as a man with the propensities of sin. He is the second Adam. The first Adam was created a pure, sinless being, without a taint of sin upon him; he was in the image of God. He could fall, and he did fall through transgressing. Because of sin his posterity was born with inherent propensities of disobedience. But Jesus Christ was the only begotten Son of God. He took upon Himself human nature, and was tempted in all points as human nature is tempted. He could have sinned; He could have fallen, but not for one moment was there in Him an evil propensity."—Ibid., p. 1128.

b. What reveals His mighty, all-sufficient power to save us? Colossians 2:10.

"By His obedience to all the commandments of God, Christ wrought out a redemption for men. This was not done by going out of Himself to another, but by taking humanity into Himself. Thus Christ gave to humanity an existence out of Himself. To bring humanity into Christ, to bring the fallen race into oneness with divinity, is the work of redemption. Christ took human nature that men might be one with Him as He is one with the Father, that God may love man as He loves His only-begotten Son, that men may be partakers of the divine nature, and be complete in Him. . . .

"This union is represented by the union of the vine and the branches. Finite man is united to the manhood of Christ. Through faith human nature is assimilated with Christ's nature. We are made one with God in Christ."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 250, 251.

4. BEHOLDING GOD'S METHODS

Wed, Nov 4

a. Describe the experience represented by baptism. Luke 3:16; Colossians 2:11–13.

"Baptism is a most solemn renunciation of the world. Those who are baptized in the threefold name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, at the very entrance of their Christian life declare publicly that they have forsaken the service of Satan and have become members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King. They have obeyed the command: 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate, . . . and touch not the unclean thing.' "—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 6, p. 91.

"The Lord is fitting a people for heaven. The defects of character, the stubborn will, the selfish idolatry, the indulgence of faultfinding, hatred, and contention, provoke the wrath of God and must be put away from His commandment-keeping people. . . . God will send reproof and warning to His people as long as they continue upon earth."—Ibid., vol. 4, p. 180.

b. What must we understand about those ordinances nailed to the cross? Colossians 2:14, 15.

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

"There are many who try to blend these two systems, using the texts that speak of the ceremonial law to prove that the moral law has been abolished; but this is a perversion of the Scriptures. The distinction between the two systems is broad and clear. The ceremonial system was made up of symbols pointing to Christ, to His sacrifice and His priesthood. This ritual law, with its sacrifices and ordinances, was to be performed by the Hebrews until type met antitype in the death of Christ, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Then all the sacrificial offerings were to cease. It is this law that Christ 'took . . . out of the way, nailing it to His cross.' Colossians 2:14. But concerning the law of Ten Commandments the psalmist declares, 'Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven.' Psalm 119:89."—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* pp. 364, 365.

5. DEVELOPING DISCERNMENT

Thu, Nov 5

a. In contrast to the seventh-day Sabbath in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:8–11), in what different context is the word "sabbath" also found in Colossians 2:16, 17? Explain the distinction. Leviticus 23:37–39; Hebrews 10:1–4.

"Paul endeavored to direct the minds of his hearers to the one great Sacrifice for sin. He pointed to the sacrifices that were shadows of good things to come, and then presented Christ as the antitype of all those ceremonies—the object to which they pointed as the only source of life and hope for fallen man. Holy men of old were saved by faith in the blood of Christ. As they saw the dying agonies of the sacrificial victims they looked across the gulf of ages to the Lamb of God that was to take away the sin of the world."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 424.

b. Give examples of what Paul warns about in Colossians 2:18–23.

"The teachers of spiritualism come in a pleasing, bewitching manner to deceive you, and if you listen to their fables you are beguiled by the enemy of righteousness and will surely lose your reward. When once the fascinating influence of the archdeceiver overcomes you, you are poisoned, and its deadly influence adulterates and destroys your faith in Christ's being the Son of God, and you cease to rely on the merits of His blood. Those deceived by this philosophy are beguiled of their reward through the deceptions of Satan. They rely upon their own merits, exercise voluntary humility, are even willing to make sacrifices, and debase themselves, and yield their minds to the belief of supreme nonsense, receiving the most absurd ideas through those whom they believe to be their dead friends. Satan has so blinded their eyes and perverted their judgment that they perceive not the evil; and they follow out the instructions purporting to be from their dead friends now angels in a higher sphere."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 1, pp. 297, 298.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Fri, Nov 6

1. Why is it wise for me to cherish the studies I learn from Scripture?
2. Name some subtle dangers faced when pursuing secular higher education.
3. How is knowing the nature of Christ able to make us better people?
4. What do I need to understand about Colossians 2:14, 15?
5. What kind of sabbath is Paul referring to in Colossians 2:16, 17?

Reflecting Eternity

MEMORY VERSE: "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:2).

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 4, pp. 92–94, 350–359; *Messages to Young People,* pp. 102–118.

"If your aptness and skill had been as much exercised in saving souls, and in disseminating the truth to those who are in darkness, as it has been to get gain and to increase your earthly possessions, you would have many stars in the crown of your rejoicing in the kingdom of glory."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 4, p. 358.

1. KEEPING FOCUS

Sun, Nov 8

a. Where is to be the focus of all who commit to Christ? Colossians 3:1.

"We are risen with Christ. Christ is our life. Through His mercy and gracious love we are declared to be chosen, adopted, pardoned, and justified. Then let us magnify the Lord."—*Selected Messages,* bk. 2, p. 245.

"Self is not to be consulted. Pride, self-love, selfishness, avarice, covetousness, love of the world, hatred, suspicion, jealousy, evil surmisings, must all be subdued and sacrificed forever. When Christ shall appear, it will not be to correct these evils and then give a moral fitness for His coming. This preparation must all be made before He comes. It should be a subject of thought, of study, and earnest inquiry, What shall we do to be saved? What shall be our conduct that we may show ourselves approved unto God?

"When tempted to murmur, censure, and indulge in fretfulness, wounding those around you, and in so doing wounding your own soul, oh! let the deep, earnest, anxious inquiry come from your soul, Shall I stand without fault before the throne of God? Only the faultless will be there. None will be translated to heaven while their hearts are filled with the rubbish of earth. Every defect in the moral character must first be remedied, every stain removed by the cleansing blood of Christ, and all the unlovely, unlovable traits of character overcome."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 1, p. 705.

2. DECIDING WHAT TO LOVE

Mon, Nov 9

a. What deliberate choice must we consistently make to ensure our salvation? Colossians 3:2, 3; Revelation 3:11.

"Our minds take the level of the things on which our thoughts dwell, and if we think upon earthly things, we shall fail to take the impress of that which is heavenly. We would be greatly benefited by contemplating the mercy, goodness, and love of God; but we sustain great loss by dwelling upon those things which are earthly and temporal. We allow sorrow and care and perplexity to attract our minds to earth, and we magnify a molehill into a mountain. . . .

"Temporal things are not to engage our whole attention, or engross our minds until our thoughts are entirely of the earth and the earthly. We are to train, discipline, and educate the mind so that we may think in a heavenly channel, that we may dwell on things unseen and eternal, which will be discerned by spiritual vision. It is by seeing Him who is invisible that we may obtain strength of mind and vigor of spirit."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1100.

b. What exalted privilege is offered to every follower of Christ, and how can we actively take hold of it? Colossians 3:4; 1 John 3:2, 3.

"Our lives should be hid with Christ in God; and although it 'doth not yet appear what we shall be,' 'When Christ, who is our life, shall appear,' 'we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.' The princely dignity of the Christian character will shine forth as the sun, and the beams of light from the face of Christ will be reflected upon those who have purified themselves even as He is pure. The privilege of becoming sons of God is cheaply purchased, even at the sacrifice of everything we possess, be it life itself.

"My dear brother, you should set your face to be a man after God's own heart. What others may venture to do or say that is not strictly in accordance with the Christian standard should be no excuse for you. You must stand before the Judge of all the earth, not to answer for another, but for yourself. We have an individual responsibility, and no man's defects of character will be the least excuse for our guilt; for Christ has given us in His character a perfect pattern, a faultless life. . . .

"Temptations will pour in upon us, for by them we are to be tried during our probation upon earth. This is the proving of God, a revelation of our own hearts. There is no sin in having temptations; but sin comes in when temptation is yielded to."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 4, pp. 357, 358.

3. THE NEW MAN

Tue, Nov 10

a. In cleaving to Christ, what must we mortify, i.e., put to death—and how only is this possible? 1 Peter 2:11; Colossians 3:5–8.

"The apostle charges us to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul. Every perverted appetite becomes a warring lust. Appetite indulged to the injury of physical strength causes disease of the soul. The lust which the apostle mentions is not confined to the violation of the seventh commandment, but every indulgence of the taste which lessens physical vigor is a warring lust. . . .

"You need to cultivate self-control. The lesson you should have learned in your youth should be mastered now. Discipline yourself to die to self, to bring your will in subjection to the will of Christ."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 4, p. 215.

"When the Christian takes his baptismal vow, divine help is pledged to him. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit stand ready to work in his behalf. God places at his command the resources of heaven, that he may be an overcomer. His own power is small; but God is omnipotent, and God is his helper. Daily he is to make known his wants at the throne of grace. By faith and trust, by availing himself of the resources provided, he can be more than a conqueror."—*Our High Calling,* p. 157.

b. As our heart is renewed, how does it affect our words? Colossians 3:9, 10.

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

"Satan was exulting that he had succeeded in debasing the image of God in humanity. Then Jesus came to restore in man the image of his Maker. None but Christ can fashion anew the character that has been ruined by sin. He came to expel the demons that had controlled the will. He came to lift us up from the dust, to reshape the marred character after the pattern of His divine character, and to make it beautiful with His own glory."—*The Desire of Ages,* pp. 37, 38.

4. A UNIQUE PEOPLE

Wed, Nov 11

a. Describe God's message for the entire human race He has created. Acts 17:24, 26, 27; Colossians 3:11.

"[Christ] saw humanity sunken in wretchedness and sinfulness. He knew that men and women were depraved and degraded, and that they cherished the most loathsome vices. Angels marveled that Christ should undertake what seemed to them a hopeless task. They marveled that God could tolerate a race so sinful. They could see no room for love. But 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' John 3:16.

"Christ came to this earth with a message of mercy and forgiveness. He laid the foundation for a religion by which Jew and Gentile, black and white, free and bond, are linked together in one common brotherhood, recognized as equal in the sight of God. The Saviour has a boundless love for every human being. In each one He sees capacity for improvement. With divine energy and hope He greets those for whom He has given His life. In His strength they can live a life rich in good works, filled with the power of the Spirit."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 225.

b. Name some ways in which our speech and actions can reveal a higher level of Christianity than is typically seen. Colossians 3:12–14.

"If sin is plain in a brother, breathe it not to another, but with love for the brother's soul, with a heart full of compassion, with bowels of mercy, tell him the wrong, then leave the matter with him and the Lord. You have discharged your duty. You are not to pass sentence.

"It has been made too light an affair to rein up a brother, to condemn him, and hold him under condemnation. There has been a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. If each would set his own heart in order, when the brethren meet together their testimony would be ready and come from a full soul, and the people around that believe not the truth would be moved. The manifestation of the Spirit of God would tell to their hearts that you are the children of God. Our love for one another should be visible to all. Then it will tell. It will have an influence. . . .

"Take hold of the work individually, be zealous and repent; and after all known wrongs are righted, then believe that God accepts you. Go not mourning, but take God at His word."—Ibid., vol. 1, p. 165.

5. SWEET MELODY

Thu, Nov 12

a. In today's hostile world, list some refreshing qualities of a true life in Christ. Colossians 3:15–17.

"Forgetting our own difficulties and troubles, let us praise God for an opportunity to live for the glory of His name. Let the fresh blessings of each new day awaken praise in our hearts for these tokens of His loving care. When you open your eyes in the morning, thank God that He has kept you through the night. Thank Him for His peace in your heart. Morning, noon, and night, let gratitude as a sweet perfume ascend to heaven.

"When someone asks how you are feeling, do not try to think of something mournful to tell in order to gain sympathy. Do not talk of your lack of faith and your sorrows and sufferings. The tempter delights to hear such words. When talking on gloomy subjects, you are glorifying him. We are not to dwell on the great power of Satan to overcome us. Often we give ourselves into his hands by talking of his power. Let us talk instead of the great power of God to bind up all our interests with His own. Tell of the matchless power of Christ, and speak of His glory. All heaven is interested in our salvation. The angels of God, thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand, are commissioned to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. They guard us against evil and press back the powers of darkness that are seeking our destruction. Have we not reason to be thankful every moment, thankful even when there are apparent difficulties in our pathway?"—*The Ministry of Healing,* pp. 253, 254.

"Upon the heads of the overcomers, Jesus with His own right hand places the crown of glory. For each there is a crown, bearing his own 'new name,' [Revelation 2:17], and the inscription, 'Holiness to the Lord.' In every hand are placed the victor's palm and the shining harp. Then, as the commanding angels strike the note, every hand sweeps the harp strings with skillful touch, awaking sweet music in rich, melodious strains."—*The Great Controversy,* p. 646.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Fri, Nov 13

1. What too often shows that we might be stuck in an earthly mode?
2. How can I better prioritize my attention toward preparing for Jesus?
3. Why does Jesus want me to dwell on a higher plane of thought and action?
4. Why is discussion on racial distinctions irrelevant to real Christians?
5. How can I radiate the pure, innocence of Heaven in word and song?

The Family and Beyond

MEMORY VERSE: "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:32).

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 3, pp. 527–540.

"We must have the Spirit of God, or we can never have harmony in the home. . . . If one errs, the other will exercise Christlike forbearance and not draw coldly away."—*The Adventist Home,* p. 118.

1. APPEALS TO WOMEN

Sun, Nov 15

a. How can a wife promote beautiful harmony in her marriage? Proverbs 14:1; Ephesians 5:33 (last part); Colossians 3:18.

"The relation of husband and wife is most sacred and solemn."—*Manuscript Releases,* vol. 6, p. 43.

"Many husbands stop at the words, 'Wives, submit yourselves,' but we will read the conclusion of the same injunction, which is, 'As it is fit in the Lord.'

"God requires that the wife shall keep the fear and glory of God ever before her. Entire submission is to be made only to the Lord Jesus Christ, who has purchased her as His own child by the infinite price of His life. God has given her a conscience, which she cannot violate with impunity. Her individuality cannot be merged into that of her husband, for she is the purchase of Christ. It is a mistake to imagine that with blind devotion she is to do exactly as her husband says in all things, when she knows that in so doing, injury would be worked for her body and her spirit, which have been ransomed from the slavery of Satan. There is One who stands higher than the husband to the wife; it is her Redeemer, and her submission to her husband is to be rendered as God has directed—'as it is fit in the Lord.' "—*The Adventist Home,* p. 116.

"The wife, if she has the spirit of Christ, will be careful of her words; she will control her spirit, she will be submissive, and yet will not feel that she is a bondslave, but a companion to her husband."—Ibid., p. 118.

2. A FORGOTTEN APPEAL

Mon, Nov 16

a. How are women who fear God to value His principles of behavior—and also be encouraged by their families and churches in so doing? 1 Peter 3:1–6; Philippians 2:14.

"There are idols cherished in our families and in our churches today which have the same influence upon us as did the golden calf upon the Israelites. Will the people search themselves? Will the shepherds do their work as faithful sentinels of God? Will they see what idols they are cherishing? Will every one that is in moderate circumstances consider that they are to be a people distinct and separate in their fashions of dress, their speech, their deportment, from the world? Will they see their idolatry in small as well as in large matters, and that it is separating them from God? When reproofs come they are ashamed, but not repentant."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 941.

"Showy, extravagant dress too often encourages lust in the heart of the wearer and awakens base passions in the heart of the beholder. God sees that the ruin of the character is frequently preceded by the indulgence of pride and vanity in dress."—*Counsels on Health,* p. 602.

"Fashion has been the goddess who has ruled the outside world, and she often insinuates herself into the church. The church should make the word of God her standard, and parents should think intelligently upon this subject. When they see their children inclined to follow worldly fashions, they should, like Abraham, resolutely command their households after them. Instead of uniting them with the world, connect them with God."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 5, p. 499.

"To protect the people of God from the corrupting influence of the world, as well as to promote physical and moral health, the dress reform was introduced among us. It was not intended to be a yoke of bondage, but a blessing."—Ibid., vol. 4, p. 634.

b. What strengthens the church to uphold godly practices and protect morality in a godless world? Titus 2:1–5; Matthew 5:8.

"My sisters, you should avoid even the appearance of evil. In this fast age, which is reeking with corruption, you are not safe unless you stand guarded. Virtue and modesty are rare. I appeal to you as followers of Jesus Christ, making a high and exalted profession, to cherish this precious, priceless gem, modesty. This will guard virtue."—*A Solemn Appeal,* p. 151.

3. APPEALS TO MEN

Tue, Nov 17

a. In committing to marry, what must a man realize? Colossians 3:19.

"When husbands require the complete subjection of their wives, declaring that women have no voice or will in the family, but must render entire submission, they place their wives in a position contrary to the Scripture. In interpreting the Scripture in this way, they do violence to the design of the marriage institution. This interpretation is made simply that they may exercise arbitrary rule, which is not their prerogative. But we read on, 'Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.' Why should the husband be bitter against his wife? If the husband has found her erring and full of faults, bitterness of spirit will not remedy the evil. . . .

"It was not the design of God that the husband should have control, as head of the house, when he himself does not submit to Christ. He must be under the rule of Christ that he may represent the relation of Christ to the church."—*The Adventist Home,* pp. 116, 117.

"Many men love their wives, but are too selfish to manifest it. They have a false dignity and pride, and will not show their love by words and deeds. There are many men who never know how starved is the heart of the wife for words of tender appreciation and affection. They bury their loved ones from their sight and murmur at the providence of God that has deprived them of their companions, when, could they look into the inner life of those companions, they would see that their own course was the cause of their premature death."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 3, pp. 527, 528.

b. What inspires true love in a man for his wife—and how is his connection with God affected by his attitude? Ephesians 5:25, 33 (first part); 1 Peter 3:7.

"Husbands should study the pattern and seek to know what is meant by the symbol presented in Ephesians, the relation Christ sustains to the church. The husband is to be as a Saviour in his family. Will he stand in his noble, God-given manhood, ever seeking to uplift his wife and children? Will he breathe about him a pure, sweet atmosphere? Will he not as assiduously cultivate the love of Jesus, making it an abiding principle in his home, as he will assert his claims to authority?

"Let every husband and father study to understand the words of Christ, not in a one-sided manner, merely dwelling upon the subjection of the wife to her husband, but in the light of the cross of Calvary, study as to his own position in the family circle."—*The Adventist Home,* p. 117.

4. PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Wed, Nov 18

a. Explain our duty to our parents. Deuteronomy 5:16; Colossians 3:20.

"Children who dishonor and disobey their parents, and disregard their advice and instructions, can have no part in the earth made new. The purified new earth will be no place for the rebellious, the disobedient, the ungrateful son or daughter."—*The Adventist Home,* p. 295.

"There is no time when children should withhold respect and love from their father and mother. While the parents live, it should be the children's joy to honor and respect them. They should bring all the cheerfulness and sunshine into the life of the aged parents, that they possibly can. . . .

"The thought that children have ministered to the comfort of their parents is a thought of satisfaction all through the life, and will especially bring them joy when they themselves are in need of sympathy and love. Those whose hearts are filled with love will regard the privilege of smoothing the passage to the grave for their parents an inestimable privilege. They will rejoice that they had a part in bringing comfort and peace to the last days of their loved parents."—*The Review and Herald,* November 15, 1892.

b. As parents, how are we bidden to make our own children's duty toward us much easier for them? Colossians 3:21; Ephesians 4:32, 6:4.

"Youth are ignorant and inexperienced, and the love of the Bible and its sacred truths will not come naturally. Unless great pains is taken to build up around them barriers to shield them from Satan's devices, they are subject to his temptations and are led captive by him at his will. In their early years children are to be taught the claims of God's law and faith in Jesus our Redeemer to cleanse from the stains of sin. . . .

"Children can be molded when they are young. But years pass when their hearts are tender and susceptible to the impressions of truth, and but little time is devoted to their moral culture. The precious lessons of truth and duty should be instilled into their hearts daily."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 5, p. 329.

"When fathers and mothers realize how their children copy them, they will watch carefully every word and gesture."—*Sermons and Talks,* vol. 1, p. 325.

"Happy are the parents whose lives are a true reflection of the divine, so that the promises and commands of God awaken in the child gratitude and reverence; the parents whose tenderness and justice and long-suffering interpret to the child the love and justice and long-suffering of God."—*Prophets and Kings,* p. 245.

5. ON THE JOB

Thu, Nov 19

a. Regardless of our employment rank or position in society, what perspective inspires a genuinely Christian attitude in us? Colossians 3:22–4:1, 5.

"There is science in the humblest kind of work, and if all would thus regard it, they would see nobility in labor. Heart and soul are to be put into work of any kind; then there is cheerfulness and efficiency. . . . There is honor in any class of work that is essential to be done. Let the law of God be made the standard of action and it ennobles and sanctifies all labor. Faithfulness in the discharge of every duty makes the work noble, and reveals a character that God can approve.

" 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.' God desires the love that is expressed in heart service, in soul service, in the service of the physical powers. . . .

"You can choose to become stereotyped in a wrong course of action because you have not the determination to take yourselves in hand and reform, or you may cultivate your powers to do the very best kind of service, and then you will find yourselves in demand anywhere and everywhere. You will be appreciated for all that you are worth. 'Whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.' 'Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.' "—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1112.

"We know not what results a day, an hour, or a moment may determine, and never should we begin the day without committing our ways to our heavenly Father. His angels are appointed to watch over us, and if we put ourselves under their guardianship, then in every time of danger they will be at our right hand. When unconsciously we are in danger of exerting a wrong influence, the angels will be by our side, prompting us to a better course, choosing our words for us, and influencing our actions. Thus our influence may be a silent, unconscious, but mighty power in drawing others to Christ and the heavenly world."—*Christ's Object Lessons,* pp. 341, 342.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Fri, Nov 20

1. Explain the healthy balance that God directs for wives.
2. Name an idolatrous distraction that often ends up as a snare.
3. Describe the high calling of a husband in marriage.
4. In my attitude toward my parents, how can I better reflect God's will?
5. How can I better reflect God's will to those in my workplace?

Laboring for the Lost

MEMORY VERSE: "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe: . . . that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory" (1 Thessalonians 2:10, 12).

Suggested Reading: *The Acts of the Apostles,* pp. 346–358.

"Paul was an educator. He preached the gospel with his voice, and in his intelligent labor he preached it with his hands."—*The Review and Herald,* March 6, 1900.

1. THE DEVOTED UNDERSHEPHERD

Sun, Nov 22

a. How does Paul's simple, introductory greeting to the Thessalonians reveal the depth of his tender regard for the flock? 1 Thessalonians 1:1–4.

"From the root of true humility springs the most precious greatness of mind—greatness which leads men to conform to the image of Christ. Those who possess this greatness gain patience and trust in God. Their faith is invincible. Their true consecration and devotion keep self hidden. The words that fall from their lips are molded into expressions of Christlike tenderness and love. Having a sense of their own weakness, they appreciate the help which the Lord gives them, and they crave His grace that they may do that which is right and true. By their manner, their attitude, and their spirit, they carry with them the credentials of learners in the school of Christ."—*That I May Know Him,* p. 37.

b. How does the apostle Peter's appeal resemble that of Paul? 1 Peter 5:2, 3.

"Those who occupy the position of undershepherds are to exercise a watchful diligence over the Lord's flock. This is not to be a dictatorial vigilance, but one that tends to encourage and strengthen and uplift. Ministry means more than sermonizing; it means earnest, personal labor."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 526.

2. IN THE SPIRIT'S POWER

Mon, Nov 23

a. In order for the truth to spread, what can we all learn from both the apostles and converts in Thessalonica? 1 Thessalonians 1:5–8.

"Let there be shown more of a desire to receive the Holy Spirit as an instructor."—*Medical Ministry,* p. 307.

"The work of the Holy Spirit is to enlighten the darkened understanding, to melt the selfish, stony heart, to subdue the rebellious transgressor, and save him from the corrupting influences of the world. The prayer of Christ for His disciples was: 'Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth.' The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, pierces the heart of the sinner and cuts it in pieces. When the theory of the truth is repeated without its sacred influence being felt upon the soul of the speaker, it has no force upon the hearers, but is rejected as error, the speaker making himself responsible for the loss of souls. We must be sure that our ministers are converted men, humble, meek, and lowly of heart."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 4, p. 441.

"God has given His ministers the message of truth to proclaim. This the churches are to receive and in every possible way to communicate, catching the first rays of light and diffusing them."—Ibid., vol. 6, p. 425.

b. How was the transformation of the new believers a testimony to the world—and a scene to be repeated today? 1 Thessalonians 5:9, 10; Isaiah 56:6, 7.

"Living power must attend the message of Christ's second appearing. We must not rest until we see many souls converted to the blessed hope of the Lord's return. In the days of the apostles the message that they bore wrought a real work, turning souls from idols to serve the living God. The work to be done today is just as real, and the truth is just as much truth; only we are to give the message with as much more earnestness as the coming of the Lord is nearer. The message for this time is positive, simple, and of the deepest importance. We must act like men and women who believe it. Waiting, watching, working, praying, warning the world—this is our work. . . .

"All heaven is astir, engaged in preparing for the day of God's vengeance, the day of Zion's deliverance. The time of tarrying is almost ended. The pilgrims and strangers who have so long been seeking a better country are almost home."—*Evangelism,* p. 219.

3. HUMBLE SELF-SUPPORT

Tue, Nov 24

a. Name some keys to the success in Thessalonica. 1 Thessalonians 2:1–7.

"The Thessalonian believers were true missionaries. Their hearts burned with zeal for their Saviour, who had delivered them from fear of 'the wrath to come.' Through the grace of Christ a marvelous transformation had taken place in their lives, and the word of the Lord, as spoken through them, was accompanied with power. Hearts were won by the truths presented, and souls were added to the number of believers.

"In this first epistle, Paul referred to his manner of labor among the Thessalonians. He declared that he had not sought to win converts through deception or guile."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 256.

b. When observing Paul's ministry in Thessalonica, what qualities are especially heartwarming? 1 Thessalonians 2:8–10.

"Before he became a disciple of Christ, Paul had occupied a high position and was not dependent upon manual labor for support. But afterward, when he had used all his means in furthering the cause of Christ, he resorted at times to his trade to gain a livelihood. Especially was this the case when he labored in places where his motives might have been misunderstood.

"It is at Thessalonica that we first read of Paul's working with his hands in self-supporting labor while preaching the word."—Ibid., p. 347.

"Paul, the great apostle to the Gentiles, learned the trade of tentmaking. There were higher and lower branches of tentmaking. Paul learned the higher branches, and he could also work at the common branches when circumstances required. Tentmaking did not bring returns so quickly as some other occupations, and at times it was only by the strictest economy that Paul could supply his necessities."

"Although feeble in health, he [Paul] labored during the day in serving the cause of Christ, and then toiled a large part of the night, and frequently all night, that he might provide for his own and others' necessities."

"Paul was an educator. He preached the gospel with his voice, and in his intelligent labor he preached it with his hands. He educated others in the same way in which he had been educated by one who was regarded as the wisest of human teachers. As Paul worked quickly and skillfully with his hands, he related to his fellow workers the specifications Christ had given Moses in regard to the building of the tabernacle."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1063.

4. AN UNSHAKEABLE GOAL

Wed, Nov 25

a. With what aim did Paul care for the flock? 1 Thessalonians 2:11–13.

"A knowledge of the truth depends not so much upon strength of intellect as upon pureness of purpose, the simplicity of an earnest, dependent faith. To those who in humility of heart seek for divine guidance, angels of God draw near. The Holy Spirit is given to open to them the rich treasures of the truth."—*Christ's Object Lessons,* p. 59.

b. Describe the obstacles that faced the proclamation of the gospel in Paul's day—and how this is echoed throughout history, including in the near future. 1 Thessalonians 2:14–18; 2 Timothy 3:12; Matthew 5:10–12.

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

"Conscientious obedience to the word of God will be treated as rebellion. Blinded by Satan, the parent will exercise harshness and severity toward the believing child; the master or mistress will oppress the commandment-keeping servant. Affection will be alienated; children will be disinherited and driven from home. . . . As the defenders of truth refuse to honor the Sunday-sabbath, some of them will be thrust into prison, some will be exiled, some will be treated as slaves. To human wisdom all this now seems impossible; but as the restraining Spirit of God shall be withdrawn from men, and they shall be under the control of Satan, who hates the divine precepts, there will be strange developments. The heart can be very cruel when God's fear and love are removed."—*The Great Controversy,* pp. 607, 608.

5. A UNIQUE JOY

Thu, Nov 26

a. Why can we be inspired by how closely the desire of Paul's heart reflected that of Christ? 1 Thessalonians 2:19, 20; Isaiah 53:11.

"Who can measure the results to the world of Paul's lifework? Of all those beneficent influences that alleviate suffering, that comfort sorrow, that restrain evil, that uplift life from the selfish and the sensual, and glorify it with the hope of immortality, how much is due to the labors of Paul and his fellow workers, as with the gospel of the Son of God they made their unnoticed journey from Asia to the shores of Europe?

"What is it worth to any life to have been God's instrument in setting in motion such influences of blessing? What will it be worth in eternity to witness the results of such a lifework?"—*Education,* p. 70.

"We do not realize how much [the Saviour's lessons] mean to the beings He has created. He loves the human race. Do you ask how much? I point you to Calvary."—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students,* p. 284.

"Many all around us only need to have their prejudices removed and the evidences of our present position spread out before them from the Word, and they will joyfully receive the present truth. The messengers should watch for souls as they that must give account. Theirs must be a life of toil and anguish of spirit, while the weight of the precious but often-wounded cause of Christ rests upon them. They will have to lay aside worldly interests and comforts and make it their first object to do all in their power to advance the cause of present truth and save perishing souls.

"They will also have a rich reward. In their crowns of rejoicing those who are rescued by them and finally saved will shine as stars forever and ever. And to all eternity they will enjoy the satisfaction of having done what they could in presenting the truth in its purity and beauty, so that souls fell in love with it, were sanctified through it, and availed themselves of the inestimable privilege of being made rich, and being washed in the blood of the Lamb and redeemed unto God."—*Early Writings,* p. 61.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Fri, Nov 27

1. What can we all learn from the apostles' dedication to sharing the truth?
2. Why was the gospel work in Thessalonica particularly striking?
3. Why did Paul, a gospel minister, at times do manual labor as a livelihood?
4. When persecution escalates, what positive results nonetheless occur?
5. Describe the joy experienced by Christ, Paul, and all soul winners.

First Sabbath Offering

Sabbath, December 5, 2026



for a Church in Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo

The city of Brazzaville is in the capital of the Republic of the Congo, located in Central Africa. Brazzaville is just west of the Democratic Republic of Congo—whose capital is Kinshasa–and together these two cities constitute the two closest cities in the world. (There are two Congos due to colonial history when different European powers colonized these adjacent regions and named them after the Congo River.)

The Republic of Congo covers an area of 125,097 square miles (342,000 km^2), with an overall population of 6,484,437 (2025) inhabitants. Covering an area of 101.9 square miles (263.9 km^2), Brazzaville the capital has a population of nearly 2.8 million inhabitants, of which around 75% are Christians: 90% Catholics and 10% Evangelical Protestants—mostly Kimbaguists. The rest adhere to traditional animist beliefs in African messianism or remain atheists.

The languages spoken are: French (official language), Lingala and Kikongo.

The message of the SDARM first entered Brazzaville in 2013, when a missionary came for four days and brought the Reform message to two young couples. Three months later, he returned—and in 27 days, the five of them reached 41 souls. The next year, seminars providing additional studies were brought to the area, and a large percentage of the believers took their stand for the present truth. Since 2021, a graduate of the RAMA Missionary School in Congo has served as a Bible worker for the Brazzaville Church.

One challenge here has been having a suitable place for worship. The brethren meet in an old building that has been abandoned by the owner, and they need to cover it with a few long plastic sheets. During the rainy season, these conditions make it very difficult to meet regularly.

Nonetheless, the Brazzaville Church is growing. On average, every Sabbath 30 people gather here to worship the Lord. At this time, the brothers and sisters of this group are turning their hope towards you—our brethren around the world—so that by your benevolent generosity, you can contribute financially for the acquisition of land in order to build a more suitable temple to His honor and glory.

Your brothers and sisters from Brazzaville

Preparing to See Christ

MEMORY VERSE: "That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour" (1 Thessalonians 4:4).

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 2, pp. 480–489; *Selected Messages,* bk. 2, pp. 257–274.

"Sanctification is a progressive work; it is not attained to in an hour or a day, and then maintained without any special effort on our part."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 2, p. 472.

1. UNSATISFYING SPLENDOR

Sun, Nov 29

a. Even amid the highest levels of artistic culture, how did Paul reveal the emptiness of life without Christ—and his longing for fellowship with faithful brethren? Acts 17:16, 17, 32, 33; 1 Thessalonians 3:1–4.

"The city of Athens was the metropolis of heathendom. Here Paul did not meet with an ignorant, credulous populace, as at Lystra, but with a people famous for their intelligence and culture. Everywhere statues of their gods and of the deified heroes of history and poetry met the eye. . . .

"As Paul looked upon the beauty and grandeur surrounding him, and saw the city wholly given to idolatry, his spirit was stirred with jealousy for God, whom he saw dishonored on every side, and his heart was drawn out in pity for the people of Athens, who, notwithstanding their intellectual culture, were ignorant of the true God. . . .

"As he saw the magnificence of Athens he realized its seductive power over lovers of art and science, and his mind was deeply impressed with the importance of the work before him.

"In this great city, where God was not worshiped, Paul was oppressed by a feeling of solitude, and he longed for the sympathy and aid of his fellow laborers. So far as human friendship was concerned, he felt himself to be utterly alone. In his epistle to the Thessalonians he expresses his feelings in the words, 'Left at Athens alone.' "—*The Acts of the Apostles,* pp. 233, 234.

2. A WAY OF LIFE

Mon, Nov 30

a. In his letter to the Thessalonians, what again reveals Paul's tremendous love and dedication to the believers? 1 Thessalonians 3:5–10.

"[Timothy and Silas] brought [Paul] 'good tidings' of the 'faith and charity' of those who had accepted the truth during the first visit of the gospel messengers to Thessalonica. Paul's heart went out in tender sympathy toward these believers, who, in the midst of trial and adversity, had remained true to God."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 255.

b. Describe the glorious aim of God for His church, and explain how it operates in our lives. 1 Thessalonians 3:12, 13; 4:1–3 (first half).

"In his anxiety that the believers at Thessalonica should walk in the fear of God, the apostle pleaded with them to reveal practical godliness in the daily life."—Ibid., p. 262.

"God would have His children realize that in order to glorify Him their affection must be given to those who most need it. . . . No selfishness, in look, word, or deed, is to be manifested when dealing with those of like precious faith, . . . whether they be high or low, rich or poor. The love that gives kind words to only a few, while others are treated with coldness and indifference, is not love, but selfishness. It will not in any way work for the good of souls or the glory of God. Our love . . . is not to be sealed up for special ones, to the neglect of others. Break the bottle, and the fragrance will fill the house. . . .

"To love as Christ loved means to manifest unselfishness at all times and in all places, by kind words and pleasant looks. These cost those who give them nothing, but they leave behind a fragrance that surrounds the soul. Their effect can never be estimated. Not only are they a blessing to the receiver, but to the giver; for they react upon him. Genuine love is a precious attribute of heavenly origin, which increases in fragrance in proportion as it is dispensed to others."—*Our High Calling,* p. 231.

"Holiness is wholeness to God. The soul is surrendered to God. The will, and even the thoughts, are brought into subjection to the will of Christ. The love of Jesus fills the soul, and is constantly going out in a clear, refreshing stream, to make glad the hearts of others."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1076.

3. PURE IN A CORRUPT AGE

Tue, Dec 1

a. Name one specific sin of which Paul saw the need to warn the Thessalonians, a sin alarmingly common today as well. 1 Thessalonians 4:3–5.

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

"It was the prevalence of this very sin, fornication, among ancient Israel, which brought upon them the signal manifestation of God's displeasure. His judgments then followed close upon their heinous sin; thousands fell, and their polluted bodies were left in the wilderness. . . .

"Seventh-day Adventists, above all other people in the world, should be patterns of piety, holy in heart and in conversation."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 2, pp. 450, 451.

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

b. What is the next admonition Paul gives the flock? 1 Thessalonians 4:6, 7.

"When the Lord comes forth as an avenger, He will also come as a protector of all those who have preserved the faith in its purity and kept themselves unspotted from the world."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 5, p. 210.

4. LESSONS THEN AND NOW

Wed, Dec 2

a. What encouragement did Paul have for the flock? 1 Thessalonians 4:8–10.

"One of the strongest evidences of true conversion is love to God and man. Those who accept Jesus as their Redeemer have a deep, sincere love for others of like precious faith. Thus it was with the believers at Thessalonica."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 262.

b. What life lesson is helpful to all? 1 Thessalonians 4:11, 12; Proverbs 13:4.

"Young men, go forth into the places to which you are directed by the Spirit of the Lord. Work with your hands, that you may be self-supporting, and as you have opportunity proclaim the message of warning."—*Medical Ministry,* p. 321.

c. What Bible doctrine vital in Thessalonica is relevant again after centuries of darkness and confusion? 1 Thessalonians 4:13–15; Psalm 6:5; 13:3.

"The Thessalonians had eagerly grasped the idea that Christ was coming to change the faithful who were alive, and to take them to Himself. They had carefully guarded the lives of their friends, lest they should die and lose the blessing which they looked forward to receiving at the coming of their Lord. But one after another their loved ones had been taken from them, and with anguish the Thessalonians had looked for the last time upon the faces of their dead, hardly daring to hope to meet them in a future life.

"As Paul's epistle was opened and read, great joy and consolation was brought to the church by the words revealing the true state of the dead. Paul showed that those living when Christ should come would not go to meet their Lord in advance of those who had fallen asleep in Jesus."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 258.

"Serious errors were . . . introduced into the Christian faith. Prominent among these was the belief in man's natural immortality and his consciousness in death. This doctrine laid the foundation upon which Rome established the invocation of saints and the adoration of the Virgin Mary. From this sprang also the heresy of eternal torment for the finally impenitent, which was early incorporated into the papal faith."—*The Great Controversy,* p. 58.

5. WAKING THE DEAD

Thu, Dec 3

a. Describe the awesome scene soon to occur when Christ returns in the clouds of glory. 1 Thessalonians 4:16–18; Revelation 20:4–6.

"All heaven will be emptied of the angels, while the waiting saints will be looking for [Jesus] and gazing into heaven, as were the men of Galilee when He ascended from the Mount of Olivet. Then only those who are holy, those who have followed fully the meek Pattern, will with rapturous joy exclaim as they behold Him, 'Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us.' And they will be changed 'in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump'—that trump which wakes the sleeping saints, and calls them forth from their dusty beds, clothed with glorious immortality."—*Early Writings,* p. 110.

"The vitalizing power of the Spirit of Christ dwelling in the mortal body binds every believing soul to Jesus Christ. Those who believe in Jesus are sacred to His heart; for their life is hid with Christ in God. The command will come from the Life-giver, 'Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead' (Isaiah 26:19).

"The Life-giver will call up His purchased possession in the first resurrection, and until that triumphant hour, when the last trump shall sound and the vast army shall come forth to eternal victory, every sleeping saint will be kept in safety and will be guarded as a precious jewel, who is known to God by name. By the power of the Saviour that dwelt in them while living and because they were partakers of the divine nature, they are brought forth from the dead. . . .

"What a glorious morning will the resurrection morning be! What a wonderful scene will open when Christ shall come to be admired of them that believe! All who were partakers with Christ in His humiliation and sufferings will be partakers with Him in His glory. By the resurrection of Christ from the dead every believing saint who falls asleep in Jesus will come forth from his prison house in triumph. The resurrected saint will proclaim, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' (1 Corinthians 15:55)."—*Selected Messages,* bk. 2, pp. 271, 272.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Fri, Dec 4

1. Like Athens, what places today reveal the limitations of earthly splendor?
2. Why is charitable love so essential in daily life?
3. What reality needs to be taught in today's licentious age?
4. Why is it important to understand the true state of the dead?
5. List the steps that occur at the return of Christ.

Living in Light

MEMORY VERSE: "Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief" (1 Thessalonians 5:4).

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 4, pp. 309–313; Ibid., vol. 5, pp. 711–718.

"The Sun of Righteousness has been shining upon the church to dispel the darkness and to call the attention of God's people to the preparation essential for those who would shine as lights in the world."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 6, p. 166.

1. VIGILANCE IN PRAYER

Sun, Dec 6

a. Seeing prophecy unfolding right before our eyes, what must we ever keep in mind? 1 Thessalonians 5:1, 2; Ecclesiastes 8:5.

"We must have a greater nearness to God. Much less of self and much more of Jesus Christ and His grace must be brought into our everyday life. We are living in an important period of this world's history. The end of all things is at hand; the sands of time are fast running out; soon in heaven it will be said: 'It is done' (Revelation 21:6). 'He that is holy, let him be holy still,' 'he which is filthy, let him be filthy still' (Revelation 22:11).

"Let our testimonies be sharpened up; let us have a firmer hold on God. I cannot refrain from prayer at one, two, and three o'clock in the morning for the Lord to work upon the hearts of the people. I think of all heaven being interested in the work that is going on upon the earth. Ministering angels are waiting about the throne to instantly obey the mandate of Jesus Christ to answer every prayer offered in earnest, living faith."—*Selected Messages,* bk. 2, pp. 376, 377.

"Thank God, all will not be rocked to sleep in the cradle of carnal security. There will be faithful ones who will discern the signs of the times. While a large number professing present truth will deny their faith by their works, there will be some who will endure unto the end."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 5, p. 10.

2. WATCHFULNESS NEEDED

Mon, Dec 7

a. Living in the last days, what reality is faced? Isaiah 13:9; Luke 17:28–30.

"The state of corruption and apostasy that in the last days would exist in the religious world, was presented to the prophet John in the vision of Babylon, 'that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.' Revelation 17:18. Before its destruction the call is to be given from heaven, 'Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.' Revelation 18:4. As in the days of Noah and Lot, there must be a marked separation from sin and sinners. There can be no compromise between God and the world, no turning back to secure earthly treasures. 'Ye cannot serve God and mammon.' Matthew 6:24.

"Like the dwellers in the vale of Siddim, the people are dreaming of prosperity and peace. 'Escape for thy life,' is the warning from the angels of God; but other voices are heard saying, 'Be not excited; there is no cause for alarm.' The multitudes cry, 'Peace and safety,' while Heaven declares that swift destruction is about to come upon the transgressor."—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* p. 167.

b. Despite flowery promises of earthly glory from influential people, of what must we all be aware? 1 Thessalonians 5:3.

"Lawyers, mechanics, farmers, traders, and even ministers from the pulpit are crying, 'Peace and safety,' when destruction is fast coming upon them.

"Belief in the near coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven will not cause the true Christian to become neglectful and careless of the ordinary business of life. The waiting ones who look for the soon appearing of Christ will not be idle, but diligent in business. Their work will not be done carelessly and dishonestly, but with fidelity, promptness, and thoroughness. Those who flatter themselves that careless inattention to the things of this life is an evidence of their spirituality and of their separation from the world are under a great deception. Their veracity, faithfulness, and integrity are tested and proved in temporal things. If they are faithful in that which is least they will be faithful in much. . . .

"Here is where many will fail to bear the test. They develop their true character in the management of temporal concerns. They manifest unfaithfulness, scheming, dishonesty, in dealing with their fellow men. They do not consider that their hold upon the future, immortal life depends upon how they conduct themselves in the concerns of this life, and that the strictest integrity is indispensable to the formation of a righteous character."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 4, pp. 309, 310.

3. CLEAR AS THE DAY

Tue, Dec 8

a. How are God's people to be distinct in this earth? 1 Thessalonians 5:4–6.

"God would have His people, in words and in deportment, declare to the world that no earthly attractions or worldly possessions are of sufficient value to compensate for the loss of the heavenly inheritance. Those who are truly children of the light and of the day will not be vain or frivolous in conversation, in dress, or in deportment, but sober, contemplative, constantly exerting an influence to attract souls to the Redeemer. The love of Christ, reflected from the cross, is pleading in behalf of the sinner, drawing him by cords of infinite love to the peace and happiness found in our Saviour. God enjoins upon all His followers to bear a living testimony in unmistakable language by their conduct, their dress and conversation, in all the pursuits of life, that the power of true godliness is profitable to all in this life and in the life to come; that this alone can satisfy the soul of the receiver."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 4, pp. 580, 581.

"In the warning to 'watch and pray,' Jesus has indicated the only safe course. There is need of watchfulness. Our own hearts are deceitful; we are compassed with the weaknesses and frailties of humanity, and Satan is intent to destroy. We may be off our guard, but our adversary is never idle. Knowing his tireless vigilance, let us not sleep, as do others, but 'watch and be sober.' The spirit and influence of the world must be met, but they must not be allowed to take possession of the mind and heart.

"The active man of business, as he is brought in contact with the world, will have trials, perplexity, and anxious care. He will find that there is a tendency to let worldly thoughts and plans take the lead, and that it will require effort, and discipline of mind and soul, to maintain a devotional spirit. But divine grace waits his demand, and his great need is the mighty argument that will prevail with God."—Ibid., vol. 5, pp. 409, 410.

b. Why can we have hope—and act accordingly? 1 Thessalonians 5:7–11.

"Paul teaches that it is sinful to be indifferent to the signs which are to precede the second coming of Christ. Those guilty of this neglect he calls children of the night and of darkness. . . .

"The watchful Christian is a working Christian, seeking zealously to do all in his power for the advancement of the gospel."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* pp. 260, 261.

4. PATIENT APPRECIATION

Wed, Dec 9

a. Name one reminder needed in Thessalonica. 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13.

"The Thessalonian believers were greatly annoyed by men coming among them with fanatical ideas and doctrines. Some were 'disorderly, working not at all, but . . . busybodies.' The church had been properly organized, and officers had been appointed to act as ministers and deacons. But there were some, self-willed and impetuous, who refused to be subordinate to those who held positions of authority in the church. They claimed not only the right of private judgment, but that of publicly urging their views upon the church. In view of this, Paul called the attention of the Thessalonians to the respect and deference due to those who had been chosen to occupy positions of authority in the church."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 261.

b. What general admonitions are needed by all? 1 Thessalonians 5:14, 15.

"When death claims one of our number, what are our memories of the treatment he has received? Are the pictures upon memory's walls pleasant to reflect upon? Are they memories of kind words spoken, of sympathy given at the right time? Have his brethren turned away the evil surmisings of indiscreet meddlers? Have they vindicated his cause? Have they been faithful to the inspired injunction: 'Comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak'? . . .

"When he with whom we have associated in the church is dead, when we know that his account in the books of heaven is fixed, and that he must meet that record in the judgment, what are the reflections of his brethren as to the course they have pursued toward him? What has been their influence upon him? How clearly now every harsh word, every unadvised act, is called to mind! How differently they would conduct themselves if they had another trial!"—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 5, p. 489.

"The more you are jostled, misapprehended, misstated, misrepresented, the more evidence you have that you are doing a work for the Master, and the more closely you must cling to your Saviour. In all your difficulties be calm and undisturbed, patient and forbearing, not rendering evil for evil, but good for evil. Look to the top of the ladder. God is above it. His glory shines on every soul ascending heavenward. Jesus is this ladder. Climb up by Him, cling to Him, and erelong you will step off the ladder into His everlasting kingdom."—Ibid., vol. 8, p. 130.

5. KEYS TO SUCCESS

Thu, Dec 10

a. When in trial, what are we to remember? 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18.

"You will meet with trials, but hold fast your integrity. Never show anything but a noble spirit. The heavenly universe is watching the conflict. Satan is watching, anxious to catch you off your guard, anxious to see you acting impetuously, that he may obtain the advantage over you. Fight manfully the battle of the Lord. Do just as Christ would do were He in your place. Let there be no inconsistency in your faith or practice. Do not allow yourself to become wrought up over the vexatious troubles that are constantly arising. Keep calm, think of Jesus, and do what you can to please Him. The grace of Christ and the Holy Spirit are God's gifts to you, that you may be strengthened with all might in the inner man."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 8, p. 132.

"If the loving-kindness of God called forth more thanksgiving and praise, we would have far more power in prayer. We would abound more and more in the love of God and have more bestowed to praise Him for. You who complain that God does not hear your prayers, change your present order and mingle praise with your petitions. When you consider His goodness and mercies you will find that He will consider your wants."—Ibid., vol. 5, p. 317.

b. Name some habits of victorious thinking. 1 Thessalonians 5:19–21.

"Men have the power to quench the Spirit of God; the power of choosing is left with them. They are allowed freedom of action. They may be obedient through the name and grace of our Redeemer, or they may be disobedient, and realize the consequences. . . .

"The Spirit of God is continually convicting, and souls are deciding for or against the truth."—*Gospel Workers,* p. 174.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Fri, Dec 11

1. How can I develop more vigilant prayer habits—and why is it important?
2. When we hear claims of "peace and safety," what should we remember?
3. What distinguishes the children of light/day from those of darkness/night?
4. Whom do I know that may be aggravating but should be appreciated?
5. What is to accompany our petitions to God?

A Truly Distinct People

MEMORY VERSE: "Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power" (2 Thessalonians 1:11).

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 2, pp. 296–307; Ibid., vol. 5, pp. 591–603.

"The Lord desires His followers to exercise great care in dealing with one another. They are to lift up, to restore, to heal. But there is to be in the church no neglect of proper discipline. The members are to regard themselves as pupils in a school, learning how to form characters worthy of their high calling."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 7, p. 264.

1. PURE INSIDE AND OUT

Sun, Dec 13

a. What shows the depth of God's call to purity? 1 Thessalonians 5:22.

"Do nothing among strangers, in the street, on the cars, in the home, that would have the least appearance of evil."—*The Ministry of Healing,* p. 491.

"Let your conduct be such that you will leave the impression upon every soul with whom you associate that a pure and holy atmosphere surrounds you. One vain word, one trifling laugh, may balance a soul in the wrong direction. Terrible are the consequences of not having a constant connection with God.

"Abstain from all evil. Common sins, however insignificant they may be regarded, will impair your moral sense, and extinguish the inward impression of the Spirit of God. The character of the thoughts leaves its imprint upon the soul, and all low conversation pollutes the mind. All evil works ruin to those who commit it. God may and will forgive the repenting sinner, but though forgiven, the soul is marred; the power of the elevated thought possible to the unimpaired mind is destroyed. Through all time the soul bears the scars. Then let us seek for that faith which works by love and purifies the heart, that we may represent the character of Christ to the world."—*Fundamentals of Christian Education,* p. 195.

2. SANCTIFICATION THROUGH CHRIST

Mon, Dec 14

a. Describe God's plan for our daily existence and how it is made possible. 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 24.

"Christians are bidden to present their bodies, 'a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.' In order to do this, all their powers must be preserved in the best possible condition. Every practice that weakens physical or mental strength unfits man for the service of his Creator. And will God be pleased with anything less than the best we can offer? Said Christ: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.' Those who do love God with all the heart will desire to give Him the best service of their life, and they will be constantly seeking to bring every power of their being into harmony with the laws that will promote their ability to do His will. They will not, by the indulgence of appetite or passion, enfeeble or defile the offering which they present to their heavenly Father."—*The Great Controversy,* p. 473.

"The Scriptures teach us to seek for the sanctification to God of body, soul, and spirit. In this work we are to be laborers together with God. Much may be done to restore the moral image of God in man, to improve the physical, mental, and moral capabilities. Great changes can be made in the physical system by obeying the laws of God and bringing into the body nothing that defiles. And while we cannot claim perfection of the flesh, we may have Christian perfection of the soul. Through the sacrifice made in our behalf, sins may be perfectly forgiven. Our dependence is not in what man can do; it is in what God can do for man through Christ. When we surrender ourselves wholly to God, and fully believe, the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin. The conscience can be freed from condemnation. Through faith in His blood, all may be made perfect in Christ Jesus. Thank God that we are not dealing with impossibilities."—*Selected Messages,* bk. 2, p. 32.

b. What qualities reveal a genuine depth of fellowship among believers? 1 Thessalonians 5:26–28; 1 John 1:7.

"The holy salutation mentioned in the gospel of Jesus Christ by the apostle Paul should ever be considered in its true character. *It is a holy kiss.* It should be regarded as a sign of fellowship to Christian friends when parting, and when meeting again after a separation of weeks or months. In 1 Thessalonians 5:26 Paul says: 'Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.' In the same chapter he says: 'Abstain from all appearance of evil.' There can be no appearance of evil when the holy kiss is given at a proper time and place."—*Early Writings,* p. 117. [Author's italics.]

3. CHRIST TO BE REVEALED

Tue, Dec 15

a. What supportive encouragement does Paul use to open his second epistle to the believers at Thessalonica? 2 Thessalonians 1:1–5.

"[Paul] expressed his confidence in [the Thessalonians'] integrity, and his gratitude that their faith was strong, and that their love abounded for one another and for the cause of their Master. He told them that he presented them to other churches as an example of the patient, persevering faith that bravely withstands persecution and tribulation."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 264.

b. If persecuted as the Thessalonians were, why can we all be encouraged by the hope that was presented to them? 2 Thessalonians 1:6, 7.

"[2 Thessalonians 1:1–6 quoted.] Here we see the interest of these churches for one another. The persecution they endured drew all hearts together and bound them together. They were scattered abroad. The errors and superstitious faith and doctrines of the Jewish nation so bitterly opposed to Christ left the little flock as sheep without a shepherd. But the seed was being sown. Christ was lifted up as the One crucified among them, and efforts were constantly made to alleviate the poverty and oppression of the brethren because of their faith."—*Letters and Manuscripts,* vol. 12, Letter 28, 1897.

c. Why should the soon return of Christ deeply impress the hearts of us all? 2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8; Psalm 50:3, 4.

"[2 Thessalonians 1:8 quoted.] These momentous events are nigh at hand, yet many who profess to believe the truth are asleep. They will surely be numbered with the unfaithful servant who saith in his heart, 'My Lord delayeth His coming,' if they remain in their present position of friendship with the world. It is only to those who are waiting in hope and faith that Christ will appear, without sin unto salvation. Many have the theory of the truth who know not the power of godliness. If the word of God dwelt in the heart, it would control the life. Faith, purity, and conformity to the will of God would testify to its sanctifying power."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 5, p. 15.

4. A CLEAR-CUT DISTINCTION

Wed, Dec 16

a. Explain the doom of two types of people. 2 Thessalonians 1:8, 9.

"Excuse not your defects because others are wrong. In the day of God you will not dare to plead as an excuse for your neglect to form a character for heaven, that others did not manifest devotion and spirituality. The same lack which you discovered in others was in yourself. And the fact that others were sinners makes your sins nonetheless grievous. Both they and you, if you continue in your present state of unfitness, will be separated from Christ, and will with Satan and his angels be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.

"The Lord made ample provision for you, that if you would seek Him, and follow the light He would give you, you should not fall by the way. The word of God was given to you as a lamp to your feet, a light to your path. If you stumble, it will be because you have not consulted your guide, the word of God, and made that precious word the rule of your life. God has not given you as a pattern the life of any human being, however good and apparently blameless his life may be. If you do as others do, and act as others act, you will at last be left outside the Holy City, with a vast multitude who have done just as you have done, followed a pattern the Lord did not leave them, and who are lost just as you will be lost.

"That which others have done, or may do in the future, will not lessen your responsibility or guilt. A pattern has been given you, a faultless life characterized by self-denial and disinterested benevolence. If you turn from this correct, this perfect pattern, and take an incorrect one, which has been clearly represented in the word of God as one that you should shun, your course of action will receive its merited reward; your life will be a failure."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 2, p. 396.

b. What refreshing contrast is to exist, and why? 2 Thessalonians 1:10.

"The resurrection and ascension of our Lord is a sure evidence of the triumph of the saints of God over death and the grave, and a pledge that heaven is open to those who wash their robes of character and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. Jesus ascended to the Father as a representative of the human race, and God will bring those who reflect His image to behold and share with Him His glory."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 9, p. 286.

5. TIME FOR FAITHFUL ACTION

Thu, Dec 17

a. Describe the wonderful outcome of God's church. 2 Thessalonians 1:11, 12.

b. As prophetic scenes fulfill, of what are we assured? 2 Thessalonians 2:1–7.

"There is one pointed out in prophecy as the man of sin. He is the representative of Satan. Taking the suggestions of Satan concerning the law of God, which is as unchangeable as His throne, this man of sin comes in and represents to the world that he has changed that law, and that the first day of the week instead of the seventh is now the Sabbath. Professing infallibility, he claims the right to change the law of God to suit his own purposes. . . .

"But Christ declared that not one jot or tittle of the law should fail until heaven and earth should pass away. The very work that He came to do was to exalt that law, and show to the created worlds and to heaven that God is just, and that His law need not be changed. But here is Satan's right-hand man ready to carry on the work that Satan commenced in heaven, that of trying to amend the law of God. . . .

"The man of sin has exalted himself against God, sitting in the temple of God, and showing himself to be God. He has trampled underfoot God's great memorial of creation, established to commemorate His work; and in its stead he has presented to the world a common working day. . . .

"But though every member of the human family should accept this child of the Papacy, in no case would this invalidate the holy Sabbath of Jehovah. Those who accept the false sabbath exalt the man of sin, and assail the government of God. But the man of sin cannot annul what God has declared shall stand fast forever. The work now to be done in our world is to exalt the law of the Lord, and call the attention of the people to it. The time has come when the truth is to be proclaimed against falsehood and error."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 910.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Fri, Dec 18

1. In a practical sense, how can I abstain from all appearance of evil?
2. According to 1 John 1:7, what is the basis of genuine fellowship?
3. What reality about the power of our God can inspire awe in our hearts?
4. Why must I avoid becoming dismayed over the shortcomings of others?
5. How can I help people understand the reality of God's true Sabbath?

Bracing Ourselves for the Battle

MEMORY VERSE: "Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not" (Malachi 3:18).

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 5, pp. 137–148; 449–467; *The Great Controversy,* pp. 551–562.

"Those who claim to have the great power of God can only be discerned by the great detector, the law of Jehovah. . . . The sheep's clothing seems so real, so genuine, that the wolf can be discerned only as we go to God's great moral standard and there find that they are transgressors of the law of Jehovah."—*Faith and Works,* p. 45.

1. DON'T BE SURPRISED

Sun, Dec 20

a. What phenomenon is characteristic of the last days? 2 Thessalonians 2:8, 9.

"I saw that Satan was working through agents in a number of ways. He was at work through ministers who have rejected the truth and are given over to strong delusions to believe a lie that they might be damned. While they were preaching or praying, some would fall prostrate and helpless, not by the power of the Holy Ghost, but by the power of Satan breathed upon these agents, and through them to the people. While preaching, praying, or conversing, some professed Adventists who had rejected present truth used mesmerism to gain adherents, and the people would rejoice in this influence, for they thought it was the Holy Ghost. Some even that used it were so far in the darkness and deception of the devil that they thought it was the power of God, given them to exercise."—*Early Writings,* pp. 43, 44.

"Satan, surrounded by evil angels, and claiming to be God, will work miracles of all kinds, to deceive, if possible, the very elect. God's people will not find their safety in working miracles, for Satan will counterfeit the miracles that will be wrought. God's tried and tested people will find their power in the sign spoken of in Exodus 31:12–18. They are to take their stand on the living word: 'It is written.' This is the only foundation upon which they can stand securely."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 9, p. 16.

2. THE PATH TO ENDURANCE

Mon, Dec 21

a. What is lacking in those who are soon to perish? 2 Thessalonians 2:9, 10.

"Only those who have been diligent students of the Scriptures and who have received the love of the truth will be shielded from the powerful delusion that takes the world captive."—*The Great Controversy,* p. 625.

b. Regardless of their profession, what will God send to those who fail to love the truth, and why? 2 Thessalonians 2:11, 12.

"The Bible declares that before the coming of the Lord, Satan will work 'with *all* power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness;' and they that 'received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved,' will be left to receive 'strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.' 2 Thessalonians 2:9–11. Not until this condition shall be reached, and the union of the church with the world shall be fully accomplished throughout Christendom, will the fall of Babylon be complete."—Ibid., pp. 389, 390. [Author's italics.]

c. For what purpose has God called us and our families—and what duties and challenges does this involve? 2 Thessalonians 2:13–15; Malachi 3:17, 18.

"Whether or not our youth who have received wise instruction and training from godly parents will continue to be sanctified through the truth depends largely upon the influence that, after leaving their homes, they meet among those to whom they look for Christian instruction."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 8, p. 226.

"Those who profess to believe in Jesus, should ever press to the light. They should daily pray for the light of the Holy Spirit to shine upon the pages of the sacred book, that they may be enabled to comprehend the things of the Spirit of God. We must have implicit trust in God's word, or we are lost. The words of men, however great they may be, are not able to make us perfect, to thoroughly furnish unto all good works. . . . It is through the sanctification of the Spirit and the belief of the truth, that we become laborers together with God."—*Fundamentals of Christian Education,* pp. 188, 189.

3. THE EXAMPLE OF PAUL

Tue, Dec 22

a. What makes faithful endurance possible? 2 Thessalonians 2:16, 17; 3:1–5.

"Paul outlined the baleful work of that power of evil which was to continue through long centuries of darkness and persecution before the second coming of Christ. The Thessalonian believers had hoped for immediate deliverance; now they were admonished to take up bravely and in the fear of God the work before them. The apostle charged them not to neglect their duties or resign themselves to idle waiting. After their glowing anticipations of immediate deliverance the round of daily life and the opposition that they must meet would appear doubly forbidding. He therefore exhorted them to steadfastness in the faith."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* pp. 266, 267.

b. What example did Paul set for gospel workers? 2 Thessalonians 3:6–9.

"Men who are chosen of God to labor in this cause will give proof of their high calling and will consider it their highest duty to grow and improve until they shall become able workmen. Then, as they manifest an earnestness to improve upon the talent which God has entrusted to them, they should be helped judiciously. But the encouragement given them should not savor of flattery, for Satan himself will do enough of that kind of work. Men who think that they have a duty to preach should not be sustained in throwing themselves and their families at once upon the brethren for support. They are not entitled to this until they can show good fruits of their labor. There is now danger of injuring young preachers, and those who have but little experience, by flattery, and by relieving them of burdens in life. When not preaching they should be doing what they can for their own support. This is the best way to test the nature of their call to preach. If they desire to preach only that they may be supported as ministers, and the church pursue a judicious course, they will soon lose the burden and leave preaching for more profitable business. Paul, a most eloquent preacher, miraculously converted of God to do a special work, was not above labor. He says: 'Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place; and labor, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it.' 1 Corinthians 4:11, 12."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 1, pp. 446, 447.

4. BASICS TO REMEMBER

Wed, Dec 23

a. Name one basic, timeless principle that is an essential tenet of genuine Christianity. Proverbs 20:4; 2 Thessalonians 3:10–12.

"Misguided souls have taught that the attainment of true holiness carries the mind above all earthly thoughts and leads men to refrain wholly from labor. Others, taking extreme views of certain texts of Scripture, have taught that it is a sin to work—that Christians should take no thought concerning the temporal welfare of themselves or their families, but should devote their lives wholly to spiritual things. The teaching and example of the apostle Paul are a rebuke to such extreme views.

"Paul was not wholly dependent upon the labor of his hands for support while at Thessalonica. Referring later to his experiences in that city, he wrote to the Philippian believers in acknowledgment of the gifts he had received from them while there, saying, 'Even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.' Philippians 4:16. Notwithstanding the fact that he received this help he was careful to set before the Thessalonians an example of diligence, so that none could rightfully accuse him of covetousness, and also that those who held fanatical views regarding manual labor might be given a practical rebuke."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* pp. 348, 349.

"The custom of supporting men and women in idleness by private gifts or church money encourages them in sinful habits, and this course should be conscientiously avoided. Every man, woman, and child should be educated to do practical, useful work. . . . All should be educated to use the members of their body to some purpose, and God is ready and willing to increase the adaptability of all who will educate themselves to industrious habits."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 912.

b. When tempted to despair, what must we recall? 2 Thessalonians 3:13.

"Holiness will lead its possessor to be fruitful and abound in all good works. He will never become weary in well-doing, neither will he look for promotion in this world. He will look forward for promotion to the time when the Majesty of heaven shall exalt the sanctified ones to His throne. Then shall He say unto them: 'Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' The Lord then enumerates the works of self-denial and mercy, compassion and righteousness, which they had wrought. Holiness of heart will produce right actions."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 2, p. 445.

5. IN AN IMPERFECT WORLD

Thu, Dec 24

a. How are we to treat the wayward? 2 Thessalonians 3:14, 15.

"We should be warned not to associate with those who by their course of action lay a stumbling block in the way of others. [2 Thessalonians 3:14, 15 quoted.] If he refuses the admonition of the Lord's servants, and follows his own will and judgment under the inspiration of his leader, Satan, he will bring ruin upon himself, and must bear his own sin.' "—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 912.

"[Paul] enjoined upon the church to separate from their fellowship anyone who should persist in disregarding the instruction given by God's ministers. 'Yet,' he added, 'count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.' "—*The Acts of the Apostles,* pp. 267, 268.

b. What final hope in this epistle are we to reflect? 2 Thessalonians 3:16–18.

"We must offer men something better than that which they possess, even the peace of Christ, which passeth all understanding. We must tell them of God's holy law, the transcript of His character, and an expression of that which He wishes them to become. Show them how infinitely superior to the fleeting joys and pleasures of the world is the imperishable glory of heaven. Tell them of the freedom and rest to be found in the Saviour. . . . He alone can satisfy the craving of the heart and give peace to the soul.

"Of all people in the world, reformers should be the most unselfish, the most kind, the most courteous. . . .

"We are to speak the truth in love, trusting in [God] to give it power for the reforming of the life. The Holy Spirit will apply to the soul the word that is spoken in love."—*The Ministry of Healing,* p. 157.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Fri, Dec 25

1. Describe some activity of the enemy of souls in the last days.
2. What happens to those who know the truth, but don't necessarily love it?
3. Explain the secret of Christian endurance.
4. What will always characterize the life of a true reformer?
5. How am I to apply the biblical method of dealing with the erring?

First Sabbath Offerings



Sabbath, October 3, 2026

The Tanzanian Mission

It's time to arise and build the headquarters and school in Dodoma (see p. 4).



Sabbath, November 7, 2026

General Conference Publishing Department

Let us spread the light of truth where printed pages are the only way (see p. 30)



Sabbath, December 5, 2026

A Church in Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo

The work in Congo is growing fast and urgently needs our support (see p. 51).