

WISDOM @ BRANCHES

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!

By Jose Alfonso Sierra, courtesy Unsplash

Pastoral Perspective

“Why Do We Even Try?”

By Pastor Mercado

Have you ever been frustrated? When 2020 started our church had lots of evangelistic plans. We started the year with Creation Health to create interest in health issues and start to make connections with people. We continued with “Final Empire,” a weekend series that presented the history of the United States and how it relates to Bible Prophecy. In March we started “Discovering Revelation,” a traditional three-week evangelistic series, and then COVID hit; and everything was canceled.

Over the last year we have been exploring ways to build connections and promote God’s agenda in our community. Some things work, some things do not. In fact, at times our society seems so secular that many become frustrated and wonder “why do we even try?”

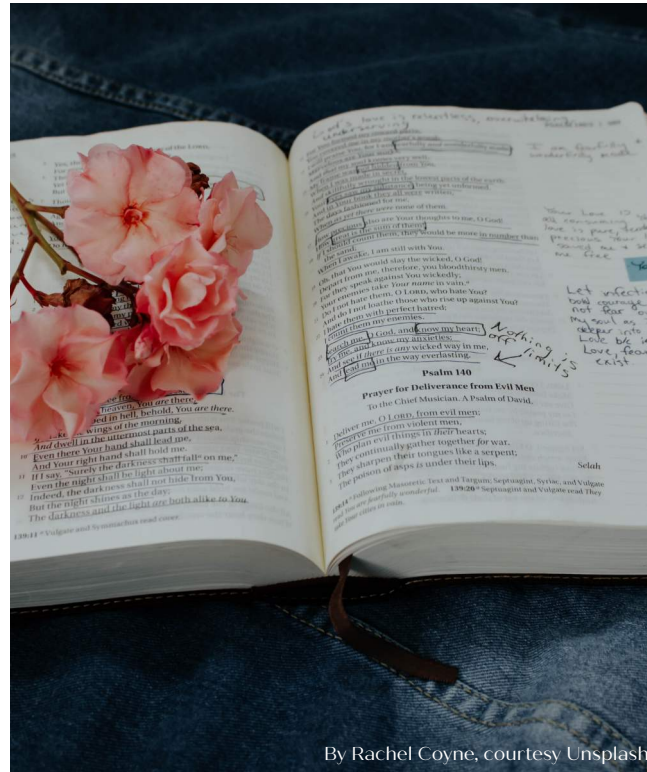
In Matt. 9:37-38 Jesus said, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.” The answer to the question of “why do we even try?” is found in these passages. We are to keep pressing forward because despite the apparent secularization of society, many are searching for truth. Many, even if unconsciously, are sensing their need of a relationship with God.

If the harvest is plentiful, it means that it is ready to be collected. The challenge is to find laborers willing to invest in God’s kingdom and work to collect the harvest.

This is where we come in. We have been fortunate in getting to know our God, in accepting His gift of salvation, and in learning about the “Present Truth,” God’s last day message for this world.

However, Satan has and is still trying to distract, divide, discourage, and frustrate us. We cannot let him take the upper hand. We have a great, relevant, practical message to give to our community and the world. No matter how grim things may appear, God is calling us to be faithful to our mission.

I encourage you to seek ways in which you can be a blessing to somebody and participate in God’s work. I will be right there with you. “For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ” (Heb. 3:14, NLT).



By Rachel Coyne, courtesy Unsplash

Adventist Health

By Marjie Johns

The Life Handbook

Health

- Drink plenty of water.
- Eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince and dinner like a beggar.
- Eat more plants and foods that grow on trees and eat less food that is manufactured.
- Live with Energy, Enthusiasm and Empathy
- Make time to pray.
- Play more.
- Read more.
- Sit in silence for at least 10 minutes each day
- Sleep for 7 hours.
- Take a 10-30 minute walk daily and smile while you walk.

Personality

- Don't compare your life to others. You have no idea what their journey is all about.
- Don't have negative thoughts or judgments. Instead invest your energy in seeing the positive present moment.
- Let go of things you cannot change.
- Try new things. Don't overdo. Accept your limits.
- Don't take yourself so seriously. No one else does.
- Don't waste your energy on gossip.
- Dream more
- Envy is a waste of time. Be grateful for all that you have.
- Forget issues of the past. Don't remind your partner with his/her mistakes of the past. That will ruin your present happiness.
- Don't hate others. Life is too short to waste time hating anyone.
- Make peace with your past so it won't spoil the present.
- Remember that you are the only one in charge of your happiness.
- Realize that life is a school filled with teachers and you are here to learn its many lessons. Problems you experience are simply part of the curriculum. The lessons will repeat until you learn them but once learned, they will last a lifetime.
- Smile and laugh more.

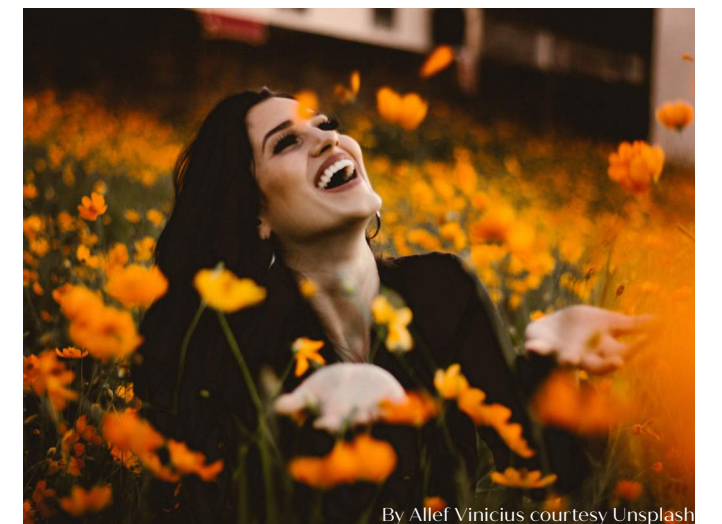
- You don't have to win every argument. Agree to disagree.

Society

- Call your family often.
- Give something good to others every day.
- Forgive everyone for everything
- Spend time with people over the age of 70 and under the age of 6.
- Listen to people with all of your attention. Be present 100%
- Try to make at least three people smile each day.
- What other people think of you is none of your business.
- Your job won't take care of you when you are sick. Your friends will. Keep in touch with your friends more often.

Life

- Do the right thing!
- Get rid of anything that isn't useful, beautiful or joyful.
- Time heals all wounds.
- However good or bad a situation is, it will change.
- No matter how you feel, get up, dress up and show up.
- Do your best.
- Life is a gift. Express gratitude and be thankful.
- Be happy.



By Allef Vinicius courtesy Unsplash

Inspiration

“God’s Great Need,” from *The Kneeling Christian*, Ch. 1, para. 1-10.

By The Unknown Christian

“GOD Wondered.” This is a very striking thought! The very boldness of the idea ought surely to arrest the attention of every earnest Christian man, woman and child. A wondering God! Why, how staggered we might well be if we knew the cause of God’s “wonder”! Yet we find it to be, apparently, a very little thing. But if we are willing to consider the matter carefully, we shall discover it to be one of the greatest possible importance to every believer on the Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing else is so momentous — so vital — to our spiritual welfare.

God “wondered that there was no intercessor” (Isa. lix. 16) — “none to interpose” (R.V., marg.). But this was in the days of long ago, before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ “full of grace and truth” — before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, full of grace and power, “helping our infirmity,” “Himself making intercession for us” and in us (Rom. viii. 26). Yes, and before the truly amazing promises of our Savior regarding prayer; before men knew very much about prayer; in the days when sacrifices for their sins loomed larger in their eyes than supplication for other sinners.

Oh, how great must be God’s wonder today! For how few there are among us who know what prevailing prayer really is! Every one of us would confess that we believe in prayer, yet how many of us truly believe in the power of, prayer? Now, before we go a step farther, may the writer most earnestly implore



By Ismael Paramo, courtesy Unsplash

you not to read hurriedly what is contained in these chapters. Much — very much — depends upon the way in which every reader receives what is here recorded. For everything depends upon prayer.

Why are many Christians so often defeated? Because they pray so little. Why are many church-workers so often discouraged and disheartened? Because they pray so little.

Why do most men see so few brought “out of darkness to light” by their ministry? Because they pray so little.

Why are not our churches simply on fire for God? Because there is so little real prayer.

The Lord Jesus is as powerful today as ever before.

The Lord Jesus is as anxious for men to be saved as ever before. His arm is not shortened

that it cannot save: but He cannot stretch forth His arm unless we pray more — and more really.

We may be assured of this — the secret of all failure is our failure in secret prayer.

If God “wondered” in the days of Isaiah, we need not be surprised to find that in the days of His flesh our Lord “marveled.” He marveled at the unbelief of some — unbelief which actually prevented Him from doing any mighty work in their cities (Mark vi. 6).

But we must remember that those who were guilty of this unbelief saw no beauty in Him that they should desire Him, or believe on Him. What then must His “marvel” be today, when He sees [\(to page 9\)](#)

for Children’s Ministry

and so were the soldiers that had guarded it. She was surprised and looked inside the tomb and found it was empty! Where was Jesus’ body?

Now she was even sadder and confused. She ran back to find Peter, John & the other disciples. She said, “They have taken Jesus, & I don’t know where they have put Him.”

Peter and John ran ahead to the tomb. Mary was right. Jesus was gone! Peter, John and the others went home sadly. When Mary got there, they were gone but she stayed. She stooped down and looked inside the tomb again and began to cry.

Then Mary saw two angels sitting in the tomb. They said to her, “Why are you crying?” Mary

Parent Connect

The resurrection is the basis of our very life, and our future life with God. In the resurrection of Jesus, God righted wrongs and gives us hope to live forever. We can find victory in Jesus & know that even though we will have sad days in our lives, in the end our sadness will turn to joy.

Bible Story—Jesus is Alive! Jn. 20:1-18

Just before sunrise on a Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene walked sadly toward a hill outside Jerusalem. Her friend Jesus had died & was buried on the past Friday. She was going to where he had been buried.

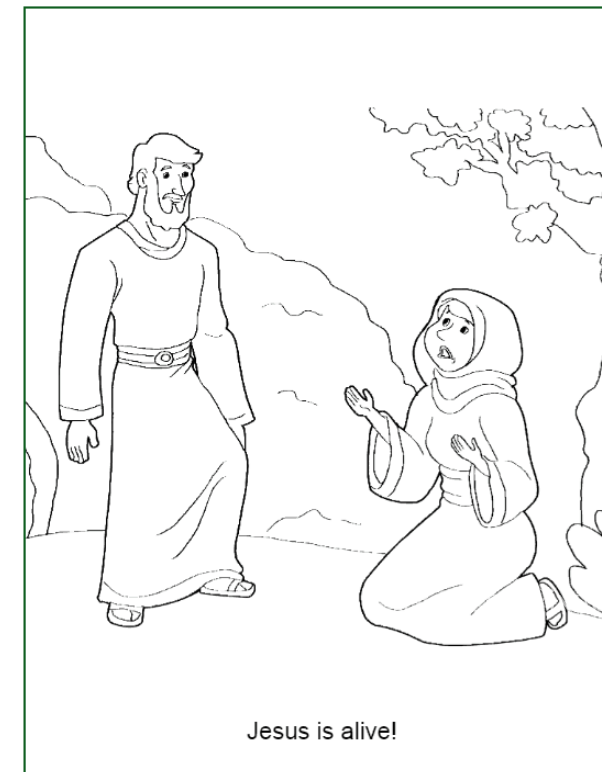
When she got there, the large stone that had been placed in front of the opening was gone

Parent Connect (end)

replied, “Someone took Jesus’ body away, and I don’t know where they put Him.”

Then Mary turned around and saw a Man. She thought it was the gardener. He asked her who she was looking for, and she told Him, “Jesus.” When the Man called her by name, “Mary,” she recognized his voice and knew it was Jesus! She was amazed. Jesus was alive! Jesus told Mary to go and tell the others He was alive and Mary ran home to find Peter, John and the other disciples to tell them.

A sad day turned happy! It began sad for Mary and the disciples but it would end happy beyond their wildest dreams. It can be that way for you too.



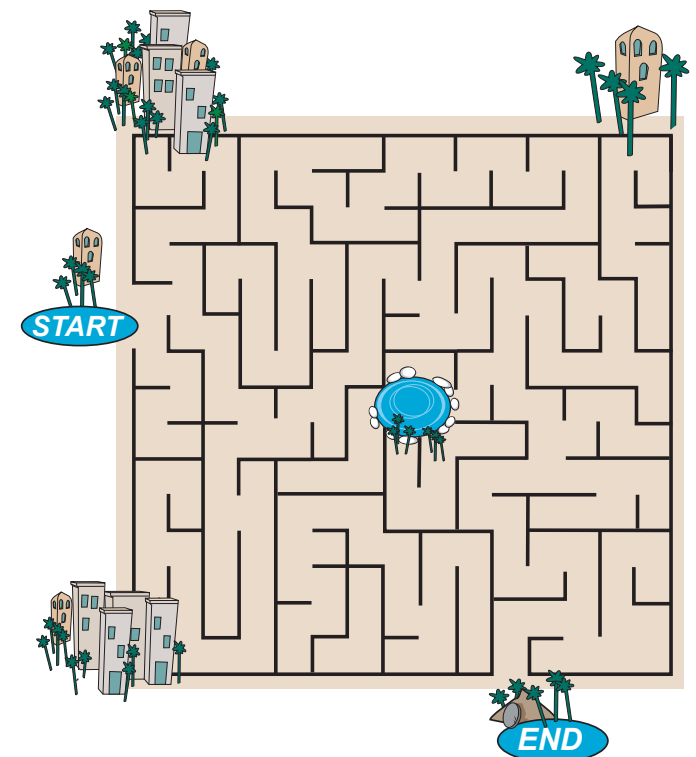
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Activity suggestion

Make a Stone to Roll Away.

◆ Use a paper cup for a cave, Allow your preschooler to color the paper or foam cup brown and green like dirt and grass. Punch a small hole at the bottom of the cup.

- ◆ Use aluminum foil to wad into a round ball (stone) the size of the cup opening.
- ◆ Get a piece of string to tie to the stone.
- ◆ With an ice pick, punch a hole through the foil & put the string through the foil leaving about 12” on both sides.
- ◆ Now crunch the foil enclosing the string so it won’t move,
- ◆ Or, tie 2 pieces of string on opposite ends of the wadded ball of foil leaving about 12” on each end. You can tape around the ball so the string will stay in place.
- ◆ Run one end of the string through a small hole in the bottom of the cup.
- ◆ Now with the cup is on it’s side, the stone can be moved by the string into the cup to close the cave. It can be opened with the opposite string.
- ◆ Pull the other end of the string to “roll the stone away!”
- ◆ Your preschooler can use a shoe box or other paper to make a background as much as you & s/he have time and interest.
- ◆ Talk about the wonderful end to the story that Jesus is ALIVE!



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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.

Chickpea & Barley Stew

By Marijie Johns

Ingredients (serves 4)

1 ½ cups barley
8 cups vegetable stock
1 large onion, diced
1 medium carrot, diced
2 stalks celery, diced
3 cloves garlic, minced
19-ounce can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
15-ounce can diced tomatoes, with liquid
1 tablespoon sea salt
1 teaspoon dried rosemary
1 bunch kale (about 7 ounces)
½ cup chopped fresh basil or parsley

Directions

Place the barley in a large bowl and cover with cold water by 1 inch. Set aside to soak for 10 minutes while you start the soup.

Heat a large, heavy pot over medium-high heat. Add 2 tablespoons of the vegetable stock. Stir in the onion, carrot, and celery. Cook until the onion softens, about 3 minutes. Add the garlic and continue to cook until the onion is lightly browned, a few minutes more.

Add the remaining vegetable stock. Bring the liquid to a boil.

Drain the barley. Add the barley, chickpeas, tomatoes, salt, and rosemary to the soup. Return to a boil, then cover and simmer for 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, prepare the kale: Discard a few inches of the tough root ends. Thinly slice the stems and coarsely chop the leaves. Rinse well by dunking it in a large bowl or sink full of water. Drain well.

When the barley has simmered for 10 minutes, stir in the kale gradually, adding more as each batch wilts. Cover and continue cooking

until the beans, barley, and kale are tender, usually 10 to 20 minutes more. Add the basil, and taste. Add more salt if needed.

Raspberry Coconut Chocolate Chip Bars

By Marjie Johns

Ingredients (24-36 bars)

Raspberry Coconut Chocolate Chip Bars
1 cup butter, room temperature
½ cup brown sugar
2 cups flour
¼ teaspoon salt
1 cup raspberry jam
½ cup reserved crumbs
½ cup fine or medium coconut unsweetened or sweetened
½ cup miniature semi-sweet chocolate chips
1 tablespoon butter, room temperature

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a 9x13-inch baking pan with parchment paper for easy removal. No need to grease the pan as there is plenty of butter in the shortbread base.

Pack the shortbread cookie mixture into the prepared pan. Evenly spread the raspberry jam over the cookie base.

Make the crumble topping by combining the ½ cup reserved crumbs with the coconut, miniature chocolate chips and the tablespoon of butter. Spread the crumble topping over the jam.

Bake in the preheated oven for 30 minutes until the the topping is golden brown. Remove from oven and let cool completely in pan. If you have lined the pan with parchment paper lift the bars out by grasping hold of the edges of the paper and gently lifting out onto a cutting board.

Cut into 24-36 bars using a sharp knife. Press the knife firmly into the slab. Wipe the knife after every cut to keep the bars neat and clean. Store bars in a covered container or freeze until needed.

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Stewardship

By Brian & Raylene Wilcox

Did You Know—you can support Nashville First SDA Church by contributing non-tithe offerings on a regular basis? The average monthly cost to operate First Church is approximately \$10,500; and just like your own home, expenses need to be paid from our income. Where does First Church get income?

From you, faithful donors who love God and love their church. If each family contributed 2-3% of their income to First Church Budget (Ministries & Operations), with God's blessings, we would have all we need to pay our monthly expenses and make a difference in the world around us for Jesus.

Now you know!

Report for March 2021

Recommended Giving Percentage above tithe 3-5%

Income	\$8,566.71	Income to Date	\$39,092.46
Outgo	9,087.66	Outgo to Date	24,874.91
Balance	\$520.95	Balance to Date	\$14,217.55

Church Board News

April Decisions

Handrails

The board chose bronze handrails to be set on the walls by the stairs to the platform on each side. They will be installed in the near future.

Visitors

Visitors are special and we want them to know that. The pastor has been working to train our greeters and to develop special welcome packets to give to our first time visitors.

The board is also looking into giving the foyer a more appealing look.

Rough draft Board Agenda

To be better prepared for our church board meetings and to shorten the meeting time, the pastor will be sending out to board members a rough draft agenda for the upcoming meeting, a week ahead of time (**3rd Monday of the month**). As you know, the board meets the 4th Monday of the month. So, if you have an agenda item you



By Debby Hudson courtesy Unsplash

wish to be addressed, get it to the pastor by the **third Sunday of the month** so he can include it. Items submitted later than that, may be deferred to the following month's agenda.

May-Early June Events

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).

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Bible Study

Victory in Christ

By Richard Dickens

The only way out of a Laodicean condition is single-minded devotion to Christ. A Laodicean condition is a developing single-mindedness of the flesh that comes from surrendering to the flesh and rejecting Christ's narrow pathway. It then builds a religious experience on the externals of works by the flesh, for the flesh. Externals and notoriety become important for self assurance versus Spirit-assurance. The Witness of the Spirit is rejected for the witness of people who feel and think the same way. Worship is in the power of the flesh. It is narcissistic or worse. Their boast is in self, or the church, not Christ (**Phil. 3:3**). They are seriously spiritually sick, but they just don't know it, or, refuse to know it.

Repentance—Gift of God Acts 5:31; 11:18

God's view is that Laodicea needs repentance (**Rev. 3:19**). But repentance is a gift from God and Laodicea doesn't feel the need for that. For most, historically, only a serious crisis has awakened that need. Think Elijah, Babylonian captivity, etc. Even then, however, only a remnant emerged.

Repentance, simply defined, as you know, is a change of mind. But, simply defined won't do. For the biblical experience is a deepening sorrow for sins committed, and a zeal to rectify wrongs done. (**Lk. 3:8-14; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31 8:22; 11:18; 26:20; Rom. 2:4; 2 Cor. 7:9-10; 2 Tim. 2:25; Heb. 6:1**).

You could say that for those growing in grace, repentance is part of sanctification and a work of a lifetime. Repentance deepens over time. To deepen the hatred of our sins over time is necessary and normal.

Peter loathed his sin of denying Christ more at the end of his life; so much so, when facing crucifixion, church tradition holds he asked to be crucified upside down. He felt he was not worthy to be crucified like his Lord. But what also is normal is the deepening sense of forgiveness from Christ, and closeness as well. It's a Christian paradox, a seeming contradiction.

What isn't normal, or shouldn't be, is the experience of sinning, then repenting, then sinning some more, feeling bad about the effect we experience, then saying we're sorry. But are we? It fosters presumption and is deadly. If you're fine as long as no strong temptation comes your way, but when it does, you flirt with it, and you struggle a bit and then succumb to it. That's not victory in Christ. The problem is you are living in two minds.

The Doubleminded Experience—

The expression, double-minded, is found only in James—and only twice, **James 1:8 and 4:8**. New Testament writers, though, do deal with it conceptually.

Experientially, it's a Christian trying to live in the flesh and in the Spirit. James tells us s/he should not expect victory, answers to prayers, success in Christ.

This is what makes Christianity hard—living with two conflicting desires. There are two experiences of the fleshly mind presented in the New Testament. First, it has a sensual experience as outlined in Romans 1—this is obvious sin. Second, it has a religious experience as shown in the Pharisees of Jesus' day. That, Judaizing influence tried to pollute the early church (**Gal. 5-6**).

The second is more dangerous because it "baptizes," condones sin, excuses, or elevates, or substitutes, deeds as having merit in our salvation—like circumcision. It does not crucify the flesh but says it's okay to indulge in certain behaviors, just not to excess. It creates a pecking order of sins. We rationalize, "Well, I may occasionally, tell a lie, play at politics at work and the church, or flirt though married, but I tithe and go to church every Sabbath. I read my devotional. I pray often—and people say they love it when I pray." This is the slippery slope to Laodiceanism.

There can be no compromise with sin. The difficulty for the rich young ruler was he wanted a religion that would allow him to have both. Laodicea is no different. Laodicea solves the conflict of double-mindedness by compromise. The gospel way is the narrow way and it is easy, by the power of the Spirit, not hard.

The simplicity of the gospel is that the same principle that begins your salvation process also makes it work all the way through to the end. The cross is letting go of our riches, of our fleshly mind-set, religious or secular. Paul asked the Galatians,

This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? . . . So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Gal. 3:2-3, 5 NASB.

The only solution is to become single-minded & go back to the narrow pathway. Meditate on **Heb. 12:1-10**. How is this possible? What is impossible with man is possible with God. **Lk. 18:27**. By the Spirit we can do it. The other alternative is a hardening into a Laodicean single-minded experience of delusion we are right with God when we're not.

Accepting the Emptying Mind-set

What Jesus asked of the rich young ruler was a call to be emptied, to leave his security for Christ's.

The call to emptying mainly comes from **Phil. 2:5-8**.

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (ESV). We live the narrow path Christ trod daily and the peace & joy of the fellowship makes the burden light..

Victory in Christ can only be experienced as we bond with Him. The reason so many do not experience peace & joy is because the witness of the Spirit to their conscience condemns them for their sins.

The bonding is union, two becoming one. What **Heb. 12:1-10** asks is not possible unless you share the same joy Jesus saw and embraced. His love for the Father was that intense, that all-encompassing. That love was for us as well, and the possibility of becoming one with us, and us with Him. We have to desire it, by the Spirit, as single-mindedly as He did.

Without bonding to Christ, we lack power to resist temptation and we find no joy in the love of Christ.



Bible Study (cont.)

Bonding is the result of the emptying of our old spirit or self & being filled by the Holy Spirit, Who remakes us in Christ's image. The fruit of emptying is bonding—the companionship of Christ & companionship creates change. Reflect on **2 Cor. 3:16-18; 4:3-18**.

We need the discipline of single-mindedness but it won't happen without the Spirit drawing us and us drawing near, letting Him in to sup with us. We need to be Spirit-minded. **Rom. 8:2-10**, outlines this experience and at first glance appears as though the delight is in doing the law until you get to verses 15-16. It's the experience of knowing God as Abba, Father, that attracts and melds the mind to the character & personality of God. Andrew Murray says it plainly—

"The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." To walk after the spirit; To be after the spirit; To be in the Spirit; To have the Spirit dwelling in us. Through the Spirit to mortify the deeds of the body; To be led by the Spirit; To be spiritually minded. These are all blessings which come when we bind ourselves wholly to live in the Spirit. If we live after the Spirit we have the very nature of the Spirit in us. If we live in the Spirit, we shall be led by Him every day and every moment. What if you were to open your heart today to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Would He not be able to keep you every moment in the sweet rest of God? And would not His mighty arm give you a complete victory over sin and temptation of every kind, and make you able to live in perpetual fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ? Most certainly! *The Deeper Christian Life*, Chapter 4, para. 13. Emphasis supplied.

It is double-mindedness that causes the erratic, unstable Christian experience. Only crucifixion will fix the problem. You cannot, in your own strength, nail your old man on the cross, but you can ask Christ.

No outward observances can take the place of simple faith and entire renunciation of self. But no man can empty himself of self. We can only consent for Christ to accomplish the work. Then the language of the soul will be, Lord, take my heart; for I cannot give it. It is Thy property. Keep it pure, for I cannot keep it for Thee. Save me in spite of myself, my weak, unchristlike self. Mold me, fashion me, raise me into a pure and holy atmosphere, where the rich current of Thy love can flow through my soul. (Ellen G. White, COL 159.3).

Though he never uses the expression, Paul in **Romans 6** outlines the answer to a double-minded experience,

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. Rom. 6:1-4, ESV.

Now note the open "secret" to his bond with Christ in **Philippians 3:7-12**.

But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. (ESV, emphasis

supplied).

This is what Spirit-focused single-mindedness looks like. The Holy Spirit inside us has the power to break the cycle of sin in our lives. Meditate on **Romans 6**. When Paul says to "present yourselves" he is stating what Ellen White says above, "Lord, take my heart...."

Then, we have chosen to deal with our sin by the Spirit. We are being emptied, humbled to the point where we recognize that without Him we can do nothing. It's the experience outlined in Romans 7.

As you meditate on **Romans 7**, have you known this experience and found liberation from a double-minded condition?

The person in Romans 7 abhors being a double-minded man. He wants to do God's will, approves of it but lacks the ability to attain it. He grieves over sin and senses helplessness. He recognizes brokenness within. **Romans 8** shows what's possible in the Spirit.

The answer as to whether the person in **Romans 7** is an unconverted Jew/Gentile or a converted Christian is—it could be either. It is a person under conviction that s/he cannot reach the victorious life in her/his own strength. Desire, effort, in the flesh is impotent.

Even after conversion, there are periods of wrestling against sin. The deeper sins, pride, envy, jealousy, greed, control, take, for many, a lifetime to overcome. But you can reach brokenness sooner than later. Brokenness, a spirit of humility and meekness before God, is not a once-broken, always broken experience. The Spirit needs to nurture it in us on a daily, all day, experience with God, but it is peace.

I don't know of anyone that has come to a deep experience with God that hasn't gone through an emptying process, always involving necessary suffering and loss for the greater prize of knowing Christ.

Jesus repeatedly warned His disciples that He was going to be crucified but their pride wouldn't accept that. At the end, they couldn't accept they were going to abandon Him. Peter wouldn't accept that he would deny Him three times.

The Bible and experiences of Christians through time are provided to make our entry and passage to a deeper walk possible, with less tragic pain and sorrow. The crises in life will come for we are in the midst of a battle with good and evil. We can ignore the need to be emptied of self, like Laodicea, or we can say, "truth Lord, empty me. Come in and sup with me!" I prefer that to the emptying process Nebuchadnezzar went through (**Dan. 4**).

Accepting the Call to be Filled

The call to be filled is found in various verses. Here are a few.

Rom. 15:13, May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

Eph. 3:16-19, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (to page 9)

Anniversaries & Birthdays		
Anniversaries		
Ray & Gail Lessman		5/11
Uche & Jade Sampson		5/19
Mike & Carol Bibee		5/21
Birthdays		
Curtis Hite	5/1 Lauren Andal	5/17
Elijah Kabia	5/4 Elan DeGroat	5/20
J. Terry Livingston	5/5 Mike Hite	5/27

By Mel Poole, courtesy Unsplash

Inspiration (end) (from page 3)
 amongst us who do truly love and adore Him, so few who really “stir themselves up to take hold of God” (Isa. lxiv. 7). Surely there is nothing so absolutely astonishing as a practically prayerless Christian? These are eventful and ominous days. In fact, there are many evidences that these are “the last days” in which God promised to pour out His Spirit — the Spirit of supplication — upon all flesh (Joel ii. 28).”



The *Kneeling Christian* is available in both print and E-formats from a variety of sources. I would encourage you to get it. May your intercession be stirred by His Spirit. The times demand it.

Bible Study (end) (from page 8)

Eph. 4:10 He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.

Eph 5:18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit. (NASB, 1995).

Christians throughout history have written defining their experience of emptying and filling. I regard this process as a discipline, like a trade. It is part of a spiritual trade we have to learn, just as any profession has its knowledge & training base one has to master to be skilled. So, as His disciples, we are called to follow in His steps. It is our calling to be like Him, and that cannot be accomplished without being emptied and filled. As F. B. Meyer entreats:

God cannot fill us if we are already filled. It took ten days to drain the apostles, even though they had spent three years under the immediate tuition¹ of Christ. But the emptying process was an indispensable preliminary to the day of Pentecost. For Elijah, this process went on beside the drying brook and during the long and dreary march to Zarephath and throughout his sojourn there. It apparently took three years and six months. It was a long and weary waiting time, but it was well spent. As he became emptied of self, self-sufficiency, and self-dependence he became more and more filled with the Spirit of power so that Carmel itself, with all its heroic deeds, was gloriously possible to him. F. B. Meyer, *Elijah and the Secret of His Power*, Chapter 4, Subsection, “We Must Be Emptied,” paragraph 1.

Meyer is explaining an important truth of our calling, termed typology. A type is a pattern or model in Scrip-

ture that a Christian can expect, or Someone we need, to pattern after—to live like; or an event we can expect to repeat, not always exactly, but similar enough to know it is from God. It fits the pattern, the type.

Bible types were a living Bible for their generation. Abraham, a type of Christ, was called to live in such a fashion so as to reflect the character of Christ. Each type, person, God called, would be a reflection of Christ’s character so that when God sent His Son into the world men might know, not by prophecy alone, but by how He lived that He truly was the Savior of the world. Jesus was the fulfillment, the Antitype². These prior types all had similar behavior, morals, lifestyle. Each one had bonded to Christ & reflected Him, even though separated by centuries.

Elijah’s experience is a type to what Jesus’ disciples went through & the Bible predicts we can expect the same, especially for the last day remnant, the antitype of Elijah and John the Baptist. Meyer asks,

Are we willing to pay this price? Are we prepared for God to empty us of all that is in the anywise contrary to his will? Are we content to be empty and broken vessels, that the river, in whose bed we lie, may easily flow through us? If not, let us ask Him to work in us to will His own good pleasure — plunging the cold, stubborn iron into the glowing furnace of His grace until it can be bent into perfect conformity to His own glorious will. But if we are willing, let us present our emptied nature to the Son of God, that He may fill us with the fullness of the Spirit. Let us also believe that He does fill us, as soon as we yield ourselves to Him. You do not want more of Him more urgently than He wants more of you, and the one is the condition of the other (James 4:5 RV). Grace, like nature, abhors a vacuum. Just as the cold, fresh air will rush in to fill an exhausted receiver as soon as it has a chance to enter, so does the grace of the Holy Spirit enter the heart that can boast of nothing but an aching void. There may be no ecstasy, no rushing wind, no fiery baptism; but nevertheless, “the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his Temple” (Malachi 3:1) in floods of silent and golden light. “Thus saith the LORD, Make this valley full of ditches. For thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water.” (2 Kings 3:16-17). Ibid. para. 2.

The promise is for us. Paul in 2 Cor. 3:2-3, says the church is to be a live gospel letter to its community.

You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on our³ hearts, to be known and read by all. And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. (ESV).

That will happen for the last day church. Their past sins are blotted out, emptied, new pages are written, filled with the Spirit of Christ. It’s our future, it can be our present. We are called to be the antitypical single-minded remnant in Christ.

Now, every day, we are being read. May our personal newsletter to family, friends, neighbors, workmates be filled with the undiluted Spirit of Christ till He comes for us.



Bible Study End Notes

¹Tuition also means “teaching,” especially of small groups.
²Antitype is a fulfillment of a type, or a copy of a type (cf. Mal. 4:5-6). “Anti,” thus, means “in place of, instead of” in Greek. See 1 Peter 3:21, NKJV. Note how other versions have translated the Greek, ἀντιτυπον (see also Heb. 9:24).
³Some manuscripts have “your.”

Ministry of Intercession

By Ellen G. White

“The Power of Persevering Prayer”

Our Prayers Are to Be Earnest and Persistent—

God does not say, Ask once, and you shall receive. He bids us ask. Unwearily persist in prayer. The persistent asking brings the petitioner into a more earnest attitude, and gives him an increased desire to receive the things for which he asks. Christ said to Martha at the grave of Lazarus, “If thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God.” John 11:40.

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.

Our prayers are to be as earnest and persistent as was the petition of the needy friend who asked for the loaves at midnight. The more earnestly and steadfastly we ask, the closer will be our spiritual union with

Lord too soon. Press your petitions to the throne, and hold on by strong faith. The promises are sure. Believe ye receive the things ye ask for, and ye shall have them.” I was then pointed to Elijah. He was subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly. His faith endured the trial. Seven times he

prayed before the Lord, and at last the cloud was seen. I saw that we had doubted the sure promises, and wounded the Savior by our lack of faith. Said the angel, “Gird the armor about thee, and above all take the shield of faith; for that will guard the heart, the very life, from the fiery darts of the wicked.” If the enemy can lead the desponding to take their eyes off from Jesus, and look to themselves, and dwell upon their own unworthiness, instead of dwelling upon the worthiness of Jesus, His love, His merits, and His great mercy, he will get away their shield of faith and gain his object; they will be exposed to his fiery temptations. The weak should therefore look to Jesus, and believe in Him; they then exercise faith.—(*Early Writings*, 73.)

Persist Unwearily in Prayer—

When a man breathes an intensely earnest prayer to God (Jesus Christ is the only name given under heaven whereby we can be saved), there is in that intensity and earnestness a pledge from God that He is about to answer that prayer exceeding abundantly, above all that we can ask or think. We must not only pray in the name of Jesus, but by the inspiration and kindling of the Holy Spirit. This explains what is meant when it is said, “the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings which can not be uttered.” The petitions must be offered in earnest faith. Then they will reach the mercy-seat. Unwearily persist in prayer. God does not say, Pray once, and I will answer you. His word is pray, be instant in prayer, believing ye have the things ye ask, and ye shall receive them; I will answer you.—(*The Gospel Herald*, May 28, 1902). . . .

Prevailing Prayer Does Not Have to Include Tears and Struggles—

There are many souls who wrestle for special victories and special blessings that they may do some great thing. To this end they are always feeling that they must make an agonizing struggle in prayer and tears. When these persons search the Scriptures with prayer to know the expressed will of God, and then do His will from the heart without one reservation or self-indulgence, they will find rest. All the agonizing, all the tears and struggles, will not bring them the blessing they long for. Self must be entirely surrendered. They must do the work that presents itself, appropriating the abundance of the grace of God which is promised to all who ask in faith.—(*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9:165.)

Excerpts from the compilation, *Prayer*, pages 61-64.



Christ. We shall receive increased blessings because we have increased faith. Our part is to pray and believe. Watch unto prayer. Watch, and co-operate with the prayer-hearing God. Bear in mind that “we are laborers together with God.” 1 Corinthians 3:9. Speak and act in harmony with your prayers. It will make an infinite difference with you whether trial shall prove your faith to be genuine, or show that your prayers are only a form.—(*Christ’s Object Lessons*, 145, 146.)

Earnest Prayer Avails Much—

That prayer which comes forth from an earnest, believing heart is the effectual, fervent prayer that avaleth much. God does not always answer our prayers as we [72] expect, for we may not ask what would be for our highest good; but in His infinite love and wisdom He will give us those things which we most need.—(*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4:531.)

Do Not Let Go of God’s Arm Too Soon—

I asked the angel why there was no more faith and power in Israel. He said, “Ye let go of the arm of the