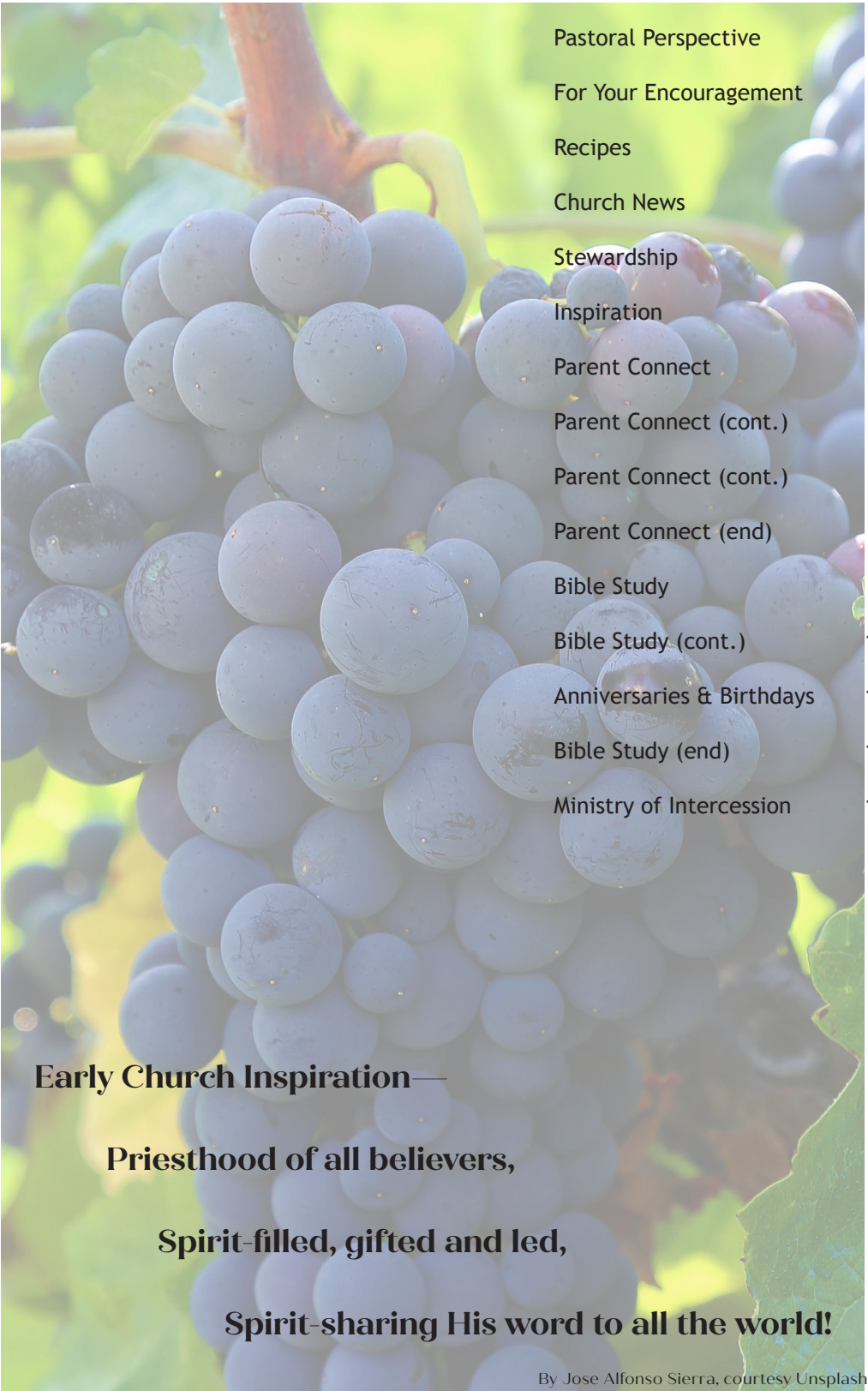


Wine & Bread

Our Life Source Connection—John 15:4-5

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Early Church Inspiration—

Priesthood of all believers,

Spirit-filled, gifted and led,

Spirit-sharing His word to all the world!



Pastoral Perspective

Why are You a Seventh-day Adventist?

by Pastor Mercado

It was a nice Sabbath afternoon and we had invited a few friends from church for Sabbath lunch. After the meal we sat together and talked about several things, like criticizing the pastor's sermon (say it isn't so).

I remember that my friend Pete and I were talking about issues taking place in the church and Pete seemed very displeased about them. He actually was overly critical, so I asked him a question, "Pete, why are you a Seventh-day Adventist? I mean, there are many options out there, why are you not a Methodist, or a Catholic, why a Seventh-day Adventist?"

"That's a good question Nelson," Pete responded, but what was sad about this is that he did not have a response.

Why are you a Seventh-day Adventist? Have you ever been asked this question? How would you respond? I hope the answer would include you having accepted Jesus as Savior and Lord and wanting to be part of His church body here on earth.

However, this is a response that you may hear from members of any Christian denomination. What is so special about being an Adventist?

In Rev. 12 the apostle John paints a picture of the great controversy between God and Satan; and as he closes the chapter, he describes Satan's strategy, "And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (vs. 17).

When the apostle Paul was persecuting the Christians Jesus appeared to him and asked, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting" (Acts 9:4-5).

You see, by persecuting His people, Paul was in essence persecuting Jesus. This is Satan's strategy that we read about in Rev. 12. Since he could not destroy Jesus, Satan persecutes Jesus' people. But the key here is that Jesus' people are called the "remnant." As Seventh-day Adventists we have always identified as the remnant, in fact, it is part of our 28 fundamental beliefs and our 13th baptismal vow. As

such, the remnant has a mission to proclaim God's end time message manifested in the Three Angel's Messages of Rev. 14.

Why am I a Seventh-day Adventist? Because by God's grace, after accepting Jesus as my Savior, God saw fit to reveal the present truth for this time and has allowed me to be part of His end time remnant movement who will prepare a world to meet Jesus.

He did the same for you, so I hope this is your response, or at least, something like that. Being a Seventh-day Adventist is incredibly special!

Ω



**"My future is as bright as
the promises of God."
Adoniram Judson**



For Your Encouragement

Inspirational Thoughts

A Compilation

From preface in *Faith's Checkbook*

"A **PROMISE** from God may very instructively be compared to a check payable to order. It is given to the believer with the view of bestowing upon him some good thing. It is not meant that he should read it over comfortably, and then have done with it. No, he is to treat the **promise** as a reality, as a man treats a check.

He is to take the **promise**, and endorse it with his own name by personally receiving it as true. He is by faith to accept it as his own. He sets to his seal that God is true, and true as to this particular word of **promise**. He goes further, and believes that he has the blessing in having the sure **promise** of it and therefore he puts his name to it to testify to the receipt of the blessing.

This done, he must believingly present the **promise** to the Lord, as a man presents a check at the counter of the Bank. He must plead it by prayer, expecting to have it fulfilled. If he has come to Heaven's bank at the right date, he will receive the **promised** amount at once. If the date should happen to be further on, he must patiently wait till its arrival; but meanwhile he may count the **promise** as money, for the Bank is sure to pay when the due time arrives." by Charles Spurgeon.

From *Daily Light on the Daily Path—Morning, May 1*

"The fruit of the Spirit is peace. —GAL. 5:22.

To be spiritually minded is life and peace. (Rom. 8:6)

God hath called us to peace. (I Cor. 7:15) Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. (John 14:27) The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. (Rom. 15:13)

I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. (II Tim. 1:12) Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. (Isa.

26:3)

The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places. (Isa. 32:17, 18) Whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil. (Prov. 1:33)

Great peace have they which love thy law." (Psa. 119:165). by Jonathan Bagster.

From *Prophets & Kings*

"Not alone for men in positions of large responsibility is the lesson of Elijah's experience in learning anew how to trust God in the hour of trial. He who was Elijah's strength is strong to uphold every struggling child of His, no matter how weak. Of everyone He expects loyalty, and to everyone He grants power according to the need. In his own strength man is strengthless; but in the might of God he may be strong to overcome evil and to help others to overcome. Satan can never gain advantage of him who makes God his defense. 'Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.'" Isaiah 45: 24. (pp. 174-175).

"Fellow Christian, Satan knows your weakness; therefore cling to Jesus. Abiding in God's love, you may stand every test. The righteousness of Christ alone can give you power to stem the tide of evil that is sweeping over the world. Bring faith into your experience. Faith lightens every burden, relieves every weariness. Providences that are now mysterious you may solve by continued trust in God. Walk by faith in the path He marks out. Trials will come, but go forward. This will strengthen your faith and fit you for service. The records of sacred history are written, not merely that we may read and wonder, but that the same faith which wrought in God's servants of old may work in us. In no less marked manner will the Lord work now, wherever there are hearts of faith to be channels of His power." by Ellen G. White. *Prophets and Kings* (p. 176). Ellen G. White Estate, Inc.

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VEGETARIAN

Recipes

Selections by Charlotte Hardy. Send recipes to charlottehardy@comcast.net, or, text (615) 974-0191 by 3rd Sunday of each month. Thank you.

Provided Anonymously by a NF Cook

Breakfast Pizza

Ingredients (serves 4-6)

- 1 Can Refrigerated Crescent Rolls
- 6 Vegetarian Sausage Patties (Morningstar Plain or Maple flavored)
- 1 Cup frozen shredded Hash Browns (optional)
- 1-2 Cups shredded Cheddar Cheese or other cheeses (i.e., Mexican mix, Mozzarella)
- 4 large eggs, or 1 8 oz carton egg substitute
- 1/4 Cup Milk or Soy milk
- 2 Teaspoon Sage OR Poultry Seasoning
- 1/2 Teaspoon Salt
- 1/4 Teaspoon Crushed Red Pepper Flakes
- 1/4 Teaspoon Pepper (optional)
- 1 1/2 Cups mixture of Red/Yellow/Green/Orange Peppers (optional)
- 1/2 Cup Sweet Onions or chopped Green Onions (optional).

Directions

- Crumble or chop up the 6 sausage patties
- Spread the crescent rolls out into a greased pan
- Mix together with a whisk–The eggs, Milk, Sage, Salt, Pepper(s)
- Distribute the crumbled sausage patties evenly over the dough
- Distribute the hash browns evenly over dough
- Distribute the Red/Yellow/Green/Orange Pepper Mix evenly over dough
- Distribute the Onions evenly over the dough
- Distribute the Cheese evenly over the dough
- Distribute the Egg mixture evenly over

- dough.
- Preheat Oven to 375°
 - Bake 25-30 minutes until crust is browned and eggs are done
 - Cut pizza into wedges, or squares
 - Serve Warm
 - Can use a 9 x 13 cake pan with good results

Vegetarian Burger Loaf

With Sweet & Sour Glaze

Combine & Saute

- 1 medium chopped onion
- 1 bag of Morningstar Veggie Griller Crumbles, or, 1 can Vegeburger
- 1 stick of butter
- 6 to 8 slices of cubed whole wheat bread (or, use Arnold's 12 or 15 grain breads)
- 1 tsp. garlic, or more, to taste
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. pepper

Optional Items:

- 1/4 Cup chopped Yellow pepper
- 1/4 Cup chopped Red pepper
- 1/4 Cup chopped Orange pepper
- 1/4 Cup chopped Green pepper
- 1 can chopped mushrooms
- MIX WELL

Separately Mix in a Large Bowl

- 1 1/2 tsp. Sage
- 4 eggs
- 1-1 1/2 cups shredded cheese (your choice)
- Mix well

Combine Ingredients

- Add the sauteed ingredients to the mixture of cheese in the large bowl
- Mix well

Prepare Glaze Topping by Combining

- 1/2 Cup ketchup
- 1/2 Cup brown sugar
- 1/4 water (add more if necessary–mixture should be relatively thick (not watery).

After all ingredients are mixed well

- Preheat oven to 350°
- Place mixture in a 9" x 13" dish/pan
- Bake for 40-45 minutes (nicely browned)
- Remove dish from oven & pour glaze over the loaf evenly.
- Put dish back in the oven for 10-15 minutes for sauce to heat & brown nicely.

Stewardship

by Brian & Raylene Wilcox

Did You Know—you can make your donations to Nashville First Church online using AdventistGiving.org? The General Conference has invested in a very useful and simple program to meet the needs of those who would like to pay their tithes and offerings online. AdventistGiving.org also has a free app for all your mobile devices. There is no cost to use this service for you as the giver or for Nashville First as the recipient of your gift. The service fees to process the offerings by bank draft or credit card is absorbed by the NAD, Unions & Conferences. You can link to the Nashville First giving page on the AdventistGiving site by going to our church website: www.nfsda.org and clicking on the quick link located at the bottom right of the home page. If you have any questions about this service or need help using the site, please contact Raylene Wilcox, Treasurer at treasurer@nfsda.org.

Report for April 2021

Recommended Giving Percentage above tithe 3-5%

Income	\$10,104.31	Income to Date	\$49,196.77
Outgo	11,596.26	Outgo to Date	36,471.17
Balance	\$1,491.95	Balance to Date	\$12,725.60

Church News

June Decisions

The board will begin a search for the possible hiring of a minister of music with input from the conference.

June Events

Nashville First Sabbath Services will be held ALL Month—including both May 29 & June 5. The church will NOT be streaming the Camp Meeting 11 am service. Instead our local church speakers will be May 29, Lucy Mercado.

June 5, Pastor Nelson Mercado will finish his 3 part series on the Trinity.

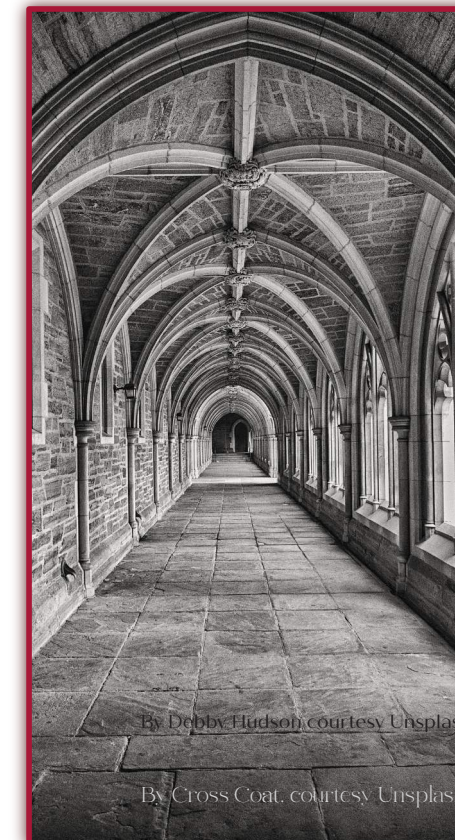
KY-TN Conference Virtual Camp meeting

May 28-29, 7 pm CDT, Dr. Leslie D. Pollard
 May 29, 11 am, Dr. Leslie D. Pollard
 May 30-June 3, 7pm, James Winegardner
 June 4-5, 7 pm, Doug Batchelor
 June 5, 11 am, Doug Batchelor

There are 2 ways to view the meetings—

The Facebook address is <https://www.Facebook.com/kytnsda/>
 The Conference Website address is <https://www.kytn.net>

You can get sermon title information at the Conference website address (above).



**"Distrust is cured
 by meditating upon
 the promises of God."
 John Calvin**



Inspiration

The School of Calvary, Ch. 1, para. 1-8

by Dr. J. H. Jowett

“For to me to live is Christ.” Philippians 1:21

There are three cardinal words in the passage: “me,” “live,” “Christ.” The middle term “live” is defined in the union of the two extremes. The two carbon electrodes of the arc lamp are brought into relationship, and the result is a light of brilliant intensity. And these two terms, “me” and “Christ,” are brought into relationship, and there is revealed “the light of life,” and I become “alive unto God.” The human finds life in union with the divine.

Now this is the only contact which justifies the usage of the term “life.” Any other application of the word is illegitimate and degrading. The word “life” stands defined in the relationship of the apostle’s words. But we take other extremes, and combine them, and we name the resultant, “life.”

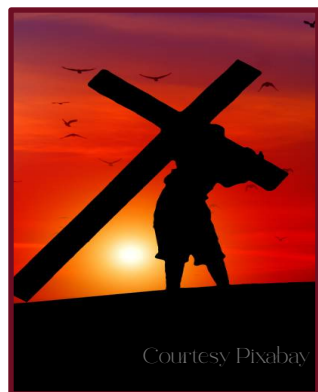
“For me to live is money.” Me — money! And we describe the union as “life.” We are using a gloriously spacious and wealthy term to label a petty and superficial gratification, which is as transient and uncertain as the ephemera that dance through the feverish hour of a single summer’s day.

“For me to live is pleasure!” Me — pleasure! And we describe the union as “life.” It is a mere sensation, having no more relationship to life in its reality than the sluggish and ill-defined existence of the amoeba has to the large mental and spiritual exercises of the Apostle John. “She that liveth in pleasure is dead

while she liveth.”

“For me to live is fame” Me — fame! And we describe the union as “life.” It is a mere galvanized spasm, and is no more worthy of the regal term “life” than a will-o-the-wisp is worthy of bearing the name of the sun.

Of all these relationships we may employ the New Testament indictment and say, “Thou hast a name to live and art dead.” All other combinations fail. By no other fellowships can we produce the resultant. Life is the unique product of a unique union. “This is life, to know Jesus.” “For me to live is Christ.” Such was the rich and ineffable life of the Apostle Paul. Let us turn our thoughts upon it in prayerful meditation.



The first condition of real life is something to love, and the second condition is something to revere. For a living issue each of the elements is essential. Each deprived of the other is robbed of its dynamic.

Neither can lift if the other be absent.

Love without reverence becomes a purely carnal sentiment, and resides in the channels of the flesh. Reverence without love is like cold moonlight, and will never enrich the heart with the presence of gracious flowers. Love without reverence is a destructive fever; reverence without love is a perpetual frost. True love kneels in reverence; true reverence yearns in love. Each, I say, is essential to the other, and both are needful in the creation of worthy and wealthy life.

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Parent Connect

by Junlan Funez

BIBLE STORY—GEN. 13:1-18,

ABRAHAM SHARED WITH LOT

In Genesis 13: 1-18, we read that it became necessary for Lot and Abraham to go separate ways. Their cattle herds had grown so much that the land could not hold all of the cattle and, as a result,

conflict was breaking out between the workers keeping their herds. Rather than allow the conflict to continue, Abraham offered the best land to Lot which revealed Abraham’s generous spirit. This month we learn about sharing His blessings. Sharing is a hard concept for children, especially



Parent Connect (cont.)

preschoolers, due to their egocentric natures, so use this biblical principle as a guide—not a stick—to encourage them to share. Demonstrate sharing and provide opportunities for little ones to share. Developing an attitude of letting go can lay a foundation not only for generosity, but also for surrendering one’s life to Christ

BIBLE PHRASE:

“BE KIND & LOVING TO ONE ANOTHER.”

BIBLE TRUTH:

I CAN SHARE WITH OTHERS (EPH. 4:32).

For Parents: How to Teach Joyful Sharing¹

If you are like me having two or more young children, chances are you are regularly bombarded by kids fighting over toys, snacks, etc. One kid comes to you crying, accusing the other for not sharing. Then the other holding on tight to the object of contention, asserting that it is hers.

Or perhaps one kid comes to you, again, crying that the other took his toy away, while the other claiming she wants to have a turn. What do you do in situations like this? Do you simply insert yourself into the scenes, take the toy off the hands of one kid, give it to the crying one, tell both to learn to share, and call it a cease-fire? You might bring a smile to the crying face but end up with another grumpy kid by doing so. Worse yet, no one learns the essence of sharing, and very soon, they come back to you with the same problem fighting over another thing.

How do we teach sharing effectively and help our children experience the joy of sharing? To answer this question, we first need to establish the definition

of sharing. According to Wikipedia, sharing “in its narrow sense”, “refers to joint or alternating use of inherently amazing goods”. Some goods, such as food, can be divided and distributed among kids, while other goods, such as a toy, cannot be physically divided, thus requiring kids to play together or to take turns individually.

Today, we focus our discussion on the sharing of toys. Since toys cannot be physically divided, an obvious choice to promote sharing is to encourage kids to play together. What if the kids have different visions of the toy, say the girl wants to play cooking with the doll while the boy wants to play doctor to check the doll?

Help them find a way to play together by incorporating scenes that both kids want. For example, how about the doll cooks at home, but has a tummy ache after the food and needs to go see a doctor? By playing together, kids learn social interaction by exchanging ideas, develop language and problem-solving skills, and truly experience the joy of sharing.

What happens when kids prefer to play with the toy alone? This scenario calls for turn taking and is often the cause of conflict. Here, we have a child who possesses and is occupied by the toy and another child who demands the toy. Do we allow the second child to walk up and grab the toy off the hands of the first one because it is good to share?

No, by no means! We understand that this action is rude. But when we coax the first child to share, we effectively take her toy by force and interrupt her play, rudely. Instead of teaching our children positive social skills, we send wrong messages to associate sharing with negative feelings. She learns that sharing feels bad, that she has no control of her toys and time, and that whoever cries louder will have a better chance of getting what he wants.

How do we bring back the joy of sharing in this case? Amy Shumaker, the author of the book *It Is OK Not to Share* says the key is child-directed turn-taking. Allow your child to take control and to set boundaries. Rather than expecting young kids to give up something the instant someone else demands it, teach them to be assertive: “I will give it to you when I am all done”. Let them finish their activity with the toy. Respect the time they take and resist the urge to rush them.

When they are done, teach them to be courteous by

Parent Connect (cont.)

reminding them that the others are waiting for their turn. When the first child willingly hands over the toy, what a joyous moment it will be for both kids! That is the moment when your child experiences the warm feeling of being kind to others—a feeling that she will want to repeat over and over, even without a parent watching. That is true generosity.

What about the waiting child? No one likes waiting, especially for the impulsive 2-5 year old. But patience is one of the fruits of the Spirit. It is OK for the waiting child to feel frustrated, sad or angry for a time. Allow them to express their intense feelings. Acknowledge their feelings. Then direct their attention to other activities while they wait to help them control the impulse to grab the toy by force.

Impulse control is a vital part of childhood brain development and gets stronger through practice. Sharing through turn-taking provides an excellent opportunity to practice this skill.

Here are some words you can say next time you are presented with a sharing challenge.

Positive assertiveness

- “You can play with it until you’re all done.”
- “Are you finished with your turn? Max says he’s not done yet.”
- “Did you like it when he grabbed your truck? Tell him to stop!”
- “Say: ‘I’m not done. You can have it when I’m done.’”
- “She can have a turn. When she’s all done, you can have a turn.”
- “I see Bella still has the pony. She’s still using it.”
- “You’ll have to wait. I can’t let you take it out of her hands.”

Waiting and awareness of others

- “Oh, it’s so hard to wait!”
- “You’re so mad. You really want to play with the pony right now!”
- “You can be mad, but I can’t let you take the toy.”
- “Will you tell Max when you’re all done?”
- “I see you’re not using the truck anymore. Go find Ben. Remember, he’s waiting for a turn.”

Spot the Differences for Abraham Shared With Lot

Compare the picture on the top with the picture on bottom. Circle the 13 things that are different




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Parent Connect (end)



Abraham Shared With Lot Word Scramble

Unscramble each of the clue words. Take the letters that appear in the circle boxes and unscramble them to find the answer to the last phrase.

SHRED


SARGS

TERWA

CHIR

NETTS

HERGETTO



Like Abraham, we can

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Parent Connect End Notes

¹Adapted from *It is OK Not to Share* and *Renegade Rules for Raising Competent and Compassionate Kids*, by Amy Shumaker.

Ω





Bible Study

Fruit of the Spirit, Part 1

by Richard Dickens

Spiritual fruit is borne of communion with Christ. They are not mere moral traits developed over time by sheer will or determination in the flesh. It's the work of the Spirit Who knows what each Christian needs to stand the tests of a lifetime. He sees weaknesses and strengths that we do not, and what we can become under His tutelage.

That doesn't mean our will power, determination aren't important or can't be increased, but human will, whatever that is at any point in our growth, is united with divinity and becomes invincible. As Paul's prayer in **Ephesians 3:14-21** declares, God "is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us."

God knows what the last generation needs. So, if you think your life is full of difficulty and more sorrow and trial than most, it may very well be He sees your value as others don't and He sees what you need for the battle ahead. Do you know yet, in your heart, how precious you are to Him?

This preparatory work is not just for the battle ahead, that you can't see now. No, more importantly, He wants the pleasure of your company. Like attracts like. The more we commune with Him, the more we desire to be like Him.

Last month we discussed the significance of single-mindedness. Its importance in the development of spiritual fruit cannot be overstated. Self-focus dilutes, distorts and eventually destroys the image of God in man. That's why Laodiceanism is so dangerous.

Introduction: The Fruits Outlined in the NT

There are 2 main passages that outline spiritual character growth, or fruit. **2 Pet. 1:3-9** and **Gal. 5:16-25**. Peter mentions 8 and Paul mentions 9, but they both only use the same word in 3 instances to describe a particular fruit. They are faith, self-control and love.

Goodness is mentioned by both but they use a different word.

Contextually, the writers deliver their messages to very different groups. The Galatians were facing heretical doctrine, bothered by the circumcision party who taught that works like circumcision, were necessary to be added to faith in Christ. Paul presents this view as a dangerous false "gospel." (**Gal. 3:1-7**). It was creating internal divisions and strife.

Peter, on the other hand, possibly writes to a different group than his first epistle, which was facing persecution. This second group doesn't appear to be facing any obvious doctrinal issues, unlike Paul. They share the same faith as Peter. It is a letter for their growth, encouraging them to keep persevering along the path of the faithful. The urgency is that Peter is aware his death is imminent and he wants to encourage his readers and reassure them in the faith. Anticipating false teachers on the horizon he writes as a pastor protecting the flock after his passing from false prophets and teachers.

Since different groups are addressed, with different needs, you would expect differences, but the differ-

ences are minimal and in no way contradictory. Everyone needs to stay the course of Christ-like development of character. Keeping the eye on the prize of being like Christ and cultivating His companionship is essential.

Let's begin our study. I shall use Peter's order in the presentation. For now, let's table the discussion of how fruit and gifts of the Spirit correlate. Let it suffice to say, for now, that fruit is character manifestations of the Spirit and gifts are Spiritual phenomena of ministry to others.

Faith (1 Peter 1:5; Galatians 5:22)

Just the noun, faith, occurs 140 times alone in Paul's writings. We will limit our study to the 22 times in Galatians. Peter, on the other hand uses it in both epistles less, but less does not imply less importance.

The references for Peter are: **1 Pt. 1:5, 7, 9, 21; 5:9; 2 Pt. 1:1, 5**. What are your observations of Peter's understanding of faith? How important is it in the believer? How does faith intermingle or interact with the other spiritual fruit?

Paul's references are: **Gal. 1:23; 2:16, 20; 3:2, 5, 7-9, 11-14, 22-26; 5:5-6, 22; 6:10**. List your observations regarding Paul's understanding of faith. Are there different nuances to Paul's experience? Would you say there are differences between Peter and Paul? If so, how so?

E. M. Bounds, who wrote so profoundly on the subject of prayer, obviously links prayer's power to faith

Faith is the foundation of Christian character and the security of the soul. When Jesus was looking forward to Peter's denial, and cautioning him against it, He said unto His disciple:

"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, to sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not."

Our Lord was declaring a central truth; it was Peter's faith He was seeking to guard; for well He knew that when faith is broken down, the foundations of spiritual life give way, and the entire structure of religious experience falls. It was Peter's faith which needed guarding. Hence Christ's solicitude for the welfare of His disciple's soul and His determination to fortify Peter's faith by His own all-prevailing prayer.

In his Second Epistle, Peter has this idea in mind when speaking of growth in grace as a measure of safety in the Christian life, and as implying fruitfulness.

"And besides this," he declares, "giving diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness."

Of this adding process, faith was the starting-point — the basis of the other graces of the Spirit. Faith was the foundation on which other things were to be built. Peter does not enjoin his readers to add to works or gifts or virtues but to faith. Much depends on starting right in this business of growing in grace. There is a Divine order, of which Peter was aware; and so he



Bible Study (cont.)

goes on to declare that we are to give diligence to making our calling and election sure, which election is rendered certain adding to faith which, in turn, is done by constant, earnest praying. Thus faith is kept alive by prayer, and every step taken, in this adding of grace to grace, is accompanied by prayer.

The faith which creates powerful praying is the faith which centers itself on a powerful Person. Faith in Christ's ability to do and to do greatly, is the faith which prays greatly. Thus the leper lay hold upon the power of Christ. "Lord, if Thou wilt," he cried, "Thou canst make me clean." In this instance, we are shown how faith centered in Christ's ability to do, and how it secured the healing power. *The Necessity of Prayer*, Ch. 1, selected paragraphs.

Ellen White many times qualified the word faith. Over 2,000 times you will find the phrase "living faith." True faith was alive. Here are three examples of what she understood.

I have frequently seen that the children of the Lord neglect prayer, especially secret prayer, altogether too much; that many do not exercise that faith which it is their privilege and duty to exercise, often waiting for that feeling which faith alone can bring. Feeling is not faith; the two are distinct. Faith is ours to exercise, but joyful feeling and the blessing are God's to give. The grace of God comes to the soul through the channel of living faith, and that faith it is in our power to exercise. *CET 126.1*.

The Lord calls for men of genuine faith and sound minds, men who recognize the distinction between the true and the false. Each one should be on his guard, studying and practicing the lessons given in the seventeenth chapter of John, and preserving a living faith in the truth for this time. We need that self-control which will enable us to bring our habits into harmony with the prayer of Christ. *8 CCh 45.4*.

But many have not a living faith. This is why they do not see more of the power of God. Their weakness is the result of their unbelief. They have more faith in their own working than in the working of God for them. They take themselves into their own keeping. They plan and devise, but pray little, and have little real trust in God. They think they have faith, but it is only the impulse of the moment. Failing to realize their own need, or God's willingness to give, they do not persevere in keeping their requests before the Lord. *COL 145.4* (Emphasis supplied).

Faith is a living experience because, being born again, we have the Holy Spirit inside of us to inspire and engender faith. Just as we listen to others and can be inspired to trust and go through with doing the right thing, so, as we commune with Christ and the Father through the Spirit, we are imbued with faith.

Others, however, can only inspire us. They are not inside of us. The Holy Spirit, Who is God and knows what His plans are for us, and Who can execute God's will through us, can take our finite faith and strengthen it with His. The finite is strengthened by

the Infinite—the two are becoming one. It is not feeling but an awareness. You may still "feel" weak but you know, have the assurance from the Spirit, you are strong in Christ and have won the battle.

At other times, that assurance is attended by feelings of hope and joy. Over time you are content either way. You know what the will of God is and you know, through the Spirit, His will is going to be performed through you whether you "feel" strong in faith or not.

Virtue (1 Peter 1:5; Philippians 4:8)

You will note that Peter uses this word as a spiritual fruit but Paul does not. Paul only uses it once in Philippians, in the phrase "if there is any excellence." Peter uses it 4 times in three verses—**1 Pet. 2:9; 2 Pet. 1:3, 5**.

Even though Paul does not include it as a spiritual fruit, you can see how important he considered it, given the context of Philippians chapter 4.

What are your observations regarding Peter's usage?

Originally, in Greek culture, it may have been used of "manliness," exhibited as "bravery in war" but it took on a variety of applications over time that indicated either "excellence" in a particular ability or endeavor, or, moral "goodness," as used by Socrates.¹

In 1 Peter 2:9, we are to proclaim God's excellencies. So the source of excellence is from Him, both in conception and in power to attain to it. What excellences are you pursuing in your life, like moral purity?

You might wish to read chapter 52, "Steadfast Unto the End," in *Acts of the Apostles*, which is based on Second Peter.

God has called His people to glory and virtue, and these will be manifest in the lives of all who are truly connected with Him. Having become partakers of the heavenly gift, they are to go on unto perfection, being "kept by the power of God through faith." **1 Peter 1:5**. It is the glory of God to give His virtue to His children. He desires to see men and women reaching the highest standard; and when by faith they lay hold of the power of Christ, when they plead His unfailing promises, and claim them as their own, when with an importunity that will not be denied they seek for the power of the Holy Spirit, they will be made complete in Him. *AA530.2*. Emphasis supplied.

Virtue, then, is a power for God and good when both vision and pursuit of His moral perfections is desired and being realized by His children. How do you think she means God gives His virtue? Is it then a gift as well?

Knowledge (2 Peter 1:5; 2 Cor. 4:6; 6:6; 8:7)

Knowledge is not in the list in Galatians 5, is that an oversight—or intentional? As you look at the 3 Pauline verses noted above, consider their context. What similarities do you find to Galatians 5? Here are some other locations in Paul that might help to understand a possible reason that Paul would not mention it: **1 Cor. 1:5; 8:1-2, 10-11; 12:8; 13:2, 8; 14:6; 2 Cor. 10:5-6; 11:6; Eph 3:19; 4:13; Phil. 1:9; Col. 1:9-10; 2:2-3; 3:10; 1 Tim. 2:4; 6:20; 2 Tim. 3:7; Titus 1:1**. (to page 11)

Anniversaries & Birthdays

Anniversaries

Adrian & Veronique Johnson 6/30

Birthdays

Daniel Aluoch 6/1	Junlan Funez 6/18
Sherri Bohnert 6/7	Lauren Hardy 6/19
Emily Larkin 6/14	Doris Cabrales 6/21
Ray Lessman 6/15	Savannah Cordis 6/23
Faith Kiprono 6/16	Jade Meyer 6/27
Morgan Hutton 6/16	Larrie Brown 6/28

By Mel Poole, courtesy Unsplash

Bible Study (end)

(from page 10)

Fruit of character remains, but gifts, such as knowledge, will pass away as the face-to-face illuminates us at the Second Coming (1 Cor. 13:1-12).

So, knowledge is a gift of the Spirit rather than a fruit of the Spirit for Paul.² Its importance is to yield fruit but it can also get in the way and puff someone up and create factions in the church, or worse (1 Cor. 4:1-6). How and why knowledge is used and shared can make all the difference in its results. Knowledge must unite us and shape us into the image of Christ. The example we demonstrate must agree with the words of knowledge we impart. Then, it is a power by the Spirit for God's glory.

Self-Control (2 Pet. 1:6; Gal. 5:23)

Luke writing about Paul's preaching content in Caesarea before Felix, says, "he reasoned about righteousness & self-control and the coming judgment." (Acts 24:25). We'd all agree on the necessity of being master of oneself. The word comes from κρατος, "power." The word, εγκρατεια, then conveys the idea of being in power or in control of yourself. You can see why it was highly valued in Greco-Roman culture.

Pragmatically, it is a very significant character trait to be developed by the Spirit. Study these passages: Gal. 5:23 (set against 5:19); 1 Cor. 7:5, 9; 9:25 1 Tim. 3:2; 2 Tim. 3:3 ("without self-control" (ESV); Tit. 1:7-8. You might wonder why I have not noted 2 Tim. 1:7, where a number of versions have translated σωφρονισμος as "self-control." Others render it "sound mind." A "safe" or "sound" "mind," is one where the person is in control of his/her faculties. But it's not the word under study, though it lends itself well enough conceptually.

John Piper, quoting John Calvin's retelling a friend of the loss of his wife demonstrates the value of self-control administered by the Spirit:

You know well how tender, or rather soft, my mind is. Had not a powerful self-control been given to me, I

could not have borne up so long. And truly, mine is no common source of grief. I have been bereaved of the best companion of my life, of one who, had it been so ordained, would have willingly shared not only my poverty but even my death.³ (Emphasis supplied).

It should be remembered that prior to his wife's passing, Calvin saw the early death of all 3 of their children. He and his wife were, also, seriously sick, on and off, for many years. Her passing nearly was the final straw.

Ellen White commenting on William Miller's character and self-control, comments,

William Miller possessed strong mental powers, disciplined by thought and study; and he added to these the wisdom of heaven by connecting himself with the Source of wisdom. He was a man of sterling worth, who could not but command respect and esteem wherever integrity of character and moral excellence were valued. Uniting true kindness of heart with Christian humility and the power of self-control, he was attentive and affable to all, ready to listen to the opinions of others and to weigh their arguments. Without passion or excitement he tested all theories and doctrines by the word of God, and his sound reasoning and thorough knowledge of the Scriptures enabled him to refute error and expose falsehood. (CIHS 94.1). Emphasis supplied.

Self-control is contingent on Spirit-control. Submission to the Spirit yields the fruit of self-control.

All this and more is the fruit of the Spirit working through our Spirit-inspired desire to be like Jesus. May your month be filled with the aroma of Christ (2 Cor. 2:14-16).

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Bible Study End Notes

¹NIDNTE, Article on ἀπετή.
²See 1 Cor. 12:8; Eph.4:13-16.
³Originally in T. H. L. Parker, *Portrait of Calvin*, p. 71. John Piper, "John Calvin: The Man and His Preaching," Bethlehem Conference for Pastors, 1997.

Ministry of Intercession

The Hidden Life of Prayer (Excerpts from Chapter 1, "The Life of Prayer") by David McIntyre

Our Lord takes it for granted that His people will pray. And indeed in Scripture generally the outward obligation of prayer is implied rather than asserted. Moved by a divinely-implanted instinct, our natures cry out for God, for the living God. And however this instinct may be crushed by sin, it awakes to power in the consciousness of redemption. Theologians of all schools, and Christians of every type, agree in their recognition of this principle of the new life. Chrysostom has said, "The just man does not desist from praying until he ceases to be just;" and Augustine, "He that loveth little prayeth little, and he that loveth much prayeth much;" and Richard Hooker, "Prayer is the first thing wherewith a righteous life

sinews and panting breath proclaim the exhaustion of the "heavenly footman." The weight that falls upon an aching heart fills the brow with anguish, even when the midnight air is chill. Prayer is the uplift of the earth-bound soul into the heaven, the entrance of the purified spirit into the holiest; the rending of the luminous veil that shuts in, as behind curtains, the glory of God. It is the vision of things unseen; the recognition of the mind of the Spirit; the effort to frame words which man may not utter. A man that truly prays one prayer," says Bunyan, "shall after that never be able to express with his mouth or pen the unutterable desires, sense, affection, and longing that went to God in that prayer." The saints of the Jewish Church had a princely energy in intercession: "Battering the gates of heaven with storms of prayer," they took the kingdom of heaven by violence. The first Christians proved in the wilderness, in the dungeon, in the arena, and at the stake the truth of their Master's words, "He shall have whatsoever he saith." Their souls ascended to God in supplication as the flame of the altar mounts heavenward. The Talmudists affirm that in the divine life four things call for fortitude; of these prayer is one. One who met Tersteegen at Kronenberg remarked, "It seemed to me as if he had gone straight into heaven, and had lost himself in God; but often when he had done praying he was as white as the wall." David Brainerd notes that on one occasion, when he found his soul "exceedingly enlarged" in supplication, he was "in such anguish, and pleaded with so much earnestness and importunity," that when he rose from his knees he felt "extremely weak and overcome." "I could scarcely walk straight," he goes on to say, "my joints were loosed, the sweat ran down my face and body, and nature seemed as if it would dissolve." A living writer has reminded us of John Foster, who used to spend long nights in his chapel, absorbed in spiritual exercises, pacing to and fro in the disquietude of his spirit, until his restless feet had worn a little track in the aisle.



beginneth, and the last wherewith it doth end;" and Père la Combe, "He who has a pure heart will never cease to pray, and he who will be constant in prayer shall know what it is to have a pure heart;" and Bunyan, "If thou art not a praying person, thou art not a Christian;" and Richard Baxter, "Prayer is the breath of the new creature;" and George Herbert, "Prayer...the soul's blood."

And yet, instinctive as is our dependence upon God, no duty is more earnestly impressed upon us in Scripture than the duty of continual communion with Him. The main reason for this unceasing insistence is the arduousness of prayer. In its nature it is a laborious undertaking, and in our endeavor to maintain the spirit of prayer we are called to wrestle against principalities and powers of darkness.

"Dear Christian reader," says Jacob Boehme, "to pray aright is right earnest work." Prayer is the most sublime energy of which the spirit of man is capable. It is in one aspect glory and blessedness; in another, it is toil and travail, battle and agony. Uplifted hands grow tremulous long before the field is won; straining

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