

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

### Second Quarter 2026: *Growing in a Relationship With God*

#### Lesson 1 “Reality Check”

#### Read for this week’s study

Revelation 3:14–22; Revelation 4:9–11; Genesis 2:7; Genesis 3:8–10; Jeremiah 31:3, 4; John 15:1–11; Romans 8:9–11.

#### Memory Text

“ ‘As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love’ ” (John 15:9, NKJV).

#### Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Our Condition
- III. Rebuke, Repent, and Reward
- IV. Everlasting Love
- V. Abide
- VI. The Sap
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

##### Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. One’s relationship with God and the picture of God that one has impact everything in life; one’s marriage, one’s parenting, one’s friendships, one’s financial decisions, one’s choice of leisure activities, one’s aspirations, and, of course, one’s eternal destiny. For a change, this series of lessons is not written by a biblical or theological scholar, they are written by an educator and a mother who is best-known for writing religious curricula for the high school level. So these lessons are not technical Bible studies, as has often been the case in the past, but approach the topic experientially. (Introduction to Quarter)
2. The author suggests that our spiritual race is a marathon, not a sprint. What can we learn from this analogy? (Introduction to Quarter)
3. What are the things that need to happen in order to have a relationship with someone? How can you have a living relationship with God when you cannot see, hear, or touch Him? (Sabbath Afternoon)

4. Have you ever wondered what Jesus might say if He described your relationship with Him right now? The author suggests that Revelation 3:14-22 is pertinent to that question. There Jesus describes the church of Laodicea, which Adventists have understood to apply to them. Read Revelation 3:14-17. Is Jesus analysis here individual or institutional? What is the key issue in this passage? (Sunday)
5. What advice does Jesus give in Revelation 3:18-19? (Sunday)
6. Read Revelation 3:20. What is Jesus inviting the church to do and what implications does that have? How does one open the door spiritually? (Monday)
7. In spite of the wretched condition of Laodicea, she is offered that greatest of all the rewards for overcoming. Read Revelation 3:21. What do the following accounts tell us about how God relates to human beings (Gen 2:7; 3:8-10; 5:24; 6:13; 12:1-4; Exod 34:29)? What would you say are the biggest hindrances to a relationship with God? (Tuesday)
8. Read John 15:1-11. Who are the branches in this metaphor? How do John 20:29-31 and 17:20 help to clarify this point? What implications does the vine and branches metaphor have for our relationship with God? How can you have a living relationship with God when you cannot see, hear, or touch Him? (Wednesday and Thursday)
9. Can you identify life events that led to a lukewarm experience with God? How did it and what brought you out of that condition? (Friday)

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Surely it's clear in the epistle to Rome that all that God asks of us is that we trust him, because if we trust him, without reservation, with no cheating, with a complete willingness to listen, he can heal and save and restore us. But if I'm forever violating that trust, that relationship with him, if sometimes I'll listen and sometimes I don't, sometimes I'm honest with him and sometimes I'm not, will he condemn me? Do you doctors condemn your patients who are foolish enough not to take their medicine and so become more and more seriously ill? Now you might correct them; that's for sure. You might show great concern. You might, if need be, sound very stern and severe. You might read them the medical equivalent of the third angel's message. "If you persist in this, you're going to die." You might well do that. But you wouldn't condemn them, would you? What good would it do to send them home, corrected to be sure, but condemned and humiliated?

Whenever we violate our relationship of trust in God, he can't trust us. Sometimes we're with him, sometimes we're not, it's a very irregular relationship. Sometimes we're so honest and sometimes we cheat, we're looking for alibis, we're always rationalizing. He cannot heal us, and we lose. This is a rebellious, untrusting, untrustworthy relationship. And that's why sin is so

dangerous. That's why sin results in death, not because our heavenly Father and physician will kill us, but the man who doesn't trust God, the man who's cheating will reap the consequences. He will die, for God cannot heal this person who doesn't trust him.

And I think this is such a correction to the definition so often used, sin is just breaking this or that rule, and you know what God does to sinners. This suggests that breaking our trusting relationship with God is the most dangerous thing we can do. The consequences are very disastrous both in this life and in the end, but not at the hands of our gracious God. If we persist in cheating, he will let us go and reap the consequences. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 14, recorded January 1978, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/27MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/28MMROMANS66> Part 2)

### **Further Study with Ellen White**

When the mind of man is brought into communion with the mind of God, the finite with the Infinite, the effect on body and mind and soul is beyond estimate. In such communion is found the highest education. It is God's own method of development. "Acquaint now thyself with Him" (Job 22:21), is His message to mankind. {AA 126.1}

Through belief in Satan's misrepresentation of God, man's character and destiny were changed, but if men will believe in the Word of God, they will be transformed in mind and character, and fitted for eternal life. To believe that "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), will change the heart, and reproduce in man the image of God. {1SM 346.1}

The leaven hidden in the flour works invisibly to bring the whole mass under its leavening process; so the leaven of truth works secretly, silently, steadily, to transform the soul. The natural inclinations are softened and subdued. New thoughts, new feelings, new motives, are implanted. A new standard of character is set up—the life of Christ. The mind is changed; the faculties are roused to action in new lines. Man is not endowed with new faculties, but the faculties he has are sanctified. The conscience is awakened. We are endowed with traits of character that enable us to do service for God. {COL 98.3}

Faith is the medium through which truth or error finds a lodging place in the mind. It is by the same act of mind that truth or error is received, but it makes a decided difference whether we believe the Word of God or the sayings of men. When Christ revealed Himself to Paul, and he was convinced that he was persecuting Jesus in the person of His saints, he accepted the truth as it is in Jesus. A transforming power was manifested on mind and character, and he became a

new man in Christ Jesus. He received the truth so fully that neither earth nor hell could shake his faith. {1SM 346.3}

When the will is placed on the Lord's side, the Holy Spirit takes that will and makes it one with the divine will. {OHC 104.4}

The omnipotent power of the Holy Spirit is the defense of every contrite soul. Not one that in penitence and faith has claimed His protection will Christ permit to pass under the enemy's power. The Saviour is by the side of His tempted and tried ones. With Him there can be no such thing as failure, loss, impossibility, or defeat; we can do all things through Him who strengthens us. When temptations and trials come, do not wait to adjust all the difficulties, but look to Jesus, your helper. {DA 490.5}

Christ came to reveal God to the world as a God of love, full of mercy, tenderness, and compassion. The thick darkness with which Satan had endeavored to enshroud the throne of Deity was swept away by the world's Redeemer, and the Father was again manifest to men as the light of life. {5T 738.4}

The same divine mind that is working upon the things of nature is speaking to the hearts of men and creating an inexpressible craving for something they have not. The things of the world cannot satisfy their longing. The Spirit of God is pleading with them to seek for those things that alone can give peace and rest—the grace of Christ, the joy of holiness. Through influences seen and unseen, our Saviour is constantly at work to attract the minds of men from the unsatisfying pleasures of sin to the infinite blessings that may be theirs in Him. To all these souls, who are vainly seeking to drink from the broken cisterns of this world, the divine message is addressed, "Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 22:17. {SC 28.1}

The parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son, bring out in distinct lines God's pitying love for those who are straying from Him. Although they have turned away from God, He does not leave them in their misery. He is full of kindness and tender pity toward all who are exposed to the temptations of the artful foe. {COL 198.1}

In His plan of government there is no employment of brute force to compel the conscience. The Jews looked for the kingdom of God to be established in the same way as the kingdoms of the world. To promote righteousness they resorted to external measures. They devised methods and plans. But Christ implants a principle. By implanting truth and righteousness, He counterworks error and sin. {COL 77.1}

Today the truths of Scripture are to be brought before the great men of the world in order that they may choose between obedience to God's law and allegiance to the prince of evil. God sets everlasting truth before them—truth that will make them wise unto salvation, but He does not

force them to accept it. If they turn from it, He leaves them to themselves, to be filled with the fruit of their own doings. {AA 241.2}

It is no part of Christ's mission to compel men to receive Him. It is Satan, and men actuated by his spirit, who seek to compel the conscience. Under a pretense of zeal for righteousness, men who are confederated with evil angels sometimes bring suffering upon their fellow men in order to convert them to their ideas of religion; but Christ is ever showing mercy, ever seeking to win by the revealing of His love. He can admit no rival in the soul, nor accept of partial service; but He desires only voluntary service, the willing surrender of the heart under the constraint of love. {AA 541.1}

God never compels the obedience of man. He leaves all free to choose whom they will serve. {PK 510.4}

All heaven took a deep and joyful interest in the creation of the world and of man. Human beings were a new and distinct order. They were made "in the image of God," and it was the Creator's design that they should populate the earth (RH Feb. 11, 1902). {1BC 1081.3}

Christ does not drive but draws men unto Him. The only compulsion which He employs is the constraint of love. {MB 127.1}

Though now He has ascended to the presence of God, and shares the throne of the universe, Jesus has lost none of His compassionate nature. Today the same tender, sympathizing heart is open to all the woes of humanity. Today the hand that was pierced is reached forth to bless more abundantly His people that are in the world. "And they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." The soul that has given himself to Christ is more precious in His sight than the whole world. The Saviour would have passed through the agony of Calvary that one might be saved in His kingdom. He will never abandon one for whom He has died. Unless His followers choose to leave Him, He will hold them fast. {DA 480.5}

God would not have us remain pressed down by dumb sorrow, with sore and breaking hearts. He would have us look up and behold His dear face of love. The blessed Saviour stands by many whose eyes are so blinded by tears that they do not discern Him. He longs to clasp our hands, to have us look to Him in simple faith, permitting Him to guide us. His heart is open to our griefs, our sorrows, and our trials. He has loved us with an everlasting love and with loving-kindness compassed us about. We may keep the heart stayed upon Him and meditate upon His loving-kindness all the day. He will lift the soul above the daily sorrow and perplexity, into a realm of peace. {MB 12.2}

Jesus presented the Father as one to whom we could give our confidence and present our wants. When we are in terror of God, and overwhelmed with the thought of His glory and majesty, the Father points us to Christ as His representative. What you see revealed in Jesus, of tenderness, compassion, and love, is the reflection of the attributes of the Father. The cross of

Calvary reveals to man the love of God. Christ represents the Sovereign of the universe as a God of love. By the mouth of the prophet He said, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee" (Jeremiah 31:3). {HP 18.3}

In the matchless gift of His Son, God has encircled the whole world with an atmosphere of grace as real as the air which circulates around the globe. All who choose to breathe this life-giving atmosphere will live and grow up to the stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. {SC 68.1}

By beholding Jesus we receive a living, expanding principle in the heart, and the Holy Spirit carries on the work, and the believer advances from grace to grace, from strength to strength, from character to character. He conforms to the image of Christ, until in spiritual growth he attains unto the measure of the full stature in Christ Jesus. Thus Christ makes an end of the curse of sin, and sets the believing soul free from its action and effect. {1SM 395.1}

The promise of the Holy Spirit is not limited to any age or to any race. Christ declared that the divine influence of His Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end. From the Day of Pentecost to the present time, the Comforter has been sent to all who have yielded themselves fully to the Lord and to His service. To all who have accepted Christ as a personal Saviour, the Holy Spirit has come as a counselor, sanctifier, guide, and witness. The more closely believers have walked with God, the more clearly and powerfully have they testified of their Redeemer's love and of His saving grace. The men and women who through the long centuries of persecution and trial enjoyed a large measure of the presence of the Spirit in their lives, have stood as signs and wonders in the world. Before angels and men they have revealed the transforming power of redeeming love. {AA 49.2}

At all times and in all places, in all sorrows and in all afflictions, when the outlook seems dark and the future perplexing, and we feel helpless and alone, the Comforter will be sent in answer to the prayer of faith. Circumstances may separate us from every earthly friend; but no circumstance, no distance, can separate us from the heavenly Comforter. Wherever we are, wherever we may go, He is always at our right hand to support, sustain, uphold, and cheer. {DA 669.4}

God has provided divine assistance for all the emergencies to which our human resources are unequal. He gives the Holy Spirit to help in every strait, to strengthen our hope and assurance, to illuminate our minds and purify our hearts. He provides opportunities and opens channels of working. If His people are watching the indications of His providence, and are ready to cooperate with Him, they will see mighty results. {PK 660.3}

God does not ask us to do in our own strength the work before us. He has provided divine assistance for all the emergencies to which our human resources are unequal. He gives the Holy Spirit to help in every strait, to strengthen our hope and assurance, to illuminate our minds and purify our hearts. {8T 19.1}

The Holy Spirit never leaves unassisted the soul who is looking unto Jesus. He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto him. If the eye is kept fixed on Christ, the work of the Spirit ceases not until the soul is conformed to His image. The pure element of love will expand the soul, giving it a capacity for higher attainments, for increased knowledge of heavenly things, so that it will not rest short of the fullness. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." {DA 302.1}

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

### Second Quarter 2026: *Growing in a Relationship With God*

#### Lesson 2 “To Know God”

#### Read for this week’s study

Genesis 3:1–5; Leviticus 20:26; 1 Samuel 2:2; 1 John 4:7–19; Genesis 1:1; Genesis 2:7; Matthew 1:23; Matthew 28:20.

#### Memory Text

“ ‘And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent’ ” (John 17:3, NKJV).

#### Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. A Clearer Picture of God
- III. God Is Holy
- IV. God Is Love
- V. God in Creation
- VI. Immanuel, God With Us
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

##### Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. The theme of this lesson is expressed in John 17:3: Eternal life is to know God through Jesus Christ. Having a clear understanding of God’s character is, of course, foundational to having a strong relationship with God. With that in mind, this lesson explores what the Bible says about the character of God, keeping in mind that it “is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy, and truth. . . . The last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love.”—Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 415. (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)

2. In the previous lesson we asked how it is possible to have a living relationship with Someone you can't see, hear or touch? By way of review, how would you answer that question? (Sunday's Lesson)
3. When it comes to our picture of God, theologians offer six major options: Naturalism, Pantheism, Deism, Determinism, Appeasement Theism, and Benevolent Theism. In preparation for the lesson discussion, do a little research on the meaning of those and their implications for what God is like.
4. Read Genesis 3:1-5. What was Lucifer's goal in his conversation with Eve? What lies did he tell Eve about God? How is God's character misrepresented in today's world? (Sunday's Lesson)
5. Holiness is not a word that people use very often today, but it is a word frequently associated with God's character in the Bible. Read Leviticus 20:26, 1 Samuel 2:2, and Isaiah 57:15. What do these texts tell us about the meaning of holiness? (Monday's Lesson)
6. Human ways of defining love are very much distorted and imperfect. How does Paul define love? Read Philippians 2:3-8 and 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. What do they tell us about love? How do these texts expand your understanding of God's character? (Tuesday's Lesson)
7. Compare the descriptions of God in Genesis 1:1 and 2:7. What difference do you notice? Is that significant in any way? (Wednesday's Lesson)
8. In John 14:9 the disciples are told that if they have seen Jesus, they have seen the Father. What did the disciples see? Read John 13:3-5. (Thursday's Lesson)
9. What is the meaning of Jesus' special name in Matthew 1:23? In Matthew, if something is worth saying, it's worth saying twice, or even three times (cf. Matt 18:20; 28:8-20). (Thursday's Lesson)
10. We probably all fail to thank God for so many good gifts in our lives. What strategies have you employed to encourage thankfulness and praise in your life? (Thursday's Lesson)
11. Ellen White highlight quote on the love of God: "All the paternal love which has come down from generation to generation through the channel of human hearts, all the springs of tenderness which have opened in the souls of men, are but as a tiny rill to the boundless ocean when compared with the infinite, exhaustless love of God. Tongue cannot utter it; pen cannot portray it. You may meditate upon it every day of your life; you may search the Scriptures diligently in order to understand it; you may summon every power and capability that God has given you, in the endeavor to comprehend the love and compassion of the heavenly Father; and yet there is an infinity beyond. You may study that love for ages; yet you can never fully comprehend the length and the breadth, the depth and the height, of the love of God in giving His Son to die for the world. Eternity itself can never fully reveal it. Yet as we study the Bible and meditate upon the life of Christ and the plan of

redemption, these great themes will open to our understanding more and more.”—  
Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 740. (Friday’s Lesson)

12. What attribute of God’s character has made the biggest impact on your life?  
(Friday’s Lesson)

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Lou: Well, in this connection someone has already asked: “How can you really have a conversation about God? After all, how can we really know God? Take Paul’s statement in Romans 3:11: ‘How unsearchable are His judgments. How inscrutable are His ways,’ the *Revised Standard Version* translates it. If that’s the case, who are we to question? God is sovereign, so why should we be sitting here having conversations about God?”

Graham: Ah, who are we to question the inscrutable ways of God? And that’s in Romans. But I notice in Romans 1, Paul says (in my words), “You’re without excuse if you don’t know God.” So on the principle of taking the Bible as a whole, and not “here a little and there a little,” I would have to put Romans 1 alongside Romans 9 and the other places.

I think when he’s saying God’s thoughts are so far above ours, that is a reverent recognition that God is infinite. Think of all He knows! We’ll never fully understand God; we’re mere creatures. And at times we need to be reminded of His infinite superiority. But then it’s marvelous that the Infinite One would want to be known.

All through the Bible He says, “Israel is destroyed because they don’t know Me,” and “I’ve come to this earth that you may know Me.” So it’s pretty clear God wants to be known. But we shouldn’t pretend we’re gods who could know everything that He knows.

Lou: So we ought not to use that idea of God’s sovereignty, and so on, as an excuse to not think about Him. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #1 with Lou Venden, “The Conflict in God’s Family” recorded January 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:*  
<http://pkp.cc/1MMCAG>

Take “to know God.” What’s the difference between really knowing God and really trusting Him? Look for example, at John 17:3: “And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” (RSV) As we discussed last time, in the Bible to really **know** someone is to love him, trust him, admire him, to be his friend. That word is even used for the intimacy between a husband and his wife. To really know God is to trust Him, to

love Him and admire Him. I can hear God saying, “If only My children really trusted Me. If they only really knew Me. If they only really loved Me. If they were only willing to listen, and let Me help them. If they would only turn around and come back and stay with Me, and choose to stay forever, I could perfectly heal all the damage done. Everything would be right again. And we could keep it right forever.” Now that’s the whole list, if you want to put it in simple terms.

I often hear God saying in the Bible, “How I wish My children could be My friends once again. And they could see Me as being their friend. And then all would be well.” Can you name anything that would be left out if we, once again, really were God’s loving, trusting, admiring friends? Is there anything He couldn’t do if we honestly regarded Him that way?

Now the Bible describes one such friend. And what an honor in the Bible to be so listed. Moses was such a friend. And he’s described in Exodus 33:11, 17. Let’s look at just a little of it:

The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend. . . . And the Lord said to Moses, “I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name.” (NIV)

You see how being a friend is the same as being known? And I think trust is being loved, and all those other things.

Now surely such trust, and such friendship with our God is no “leap in the dark,” as some people describe faith. Does God ask us to gamble when we trust Him? Has God left us in the dark? Surely we have been warned that it is not safe to trust someone we do not know. And God doesn’t ask us to trust Him as a stranger. Romans 10:17 is another key text we all know so well. Where does this trust come from? “So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ.” (RSV) Or some manuscripts say “the word of God.” And it’s the same in effect, isn’t it? “Faith comes from what is heard” because they didn’t have copies of the Bible, or Bible Reference Sheets the way we do. They had to go and listen as the scriptures were read. And as they listened they heard the truth. They heard the evidence. And some were won to repentance and to trust, particularly when they heard the truth revealed by the Son of God Himself. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #3, “All God Asks Is Trust” recorded January 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/3MMCAG>*

So if we desire to know God, and learn the answers to the questions in the Great Controversy; if we want to see Christ; if we want to be open to the work of the Holy Spirit; if we want to let Him lead us into truth; there is only one way, and that is to read the Bible. As we read all sixty-six books we will discover how true that last verse is: Hebrews 1:1:

In many [very many] and various [very various] ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets [you see that is demonstrating in many and various ways over a long period of time, and under a great variety of circumstances; that's what Hebrews 1:1 is saying. In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets], but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son [or by His Son]. (RSV)

You don't find claims in there. You find demonstration, over many centuries of time and certainly under a great variety of circumstances. The very length of the sixty-six books speaks well of our God. The very existence of the Bible says that God is not trying to lead us to trust Him without evidence. If God offered us only claims, the Bible would be only a paragraph long. How moving it is to us to realize that the Infinite One has chosen to win His family by being a humble teacher. By stooping to meet us where we are, speaking a language we can understand, leading us no faster than we are able to follow, and running grave risks of being misunderstood—especially when we are so noisy that He has to raise His voice to get our attention, and then tell us that He does not like to raise His voice at all! A teacher like that could be trusted. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #4, "God's Way of Restoring Trust" recorded February 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/4MMCAG>*

Do we need to fear how Jesus will treat us in the hereafter, if He would treat Simon that way? Even people who couldn't be saved and did not become His followers. Look at those Pharisees who brought that poor woman. Look how He treated them. How did He treat Judas? You remember when Judas went to betray his Lord? Jesus had so covered for him that the other disciples thought he'd gone to make an offering to feed the poor. Now, that's how Jesus covered for Judas. And there are many more stories like this. This is the clearest evidence the universe will ever see, or ever need, as to the kind of person our God is. And what I like is, it's not so much in words as it is a description. It's stories. That's why it's such a shame to collect the key texts, the statements, and skip the stories. "The stories are for the children." The stories are the evidence. The recounting of the story of the woman taken in adultery, the story in the upper room, and the story here of the woman who anointed His feet. It's the stories that are such compelling evidence, and based on that evidence, we have the statements that God is love, and so on.

That statement that God is love doesn't mean too much apart from stories like this. Love covers a multitude of sins, and so on, it says. Well, watch Him do it! We can count on it. In the hereafter, we have no need to fear the infinite memory of God. However, it does also mean that no one could be safely admitted to the hereafter who could not be entrusted with the

memory of other people's sins, and treat them with all due respect. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Intertestament Period & Matthew, recorded March 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/51MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/52MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

I wonder if tonight we could think back in imagination to the very dramatic events of that first week of this earth's history. The war had begun already up in heaven. Satan had already leveled his charges and his accusations. One-third of the angels had already agreed with him that God is not worthy of our love and our trust.

Right in the middle of that devastating crisis, God invites His family to watch Him as He creates yet another world—this time, ours. How easily He could have created our world with a snap of His fingers, in just an instant of time. But in the dramatic and significant setting of The Great Controversy, He chose, this time, to do it in six twenty-four hour days. On the first day, all He said was, "Let there be light." That's all. And then days two, three, four, and five, God in unhurried majesty and drama unfolded His plans for our earth. By the sixth day, what a beautiful place this was. Where now were Satan's charges that God was selfish?

I mean, look at the freedom. He created us in His own image with power to think and to do. And we know from human history that He created us free to either love and trust Him, or hate Him and spit in His face, because it has been done. He created us able to do it. God even allowed Satan to approach our first parents at the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. And He didn't hide that tree in some dark corner of the garden; He put it right in the middle near the Tree of Life, so that Adam and Even would see it every time they came to that other tree. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #10, "The Reminder of the Evidence" recorded March 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/10MMCAG>

And I think that Paul's great concern here in Colossians is that the one who came to clear up all the questions about God was God Himself, or our questions have not really been answered. Because our questions are not about the second in command. They're not about an angel. Our questions are about God. So those who believe that someone less than God came have either different questions or they don't have the answers.

But if we really want to know about God, what God is really like, then it would mean everything in the world to believe and understand that the one who came to this earth and walked among

us was that God. And so, when Jesus was here, and we realize it's God, and you watch Him treat sinners so graciously, did anybody intercede with Jesus to forgive somebody? No. Nobody had to plead with Him to forgive, ever. It was in His heart to forgive. No one had to plead with Him. But somebody has to plead with the Father, right? If Jesus is fully God, as emphasized in all these passages, and nobody had to intercede with Him, then we know no one has to intercede with God. And yet they weren't getting that point. And so Jesus had to say, in John 16:26, "You know that if you've seen me, you've seen the Father. And you realize the implications of this? There's no need for me to intercede with the Father when I get up there, for the Father's just like me. In fact, I am God." {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Ephesians and Colossians, recorded May 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/67MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/67MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

### **Further Study with Ellen White**

God had power to hold Adam back from touching the forbidden fruit; but had He done this, Satan would have been sustained in his charge against God's arbitrary rule. Man would not have been a free moral agent, but a mere machine (RH June 4, 1901). {1BC 1084.2}

The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan's deceptive power was to be broken. This could not be done by force. The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world's dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, "with healing in His wings." Malachi 4:2. {DA 22.1}

The plan for our redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam. It was a revelation of "the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal." Romans 16:25, R. V. It was an unfolding of the principles that from eternal ages have been the foundation of God's throne. From the beginning, God and Christ knew of the apostasy of Satan, and of the fall of man through the deceptive power of the apostate. God did not ordain that sin should exist, but He foresaw its existence, and made provision to meet the terrible emergency. So great was His love for the world, that He covenanted to give His only-begotten Son, "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. {DA 22.2}

Holy angels often visited the garden, and gave instruction to Adam and Eve concerning their employment and also taught them concerning the rebellion and fall of Satan. The angels warned them of Satan and cautioned them not to separate from each other in their employment, for they might be brought in contact with this fallen foe. The angels also enjoined upon them to follow closely the directions God had given them, for in perfect obedience only were they safe. Then this fallen foe could have no power over them. {EW 147.1}

We are not to think of God only as a judge, and to forget him as our loving Father. Nothing can do our souls greater harm than this; for our whole spiritual life will be molded by our conceptions of God's character. {RH, April 5, 1887 par. 10}

Satan was artful in presenting his side of the question. As soon as he found that one position was seen in its true character, he changed it for another. Not so with God. He could work with only one class of weapons,—truth and righteousness. Satan could use what God could not,—crookedness and deceit. These are the very weapons that he uses in our day to make the truth of none effect. When the truth is presented to the people, it seems to many to be consistent and right; and if the enemy and his followers did not come in and oppose it by every means in their power, where there are now ten who take hold of it, there would be thousands. {RH, March 9, 1886 par. 6}

Today the truths of Scripture are to be brought before the great men of the world in order that they may choose between obedience to God's law and allegiance to the prince of evil. God sets everlasting truth before them—truth that will make them wise unto salvation, but He does not force them to accept it. If they turn from it, He leaves them to themselves, to be filled with the fruit of their own doings. {AA 241.2}

God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God's government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power. {DA 759.1}

God does not force the will of His creatures. He cannot accept an homage that is not willingly and intelligently given. A mere forced submission would prevent all real development of mind or character; it would make man a mere automaton. Such is not the purpose of the Creator. He desires that man, the crowning work of His creative power, shall reach the highest possible development. He sets before us the height of blessing to which He desires to bring us through His grace. He invites us to give ourselves to Him, that He may work His will in us. It remains for us to choose whether we will be set free from the bondage of sin, to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God. {AG 313.5}

The government of God is not, as Satan would make it appear, founded upon a blind submission, an unreasoning control. It appeals to the intellect and the conscience. "Come now, and let us reason together," is the Creator's invitation to the beings He has made. Isaiah 1:18. God does not force the will of His creatures. He can not accept an homage that is not willingly and intelligently given. {BTS, December 1, 1908 par. 5}

He desires that all the inhabitants of the universe shall be convinced of His justice in the final overthrow of rebellion and the eradication of sin. He purposes that the real nature and direful effects of sin shall be clearly manifested to the end that all may be assured of the wisdom and justice of the divine government. {BTS, December 1, 1908 par. 6}

Every manifestation of creative power is an expression of infinite love. The sovereignty of God involves fullness of blessing to all created beings. {PP 33.2}

The heart of Infinite Love yearns after those who feel powerless to free themselves from the snares of Satan; and He graciously offers to strengthen them to live for Him. "Fear thou not," He bids them; "for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee: yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness." . . . {CC 235.4}

In the councils of heaven it was decided that principles must be acted upon that would not at once destroy Satan's power, for it was His [God's] purpose to place things upon an eternal basis of security. . . . God's order must be contrasted with the new order after Satan's devising. The corrupting principles of Satan's rule must be revealed. The principles of righteousness expressed in God's law must be demonstrated as unchangeable, eternal, perfect.—*Manuscript 57, 1896 (Manuscript Releases, vol. 18, pp. 360, 361).* {CTr 13.6}

The character of God as revealed by Christ invites our faith and love, for we have a Father whose mercy and compassion fail not. At every step of our journey heavenward He will be with us to guide in every perplexity, to give us help in every temptation. {HP 16.4}

God has given us these precious things as an expression of His love. The Lord is a lover of the beautiful, and to please and gratify us He has spread before us the beauties of nature, even as an earthly parent seeks to place beautiful things before the children that he loves. The Lord is always pleased to see us happy. Sinful as it is with all its imperfections, the Lord has lavished upon this earth the useful and the beautiful. The beautiful tinted flowers tell of His tenderness and love. They have a language of their own, reminding us of the Giver. {TDG 241.3}

But not to any class is Christ's love restricted. He identifies Himself with every child of humanity. That we might become members of the heavenly family, He became a member of the earthly family. {DA 638.4}

God is love. Like rays of light from the sun, love and light and joy flow out from Him to all His creatures. It is His nature to give. His very life is the outflow of unselfish love. {MB 77.2}

God is love, God is life. It is the prerogative of God to redeem, reconstruct, and restore. {HP 291.2}

When Adam's sin plunged the race into hopeless misery, God might have cut Himself loose from fallen beings. He might have treated them as sinners deserve to be treated. He might have commanded the angels of heaven to pour out upon our world the vials of His wrath. He might have removed this dark blot from His universe. But He did not do this. Instead of banishing them from His presence, He came still nearer to the fallen race. He gave His Son to become bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. . . . {AG 176.4}

Christ, the Light of the world, veiled the dazzling splendor of His divinity and came to live as a man among men, that they might, without being consumed, become acquainted with their Creator. No man has seen God at any time except as He is revealed through Christ. {8T 265.2}

All heaven took a deep and joyful interest in the creation of the world and of man. Human beings were a new and distinct order. They were made "in the image of God," and it was the Creator's design that they should populate the earth (RH Feb. 11, 1902). {1BC 1081.3}

Next to the angelic beings, the human family, formed in "the image of God," are the noblest of His created works. {FLB 29.6}

God is a being, and man was made in His image. After God created man in His image, the form was perfect in all its arrangements, but it had no vitality. Then a personal, self-existing God breathed into that form the breath of life, and man became a living, breathing, intelligent being. All parts of the human machinery were put in motion. The heart, the arteries, the veins, the tongue, the hands, the feet, the perceptions of the mind, the senses, were placed under physical law. It was then that man became a living soul. {TDG 273.4}

By His life and His death, Christ has achieved even more than recovery from the ruin wrought through sin. It was Satan's purpose to bring about an eternal separation between God and man; but in Christ we become more closely united to God than if we had never fallen. In taking our nature, the Saviour has bound Himself to humanity by a tie that is never to be broken. {DA 25.3}

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

### Second Quarter 2026: *Growing in a Relationship With God*

#### Lesson 3 “Pride Versus Humility”

#### Read for this week’s study

1 John 2:15–17; Luke 18:9–14; 1 John 1:9; Hebrews 11:24–26; Luke 22:24–27; Philippians 2:3–8.

#### Memory Text

“ ‘For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted’ ”  
(Luke 14:11, NKJV).

#### Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Tight Fingers of Pride
- III. Know Yourself
- IV. Moses, Humble Servant
- V. The Greatest Offense
- VI. Look at Him
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

##### Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. This week’s lesson explores the impact that pride can have on our relationships with God and with others. It also looks at what the Bible teaches us about humility before others and, of course, before God. As this class will recognize, the path from pride to humility is a major theme of the stages of faith. This tells us that pride is not forsaken, or humility gained, by human effort. In both cases it is a process that God builds in us over time, and often with much suffering. (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. How would you define the word “pride”? Where does pride come from? What symptoms would enable you to detect pride in yourself or in others? (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
3. Pride first began with Lucifer. Compare his attitude with that exhibited by Jesus. Read Isaiah 14:12-14 and Philippians 2:3-8. What thoughts might this contrast bring to your mind? (Sunday’s Lesson)

4. Read 1 John 2:15-16. What is the difference between the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes? What does this text tell us about the origin of pride? Is there ever a time when pride is a positive thing in your life? (Sunday's Lesson)
5. Read Luke 18:9-14. If you could hear Jesus tell this parable back in Bible times, how would you look at it differently? What does this story have to do with pride and humility? Have you ever prayed for God to humble you? How did that turn out? Do you think that would be a good idea? (Monday's Lesson)
6. Stephen told the Sanhedrin that Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was mighty in words and deeds (Acts 7:22). Yet Moses chose the path of humility instead of pride (Num 12:3). Why do you think Moses chose that path (Heb 11:24-26)? Can you think of any other reasons why one would consider suffering for Christ greater wealth than "the treasures of Egypt"? (Tuesday's Lesson)
7. The lesson suggests at this point reviewing the song based on Hebrews 11: "I'd Rather Have Jesus". (Tuesday's Lesson)
8. Read Luke 22:24-27. The disciples were disputing among themselves as to who was the greatest. How did Jesus respond? Who is the ultimate standard of humility? (Wednesday's Lesson)
9. Read Psalm 138:6. How does this summarize the picture of God we have seen in this lesson? (Thursday's Lesson)
10. Summary of today's theme from the writings of Ellen G. White: "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. Those whom heaven recognizes as holy ones are the last to parade their own goodness." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 160.

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

We are dependent for healing on our Creator. If we're inclined to cheat, He cannot heal us. So He desires us to be really honest about ourselves. And Paul says we don't even know how to describe our symptoms. We don't know how to pray as we should. Well, the Spirit comes and helps us see the truth about ourselves, and say the truth about ourselves, and say, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner," like the publican. And then something good can happen. To be honest in our prayers, as David was in the Psalms. If he hated his neighbor, he didn't say, "Lord, do bless him." Because that's the image of a saint. He'd say, "God, I hate the man! But search me and see if there be any wicked way in me." You remember when we went through the Psalms. That's honesty with your physician. Honesty in prayer. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the

audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Hebrews, recorded July 1982, Riverside, California}  
*To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/73MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/74MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

### **Further Study with Ellen White**

Lucifer was enshrouded with glory as the covering cherub. Yet this angel whom God had created, and entrusted with power, became desirous of being as God. He gained the sympathy of some of his associates by suggesting thoughts of criticism regarding the government of God. This evil seed was scattered in a most seducing manner; and after it had sprung up and taken root in the minds of many, he gathered the ideas that he himself had first implanted in the minds of others, and brought them before the highest order of angels as the thoughts of other minds against the government of God. Thus, by ingenious methods of his own devising, Lucifer introduced rebellion in heaven. {4BC 1143.1}

God could employ only such means as were consistent with truth and righteousness. Satan could use what God could not—flattery and deceit. He had sought to falsify the word of God and had misrepresented His plan of government, claiming that God was not just in imposing laws upon the angels; that in requiring submission and obedience from His creatures, He was seeking merely the exaltation of Himself. It was therefore necessary to demonstrate before the inhabitants of heaven, and of all the worlds, that God's government is just, His law perfect. Satan had made it appear that he himself was seeking to promote the good of the universe. The true character of the usurper and his real object must be understood by all. He must have time to manifest himself by his wicked works. {PP 42.1}

Even when he was cast out of heaven, Infinite Wisdom did not destroy Satan. Since only the service of love can be acceptable to God, the allegiance of His creatures must rest upon a conviction of His justice and benevolence. The inhabitants of heaven and of the worlds, being unprepared to comprehend the nature or consequences of sin, could not then have seen the justice of God in the destruction of Satan. Had he been immediately blotted out of existence, some would have served God from fear rather than from love. The influence of the deceiver would not have been fully destroyed, nor would the spirit of rebellion have been utterly eradicated. For the good of the entire universe through ceaseless ages, he must more fully develop his principles, that his charges against the divine government might be seen in their true light by all created beings, and that the justice and mercy of God and the immutability of His law might be forever placed beyond all question. {PP 42.3}

What speech is to thought, so is Christ to the invisible Father. He is the manifestation of the Father, and is called the Word of God. God sent His Son into the world, His divinity clothed with

humanity, that man might bear the image of the invisible God. He made known in His words, His character, His power and majesty, the nature and attributes of God. Divinity flashed through humanity in softening, subduing light. He was the embodiment of the law of God, which is the transcript of His character (MS 77, 1899). {5BC 1131.6}

For our sake Jesus emptied Himself of His glory; He clothed His divinity with humanity that He might touch humanity, that His personal presence might be among us, that we might know that He was acquainted with all our trials, and sympathized with our grief, that every son and daughter of Adam might understand that Jesus is the friend of sinners (ST April 18, 1892). {7BC 927.1}

If the lilies of the field are objects upon which the great Master Artist has bestowed care, making them so beautiful that they outrival the glory of Solomon, the greatest king that ever wielded a scepter; if the grass of the field is made into a beautiful carpet for the earth, can we form any idea of the regard which God bestows upon man, who was formed in His image (Letter 4, 1896)? {5BC 1086.7}

And the same compassion that reached out to rescue Peter is extended to every soul who has fallen under temptation. It is Satan's special device to lead man into sin, and then leave him, helpless and trembling, fearing to seek for pardon. But why should we fear, when God has said, "Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me?" Isaiah 27:5. Every provision has been made for our infirmities, every encouragement offered us to come to Christ. {COL 156.1}

In the whole Satanic force there is not power to overcome one soul who in simple trust casts himself on Christ. {COL 157.3}

By prayer, by the study of His word, by faith in His abiding presence, the weakest of human beings may live in contact with the living Christ, and He will hold them by a hand that will never let go. {MH 182.1}

But forgiveness has a broader meaning than many suppose. When God gives the promise that He "will abundantly pardon," He adds, as if the meaning of that promise exceeded all that we could comprehend: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:7-9. God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness *for* sin, but reclaiming *from* sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10. And again he says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." Psalm 103:12. {MB 114.1}

To be pardoned in the way that Christ pardons is not only to be forgiven, but to be renewed in the spirit of our mind. The Lord says, "A new heart will I give unto thee." The image of Christ is to be stamped upon the very mind, and heart, and soul. The apostle says, "And we have the mind of Christ." {RC 303.4}

The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means that sin is taken away, and that the vacuum is filled with the Spirit. It means that the mind is divinely illumined, that the heart is emptied of self, and filled with the presence of Christ. {OHC 154.5}

In God's forgiveness the heart of the erring one is drawn close to the great heart of Infinite Love. The tide of divine compassion flows into the sinner's soul, and from him to the souls of others. The tenderness and mercy that Christ has revealed in His own precious life will be seen in those who become sharers of His grace. {COL 251.1}

In His life and lessons, Christ has given a perfect exemplification of the unselfish ministry which has its origin in God. God does not live for Himself. By creating the world, and by upholding all things, He is constantly ministering for others. "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Matthew 5:45. This ideal of ministry God has committed to His Son. Jesus was given to stand at the head of humanity, that by His example He might teach what it means to minister. His whole life was under a law of service. He served all, ministered to all. Thus He lived the law of God, and by His example showed how we are to obey it. {DA 649.4}

The divine command given to Moses found him self-distrustful, slow of speech, and timid. He was overwhelmed with a sense of his incapacity to be a mouthpiece for God to Israel. But having once accepted the work, he entered upon it with his whole heart, putting all his trust in the Lord. The greatness of his mission called into exercise the best powers of his mind. God blessed his ready obedience, and he became eloquent, hopeful, self-possessed, and well fitted for the greatest work ever given to man. This is an example of what God does to strengthen the character of those who trust Him fully and give themselves unreservedly to His commands. {PP 255.1}

In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve. In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself. True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan's control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God. {DA 466.4}

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. {5T 513.1}

God permits every human being to exercise his individuality. He desires no one to submerge his mind in the mind of a fellow mortal. Those who desire to be transformed in mind and character are not to look to men, but to the divine Example. God gives the invitation, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." By conversion and transformation men are to receive the mind of Christ. Every one is to stand before God with an individual faith, an individual experience, knowing for himself that Christ is formed within, the hope of glory. . . . {TMK 134.3}

Man's need for a divine teacher was known in heaven. The pity and sympathy of God were aroused in behalf of human beings, fallen and bound to Satan's chariot car; and when the fullness of time was come, He sent forth His Son. The One appointed in the councils of heaven came to this earth as man's instructor. The rich benevolence of God gave Him to our world, and to meet the necessities of human nature He took humanity upon Himself. To the astonishment of the heavenly host the eternal Word came to this world as a helpless babe. Fully prepared, He left the royal courts and mysteriously allied Himself with fallen human beings. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." John 1:14. {CT 259.2}

Christ undertook to redeem man and to rescue the world from the grasp of Satan. The great controversy begun in heaven was to be decided in the very world, on the very same field, that Satan claimed as his. {PP 69.2}

**Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes**  
**Second Quarter 2026: *Growing in a Relationship With God***  
**Lesson 4 “The Role of the Bible”**

**Read for this week’s study**

Lamentations 3:22, 23; 2 Timothy 3:15–17; John 17:17; Ephesians 1:13; Psalm 119:11;  
1 Corinthians 2:14.

**Memory Text**

“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12, NJKV).

**Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide**

- I. Introduction
- II. The Most Powerful Weapon
- III. Scripture, the Authority
- IV. Bible Truth
- V. Bible Claims
- VI. State of the Heart
- VII. Further Study

**Questions and Notes for Consideration**

**Facilitator: Jon Paulien**

1. According to the lesson for this week, if you have a desire to grow in your relationship with God, the best thing you can do is commit to spending quality time with Him daily praying, reading His inspired Word, and surrendering your will to what it teaches. Today’s lesson is about the role of the Bible in a relationship with God. Read Hebrews 4:12. What does this text tell us about the Bible? (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. “Satan employs every possible device to prevent men from obtaining a knowledge of the Bible; for its plain utterances reveal his deceptions.” GC 593. How do we make more time in our lives for God’s Word? (Sunday’s Lesson)

3. Read Lamentations 3:22-23. The beauty of a relationship with God is that even if we are up and down in the relationship, God is wonderfully constant. How does Jeremiah express this truth in Lamentations?
4. Read 2 Timothy 3:15-17. What does the Bible have to say about itself? Compare with 2 Peter 1:19-21. Are the words of the Bible inspired or the people who wrote the Bible inspired? Are there ways that lay people can study the Bible to achieve scholarly-level accuracy in their understanding of the Bible? (Monday's Lesson)
5. In popular culture these days, there is no measuring stick, no solid foundation that can be depended on. In contrast, notice the claims we find in Scripture (John 17:17; Proverbs 30:5-6; 1 Thess 2:13). Is it enough to embrace these claims intellectually or does our understanding need to go deeper? Hebrews 13:8 says that Jesus is the same, yesterday, today, and forever. (Tuesday's Lesson)
6. Ellen G. White grew up in the Methodist tradition. Methodists understand there to be four sources of truth: The Bible, tradition, reason, and experience. Among these four the Bible is the final word, to use Wesley's words, it has primacy. Is this a helpful analysis for the Adventist understanding of truth today? Many Adventists would ask, *Why would anyone need tradition, reason and experience if you already have the Bible?* (Tuesday's Lesson)
7. Read Psalm 119:11. What is David's advice in this verse and how might one follow it? The lesson asks, "What might change in your home if you turned to the Bible when faced with a big decision, relationship problem, or challenge? What might change in your workplace or church if the words of the Bible truly became the lens through which people chose to view the world? (Wednesday's Lesson)
8. Read 1 Corinthians 2:14. What does this verse mean to you? (Thursday's Lesson)
9. A good question to ask ourselves is, "What is the state of my heart and mind as I approach the Scriptures? What are some of the different mindsets people have when they read the Bible? (Thursday's Lesson)
10. If someone wanted to deepen their relationship with God, where would you advise them to start reading? (Friday's Lesson)

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Now where do we find this good news if not in the biblical record? But how does one read the Bible in order to learn the truth about God—to find the answers to our questions and whether or not He is worthy of our trust? Should we go through the book and collect statements, sometimes known as key texts? And I'm not going to make light of key texts; I wish I knew five thousand more! But key texts, statements, are claims. And God does not ask us to believe mere claims. God is love. God is this. God is that. Those are claims. Where is the evidence? The evidence is in between the key texts. The evidence is in the stories. And we adults do a very

strange thing. We collect the claims—and give the evidence to the children, and hope they understand how Samson, filled with the Holy Spirit, could kill a thousand men with the jawbone of an ass! We may not know what that means, but we hope the little dears will be able to understand it clearly.

Children are willing to accept statements and claims. “My daddy says, and I believe it.” As adults we demand evidence. As the children grow up they become more demanding of evidence. Why do we give the evidence to the children while we collect the claims? Give the claims to the children, and we take the stories back. It’s time that we read the stories that the children spend so much time telling to each other after hearing them in grade school or Sabbath school. The stories are the demonstration of the truth about our God. The key texts are the summaries of the meaning. They really are more like claims. ***So to know God better, to determine whether he is worthy of our trust, I believe as adults we have to read all sixty-six books and ask of every story, teaching, and event, what does this tell me about my God?*** {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from series, “Conversations About God”, #4 – *God’s Way Of Restoring Trust*, recorded February 1984}

### **Recommended Listening:**

Conversations About God #5 “The Record of the Evidence” is available at:  
<http://pkp.cc/5MMCAG>

### **Further Study with Ellen White**

It is Satan’s special device to lead man into sin and then leave him there, helpless and hopeless, fearing to seek for pardon. But God invites, “Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me.” Isaiah 27:5. In Christ every provision has been made, every encouragement offered. {PK 325.5}

If men will walk in the path that God has marked out for them, they will have a counselor whose wisdom is far above any human wisdom. {2BC 993.1}

Our God is an ever-present help in every time of need. He is perfectly acquainted with the most secret thoughts of our heart, with all the intents and purposes of our souls. When we are in perplexity, even before we open to Him our distress, He is making arrangements for our deliverance. Our sorrow is not unnoticed. He always knows much better than we do, just what is necessary for the good of His children, and He leads us as we would choose to be led if we could discern our own hearts and see our necessities and perils, as God sees them. But finite beings seldom know themselves. They do not understand their own weakness. . . . God knows

them better than they know themselves, and He understands how to lead them. . . .  
{OHC 316.4}

God bids us fill the mind with great thoughts, pure thoughts. He desires us to meditate upon His love and mercy, to study His wonderful work in the great plan of redemption. Then clearer and still clearer will be our perception of truth, higher, holier, our desire for purity of heart and clearness of thought. The soul dwelling in the pure atmosphere of holy thought will be transformed by communion with God through the study of the Scriptures. {AG 34.2}

God wants our minds to expand. He desires to put His grace upon us. We may have a feast of good things every day, for God can open the whole treasure of heaven to us. {Mar 23.3}

The Bible is not given to us in grand superhuman language. Jesus, in order to reach man where he is, took humanity. The Bible must be given in the language of men. Everything that is human is imperfect. Different meanings are expressed by the same word; there is not one word for each distinct idea. The Bible was given for practical purposes. {7BC 945.7}

The Bible is its own expositor. Scripture is to be compared with scripture. The student should learn to view the word as a whole and to see the relation of its parts. He should gain a knowledge of its grand central theme—of God’s original purpose for the world, of the rise of the great controversy, and of the work of redemption. {CT 462.1}

The Bible is its own interpreter. With beautiful simplicity one portion connects itself with the truth of another portion, until the whole Bible is blended in one harmonious whole. Light flashes forth from one text to illuminate some portion of the Word that has seemed more obscure. {OHC 207.5}

He [Christ] maintained his disguise till he had interpreted the Scriptures, and had led them to an intelligent faith in his life, his character, his mission to earth, and his death and resurrection. He wished the truth to take firm root in their minds, not because it was supported by his personal testimony, but because the typical law, and the prophets of the Old Testament, agreeing with the facts of his life and death, presented unquestionable evidence of that truth. {3SP 214.2}

I am afraid of anything that would have a tendency to turn the mind away from the solid evidences of the truth as revealed in God’s Word. I am afraid of it; I am afraid of it. We must bring our minds within the bounds of reason, lest the enemy so come in as to set everything in a disorderly way. {2SM 43.2}

All whom God has blessed with reasoning powers are to become intellectual Christians. They are not requested to believe without evidence; therefore Jesus has enjoined upon all to search the Scriptures. Let the ingenious inquirer, and the one who would know for himself what is truth, exert his mental powers to search out the truth as it is in Jesus. Any neglect here is at the

peril of the soul. We must know individually the prescribed conditions of entering into eternal life. . . . We cannot allow these questions to be settled for us by another's mind, or another's judgment. . . . We cannot trust the salvation of our souls to ministers, to idle traditions, to human authorities, or to pretensions. . . . The Lord positively demands of every Christian an intelligent knowledge of the Scriptures. {RH, March 8, 1887 par. 1}

We must study the truth for ourselves. No man should be relied upon to think for us. No matter who he is, or in what position he may be placed, we are not to look upon any man as a criterion for us. We are to counsel together, and to be subject one to another; but at the same time we are to exercise the ability God has given us, in order to learn what is truth. Each one of us must look to God for divine enlightenment. We must individually develop a character that will stand the test in the day of God. {TM 109.4}

The leaven of truth works secretly, silently, steadily, to transform the soul. The natural inclinations are softened and subdued. New thoughts, new feelings, new motives, are implanted. A new standard of character is set up—the life of Christ. The mind is changed; the faculties are aroused to action in new lines. Man is not endowed with new faculties, but the faculties he has are sanctified. The conscience is awakened. {HP 21.4}

We thank God that the Bible is prepared for the poor man as well as for the learned man. It is fitted for all ages and all classes. {FLB 13.7}

The truth as it is in Jesus will not degrade but elevate the receiver, purify his life, refine his taste, sanctify his judgment. {OHC 230.6}

Even the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart is to be tested by the word of God. The Spirit which inspired the Scriptures, always leads to the Scriptures. {GCDB, April 13, 1891 par. 5}

The Holy Spirit will not compel men to take a certain course of action. We are free moral agents; and when sufficient evidence has been given us as to our duty it is left with us to decide our course. {RH, July 17, 1888 par. 4}

It is not the plan of God to compel men to yield their wicked unbelief. Before them are light and darkness, truth and error. It is for them to decide which to accept. The human mind is endowed with power to discriminate between right and wrong. God designs that men shall not decide from impulse, but from weight of evidence, carefully comparing scripture with scripture (*Redemption: or the Miracles of Christ*, pp. 112, 113). {1BC 1120.5}

The creative energy that called the worlds into existence is in the word of God. This word imparts power; it begets life. Every command is a promise; accepted by the will, received into the soul, it brings with it the life of the Infinite One. It transforms the nature and re-creates the soul in the image of God. {Ed 126.4}

The Holy Spirit will not compel men to take a certain course of action. We are free moral agents; and when sufficient evidence has been given us as to our duty, it is left with us to decide our course. {FE 124.1}

[T]he precious faith inspired of God imparts strength and nobility of character. As His goodness, His mercy, and His love are dwelt upon, clearer and still clearer will be the perception of truth; higher, holier, the desire for purity of heart and clearness of thought. The soul dwelling in the pure atmosphere of holy thought is transformed by intercourse with God through the study of His Word. Truth is so large, so far-reaching, so deep, so broad, that self is lost sight of. The heart is softened and subdued into humility, kindness, and love. {FLB 223.3}

There are veins of truth yet to be discovered, but spiritual things are spiritually discerned. One passage of Scripture will prove a key to unlock other passages, and in this way light is shed upon the hidden meaning of the word. By comparing different texts treating on the same subject, viewing their bearing on every side, the true meaning of the Scriptures will be made evident. {CT 437.2}

Not by the decisions of courts or councils or legislative assemblies, not by the patronage of worldly great men, is the kingdom of Christ established, but by the implanting of Christ's nature in humanity through the work of the Holy Spirit. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John 1:12, 13. Here is the only power that can work the uplifting of mankind. And the human agency for the accomplishment of this work is the teaching and practicing of the word of God. {DA 509.4}

All who come to Christ for a clearer knowledge of the truth will receive it. He will unfold to them the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and these mysteries will be understood by the heart that longs to know the truth. A heavenly light will shine into the soul temple and will be revealed to others as the bright shining of a lamp on a dark path. {TMK 205.6}

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. {COL 59.3}

God bids us fill the mind with great thoughts, pure thoughts. He desires us to meditate upon His love and mercy, to study His wonderful work in the great plan of redemption. Then clearer and still clearer will be our perception of truth, higher, holier, our desire for purity of heart and clearness of thought. The soul dwelling in the pure atmosphere of holy thought will be transformed by communion with God through the study of Scriptures. {COL 60.1}

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

### Second Quarter 2026: *Growing in a Relationship With God*

### Lesson 5 “How to Study the Bible”

#### Read for this week’s study

John 15:1–8; Mark 1:35; 1 Chronicles 16:11; Psalm 119:105; Isaiah 50:4; Isaiah 55:1–13.

#### Memory Text

“ ‘So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it’ ” (Isaiah 55:11, NKJV).

#### Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Time
- III. A Place
- IV. Deep Bible Study
- V. A Double Blessing
- VI. ‘Tis So Sweet!
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

##### Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. In a relationship with someone you can’t see, hear, or touch, who you are talking to it critical to the relationship. Fortunately, in the Bible, God has taken the initiative to reveal who he is. That revelation is anecdotal and is often misunderstood, but with patience and diligent effort, we can truly get to know the God of the Bible. The goal of this week’s lesson is to explore the role of the Bible in developing a living relationship with God. (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Graham Maxwell used to divide the Bible into two types of literature: statements or claims, on one hand, and stories on the other. How would an understanding of these distinctions affect the way one reads the Bible?
3. Read Psalm 55:11. According to this text, God’s word “shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it”. What, in your view, is the purpose, that “thing”, for which God sent

His Word? How would you define it in your own words? (Sabbath Afternoon's Lesson)

4. In the book *Steps to Christ* (page 90), Ellen G. White said: "There is but little benefit derived from a hasty reading of the Scriptures." What is she talking about? How would you go about reading the Bible more slowly and carefully, while not succumbing to spiritual boredom? Certainly, reading the Bible in the Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic would slow down the speed of our reading. Are there other techniques for close reading you can think of that don't require knowledge of the original languages? How do you reconcile the need to read slowly with the need to understand the Bible as a whole?
5. Read John 15:1-8. What does it mean to "abide" or "remain" in Him? How do you do that in practice? (Sunday's Lesson)
6. Jesus is our perfect example in all things. What does Mark 1:35 tell us about Jesus' devotional life? What can we apply from Jesus' practice to our own lives? What does 1 Chronicles 16:11 add to that? (Monday's Lesson)
7. What role can writing things down in a spiritual journal or diary play in our own deepening understanding of the Bible? "Whenever the people of God are growing in grace, they will be constantly obtaining a clearer understanding of His word. They will discern new light and beauty in its sacred truths" (CWE 38-39). Read Psalm 119:105. What do the analogies of "lamp for my feet" and "light for my path" mean to you? (Tuesday's Lesson)
8. There are many ways one can go about studying the Bible. One can read the Bible word by word (looking up each word in a Bible dictionary or lexicon), verse by verse, book by book, a chapter at a time, one can trace themes through the Bible as a whole or a single book in particular (using a concordance). One can listen to the reading of the Bible while out for a walk. What are the pros and cons of each approach? Which is your favorite and why? Just as we keep friendships alive by planning new adventures, what can one do to "spice up" our walk with the Bible? (Wednesday's Lesson)
9. Read Isaiah 50:4. What does this verse tell us about relationship with God? Can this verse apply to everyone? Is there really such a thing as a "morning person" or an "evening person"? (Wednesday's Lesson)
10. Read Psalm 119:103-104. How would you apply the "sweeter than honey" metaphor to the Bible? What do you think the Psalmist means by gaining understanding through God's precepts? Read Isaiah 55:1-13. What do you learn about the devotional life from this chapter? (Thursday's Lesson)
11. Some concluding words from Ellen G. White on the subject of our relationship to the Bible: "How shall we search the Scriptures? Shall we drive our stakes of doctrine one after another, and then try to make all Scripture meet our established opinions? or shall we take our ideas and views to the Scriptures, and measure our theories on every side by the Scriptures of truth? Many who read and even teach the Bible, do

not comprehend the precious truth they are teaching or studying. . . . Many give the words of Scripture a meaning that suits their own opinions.”—Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, p. 36. What implications does this statement have for your own study of the Bible? (Friday’s Lesson)

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Lou: Talking about the Bible and trusting the Bible, what do you say to a person who says “Look, I just want to take the Bible as it reads! And when I read in the Bible that (as for example in Romans 11:33 in that doxology that Paul concludes with) ‘God’s ways are inscrutable. How can anyone know the mind of God?’ Now, if I just accept the Bible, why can’t I just accept that statement and say, ‘Why have conversations about God? How can we even know God? I’ll just believe the Bible.’”

Graham: Depending on the person who is saying this, one might reply differently, but let’s assume this is a very devout person. He really does accept the Scriptures. I would want to make the most of that. I would want to say, “Well, what about these other places in the Bible? Do you accept those too? Or do you just accept this one?”

Lou: What other places?

Graham: Like places in Romans chapter one that say God can be known. In fact, this individual is accepting one verse in Romans and skipping another one. If that doesn’t work, then I might turn to a place that says, “Give wine to the poor, that they may forget their misery,” and verses like that, until maybe he is shocked into realizing you can’t take “here a little and there a little.”

When you say you accept the Bible, you accept it all the way through. And probably that’s what he meant when he said, “I accept God’s word—if it says it, I believe it, and that’s all there is to it.” Then I would want to point to these other verses that say that God can be known. And if He can’t be known, why all this content of Scripture? Why did Christ come to make His Father known? So this use of one little verse can lead us down all kinds of pathways I’m sure he wouldn’t want to go.

Lou: So you are saying that the basic attitude of “I want to accept the Bible as it reads,” is a good attitude provided it takes the Bible as a whole, all sixty-six books, the total message of Scripture.

Graham: Right. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #3 with Lou Venden, “All God Asks Is Trust” recorded January 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:*

<http://pkp.cc/3MMCAG>

Well, these two letters are so similar, Ephesians and Colossians. What impressed you most with these two? Let me mention one thing for a start. I think the most important thing when reading the Bible is to have read the Book of Revelation before reading the other sixty-five. That's a privilege we have that the early Christians didn't have. The generation that knew the apostles was all gone by then. Revelation was written in the 90's, and only John was left. And John was given this larger view of the war up in heaven, and that our predicament is just part of a much larger one. And to see that larger view makes so much greater sense and significance out of everything else we read in the Bible. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Ephesians and Colossians, recorded May 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/67MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/67MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

### Further Study with Ellen White

The government of God is not, as Satan would make it appear, founded upon a blind submission, an unreasoning control. It appeals to the intellect and the conscience. "Come now, and let us reason together" is the Creator's invitation to the beings He has made. Isaiah 1:18. God does not force the will of His creatures. He cannot accept an homage that is not willingly and intelligently given. A mere forced submission would prevent all real development of mind or character; it would make man a mere automaton. Such is not the purpose of the Creator. He desires that man, the crowning work of His creative power, shall reach the highest possible development. He sets before us the height of blessing to which He desires to bring us through His grace. He invites us to give ourselves to Him, that He may work His will in us. It remains for us to choose whether we will be set free from the bondage of sin, to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God. {SC 43.4}

You must learn the simple art of taking God at His word; then you have solid ground beneath your feet. {ML 10.8}

The command to love one another had a new meaning in the light of His self-sacrifice. The whole work of grace is one continual service of love, of self-denying, self-sacrificing effort. During every hour of Christ's sojourn upon the earth, the love of God was flowing from Him in irrepressible streams. All who are imbued with His Spirit will love as He loved. The very principle that actuated Christ will actuate them in all their dealing one with another. {DA 677.2}

There is no comforter like Christ, so tender and so true. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. His Spirit speaks to the heart. Circumstances may separate us from our friends; the broad, restless ocean may roll between us and them. Though their sincere friendship may still exist, they may be unable to demonstrate it by doing for us that which would be gratefully

received. But no circumstances, no distance, can separate us from the heavenly Comforter. Wherever we are, wherever we may go, He is always there, one given in Christ's place, to act in His stead. He is always at our right hand, to speak soothing, gentle words, to support, sustain, uphold, and cheer. The influence of the Holy Spirit is the life of Christ in the soul. This Spirit works in and through every one who receives Christ. Those who know the indwelling of this Spirit reveal its fruit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith. {TMK 171.5}

In the divine arrangement God does nothing without the cooperation of man. He compels no man's will. That must be given to the Lord completely, else the Lord is not able to accomplish His divine work that He would do through the human agency. Jesus declared that in a certain place He could not do many mighty works among the people because of their unbelief. He wanted to do for them in that place just what He knew that they needed to have done, but He could not because unbelief barred the way. The potter cannot mold and fashion unto honor that which has never been placed in his hands. The Christian life is one of daily surrender, submission, and continual overcoming, gaining fresh victories every day. This is the growing up into Christ, fashioning the life into the divine Model. . . . {TMK 55.4}

Christ brings all true believers into complete oneness with Himself, even the oneness which exists between Him and His Father. The true children of God are bound up with one another and with their Saviour. They are one with Christ in God. {SD 293.5}

He who places himself unreservedly under the guidance of the Spirit of God, will find that his mind expands and develops. He obtains an education in the service of God which is not one-sided and deficient, developing a one-sided character, but one which results in symmetry and completeness. {1SM 338.2}

All who receive Christ as a personal Saviour are to demonstrate the truth of the gospel and its saving power upon the life. God makes no requirement without making provision for its fulfillment. Through the grace of Christ we may accomplish everything that God requires. All the riches of heaven are to be revealed through God's people. "Herein is My Father glorified," Christ says, "that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples." John 15:8. {COL 301.2}

All who come to Christ for a clearer knowledge of the truth will receive it. He will unfold to them the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and these mysteries will be understood by the heart that longs to know the truth. A heavenly light will shine into the soul temple, and will be revealed to others as the bright shining of a lamp on a dark path. {COL 35.3}

The Bible contains a simple and complete system of theology and philosophy. It is the book that makes us wise unto salvation. It tells us of the love of God as shown in the plan of redemption, imparting the knowledge essential for all students—the knowledge of Christ. . . . {CT 422.1}

The Bible was not written for the scholar alone; on the contrary, it was designed for the common people. The great truths necessary for our salvation are made as clear as noonday,

and none will mistake and lose their way except those who follow their own judgment instead of the plainly revealed will of God. {LHU 130.6}

By beholding we are to become changed; and as we meditate upon the perfections of the divine Model, we shall desire to become wholly transformed, and renewed in the image of His purity. It is by faith in the Son of God that transformation takes place in the character, and the child of wrath becomes the child of God. He passes from death unto life; he becomes spiritual and discerns spiritual things. The wisdom of God enlightens his mind, and he beholds wondrous things out of His law. As a man is converted by the truth, the work of transformation of character goes on. He has an increased measure of understanding. In becoming a man of obedience to God, he has the mind of Christ, and the will of God becomes his will. {HP 103.2}

In all ages God has given human beings divine revelations, that thus He may fulfill His purpose of unfolding gradually to the mind the doctrines of grace. His manner of imparting the truth is illustrated by the words, "His going forth is prepared as the morning." He who places himself where God can enlighten him, advances, as it were, from the partial obscurity of dawn to the full radiance of noonday. {ML 109.4}

Peace comes with dependence on divine power. As fast as the soul resolves to act in accordance with the light given, the Holy Spirit gives more light and strength. {TM 518.1}

The truths of God's word are not mere sentiments, but the utterances of the Most High. He who makes these truths a part of his life becomes in every sense a new creature. He is not given new mental powers, but the darkness that through ignorance and sin has clouded the understanding is removed. {CT 452.2}

God delights to give. He is full of compassion, and He longs to grant the requests of those who come unto Him in faith. He gives to us that we may minister to others and thus become like Himself. {COL 141.1}

It is a law of the mind that it gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is trained to dwell. If occupied with commonplace matters only, it will become dwarfed and enfeebled. If never required to grapple with difficult problems, it will after a time almost lose the power of growth. As an educating power the Bible is without a rival. In the word of God the mind finds subject for the deepest thought, the loftiest aspiration. The Bible is the most instructive history that men possess. It came fresh from the fountain of eternal truth, and a divine hand has preserved its purity through all the ages. {PP 596.2}

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

### Second Quarter 2026: *Growing in a Relationship With God*

#### Lesson 6 “Prayer Warriors”

#### Read for this week’s study

Daniel 2:20–23; Daniel 6:10, 11; Acts 20:36; Genesis 5:22–24; Exodus 33:15–23; Exodus 32:31, 32.

#### Memory Text

“I love the LORD, because He has heard my voice and my supplications. Because He has inclined His ear to me, therefore I will call upon Him as long as I live” (Psalm 116:1, 2, NKJV).

#### Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Faithful Daniel
- III. The Posture of Prayer
- IV. Enoch Walked and Talked
- V. Moses, Godly Leader
- VI. Moses Intercedes for a Nation
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

##### Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. What thoughts come into mind when you see or hear the phrase “prayer warriors”? Read Psalm 116:1-2. The Psalmist claims that Yahweh has heard his voice. How do you know when God has heard you? This week we will explore some examples of people in the Bible who prayed and how God might use their experiences to teach important lessons for us today. The author of the lesson states: “If we don’t pray often and continually, we will wander from the Lord sooner or later.” Do you agree? (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Daniel and his three friends stood for principle when they arrived in Babylon and the Bible tells us that “God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams” (Dan 1:8, 17). When the next crisis came, God revealed the secret of the king’s dream to Daniel (Dan 2:17-

- 19). Read Daniel 2:20-23. What was the content of Daniel's prayer and what do you think we can learn from it? (Sunday's Lesson)
3. Despite fierce jealousy and evil plotting from his peers (Dan 6:5-9), what does Daniel do? Read Daniel 6:10-11. What would you do if confronted with similar circumstances? (Sunday's Lesson)
  4. In the book *Steps to Christ* (page 93) Ellen G. White writes: "Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend." What impact does this idea of friendship have on your understanding of prayer? The author of the lesson suggests: ". . . when we kneel before God [as opposed to other positions for prayer], our heart surrenders more readily . . ." Has that been your experience? Or is there another position in prayer that works better for you? What do we learn about positions in prayer from the following biblical examples (Acts 21:5; 2 Chronicles 20:5-6, 13; 2 Sam 7:18; Mark 14:35)? What might each of these say about your picture of God? (Monday's Lesson)
  5. What do you think Paul means when he exhorts the Thessalonians to "pray without ceasing" or the Romans to be "constant in prayer"? Read Genesis 5:22-24. What do we know about Enoch from the Bible? What about his life echoes being "constant in prayer"? (Tuesday's Lesson)
  6. While the Enoch story is suggestive rather than detailed, the Bible shares with us numerous conversations between Moses and God, the very first occurring at the burning bush on the very same mountain. Read Exodus 33:9-11. What kind of relationship did God and Moses have? Is that possible for us as well? Read Exodus 33:12-13? What was Moses' purpose in talking with the Lord? Read Exodus 33:14-16. Why is Moses so insistent on God's presence in their desert journeys? Read Exodus 33:17-23. How is the glory of God defined in this passage? (Wednesday's Lesson)
  7. On one occasion Moses interceded in prayer to God for his brother Aaron. Read Exodus 32:1-6. Why do you think these actions made sense to Aaron and the people at that time? Read Exodus 32:7-14. What would have happened if Moses had not interceded for the people? What can we learn from the dynamic between Moses and God in this passage? To what lengths does Moses go to intercede on behalf of the whole nation? What lessons do you see in this story for us? How does Moses interpret God's behavior in this story later on (Deut 9:19-20)? What do you make of that interpretation? (Wednesday's Lesson)
  8. Read Exodus 32:31-32. What does this add to the story? To what lengths does Moses go to intercede on behalf of the whole nation? What lessons do you see in this story for us? Was this intercession really necessary, or was God trying to teach Moses something? (Thursday's Lesson)
  9. The lesson author's analysis of Moses' prayer life is summarized as follows (be prepared to add, subtract or otherwise interact with these suggestions): 1) Moses had a deep love for God and a clear picture of His character. 2) Moses was both bold and faithful as he held on to God through the ups and downs in their relationship. 3)

Moses reminded God of His covenant, claimed God’s promises on behalf of this people, and remembered God’s leading in the past. 4) Moses accepted God’s answers to his prayers, whether the answer was a yes or a no. (Thursday’s Lesson)

10. Which of the insightful sentiments in the following resonate the most with you? Why? “We may keep so near to God that in every unexpected trial our thoughts will turn to Him as naturally as the flower turns to the sun. . . . His heart of love is touched by our sorrows and even by our utterances of them. Take to Him everything that perplexes the mind. Nothing is too great for Him to bear, for He holds up worlds, He rules over all the affairs of the universe. Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice. There is no chapter in our experience too dark for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult for Him to unravel. No calamity can befall the least of His children, no anxiety harass the soul, no joy cheer, no sincere prayer escape the lips, of which our heavenly Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest. . . . The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son.”—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, pp. 99, 100. (Friday’s Lesson)
11. Of the three Bible characters studied this week, whose prayer life do you most relate to and why? (Friday’s Lesson)

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

And so, the Holy Spirit brings the truth to us—the truth about God. He helps us to see that truth and to be convinced about it, and the truth about ourselves and learn how to tell the truth to our gracious heavenly Father. And then God can do good things for us. Paul even said we should pray without ceasing. You note that last familiar verse, 1 Thessalonians 5:17: “Never stop praying.” (*Norlie*) Or as *Goodspeed* translates it: “Never give up praying.” But if we should spend all our time on our knees, we would never get anything else done. So how can one pray without ceasing and still be effective in this life? But prayer, you see, in its very essence is thinking toward God. It means that God is at the very center of our thoughts. Eventually it becomes a habit that God should be at the very center of all our plans, always.

When we see Him face to face, as we know we shall, will that be the end of prayer? Does that mean that prayer is yet another of the emergency measures God has used to keep open the channels of communication between Himself and His children until the time comes when there will be no need to talk together anymore? What do we mean when we sing, “Farewell, farewell, sweet hour of prayer?” “Farewell, farewell, I will never talk to you, God, again.” No, if prayer is conversation with a friend, when we meet God, the hour of prayer will have barely just begun. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #15, “Talking to

God as a Friend” recorded May 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/15MMCAG>*

### Further Study with Ellen White

He has assured you that the Holy Spirit was given to abide with you forever, to be your pleader and your guide. He asks you to trust in Him, and commit yourself into His keeping. The Holy Spirit is constantly at work, teaching, reminding, testifying, coming to the soul as a divine comforter, and convincing of sin as an appointed judge and guide. . . . {RC 129.6}

As the Lord co-operated with Daniel and his fellows, so He will co-operate with all who strive to do His will. And by the impartation of His Spirit He will strengthen every true purpose, every noble resolution. Those who walk in the path of obedience will encounter many hindrances. Strong, subtle influences may bind them to the world; but the Lord is able to render futile every agency that works for the defeat of His chosen ones; in His strength they may overcome every temptation, conquer every difficulty. {PK 487.1}

God brought Daniel and his associates into connection with the great men of Babylon, that in the midst of a nation of idolaters they might represent His character. How did they become fitted for a position of so great trust and honor? It was faithfulness in little things that gave complexion to their whole life. They honored God in the smallest duties, as well as in the larger responsibilities. {PK 487.2}

We may commune with God in our hearts; we may walk in companionship with Christ. When engaged in our daily labor, we may breathe out our heart’s desire, inaudible to any human ear; but that word cannot die away into silence, nor can it be lost. Nothing can drown the soul’s desire. It rises above the din of the street, above the noise of machinery. It is God to whom we are speaking, and our prayer is heard. {GW 258.2}

The Lord will not leave His afflicted, tried children to be the sport of Satan’s temptations. It is your privilege to trust in Jesus. The heavens are full of rich blessings. . . . {TMK 78.5}

You need not go to the ends of the earth for wisdom, for God is near. It is not the capabilities you now possess or ever will have that will give you success. It is that which the Lord can do for you. We need to have far less confidence in what man can do and far more confidence in what God can do for every believing soul. He longs to have you reach after Him by faith. He longs to have you expect great things from Him. He longs to give you understanding in temporal as well as in spiritual matters. He can sharpen the intellect. He can give tact and skill. Put your talents into the work, ask God for wisdom, and it will be given you. {COL 146.4}

Unceasing prayer is the unbroken union of the soul with God, so that life from God flows into our life; and from our life, purity and holiness flow back to God. {SC 97.2}

All things are possible to those that believe. No one coming to the Lord in sincerity of heart will be disappointed. {HP 81.5}

The way to the throne of God is always open. You cannot always be on your knees in prayer, but your silent petitions may constantly ascend to God for strength and guidance. When tempted, as you will be, you may flee to the secret place of the Most High. His everlasting arms will be underneath you. {HP 86.2}

In the secret place of prayer, where no eye but God's can see, no ear but His can hear, we may pour out our most hidden desires and longings to the Father of infinite pity, and in the hush and silence of the soul that voice which never fails to answer the cry of human need will speak to our hearts. {Pr 182.6}

Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears before God. You cannot burden Him; you cannot weary Him. He who numbers the hairs of your head is not indifferent to the wants of His children. "The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." James 5:11. His heart of love is touched by our sorrows and even by our utterances of them. Take to Him everything that perplexes the mind. Nothing is too great for Him to bear, for He holds up worlds, He rules over all the affairs of the universe. Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice. There is no chapter in our experience too dark for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult for Him to unravel. No calamity can befall the least of His children, no anxiety harass the soul, no joy cheer, no sincere prayer escape the lips, of which our heavenly Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest. "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." Psalm 147:3. The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son. {SC 100.1}

Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. The eye of faith will discern God very near, and the suppliant may obtain precious evidence of the divine love and care for him. {4T 533.3}

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

### Second Quarter 2026: *Growing in a Relationship With God*

#### Lesson 7 “Practical Prayer”

#### Read for this week’s study

1 Kings 19:1–18; Matthew 6:5–8; Luke 11:2–4; Matthew 6:5–15; Daniel 9:4–19; Romans 8:26, 27.

#### Memory Text

“Trust in Him at all times, you people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us” (Psalm 62:8, NKJV).

#### Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Elijah—Praying in Crisis
- III. When Prayers Seem Unanswered
- IV. Jesus Teaches Us How to Pray
- V. Praise, Confession, Requests, Thanksgiving
- VI. Other Questions About Prayer
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

##### Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. The lesson this week continues the theme of prayer, looking at examples from the stories in the Bible of people who prayed. Often our prayers revolve around praise and requests. What other types of prayer should we consider including? (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Elijah is another biblical character renowned for his prayers. Read 1 Kings 18:36-39. What does Elijah pray for and what is the result? Read 1 Kings 18:42-45. What position does Elijah take for this prayer and what is the result? Read 1 Kings 19:1-8. What does Elijah pray for this time, and how does God answer? Read 1 Kings 19:9-18. Would you consider this conversation between Elijah and God a prayer? How is God’s response different from the one Elijah got on Mount Carmel? How do the changes in Elijah’s emotional state relate to his repeated prayers? (Sunday’s Lesson)

3. Many people have prayed about some things for years and it feels as if God has not heard or answered their prayers. The Bible says, “ask, and it will be given to you” (Matt 7:7). What is your understanding of Jesus’ promise? (Monday’s Lesson)
4. Read 1 Samuel 1:10-17. Hannah is an example of a woman who prayed for something very specific. At first it seemed that God didn’t answer her prayer, but she persisted, and in time God did answer. Why do you think God delayed in her case, or in any case? (Monday’s Lesson)
5. Read Matthew 6:5-8. What was Jesus’ reaction to the long and carefully worked-out prayers typical of Jesus’ day? What was His core issue with that type of prayer? What alternative for prayer does He offer in Matthew 6:9-15? What elements of prayer can you distinguish in this model prayer? As you think about your own life situation, what prevents you from praying more often and more effectively? (Tuesday’s Lesson)
6. One of the longest and most effective prayers in the Bible is found in Daniel 9. Read Daniel 9:4-19. What are the key elements in this prayer and what kind of model does it present for us today? (Wednesday’s Lesson)
7. In general, what are the main components of biblical prayers? List at least four and be prepared to describe them and why they are important. As you think of these various components of biblical prayer which is the greatest need in your life right now? How can we learn to include more thankfulness in our prayers? (Wednesday’s Lesson)
8. Some questions to consider regarding prayer: 1) Why pray when God already knows everything you plan to talk about? 2) Why pray when things are going pretty well? 3) What is the role of faith or trust in prayer? 4) How does solo prayer differ from prayer in a group, as in a family? Which of the two is more important? 5) How can we listen to God as well as talk to Him? Which of these questions do you consider the most challenging? (Thursday’s Lesson)
9. What is the role of fasting alongside prayer? (Friday’s Lesson)

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

So now, imagine that the Father appears visibly among us here at Loma Linda this evening. How would we speak to Him? Or to make it more personal, let us say that He is willing to meet us in the fellowship room. As many of us as could, would go over there and gather around Him, just as the crowds did around Jesus; and Mary loved to sit there at His feet. Supposing we should have the inestimable privilege of talking there freely with God the Father for a whole hour. Would it be appropriate at the end for someone among us to arise and say, “This has been such a special occasion, don’t you think we ought to close this meeting with a word of prayer?” Or would it be correct to understand that talking, conversing, having conversation with our God as

with a friend for that whole hour actually is real prayer, and we have been praying the whole hour long? . . .

Now God is seated there, and we are gathered around Him. What should we say? Should we be the first to speak? Once we have started speaking, would we talk all the time? Or would we let God speak for a while? Normally, when we pray we do all the talking, don't we? And then we say "Amen" and go about our business, or go to sleep. It would be like meeting in the room with our heavenly Father, and talking to Him incessantly for several minutes, and then saying, "Amen, thank you very much," and then going home. It wouldn't make sense, would it? It certainly wouldn't be conversation as with a friend.

Conversation means at least two people speaking. But how do we converse with God when we can't see Him just now, because of the present emergency? We all understand that emergency and why in mercy He does not reveal Himself visibly to us at this moment. And so, the Bible is called the Word of God—God speaking to us. If we wish to hear God speak, except in most extraordinary occasions, God speaks to us through the Bible. We speak to Him in prayer. Truly, as someone has said, "We commune with God through the study of the Scriptures." . . .

So, what language would you use? Then how would we address Him? Jesus addressed His Father as "*Abba*, Father." *Abba* is Aramaic for father. So it is almost like saying, "Father, Father," although it is a term of endearment. Some versions translate "*Abba*, Father" as "Dear Father," the way some of us like to start our public prayers and private too, Dear Father. You remember Paul in Romans and Galatians invites us to do precisely that. He says that when the Spirit of truth dwells within us, we will address the Father as "Dear Father."

But most important, what would we talk about? Could you on such a precious occasion say, "Thank you, God, for today's groceries and here is my list for tomorrow, amen," and then go on about your business? Or more seriously, right there with the Father, might you say, "Bless the missionaries as they carry the truth to the far-flung corners of the earth." The Lord might say, "How sweet. How is it that you only think of these things when you are at the time of prayer?" Of course, if you are the mother of a missionary, how appropriate for you to talk to God about your loved ones. And missionaries, above all people, deserve and need our prayers. But if we are not thinking about them the rest of the time, just that when we talk to God, we feel that we should only mention the most lofty themes and not the things we have been really thinking about all day?

You see, for some of us, those well-worn phrases about the missionaries and other sorts of things we understand we *ought* to mention when we pray, might seem rather empty when we are talking face to face with God as with a friend. Or, if we should leave the meeting and walk through a garden in the community, wouldn't it be natural, walking with God, to comment with admiration on the beauty and fragrance of a rose, and the beautiful sounds of the

mockingbirds? Aren't they magnificent right now? And then that lovely, lonely sound of the mourning dove. Why couldn't we tell Him how beautiful it was to create things that way? Or walking through the garden, would we simply say, "We thank thee, Lord, for the beauties of nature that surround us," and move on to some other topic? We do have well-worn phrases to cover these things. It seems to me that if God really were our Friend, we would take time to talk about these things and to be more specific about them, as we would with other members of the family. We might even venture to ask Him about the thorns on the rose. "Did you put them there? If so, why?"

Or is it all right to ask questions of our God? Job did, and he honored God with his confidence. You remember how boldly, but reverently, Job agonized with God—to the consternation of his friends. They worried that God would surely smite Job for daring to talk to the Father like this. The whole book of Job is on this subject. I have picked just one place. Look at Job 29:2-4 and 30:20. Job cries to God:

If only my life could once again be as it was when God watched over me. God was always with me then. . . . and the friendship of God protected my home. . . . [But now] I call to you, O God, but you never answer, and when I pray, you pay no attention. (GNT)

How that worried Job's friends! But was God offended? No, look at our next verse, Job 42:7. God said to the three friends, who were so worried: "You did not speak the truth about me the way my servant Job did." (GNT) You see, Job knew God, and He honored God with those cries. God was not talking to him just then. And Job was deeply upset because their friendship seemed to be at an end. So what upset the friends complemented God, and spoke well of their relationship. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #15, "Talking to God as a Friend" recorded May 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/15MMCAG>*

Lou: There's another phrase in here that raises questions many times. I've wondered about this myself. When we pray, "Lead us not into temptation," what are we really praying? Does that imply, have you ever wondered about this, "God, be careful; please don't get me into temptation?" That God would really want to do that?

Graham: Well one thing that helps is, the word "temptation" means trial or testing. Some versions have, "Lead us not into hard testing." The idea that God would tempt is unthinkable as our heavenly Father. Remember James deals with this. That when we're tempted, don't even blame the devil. He says, "You are led away by your own lusts and enticements." Certainly don't blame God. He wouldn't do any such thing. So "Lead us not into temptation" cannot mean, "Please, don't You tempt us" but, "Lead us not into testing," Jesus prayed that in Gethsemane. He said, "Remove this cup from Me, if possible." I don't think we should pray, "Lord, I'm ready

for it. Bring on the trials; I feel very strong today.” I believe we should say, “Lord, in all humility, I mean bring me not into trial; nevertheless, Thy will be done.”

I think, “Lead us not into testing” must be coupled with, “Nevertheless, Thy will be done.” Jesus did it in Gethsemane, and we do it in the Lord’s Prayer. You know, the Lord’s Prayer and the prayer in Gethsemane are very similar in a number of respects. “Lead us not into testing, remove this cup from Me. Nevertheless, Thy will be done.” So I think the prayer in Gethsemane helps understand the Lord’s Prayer. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #15 with Lou Venden, “Talking to God as a Friend” recorded May 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/15MMCAG>*

I believe that to pray in Jesus’ name is simply a grateful recognition that if the Son had not come to reveal the truth about His Father we wouldn’t know how to approach the Father. We’d be afraid to. Might not even want to. So to pray in His name is an acknowledgment of all that the Son has done, and the Father through Him, to make us even want to pray, and to approach the throne with confidence, and so on. So it has to be meaningfully done, or it’s almost an insult just to mean “I’m nearly done, God,” when up in heaven the Father hears you say, “For we ask this in Jesus’ name”, He knows you’re nearly through, and when you say “Amen” He knows you’re done and He can start listening to another one. It seems sad, but often down here “Amen” means it’s time for the choir to begin the response. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, recorded May 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/71MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/72MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

But you know, Balaam had learned that you should persevere in prayer, and so he prayed some more and he said, “God, please let me go and curse Israel.” And God said, “No, certainly not.” But he persevered still further in prayer. And God said, “Yes.” “Good,” said Balaam, “at last I have an answer to my prayer.” You know, we don’t think we get an answer until we get a yes, or we get protection from an accident. It’s a pity that, like in the *Review and Herald*, for example, most of the stories of answered prayer are yes answers. And that suggests that if we don’t get what we’re asking for, God is not answering our prayers. And that can be misleading though it’s very difficult for the editors to know how many of the others to put in. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, PUC Teacher’s Conference, #9 “Praying To God As A Friend”, recorded April 1974, Angwin, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/9MMPUCTEACH>*

## Further Study with Ellen White

Could our spiritual vision be quickened, we should see souls bowed under oppression and burdened with grief, pressed as a cart beneath sheaves, and ready to die in discouragement. We should see angels flying quickly to the aid of these tempted ones, forcing back the hosts of evil that encompass them, and placing their feet on the sure foundation. The battles waging between the two armies are as real as those fought by the armies of this world, and on the issue of the spiritual conflict eternal destinies depend. {PK 175.3}

We are to live only one day at a time. We do not have to do the work of a lifetime in a few hours. We need not look into the future with anxiety; for God has made it possible for us to be overcomers every day. {FLB 249.4}

God always rewards the confidence of His people. The way to the throne of mercy is always open. God sees the wants of His people as clearly in the darkness of midnight which surrounds them as in the splendor of noonday. To look to God for help at all times, this is our safety. {TDG 199.2}

If you ask the help of God, you will not ask in vain. The Lord is at work in many ways to win your hearty confidence. In nothing does He take more delight than to have you unburden, come to Him for light and strength, and He has promised that you shall find rest to your soul. If you will find heart and voice to pray, He will be sure to hear, and an arm will be reached down to save you. There is a God that hears prayer, and when all other resources fail, He is your refuge, a very present help in time of trouble. . . . {TDG 184.4}

The Lord is our helper, our defense. God has provided that no soul that trusts in Him shall be overcome by the enemy. {CTr 47.4}

That prayer of Christ embraces all His followers to the close of time. Our Saviour foresaw the trials and dangers of His people; He is not unmindful of the dissensions and divisions that distract and weaken His church. He is looking upon us with deeper interest and more tender compassion than moves an earthly parent's heart toward a wayward, afflicted child. He bids us learn of Him. He invites our confidence. He bids us open our hearts to receive His love. He has pledged Himself to be our helper. {5T 237.2}

But in heaven, service is not rendered in the spirit of legality. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of. In their ministry the angels are not as servants, but as sons. There is perfect unity between them and their Creator. Obedience is to them no drudgery. Love for God makes their service a joy. So in every soul wherein Christ, the hope of glory, dwells, His words are re-echoed, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8. {MB 109.2}

In the vision of the prophet Ezekiel there was the appearance of a hand beneath the wings of the cherubim. This is to teach His servants that it is divine power which gives them success. Those whom God employs as His messengers are not to feel that His work is dependent upon them. Finite beings are not left to carry this burden of responsibility. He who slumbers not, who is continually at work for the accomplishment of His designs, will carry forward His own work. He will thwart the purposes of wicked men, and will bring to confusion the counsels of those who plot mischief against His people. He who is the King, the Lord of hosts, sitteth between the cherubim, and amid the strife and tumult of nations He guards His children still. He who ruleth in the heavens is our Saviour. He measures every trial, He watches the furnace fire that must test every soul. When the strongholds of kings shall be overthrown, when the arrows of wrath shall strike through the hearts of His enemies, His people will be safe in His hands. {MB 121.1}

In the creation of man was manifest the agency of a personal God. When God had made man in His image, the human form was perfect in all its arrangements, but it was without life. Then a personal, self-existing God breathed into that form the breath of life, and man became a living, intelligent being. All parts of the human organism were set in action. The heart, the arteries, the veins, the tongue, the hands, the feet, the senses, the faculties of the mind, all began their work, and all were placed under law. Man became a living soul. Through Christ the Word, a personal God created man and endowed him with intelligence and power. {MH 415.1}

No tongue can express, no finite mind can conceive, the blessing that results from appreciating the goodness and love of God. Even on earth we may have joy as a wellspring, never failing, because fed by the streams that flow from the throne of God. {SD 122.4}

It is for our own benefit to keep every gift of God fresh in our memory. By this means faith is strengthened to claim and to receive more and more. There is greater encouragement for us in the least blessing we ourselves receive from God than in all the accounts we can read of the faith and experience of others. The soul that responds to the grace of God shall be like a watered garden. His health shall spring forth speedily; his light shall rise in obscurity, and the glory of the Lord shall be seen upon him. {MH 100.3}

It is that men may understand the joy of forgiveness, the peace of God, that Christ draws them through the manifestation of His love. If they respond to His drawing, yielding their hearts to His grace, He will lead them on step by step, to a full knowledge of Himself, and this is life eternal. {1SM 323.2}

God accepts your broken, contrite heart. He offers you free pardon. He offers to adopt you into His family, with His grace to help your weakness, and the dear Jesus will lead you on step by step if you will only put your hand in His and let Him guide you.— Lt 38, 1887. {2MCP 451.3}

Jesus knows the circumstances of every soul. You may say, I am sinful, very sinful. You may be; but the worse you are, the more you need Jesus. He turns no weeping, contrite one away. He

does not tell to any all that He might reveal, but He bids every trembling soul take courage. Freely will He pardon all who come to Him for forgiveness and restoration. {DA 568.3}

Prayer is a heaven-ordained means of success. Appeals, petitions, entreaties, between man and man, move men and act a part in controlling the affairs of nations. But prayer moves heaven. That power alone that comes in answer to prayer will make men wise in the wisdom of heaven and enable them to work in the unity of the Spirit, joined together by the bonds of peace. Prayer, faith, confidence in God, bring a divine power that sets human calculations at their real worth—nothingness. . . . He who places himself where God can enlighten him, advances, as it were, from the partial obscurity of dawn to the full radiance of noonday. {HP 75.6}

Jesus gives the Holy Spirit in large measure for great emergencies, to help our infirmities, to give us strong consolation, to illuminate our minds, and purify and ennoble our hearts. Christ becomes unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. {RC 103.5}

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

### Second Quarter 2026: *Growing in a Relationship With God*

### Lesson 8 “Having Faith”

#### Read for this week’s study

Mark 8:11, 12; Matthew 15:21–28; Luke 7:1–10; Ephesians 2:8; Hebrews 11; Revelation 14:12.

#### Memory Text

“Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see”  
(Hebrews 11:1, NLT).

#### Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Just Give Me a Sign!
- III. Jesus Sees Our Faith
- IV. Faith Is Not a Feeling
- V. Examples of Faith
- VI. The Faith of Jesus
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

##### Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “This week let’s explore the topic of faith: what to do with doubt and unbelief; what, according to Jesus, strong faith looks like; and what it means to have “the faith of Jesus.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. What is it about human nature that in every generation there are some who want a sign? Why are signs so fascinating to us? Why does Jesus tell the people in Mark 8:11-12 that they will not be given any sign(s), yet in Matthew he gives the sign of Jonah (12:39-40)? (Sunday’s lesson)
3. Why is there such disparity between the faith of the disciples (Mark 4:40), the faith of the Canaanite woman (Matthew 15:21–28), and the Roman centurion (Luke 7:1-10)? (Monday’s lesson)
4. What’s the relationship between faith as a gift (Romans 12:3) and a tool of salvation (Ephesians 2:8)? What do we mean when we say that “faith is not a feeling”? (Tuesday’s lesson)
5. How does a plain or superficial reading of Hebrews 11:1 obscure the real meaning of that verse? When you read verses 7-40, which unpacks the lives of various biblical

personalities, which of their stories of faith speak to you the most? (Wednesday's lesson) Which would *you* choose as "heroes of faith"? Which of them would you not choose, yet *God* chose them? How does that broaden our understanding of what God is looking for? How can their stories be encouraging and inspiring to us today?

6. How was the expression "the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12) understood in Adventism historically? What can we learn from the gradual development of our understanding as a church? (Thursday's lesson) What does Matthew 26:36–42 tell us about the faith of Jesus at this crucial moment?
7. How can we move beyond claiming Hebrews 11:6 as our personal prayer? How has God rewarded our corporate seeking of him and his Scripture in the last 50 years? (See: S.K. Tonstad, *Saving God's Reputation: The Theological Function of "Faith of Jesus" In the Cosmic Narratives of Revelation*, Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2006.)
8. If "faith of Jesus" is best understood as "the faithfulness of Jesus" — that is, the active, loyal, faithful stance of Christ in the cosmic conflict, especially as revealed in his sacrificial death and his bearing witness to God's true character, then this shifts our focus from human faith as a response to a divine object, to Christ's own faithfulness as the paradigm and foundation for the life of the believers. Why is this shift important?
9. "The faithfulness of Jesus" shifts the locus of faith from a human response to a divine action, making Christ's own faithful witness the model and ground for salvation and perseverance. This avoids the more passive reading of faith as mere cerebral belief in Jesus or as a human act of fidelity which focuses on us, not God.
10. How does this shift have potential to transform how we see our role in God's great project of reconciliation and renewal of his world? How does it help us to see how God calls **all** of us to be involved in this by cooperating with him in making the world as much like he intends it to be before he returns?

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Faith is our conviction. It's being certain about things that at the moment we cannot see. And if you know the background of that verse in Hebrews, you know that this goes back to Habakkuk chapters one and two where Habakkuk says to God, "Why aren't you going to do something?" And God says, "I am. But you wouldn't believe it if I told you." And Habakkuk says, "I do. And I'm going to wait and see." And God says, "If what I have predicted seems slow, wait for it; it will come. My righteous one will live in trust."

That famous verse, "The just shall live by faith," is not discussing forgiveness or justification. The background for that verse is the one who is right with me—and my friend, will trust me and be willing to wait. And that's the kind of trust, and right relationship with God, that really

counts. And when we come to Romans (to look at that verse a little later), that's the background for it.

The angels had such trust, the loyal ones. They had questions! But they said to God, "We trust You enough that we are willing to wait," and they waited all the way to Calvary for some of their answers. They even heard the promise to Adam and Eve that God was going to do something. And they were willing to wait because they trusted God. It certainly helps to understand "salvation by faith" and "righteousness by faith," to understand faith as trust in this way. We're not saved by faith; that is, faith does not save us. God saves us. But God can only save those who trust Him.

Like a physician, God stands ready to heal all the damage done. But He cannot force us to be well. If we don't trust Him enough to listen, and to cooperate, and let Him heal the damage done, there's no way He can heal us. Physicians cannot heal rebellious patients who stay away because they think the doctor is a quack. Only if there is trust there—there needs to be mutual trust—can healing really take place. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #3, "All God Asks Is Trust" recorded January 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/3MMCAG>

What does faith mean? We have so often discussed it. Faith is used for everything from believing what you know isn't so. This week on television somebody used that definition; faith is believing something that couldn't possibly be so. And your willingness to believe it shows that you really have faith. Faith is not a leap in the dark either, which is a common philosophical explanation. For has our gracious God left us in the dark? How would anyone dare suggest that God, who has revealed Himself at such infinite cost, has left us in the dark? More than this, would the God you know, tempt you to trust a stranger you don't know? Look at the dangers involved in that. We warn our daughters when they are walking home from school, if a stranger offers you a ride in his car, don't get in. And there are sad stories in the newspaper from time to time about little girls who got into stranger's cars. Does God ask us as a stranger to get in His car? He doesn't ask us to run any such risk. He first reveals Himself, that's the good news. Then on the basis of this truth and this everlasting good news, God then has a right to ask us, "Do you find Me worthy of your trust, your confidence, your faith? Do you still think I'm an untrustworthy 'quack', who'd hurt you? Or do you find Me a trustworthy physician? Could you trust Me enough to be willing to stay with Me long enough to let Me heal you?" This is why the only requirement for healing and salvation is faith and trust. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 13, recorded January 1978, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/25MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/26MMROMANS66> (Part 2)

Is faith a gift of God? Is that why some have faith and some don't? He's given it to some and not to others? If God gives faith, why do some have it and some don't? And does He give more to some than to others? Does He practice favoritism here? Can faith actually be given? You say to God, "I don't trust you. I think you're an absolutely untrustworthy liar as the devil has said, but I wish I trusted you and thought you told the truth. I'm praying that when I wake up in the morning, I will trust you and not think you're a liar anymore."

You hop into bed, wake up in the morning, you love, trust and admire God, you now know He tells the truth. Would you trust that? Can God give us faith as an outright gift? And yet, if God had not given us the capacity to reason and to weigh evidence and to discern between the true and the false, if God had not given us the capacity to make decisions and commitments, if God had not given us the revelation of the truth about Himself at such cost, if God did not preserve us from the enemy who would destroy us and confuse us and take away our chance to weigh the evidence, in fact, if God has not done all that He has done would there be any chance that we could see Him as He is and trust Him?

In fact, who even instructs us and works with us and persuades us, and tries to lead us to truth and conviction? Aren't all these things the work of God and the work of the Holy Spirit? Is there anything, though, that God doesn't do in the matter of faith? Does He also cast our vote? Does God not only bring the evidence but also force our vote? If God has forced our vote, then He's won the Great Controversy by stuffing the ballot box, hasn't He? He really hasn't won our vote. As Ellen White says repeatedly, our vote is offered in the highest sense of freedom. The vote is ours.

So God gives us every opportunity to have faith, but the decision to trust it is left with us. And many religions don't like that. They don't want anything left with us. But if it isn't left with us, how are we held accountable in the judgment? Are we not judged as to whether or not we've chosen to place our faith in the true God?

Isn't that the only thing we're held responsible for? The decision is ours, or else our trust in God would mean nothing to Him, would it? If He had manipulated us so that we trusted Him, I mean, if our wives said they loved us because we had manipulated them, we'd be talking back to ourselves. Does God just want to hear Himself talking back, "I love you God"? Or does He want to hear us say in the highest sense of freedom, "We do love and trust you; that's our choice." Hasn't He paid a heavy price to preserve our freedom to cast our own vote in the Great Controversy? And to love Him because we've decided He's lovable and trustworthy. And I think it's so cruel of many religions to suggest that even faith is not our decision. God does all of that. Yes, He brings everything to us. Without Him there would be no chance to exercise faith. But the decision, the vote, is ours, and for that we're held responsible.

In fact, Ellen White says if the Holy Spirit should be poured out on you with a hundredfold greater intensity, it would not make of you a Christian. (MB 142) The Spirit only leads to truth, leads us to conviction, but at the same time preserves our freedom to vote no. So when it says faith is a gift of God, I think we have to reserve that one act that is assigned to us—the decision whether we’re going to respond to the evidence with trust or with rebellion and distrust. Why all the costly revelation these thousands of years and all the records of scripture that we might have the evidence, if God is the one who places faith in our hearts anyway whether we have evidence or not? If God just says, “Now you don’t trust me, now you do” why do you need any evidence? The fact that God has been such a teacher and has brought us so much evidence is clear support that He’ll bring us every opportunity; He’ll preserve our lives to give us those moments of freedom when we cast our vote. But casting that vote is our privilege, our responsibility; He’s created us capable of voting and holds us responsible for the vote that we cast. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 12, recorded January 1978, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/23MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/24MMROMANS66> (Part 2)

But the most impressive illustration of how God seeks to convince us, not on authority and power, but on the basis of truth, was provided by Jesus Himself on the road to Emmaus. And that’s described in Luke 24, on the Bible Reference Sheet. I wish we could read the whole story:

But while they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him [they didn’t know Christ was walking with them]. And he said to them, “What is this conversation which you are holding” [You see, they were having a conversation about God (as we are) on the road to Emmaus.]? And they stood still, looking sad. . . . And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. . . . Later, when he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him. (RSV)

Why did He not reveal who He was at the beginning, and say, “What are your questions? You know that I will give you authoritative answers, and I will expect you to believe them.” He did not reveal who He was until He had led them to an intelligent confidence based on the unquestionable evidence of Scripture. Then He revealed who He was. If the Infinite One will do that, how dare we presume to take any shortcuts? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #4, “God’s Way of Restoring Trust” recorded February 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/4MMCAG>

Lou: Over the last couple weeks, I have received letters from an individual who has talked about the impression of the Holy Spirit. This person even spoke about being awakened at night and going into his bathroom and turning on the light, and he describes how the Spirit came on him and he wrote and wrote. Now, that leads me to a question that someone has raised: “If I pray for the Holy Spirit to guide and then I have this deep conviction,” and this individual spoke about what great conviction that the Spirit has come, “isn’t that enough?”

Graham: It would seem to be. Fortunately the Bible warns us of that and sets up some protection. This warm feeling of conviction within could come from prejudice, it could come from indigestion, it could come from all kinds of things. So the Bible warns us that if it seems the Spirit is directing you in a certain direction, He will not lead you away from what He has already inspired. So we should always judge the work of the Holy Spirit by the scriptures which He has previously inspired.

Lou: But what difference does it make what kind of person I believe God to be? Now that’s a bit of a different question, but it’s related. So long as I submit to His authority. If I just say, “God has said it; I believe it; that’s it”?

Graham: Well, I think of two illustrations that come quickly to mind since we’ve talked of Saul. The conception of God that Saul had led him to conduct his evangelism the way he did before the Damascus road. In God’s name he imprisoned people and he had them stoned to death. When he got the true picture of God on the Damascus road so dramatically (and by the way, it suggests it didn’t have to take a lifetime), I think Saul proceeded from the foot of Sinai to the mouth of the cave in a few minutes. He really grew up in a hurry there. Paul changed his picture of God and he changed his whole method of evangelism.

Lou: So you’re saying that the picture inevitably affects everything.

Graham: Everything: the way we worship, the way we witness to others, the way we behave. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #7 with Lou Venden, “The Question of Authority” recorded February 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:*  
<http://pkp.cc/7MMCAG>

Now, what do you think of a God who does not demand our belief on the authority of His personal testimony, but on the basis of evidence?

Well, we’re reminded we’re in this great controversy, and there is an enemy making claims, and making light of evidence, and reason, and intelligence. Of course, the truth isn’t with him. It’s no wonder that in the name of religion, the adversary has put thinking, investigation, careful

criticism, cautious skepticism, demanding of evidence, in a bad light. And he says, “Well, in the realm of religion, all you need is a warm feeling in the bosom,” but he’ll win, if you go that way. But if you demand evidence, since the evidence isn’t with him, he’ll lose. So Jesus is here, and He doesn’t say, “Look, do you not have a warm feeling in your heart? You’ll know this is true.” He never tempted them to believe that. This is the same Christ who inspired Deuteronomy 13 and 1 Kings 13 and warned us about mere claims. This is the One who didn’t send mere claims to His cousin, in prison. This is the way God is. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Luke, recorded April 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/55MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/56MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Actually, is faith alone a way of knowing anything? Can you think of anything you believe for which you have no evidence and about which you have no knowledge? Is faith an alternate way of knowing something? Now, we wouldn’t think of believing something without evidence in any other area of life. Even when we go shopping, look how carefully we investigate; especially these days with prices as high as they are. But is it safe in the realm of religion to believe something for which we have no evidence? Wouldn’t that be the most dangerous area in which to make a decision without information and without evidence?

When a child says, “I believe there’s a man in the moon,” we smile and say that’s very childish. But when a man says, “Don’t ask me to give you any evidence for God; it’s just something I accept by faith,” we think that’s acceptable. Some will say in the realm of religion, “I can’t give you the evidence for this, but I have a warm feeling of conviction deep down in my heart that it is so.” How trustworthy is this warm feeling deep down in the heart? Don’t all religious people have warm senses of convictions in their hearts about what they believe?

Our good friends in the Mormon Church, the Latter-Day Saints, openly, without apology, take this approach. Do you ever listen on television once every six months to the semi-annual general conference World Council of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints? I love to listen when I’m able. Many of the sermons that are presented, are directed toward the subject “How do we know”, that is, we Latter-Day Saints, “know that we are God’s one true church?” We sometimes like to talk that way about ourselves. The answer given always is, “The Holy Spirit has borne witness with our spirits, and we have a sense of conviction in our bosoms, and we know this is so. We don’t have to cite evidence; we just know. We have this inner conviction.”

Sometimes in the spring of the year in our schools, especially our boarding schools, when the trees begin to blossom on campus; I remember this happened up at PUC in the 23 years I lived up there, there was a peach tree that used to blossom in the spring at the foot of the steps down from Irwin Hall. Some of you know that building there. And just about the time the

blossoms would come on that tree, it seemed that the women of Graf began to look doubly attractive to the men of Granger. And the courtships would flourish, and occasionally the dean would decide that one of these friendships was really not well advised. She might call the young man in and say, "Young man, may I advise a little caution? Do you know this girl very well? Don't make a hasty decision." Then the young man could say, "Oh but Dean, I have a warm feeling of conviction in my heart that this is the girl for me." And the dean might reply, "Well now, young man, you know that a warm feeling in the heart is not very reliable. You must get to know this girl better. You haven't even had an invitation to her home yet, to see how she behaves around her family," and so on. And you say, "Why Dean, I'm surprised. Last night at vespers you said that when it comes to making up our minds about God, don't ask too many questions, don't be too demanding of evidence; there can come this sense of conviction within and you'll know that it's true. Is it possible, Dean, that my decision about my future wife is more important than my decision about God?" It would seem to me if it's important to have some knowledge and some evidence before making a decision about one's husband or wife, then it is infinitely more important to have some evidence, some information, before making a decision about God. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Faith, Righteousness and Salvation, #1, "The Meaning of Faith, The Only Requirement for Salvation", recorded February 6, 1975, Lynwood, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/1MMFRS> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/2MMFRS> (Part 2)

### **Further Study with Ellen White**

God intends that even in this life the truths of His word shall be ever unfolding to His people. There is only one way in which this knowledge can be obtained. We can attain to an understanding of God's word only through the illumination of that Spirit by which the word was given. . . . {SC 109.2}

God desires man to exercise his reasoning powers; and the study of the Bible will strengthen and elevate the mind as no other study can. {SC 109.3}

In order to arrive at truth, we must have a sincere desire to know the truth and a willingness of heart to obey it. And all who come in this spirit to the study of the Bible will find abundant evidence that it is God's word, and they may gain an understanding of its truths that will make them wise unto salvation. {SC 111.1}

There is an evidence that is open to all,—the most highly educated, and the most illiterate,—the evidence of experience. God invites us to prove for ourselves the reality of His word, the truth of His promises. He bids us "taste and see that the Lord is good." Psalm 34:8. Instead of

depending upon the word of another, we are to taste for ourselves. He declares, "Ask, and ye shall receive." John 16:24. His promises will be fulfilled. They have never failed; they never can fail. And as we draw near to Jesus, and rejoice in the fullness of His love, our doubt and darkness will disappear in the light of His presence. {SC 111.3}

By faith we may look to the hereafter and grasp the pledge of God for a growth of intellect, the human faculties uniting with the divine, and every power of the soul being brought into direct contact with the Source of light. We may rejoice that all which has perplexed us in the providences of God will then be made plain, things hard to be understood will then find an explanation; and where our finite minds discovered only confusion and broken purposes, we shall see the most perfect and beautiful harmony. "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." 1 Corinthians 13:12. {SC 112.3}

By the grace of Christ, perform every duty that has been made plain to your understanding, and you will be enabled to understand and perform those of which you are now in doubt. {SC 111.2}

Jesus is ever ready to speak peace to souls that are troubled with doubts and fear. This precious Saviour waits for us to open the door of our heart to him, and say, Abide with us. {6Red 37.1}

It is Satan's work to fill men's hearts with doubt. He leads them to look upon God as a stern judge. He tempts them to sin, and then to regard themselves as too vile to approach their heavenly Father or to excite His pity. The Lord understands all this. Jesus assures His disciples of God's sympathy for them in their needs and weaknesses. Not a sigh is breathed, not a pain felt, not a grief pierces the soul, but the throb vibrates to the Father's heart. {DA 356.2}

God gives light to guide those who honestly desire light and truth; but it is not His purpose to remove all cause for questioning and doubt. He gives sufficient evidence to found faith upon, and then requires men to accept that evidence and exercise faith. {5T 303.1}

But He who spoke peace to the billows of Galilee has spoken the word of peace for every soul. However fierce the tempest, those who turn to Jesus with the cry, "Lord, save us," will find deliverance. His grace, that reconciles the soul to God, quiets the strife of human passion, and in His love the heart is at rest. {DA 336.4}

We may believe that God is with us in every place, and in every trying hour we may hold fast that hand which has all power. {ML 336.3}

The blessings of salvation are for every soul. Nothing but his own choice can prevent any man from becoming a partaker of the promise in Christ by the gospel. {DA 403.2}

Caste is hateful to God. He ignores everything of this character. In His sight the souls of all men are of equal value. . . . Without distinction of age, or rank, or nationality, or religious privilege, all are invited to come unto Him and live. {DA 403.3}

God regards us as His children. He has redeemed us out of the careless world and has chosen us to become members of the royal family, sons and daughters of the heavenly King. He invites us to trust in Him with a trust deeper and stronger than that of a child in his earthly father. Parents love their children, but the love of God is larger, broader, deeper, than human love can possibly be. It is immeasurable. Then if earthly parents know how to give good gifts to their children, how much more shall our Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him? {COL 142.1}

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. He who has given us His word—the leaves of the tree of life—will not withhold from us a knowledge of how to provide food for His needy children. {MH 199.4}

When Christ took human nature upon Him, He bound humanity to Himself by a tie of love that can never be broken by any power save the choice of man himself. Satan will constantly present allurements to induce us to break this tie—to choose to separate ourselves from Christ. Here is where we need to watch, to strive, to pray, that nothing may entice us to *choose* another master; for we are always free to do this. But let us keep our eyes fixed upon Christ, and He will preserve us. Looking unto Jesus, we are safe. Nothing can pluck us out of His hand. In constantly beholding Him, we “are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” 2 Corinthians 3:18. {SC 72.1}

If you will ask help of God you need not ask in vain. In order to encourage us to have confidence and trust He comes near us by His holy Word and Spirit, and seeks in a thousand ways to win our confidence. But in nothing does He take more delight than in receiving the weak who come to Him for strength. If we will find heart and voice to pray, He will be sure to find an ear to hear and an arm to save. {TDG 194.5}

Every human being is the object of loving interest to Him who gave His life that He might bring men back to God. Souls guilty and helpless, liable to be destroyed by the arts and snares of Satan, are cared for as a shepherd cares for the sheep of his flock. {MH 162.1}

In every human being He discerned infinite possibilities. He saw men as they might be, transfigured by His grace—in “the beauty of the Lord our God” (Psalm 90:17). {AG 223.3}

God’s grace is ever working upon the human heart, and when it is received, the evidence of its reception will appear in the life and character of its recipient, for spiritual life will be seen developing from within. The grace of Christ in the heart will always promote spiritual life, and spiritual advancement will be made. {TMK 163.2}

The gifts of Jesus are ever fresh and new. . . . Each new gift increases the capacity of the receiver to appreciate and enjoy the blessings of the Lord. He gives grace for grace. There can be no failure of supply. If you abide in Him, the fact that you receive a rich gift today insures the reception of a richer gift tomorrow. . . . {AG 104.2}

Love to Jesus will be manifested in a desire to work as He worked for the blessing and uplifting of humanity. It will lead to love, tenderness, and sympathy toward all the creatures of our heavenly Father's care. {SC 77.4}

Faith is trusting in God—believing that He loves us, and knows what is for our best good. Thus, instead of our own way, it leads us to choose His way. In place of our ignorance, it accepts His wisdom; in place of our weakness, His strength; in place of our sinfulness, His righteousness. Our lives, ourselves, are already His; faith acknowledges His ownership, and accepts its blessing. Truth, uprightness, purity, are pointed out as secrets of life's success. It is faith that puts us in possession of these. Every good impulse or aspiration is the gift of God; faith receives from God the life that alone can produce true growth and efficiency. {FLB 90.3}

Faith . . . reaches out to grasp the hand of Christ, knowing that He will hold more firmly than it is possible for the human hand to hold, and that He will never let go. While the human agent is willing to be led, Christ will lead him. . . . {UL 72.2}

As the will of man co-operates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings. {COL 333.1}

God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him. {MH 479.2}

God bids us fill the mind with great thoughts, pure thoughts. He desires us to meditate upon His love and mercy, to study His wonderful work in the great plan of redemption. Then clearer and still clearer will be our perception of truth, higher, holier, our desire for purity of heart and clearness of thought. The soul dwelling in the pure atmosphere of holy thought will be transformed by communion with God through the study of Scriptures. {COL 60.1}

God scatters blessings all along our path to brighten our journey and lead our hearts out to love and praise Him, and He wants us to draw water from the well of salvation that our hearts may be refreshed. We may sing the songs of Zion, we may cheer our own hearts, and we may cheer the hearts of others; hope may be strengthened, darkness turned to light. God has not left us in a dark world—as pilgrims and strangers seeking a better country, even an heavenly—without giving us precious promises to lighten every burden. The borders of our path are strewn with fair flowers of promise. They blossom all around, sending forth rich fragrance. {OHC 10.2}

Our God is a very present help in time of need. He is acquainted with the most secret thoughts of our hearts, with all the intents and purposes of our souls. When we are in perplexity, even before we open to Him our distresses, He is making arrangements for our deliverance.—Letter 73, Feb. 1, 1905, to Drs. D. H. and Laretta Kress. {UL 46.6}

He who constantly depends upon God through simple trust and prayerful confidence, will be surrounded by the angels of heaven. He who lives by faith in Christ, will be strengthened and upheld, able to fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold upon eternal life. {HP 16.7}

God desires us to rest content in His love. The contentment that Christ bestows is a gift worth infinitely more than gold and silver and precious stones. . . . {HP 186.3}

It is part of God's plan to grant us in answer to the prayer of faith, that which He would not bestow did we not thus ask. {GC 525.2}

Faith is not a happy flight of feeling; it is simply taking God at His word—believing that He will fulfill His promises because He said He would.—Lt 49, 1888. (HC 119.) {2MCP 539.5}

Where there is not only a belief in God's Word, but a submission of the will to Him; where the heart is yielded to Him, the affections fixed upon Him, there is faith—faith that works by love, and purifies the soul. Through this faith the heart is renewed in the image of God. {AG 137.5}

Amid the perplexities that will press upon the soul, there is only One who can help us out of all our difficulties, and relieve all our disquietude. We are to cast all our care upon Jesus, and bear in mind that He is present, and is directing us to commune with Him. We are to keep our minds stayed upon God; and in our weakness, He will be our strength; in our ignorance, He will be our wisdom; in our frailty, He will be our enduring might. {SD 27.2}

These things were not written merely that we might read and wonder, but that the same faith which wrought in God's servants of old might work in us. In no less marked a manner than He wrought then will He work now wherever there are hearts of faith to be channels of His power. {CG 43.1}

Many hold faith as an opinion. But saving faith is a transaction, by which those who receive Christ join themselves in covenant relation with God. Genuine faith is life. A living faith means an increase of vigor, a confiding trust, by which the soul becomes a conquering power. {GW 261.1}

Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. The eye of faith will discern God very near, and the suppliant may obtain precious evidence of the divine love and care for him. The prayer that Nathanael offered came from a sincere heart, and it was heard and answered by the Master. The Lord reads the hearts of all, and "the prayer of the upright is His delight." [Proverbs 15:8.] {GW 257.1}

God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith. His existence, His character, the truthfulness of His word, are all established by testimony that appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant. Yet God has never removed the possibility of doubt. Our faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration. Those who wish to doubt will have opportunity; while those who really desire to know the truth will find plenty of evidence on which to rest their faith. {SC 105.2}

A life in Christ is a life of restfulness. There may be no ecstasy of feeling, but there should be an abiding, peaceful trust. Your hope is not in yourself; it is in Christ. Your weakness is united to His strength, your ignorance to His wisdom, your frailty to His enduring might. So you are not to look to yourself, not to let the mind dwell upon self, but look to Christ. Let the mind dwell upon His love, upon the beauty, the perfection, of His character. Christ in His self-denial, Christ in His humiliation, Christ in His purity and holiness, Christ in His matchless love—this is the subject for the soul's contemplation. It is by loving Him, copying Him, depending wholly upon Him, that you are to be transformed into His likeness. {SC 70.2}

With the trusting faith of a little child, we are to come to our heavenly Father, telling Him of all our needs. He is always ready to pardon and help. The supply of divine wisdom is inexhaustible, and the Lord encourages us to draw largely from it. {3BC 1146.8}

God is ever seeking to instruct finite men that they may exercise faith in Him and trust themselves wholly in His hands. Every drop of rain or flake of snow, every spire of grass, every leaf and flower and shrub, testifies of God. These little things so common around us, teach the lesson that nothing is beneath the notice of the infinite God, nothing too small for His attention (GCB Feb. 18, 1897). {3BC 1141.3}

But though the conflict is a ceaseless one, none are left to struggle alone. Angels help and protect those who walk humbly before God. Never will our Lord betray one who trusts in Him. As His children draw near to Him for protection from evil, in pity and love He lifts up for them a standard against the enemy. Touch them not, He says; for they are Mine. I have graven them upon the palms of My hands. {PK 570.4}

The Lord will not disappoint any who put their trust in Him. He will be first and last and best in everything to us. He will be a present help in every time of need. In these last days of service we shall ... be held, and led, and protected, by the power of Christ. {RY 112.1}

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

### Second Quarter 2026: *Growing in a Relationship With God*

### Lesson 9 “Sin, the Gospel, and the Law”

#### Read for this week’s study

Judges 14; Mark 9:42–48; Romans 3:20; Matthew 5:17, 18; Romans 3:28; Matthew 7:24–29.

#### Memory Text

“I will never forget Your precepts, for by them You have given me life. I am Yours, save me; for I have sought Your precepts” (Psalm 119:93, 94, NKJV).

#### Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Distractions and Temptations
- III. Strongholds in My Relationship With God
- IV. The Law
- V. The Law and the Gospel
- VI. Knowing *and* Doing
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

##### Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “This week let’s explore the reason God gave us His law and, when someone transgresses God’s law and consequently sins, what or who can help to restore their relationship with God.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. What does the outcome of Samson’s life teach us about distractions and temptations? (Judges ch. 14 and 16:1, 4, 16, 17) (Sunday’s lesson). Although called by God for a specific purpose, he served God while giving in to temptation. What is the connection between giftedness and character?
3. What facilitates your relationship with God and what are the barriers that prevent you from growing in Christ? How do you understand Jesus’ warning about what causes us to sin in Mark 9:42–48? (Monday’s lesson) Why should we be prepared to reject something which is good and God-given – such as hands, feet and eyes – but which are leading us down the wrong path?
4. What is the essence and function of God’s law? (Romans 3:20 and 1 John 3:4) (Tuesday’s lesson) How can we change our view of the law so that we do not perceive it as restricting us, but strengthening us?

5. How has the law been abused throughout the centuries? What is the relationship between the law and the gospel? How do you understand Jesus' words from Matthew 5:17-18? (Wednesday's lesson)
6. John Wesley brought emphasis on sanctification as the second work of God's grace. Why is it that in Methodism, the emphasis on sanctification did not cause wide-spread legalism, while in Adventism it did? How is that related to our doctrine of judgment?
7. What is the poignant final challenge that Jesus brings to his listeners in conclusion of his Sermon on the Mount? (Matthew 7:24–29; Thursday's lesson) Why does Jesus insist that his hearers will be judged on whether or not they hear his words and do them? Doing what Jesus says or not doing it makes the difference between a house that stays standing in the storm and a house that falls with a great crash.
8. How is this connected with the rock in Matthew 16:18 and God's House which was built upon a rock and comes crashing down in chapter 24? How can we build our lives on Jesus' teaching so that we are part of the 'house' that lasts forever? How are we 'doing' God's words in our time?
9. "When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching..." (Matthew 7:28) Everyone is amazed, but Jesus is not interested in amazing the crowds. Jesus never went up to people and said, "Admire me." He only said, "Follow me." Jesus wants followers, not admirers. His call, being his disciple, goes beyond casual or cultural Christianity.
10. However, it doesn't mean that followers are perfect; rather, even when we stumble, the call is to recommit and rely on God's help. The metaphor doesn't become a legalistic test of performance, but a grace-invitation to wholehearted discipleship. How can we reflect that as individuals and as a community of faith?

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Now we all in the ordinary, legalistic course of events ought to die, and if God let us die, it would prove the truthfulness of His works. But God did not ask us to prove that He told the truth. It was essential that the universe know that the consequences of the wages of sin is death, and to know that it is Satan who's lied when he says that is not true. God had told the truth.

This had to be demonstrated. And back in Romans 3, Paul has said that God showed His Son publicly dying to answer that question, to demonstrate that God is righteous in having apparently overlooked men's former sins. The wages of sin is death has always been true; it always will be true. Disorderly rebelliousness in God's orderly universe will result in death. But the truthfulness of that has been demonstrated by God Himself, He doesn't ask us to do it.

So Paul says, “I’m free from that. I don’t have to die. I’m discharged from this law. Christ has taken care of it.” That is, the old man is gone; he said remember you buried him in baptism. Just as Jesus, who really took care of all this, really was buried. So you symbolize your intention in the light of all that Jesus has said and done, to be through with your old man, to be done with the sins of the past.

Isn’t this the new man and the old man struggling? The convictions of the new man who gladly buried his old man in baptism, and said, “I’d like now to live a better life. I’d like to live as Christ lived.” But almost immediately one succumbs to temptation and disgrace. This happens so often in life that finally one might cry as Paul did, “Wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this?” How do you translate this? Mine says “body of death.” I like “doomed body”. He answers, “Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.”

Now, when is this struggle? Is it before a man is converted? And when he’s converted and justified, he from then on has peace not only with God, but with himself. Or is this the struggle that continues after one is converted? The struggle, surely, every Christian has experienced. Or is it perhaps the struggle of a person in the experience of conversion, an experience that might be repeated every time one comes face to face with new truth, and you have to make up your mind again. Am I willing to do it or not? What have you decided? You know how this has been debated through the years.

Incidentally, on this struggle, I think that it’s this experience that comes up most frequently during weeks of prayer. I venture next week a number of individuals will raise this again. I don’t think I’ve ever gone through a week of prayer but what someone has said (maybe they’ve been believers for a long, long time), “I get so discouraged because the good I would do I don’t do.” That seems to be the common lot of believers. And the more eager they are to do what’s right, the more sensitive they are to frequent failure. And this chapter, I feel, is the best basis for a discussion of that problem, and the most encouraging, though one should never stop at the end of seven but always add the first verse of eight. You see, there is no condemnation to the struggling saint. He’s not condemned, for we don’t deal with a legalistic God, but a gracious God, and He knows all about this struggle. He knows we have this old man of sin; He knows he can’t be eliminated with a snap of the fingers—that any moment of carelessness will let him bestir himself and get out of his coffin and trouble us again. Now there’s no excuse, we’re told, for sin, it’s true. But John says, “If we do sin, inexcusably, we still have an advocate with the Father.” There we’re back to that verse at the beginning. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 7, recorded November 1977, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/13MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/14MMROMANS66> (Part 2)

You see, the tendency is to think of sin as failing to live up to a requirement. So one, for example, might tack the Ten Commandments to one's bedroom wall and in the morning you kneel down for morning prayers and you read all 10 and you say, "God help me to make this a good day. Help me not to murder anybody, help me not to commit adultery, help me not to steal," and then you go off to work. And in the evening you come back and kneel down to pray before going to sleep, and you read the Ten, and you say, "Oh, this has indeed been a good day. I didn't murder anyone, I didn't commit adultery today, and I didn't break the Sabbath today because it was Wednesday anyway. I thank Thee, Lord I'm not like other men, like this publican over here. It's been a very good day." And you hop into bed.

And Paul is going to say in the next chapter, "I used to read the commandments that way, until I got down to the 10th, and the 10th suggested that sin happens deep inside, just as Jesus said, 'He who hates his brother is a murderer.'" See, maybe you didn't murder your mother-in-law today, but how did you feel about her? (Why do mothers-in-law have to suffer that sort of illustration?) "And on Sabbath, you see, I was in church today, in fact, I went to first service and Sabbath school, and I went to the Hill Church for second service, and I took out literature all afternoon, God this was a great day." And yet inside I may have been like those people in Amos 8, who were waiting for the sun to go down so they could get ready for the program and open their store Saturday night.

If our hearts are not in it, if this is just an exterior thing, *we may be sinning all the time while apparently keeping the commandments*. And Paul will discuss that in some detail in the next chapter. And he didn't like it when he first saw it. When he realized that the Ten Commandments prohibited even evil desire, "Oh" he said, "my rebelliousness revived. Of course after awhile," he said, "I got to thinking about it and how right that is. It's not enough that I don't kill somebody. What really is required, is that I don't even hate him, in fact, that I love him." For we can only live together in an open free society if we don't even hate each other, we actually love each other. It isn't that we just don't murder each other; it isn't that we don't steal. *We don't even want to steal*. So, sin is rebelliousness, it's an attitude toward these things. So I might be "obeying", but my attitude is bad. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 6, recorded November 1977, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/11MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/12MMROMANS66> (Part 2)

We usually use 1 John 3:4, and we usually translate that, "Sin is the transgression of the law." But that's a rather expansive translation of one word. And it tempts one to put the Ten Commandments up on the wall and say, "Well, I haven't broken that one, and that one, and that one, and that one, so this has been a rather good day." Paul used to look down the Ten,

and on a Tuesday night when he knelt to pray, he could say, “This has been a good day. I haven’t murdered anybody. I haven’t committed adultery today. I haven’t stolen today. I haven’t broken the Sabbath, because it was Tuesday anyway. I thank Thee, Lord, I am not like this publican over here.” And then he looked at the tenth, and he realized he had been breaking them. Because sin in 1 John 3:4, is not “the transgression of the Law.” The Greek says, “sin is lawlessness.” Sin is a state of mind. It’s an attitude. And that’s what is here. “Whoever knows what is right to do and fails to do it, to him it is rebelliousness.” “*Lawlessness*” is the literal Greek word in 1 John 3:4. Moreover, when you think of the fact that it’s God who has told us what to do, and everything He has asked us to do is for our best good, and if we do not do it, that suggests distrust. And you remember in Romans 14, the last verse: “Whatever is not of faith and trust is sin.”

Sin is a breach of trust. And I think we would protect ourselves from a rather mechanical understanding—or *misunderstanding* of sin, if we put these three verses together instead of one. Romans 14, James 4 and 1 John 3. “Sin is lawlessness.” “Sin is knowing what you ought to do but not doing it.” “Sin is a breach of trust.” And I think they’re all in harmony there, aren’t they? You could even put Malachi with it: “Cursed be the cheat.” Not that God hates cheats. He just can’t help cheats. He can’t save and heal cheats. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in all 66 – 1&2 Peter and James*, recorded July 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:* [http://pkp.cc/75MMPOGIA66 \(Part 1\)](http://pkp.cc/75MMPOGIA66) [http://pkp.cc/76MMPOGIA66 \(Part 2\)](http://pkp.cc/76MMPOGIA66)

One view sees the plan of salvation and God’s gracious provisions, such as the death of Christ on the cross, as being primarily offered to adjust our legal standing in the sight of God. Because as sinners, we are guilty. And guilty as we are, justice and law demand that we be executed. And the only way to avoid being executed—and there are many, various explanations of execution; these are the various views of hell. We all have views of hell, the longer view, the medium view and the shorter view; there are many views of hell. But if God is the executioner, then we do well to be preoccupied with our legal standing. And unless we be forgiven, He will go ahead and do this to us; He must. Law and justice require it. And if He doesn’t go through with this, the universe will conclude He is unjust. And if He’s unjust, you wouldn’t trust Him, and now you’re getting over into the other view, which always amuses me, that if you pursue even the legal view logically to its conclusions you wind up with the other one.

But now in the larger view, which uses all sixty-six books and has no problems with Ellen White at all, it sees sin not as a legal problem. It sees sin as a very real problem that has had devastating consequences on us physically, mentally, spiritually, socially. Sin is a breach of trust, as Romans 14 says. Sin is treachery. Sin is what Lucifer did in the beginning, for which you could

not have called him in before church counsel. I mean, what had he done? Nothing! Except the most devastating thing that can ever be done. Nearly destroyed the universe, that's what he did.

That's how bad it was. And because of this distrust, and the consequential unwillingness to listen and allow God to look after us and heal the damage done, enormous damage has been done to sinners. **We're not in legal trouble, we're in trouble. We're not in danger of being executed, we're dying. That's the difference.** And I believe it makes all the difference in the world. I would not go to a doctor who would kill his patients for not cooperating. But if I'm dying, I need a doctor. And if I go and don't cooperate, I still may die. But my understanding is, that in this larger view, this great controversy view, this sixty-six book view, we're all dying. And if God were to leave us alone, that's it.

But He hasn't. He's pursued us through the years, trying to win us back to trust. And of course, you don't expect people to trust without evidence. You don't make claims; you offer demonstrations; that's the content of the sixty-six books, God's demonstration of the kind of person He is. And the way He's handled this emergency is the greatest demonstration of all. As to, not how He treats His friends, but how He treats His enemies. How He treats the sick and the dying; how does He seek to win them back to trust? And some of us find that very wonderful.

So the purpose of the plan of salvation is not to adjust our legal standing, but the purpose of the plan of salvation is to win us back to trust so He can heal us, which He can readily do, and it is to confirm the trust of the onlooking universe. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio presentation, Questions People are Asking About the Plan of Salvation, recorded April 1983, Redlands, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

[http://pkp.cc/1MMQUESTP \(Part 1\)](http://pkp.cc/1MMQUESTP) [http://pkp.cc/2MMQUESTP \(Part 2\)](http://pkp.cc/2MMQUESTP)

If you were ever asked to explain why you obey God (assuming that you do), what answer would you give? Would you say, "I do what I do as a believer, because God has told me to and He has the power to reward and destroy." Is that why you don't lie and murder? Nothing wrong in those things themselves, but it upsets God when you do that—and that is a dangerous thing to do.

This might be all right for a beginner or for a little child, but it makes God's laws seem so arbitrary. They have no sense in themselves. That kind of obedience does not speak well and truly about our God.

Would you rather say, “I do what I do as a believer, because God has told me to, and I love Him and want to please Him.” Is that why you don’t steal or commit adultery? It is not that you see anything wrong in these things in themselves, it’s just that God doesn’t like it when we do that. He has been so good to us, surely we owe it to Him to do the things He has asked us to do, whether they make sense or not.

Again, this does not speak well of God. It might be a little improvement from obeying out of fear or desire for reward. But it still smacks of arbitrariness. It still does not speak well of God, though that is often thought to be the antidote for the first one.

Could you say this? “I do what I do because more and more I am finding it to be right and sensible to do so. How I admire and revere the one who so advised me and even commanded me in the days of my ignorance and immaturity,” hastening to add, “being still somewhat ignorant and immature, I am willing to listen to this God and to heed His commandments when He asks me to do something beyond my present understanding.” That says that God is not arbitrary, but that everything He has asked us to do makes such good sense, we should want to do it anyway. If you can say that, then truly God’s law is not a threat to your freedom, and you thank Him for it.

James is thought to be the legalist among the Bible writers. But look at James 2:8, 12, the last on the list:

If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, “Love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing right. Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom.” (NIV)

That is James; and even Luther didn’t understand him that way.

And then I ventured to add this at the end. Since Ellen White, whom some of us regard as a real friend of God, since she has often been understood as a legalist, I included one of her many descriptions of real obedience. Look at the bottom:

The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation, merely because he is required to do so, will never enter into the joy of obedience. In fact, he does not obey. . . . True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer [Abraham trusted God; and God said, “That’s what I want. That’s righteousness.”]. This will lead us to do right because it is right—because right doing is pleasing to God. (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, 97, 98.)

{Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #12, “God’s Law Is No Threat to Our Freedom” recorded April 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/12MMCAG>

## Further Study with Ellen White

The tempter has no power to control the will or to force the soul to sin. He may distress, but he cannot contaminate. He can cause agony, but not defilement. {FLB 327.6}

The tempter can never compel us to do evil. He cannot control minds unless they are yielded to his control. {DA 125.2}

God has made ample provision for His people; and if they rely upon His strength, they will never become the sport of circumstances. . . . It is not in the power of earth or hell to compel anyone to do evil. Satan attacks us at our weak points, but we need not be overcome. However severe or unexpected the assault, God has provided help for us, and in His strength we may conquer. {PP 421.2}

Christ knows our weakness, and to Him we can go daily for help. It is not necessary for us to gain strength a month ahead. We are to conquer from day to day (MS 28, 1886). {7BC 974.3}

God asks us to live only one day at a time. You need not look a week or a month ahead. *Today* do your best. Today speak and act in a way that will honor God. The promise is, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be" (Deuteronomy 33:25). {HP 59.6}

The promise is not that we will have strength today for a future emergency, that anticipated future trouble will be provided for beforehand, before it comes to us. We may, if we walk by faith, expect strength and provision for us as fast as our circumstances demand it. We live by faith, not by sight. The Lord's arrangement is for us to ask Him for the very things that we need. The grace of tomorrow will not be given today. Men's necessity is God's opportunity. . . . {OHC 125.2}

We are to keep close to the Source of our strength day by day, and when the enemy comes in like a flood the Spirit of the Lord lifts up a standard for us against the enemy. The promise of God is sure, that strength shall be proportioned to our day. We may be confident for the future only in the strength that is given for the present necessities. The experience in God is daily becoming more precious. . . . Do not borrow anxiety for the future. It is today that we are in need. . . . The Lord is our helper, our God, and our strength in every time of need. {OHC 125.5}

We can but look onward to new perplexities in the coming conflict, but we may well look on what is past as well as what is to come, and say, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us" (1 Samuel 7:12). "As thy days, so shall thy strength be" (Deuteronomy 33:25). The trial will not exceed the strength which shall be given us to bear it. {TDG 58.3}

The way to the throne of God is always open. You cannot always be on your knees in prayer, but your silent petitions may constantly ascend to God for strength and guidance. When tempted, as you will be, you may flee to the secret place of the Most High. His everlasting arms will be underneath you. {CH 362.2}

God's everlasting arm encircles the soul that turns to Him for aid, however feeble that soul may be. {4T 328.1}

God has the world in His hand. We have God on our side. All heaven is waiting and longing for our cooperation. The Lord is supreme. Why then should we fear? The Lord is almighty; why should we tremble? In the past God has delivered His people, and He will be our helper if we will arise in His strength and go forward. {TMK 342.3}

Satan's rebellion was to be a lesson to the universe through all coming ages, a perpetual testimony to the nature and terrible results of sin. The working out of Satan's rule, its effects upon both men and angels, would show what must be the fruit of setting aside the divine authority. It would testify that with the existence of God's government and His law is bound up the well-being of all the creatures He has made. Thus the history of this terrible experiment of rebellion was to be a perpetual safeguard to all holy intelligences, to prevent them from being deceived as to the nature of transgression, to save them from committing sin and suffering its punishments. {GC 499.1}

The whole universe had been witness to the scenes at Sinai. In the working out of the two administrations was seen the contrast between the government of God and that of Satan. Again the sinless inhabitants of other worlds beheld the results of Satan's apostasy, and the kind of government he would have established in heaven had he been permitted to bear sway. {PP 335.3}

In the councils of heaven it was decided that principles must be acted upon that would not at once destroy Satan's power; for it was God's purpose to place things upon an eternal basis of security. Time must be given for Satan to develop the principles which were the foundation of his government. The heavenly universe must see worked out the principles which Satan declared to be superior to God's principles. God's order must be contrasted with Satan's order. The corrupting principles of Satan's rule must be revealed. The principles of righteousness expressed in God's law must be demonstrated as unchangeable, perfect, eternal.—RH Sept. 7, 1897. {TA 41.1}

Even when he was cast out of heaven, Infinite Wisdom did not destroy Satan. Since only the service of love can be acceptable to God, the allegiance of His creatures must rest upon a conviction of His justice and benevolence.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 40-42. {CTr 12.7}

The law of ten commandments is not to be looked upon as much from the prohibitory side as from the mercy side. Its prohibitions are the sure guarantee of happiness in obedience. As received in Christ, it works in us the purity of character that will bring joy to us through eternal ages. To the obedient it is a wall of protection. We behold in it the goodness of God, who by revealing to men the immutable principles of righteousness seeks to shield them from the evils that result from transgression. {6BC 1110.4}

We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death. {6BC 1110.5}

The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all created beings depended upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. God desires from all His creatures the service of love—homage that springs from an intelligent appreciation of His character. He takes no pleasure in a forced allegiance, and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service. {GC 493.2}

Before this earth was called into being, God’s law existed. Angels are governed by its principles, and in order for earth to be in harmony with heaven, man also must obey the divine statutes. To man in Eden Christ made known the precepts of the law “when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.” Job 38:7. The mission of Christ on earth was not to destroy the law, but by His grace to bring man back to obedience to its precepts. {MB 48.1}

There was but one hope for the human race—that into this mass of discordant and corrupting elements might be cast a new leaven; that there might be brought to mankind the power of a new life; that the knowledge of God might be restored to the world. {Ed 76.1}

Christ came to restore this knowledge. He came to set aside the false teaching by which those who claimed to know God had misrepresented Him. He came to manifest the nature of His law, to reveal in His own character the beauty of holiness. {Ed 76.2}

Christ came to the world with the accumulated love of eternity. Sweeping away the exactions which had encumbered the law of God, He showed that the law is a law of love, an expression of the Divine Goodness. He showed that in obedience to its principles is involved the happiness of mankind, and with it the stability, the very foundation and framework, of human society. {Ed 76.3}

God desires us to be happy, and He gave us the precepts of the law that in obeying them we might have joy. {DA 308.1}

The infinite love of God has been manifested in the gift of His only-begotten Son to redeem a lost race. Christ came to the earth to reveal to men the character of His Father, and His life was filled with deeds of divine tenderness and compassion. {PP 469.2}

That which alone can effectually restrain from sin in this world of darkness, will prevent sin in heaven. The significance of the death of Christ will be seen by saints and angels. . . The angels

ascribe honor and glory to Christ, for even they are not secure except by looking to the sufferings of the Son of God. It is through the efficacy of the cross that the angels of heaven are guarded from apostasy. Without the cross they would be no more secure against evil than were the angels before the fall of Satan. Angelic perfection failed in heaven. . . The plan of salvation, making manifest the justice and love of God, provides an eternal safeguard against defection in unfallen worlds, as well as among those who shall be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. {ST, December 30, 1889 par. 4}

God's ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning. {DA 311.2}

Each law of God is an enactment of mercy, love, and saving power. These laws, obeyed, are our life, our salvation, our happiness, our peace [Psalm 119:165 quoted] (Letter 112, 1902). {3BC 1153.6}

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

### Second Quarter 2026: *Growing in a Relationship With God*

### Lesson 10 “Repentance *and* Forgiveness”

#### Read for this week’s study

Isaiah 61:10; Hosea 6; Acts 3:18, 19; Exodus 34:1–10; Romans 6:23; Matthew 22:1–14.

#### Memory Text

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9, NKJV).

#### Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Rush of Life
- III. Holy Spirit Promptings
- IV. Real Repentance
- V. Sufficient Grace
- VI. The Most Expensive Robe
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

##### Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “The theme of this week’s lesson study is repentance and forgiveness. Keep the theme of this week’s memory verse in your mind as you go through each day’s lesson. Yes, we sin, but thanks to the Cross and the plan of salvation, forgiveness is always there for the confessing and repentant sinner.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Sunday’s lesson focuses on the rush of life, how easily we become distracted, and the importance of noticing the things that weaken or break down our relationship with God. What important truth do the texts in Isaiah 61:10; 64:6 and Zechariah 3:4 reveal to us about Christ’s righteousness? What does it mean to “always cling fervently to what’s promised here”?
3. Monday’s lesson is about the promptings of the Holy Spirit. One of the roles of the Holy Spirit is to “convict the world of sin” (John 16:7, 8). How is that connected with righteousness and judgment (8-11)? What specifically do you notice in Hosea 6 about how God describes Himself in His appeal for repentance?
4. Why is repentance so important in the process of spiritual growth (Acts 3:18, 19)? (Tuesday’s lesson) What is a time of “refreshing”? How can we make sure that the

repentance leads to life (Acts 11:18) and a growing relationship with God, rather than a pathological self-obsession with ourselves and our failures?

5. What crucial truths about repentance and God's character can we learn from Exodus 34:1-10? (Wednesday's lesson) How can we get a better grasp of God's all-sufficient grace? How does Jonah misquote this text (Jonah 4:2-3)? Is it possible that God's mercy and generosity will always unsettle us?
6. What message do you find in Jesus' parable in Matthew 22:1-14? (Thursday's lesson). The great and deep mystery of God's forgiveness is not the same as saying that whatever we do is not really important because it will all work out somehow in the end.
7. "We should daily clothe ourselves with Jesus' robe of righteousness. What does this really mean, and how do we do this?" (Thursday's lesson) How do you understand the metaphor with the robe? What is the purpose of God's providing this "most expensive robe"?
8. How do we share the message that God loves us the way we are, yet he does not want us to stay the way we are? His love reaches us *where* we are, but his love refuses to let us stay *as* we are. Love wants the best for the beloved. That's why wherever Jesus comes, lives are transformed, healed, changed. The result of God's transforming grace is not only salvation, but also sanctification and compassionate service to others. That's why we need to see repentance as life-giving, not guilt-inducing.
9. Repentance (*metanoia* in Greek = "change of mind/heart/way") is right at the center of Christian faith, but it can easily get distorted if we lean too far to one side. Repentance is the way back—it's turning *toward* God, not just turning *from* sin. That's why it must always be presented as relational, not merely moral.
10. Repentance is not a one-time act but a lifelong rhythm. It prevents pride, invites continual growth, and keeps our hearts tender before God, humble and dependent on Him. How can we model true repentance in our time and place? How can we better appreciate what the Holy Spirit does for the world, individuals and the community?

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

It is emphasized all through the Old Testament as well as the New. Look at Ezekiel 33:11:

As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel? (RSV)

Like a physician, God stands ready to heal us. But He cannot force us to be well. If we prefer to leave Him, He will respect our decision and sadly let us go. But as we leave Him for the last time

to reap the awful consequences, we will hear His sad cry in Hosea, “How can I give you up? How can I let you go?” We discussed it when we talked about why Jesus died. Do you remember that dramatic story in the book of Hosea? Then as God interpreted what Hosea had done, He said, “I have pled so long, so many years, centuries, with My people Israel to please come home. Bring words of repentance with you, and I’ll heal you and I’ll forgive you.”

You remember when the prodigal son did this. Jesus told the story to show how glad God is when anyone does come home. How eager He is to heal! How magnificent is that story, told so many times. Just a little of it now, look at Luke 15 on the reference sheet. Look what this says about the attitude of our Father toward His sinful children:

While he was still a long way off his father saw him, and his heart went out to him. He ran to meet him, flung his arms round him, and kissed him. The son said, “Father, I have sinned against God and against you; I’m no longer fit to be called your son.” But the father said to his servants, “Quick! fetch a robe, my best one [don’t you like that! Quick! fetch a robe, my best one], and put it on him. . . . And let us have a feast to celebrate the day. For this son of mine was dead and has come back to life; he was lost and is found.”  
(NEB)

Jesus added that there is joy among the angels in heaven whenever anybody comes back. Even the angels are pleased when we come home. But Israel did not come back in the days of Hosea. So those sad words follow in Hosea 14: “But come home, Israel, come home to the Lord your God. . . . Take words of repentance with you as you return to the Lord. . . . I will heal their unfaithfulness, I will love them with all My heart.” (*Phillips*) But they didn’t come. Look at Hosea 11:7, 8: “My people are bent on turning away from Me [not turning home, turning away]. . . . How, oh how, can I give you up Ephraim! How, oh how, can I hand you over Israel!” (*Phillips*)

As in Hosea, He will sadly hand us over if we insist on turning away. I understand that God will miss us if we are lost. He will miss us forever if we don’t come home. You think of the eternal void that brilliant Lucifer will leave in the infinite memory of God! But for some of us, this magnificent picture of God leads us to repentance, and to trust. Remember the famous last verse on the list, Romans 2:4: “Do you not know that God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?” (RSV) {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #13, “How God Treats His Erring Children” recorded April 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:*

<http://pkp.cc/13MMCAG>

Lou: This person also wanted to ask, “How does God forgive sins, and what is involved in receiving the remission of our sins?”

Graham: Now, “remission” meaning *forgiveness*, and not just suppressing it for a little while like the medical term. What’s involved in God forgiving? I believe God is forgiveness personified. And you and your brother Morrie, when you tell the prodigal son story, you make that so clear. That’s beautifully done. What had to be done for the father to receive his son back—dirty, and diseased and malnourished as he was? All the boy had to do was come home and find his father had forgiven him long before. In fact, it’s when he found that his father had forgiven him, that he repented. It isn’t, “If I repent, He’ll forgive me.” When I find how forgiving He is, that leads me to repentance. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #9 with Lou Venden, “There Is No Need to Be Afraid of God” recorded March 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/9MMCAG>

But let’s say we’re covered by the righteousness of Christ. How does that actually work? Here’s the Father, here are a hundred million angels of Daniel 7 as the court sits in judgment and the books are opened. My case comes up, and I have a dreadful record. But I don’t need to worry, because I am covered with the righteousness of Christ, and fortunately God does not have 20/20 vision, and doesn’t know the secret about what’s inside! Jesus knows what’s inside, and I’m sure my guardian angel knows what’s inside, and the accuser of the brethren knows what’s inside.

In fact, he accuses me day and night before God and says, “Do you want to know what’s inside? If God looks, does He say, “Nah, looks pretty good to me.” I don’t like the thought that I’m somehow sneaking into the kingdom in disguise. Someday God might learn the truth about me. If I am not changed inside, I’m not safe to have around. So this obviously is not for purposes of disguise. God knows. He knows me just as well as anybody else in the Godhead. God says, “I not only forgive you, but I will treat you as if you had never sinned. In fact, I will treat you with dignity and respect, as if you’d always been My loyal children.” To be covered with the righteousness of Christ is not a disguise. It means we’ll be treated as if we had lived as righteously as the Son.

So, covered with the righteousness of Christ: What does it mean? I take it to mean that because Christ answered all the problems, He’s not asking me to do it. He’s asking me, “Do you want to respond to these answers, like the loyal angels have? Have you been won back to trust me? Are you willing to listen? If so, I can heal the damage done.” And even though I am a pretty sick patient in my heavenly Father’s eyes, God will treat me with dignity and respect, as if I had lived as nobly as His Son. I think that’s the covering. I mean, He would really do this. He will treat me with dignity, and with respect, as if I had never been disloyal.

That's a statement. I'd want evidence for that. How about His treatment of the woman taken in adultery? Look at the way He treated her and sought to recover her dignity and self-respect. Look at the way He treated Peter and other people through the scriptures. He really does it. In fact, He even treats "unsavable" sinners with dignity and respect. Look at Judas. He covered for him, so that when Judas went out to betray his Lord, the disciples thought he went out to make an offering to feed the poor. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio presentation, Questions People are Asking About the Plan of Salvation, recorded April 1983, Redlands, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/1MMQUESTP> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/2MMQUESTP> (Part 2)

### **Further Study with Ellen White**

When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. {COL 311.4}

God in His great love is seeking to develop in us the precious graces of His Spirit. He permits us to encounter obstacles, persecution, and hardships, not as a curse, but as the greatest blessing of our lives. Every temptation resisted, every trial bravely borne, gives us a new experience and advances us in the work of character building. The soul that through divine power resists temptation reveals to the world and to the heavenly universe the efficiency of the grace of Christ. {MB 117.1}

The faithful, praying ones are, as it were, shut in with God. They themselves know not how securely they are shielded. Urged on by Satan, the rulers of this world are seeking to destroy them; but could their eyes be opened, as were the eyes of Elisha's servant at Dothan, they would see the angels of God encamped about them, by their brightness and glory holding in check the hosts of darkness. {5T 475.1}

Arise and go to your Father. He will meet you a great way off. If you take even one step toward Him in repentance, He will hasten to enfold you in His arms of infinite love. His ear is open to the cry of the contrite soul. The very first reaching out of the heart after God is known to Him. Never a prayer is offered, however faltering, never a tear is shed, however secret, never a sincere desire after God is cherished, however feeble, but the Spirit of God goes forth to meet it. Even before the prayer is uttered or the yearning of the heart made known, grace from Christ goes forth to meet the grace that is working upon the human soul. {COL 206.1}

Christ might, because of our guilt, have moved far away from us. But instead of moving farther away, He came and dwelt among us, filled with all the fullness of the Godhead, to be one with us, that through His grace we might attain perfection. {RC 17.5}

Prayer is heaven's ordained means of success in the conflict with sin and the development of Christian character. The divine influences that come in answer to the prayer of faith will accomplish in the soul of the suppliant all for which he pleads. For the pardon of sin, for the Holy Spirit, for a Christlike temper, for wisdom and strength to do His work, for any gift He has promised, we may ask; and the promise is, "Ye shall receive." {AA 564.1}

In all ages, through the medium of communion with heaven, God has worked out His purpose for His children, by unfolding gradually to their minds the doctrines of grace. His manner of imparting truth is illustrated in the words, "His going forth is prepared as the morning." Hosea 6:3. He who places himself where God can enlighten him, advances, as it were, from the partial obscurity of dawn to the full radiance of noonday. {AA 564.2}

The Lord did not lock the reservoir of heaven after pouring His Spirit upon the early disciples. We also may receive of the fullness of His blessing. Heaven is full of the treasures of His grace, and those who come to God in faith may claim all that He has promised. {6BC 1055.4}

The Lord will not compel men to deal justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with their God; He sets before the human agent good and evil, and makes plain what will be the sure result of following one course or the other. Christ invites us, saying, "Follow Me." But we are never forced to walk in His footsteps. If we do walk in His footsteps, it is the result of deliberate choice. As we see the life and character of Christ, strong desire is awakened to be like Him in character; and we follow on to know the Lord, and to know His goings forth are prepared as the morning. We then begin to realize that "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."—R. & H., March 31, 1896. {CS 138.1}

The Sun of Righteousness did not burst upon the world in splendor, to dazzle the senses with His glory. It is written of Christ, "His going forth is prepared as the morning." Hosea 6:3. Quietly and gently the daylight breaks upon the earth, dispelling the shadow of darkness, and waking the world to life. So did the Sun of Righteousness arise, "with healing in His wings." Malachi 4:2. {DA 261.3}

Christ is ready to set us free from sin, but He does not force the will; and if by persistent transgression the will itself is wholly bent on evil, and we do not *desire* to be set free, if we *will* not accept His grace, what more can He do? We have destroyed ourselves by our determined rejection of His love. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." "Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." 2 Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:7, 8. {SC 34.2}

God's ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. The living God has given in His holy law a transcript of His character. The greatest Teacher the world has ever known is Jesus Christ; and what is the standard He has given for all who believe in Him? "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matthew 5:48. As God is perfect in His high sphere of action, so man may be perfect in his human sphere. {CT 365.2}

The plan of redemption is not merely a way of escape from the penalty of transgression, but through it the sinner is forgiven his sins, and will be finally received into heaven—not as a forgiven culprit pardoned and released from captivity, yet looked upon with suspicion and not admitted to friendship and trust; but welcomed as a child, and taken back into fullest confidence. {7BC 950.6}

God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness *for* sin but reclaiming *from* sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10. {FLB 129.2}

It is God's glory to encircle sinful, repentant human beings in the arms of His love, to bind up their wounds, to cleanse them from sin, and to clothe them with the garments of salvation. {PK 668.3}

Accustomed as they had been in Egypt to material representations of the Deity, and these of the most degrading nature, it was difficult for them to conceive of the existence or the character of the Unseen One. In pity for their weakness, God gave them a symbol of His presence. "Let them make Me a sanctuary," He said; "that I may dwell among them." Exodus 25:8. {Ed 35.1}

To human beings striving for conformity to the divine image there is imparted an outlay of heaven's treasure, an excellency of power, that will place them higher than even the angels who have never fallen. {COL 162.4}

God does not force the will or judgment of any. He takes no pleasure in a slavish obedience. He desires that the creatures of His hands shall love Him because He is worthy of love. He would have them obey Him because they have an intelligent appreciation of His wisdom, justice, and benevolence. And all who have a just conception of these qualities will love Him because they are drawn toward Him in admiration of His attributes. {GC 541.3}

God has bound our hearts to Him by unnumbered tokens in heaven and in earth. Through the things of nature, and the deepest and tenderest earthly ties that human hearts can know, He has sought to reveal Himself to us. Yet these but imperfectly represent His love. Though all these evidences have been given, the enemy of good blinded the minds of men, so that they looked upon God with fear; they thought of Him as severe and unforgiving. Satan led men to conceive of God as a being whose chief attribute is stern justice,—one who is a severe judge, a

harsh, exacting creditor. He pictured the Creator as a being who is watching with jealous eye to discern the errors and mistakes of men, that He may visit judgments upon them. It was to remove this dark shadow, by revealing to the world the infinite love of God, that Jesus came to live among men. {SC 10.3}

The whole universe will have become witnesses to the nature and results of sin. And its utter extermination, which in the beginning would have brought fear to angels and dishonor to God, will now vindicate His love and establish His honor before the universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law. Never will evil again be manifest. Says the word of God: "Affliction shall not rise up the second time." Nahum 1:9. The law of God, which Satan has reproached as the yoke of bondage, will be honored as the law of liberty. A tested and proved creation will never again be turned from allegiance to Him whose character has been fully manifested before them as fathomless love and infinite wisdom. {GC 504.1}

The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves, and just and merciful on the part of God. {GC 542.2}

The fall of man, with all its consequences, was not hidden from the Omnipotent. Redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam, but an eternal purpose, suffered to be wrought out for the blessing not only of this atom of a world, but for the good of all the worlds that God had created. . . . {TMK 18.2}

Through creation and redemption, through nature and through Christ, the glories of the divine character are revealed. By the marvelous display of His love in giving "his only begotten Son," ... the character of God is revealed to the intelligences of the universe. {TMK 18.5}

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

### Second Quarter 2026: *Growing in a Relationship With God*

#### Lesson 11 “Setbacks”

#### Read for this week’s study

Mark 4:35–41; Mark 5:21–34; Romans 5:3–5; Job 19:23–27; Job 23:8–12; Luke 24:13–27; Romans 8:18, 28.

#### Memory Text

“And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us” (Romans 5:3–5, NKJV).

#### Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Life’s Storms
- III. Be Made Well
- IV. Job
- V. The Road to Emmaus
- VI. See Jesus
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

##### Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “This week, we’ll explore some responses we often have when life is challenging. We’ll consider how we might use life’s setbacks to strengthen, not weaken, our most important relationship.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Because the universe is in a real conflict between God’s character of love and Satan’s character of coercion and destruction, earth is a frontline battleground. As a result, we humans are caught in the crossfire. None of us can escape setbacks, storms, and life difficulties on this side of the Garden of Eden. Thus, the ultimate question is not how do we escape them, but do they bring us closer to God?
3. What lessons about life’s storms can you take from the story in Mark 4:35–41? (Sunday’s lesson) What does the question of the disciples: “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” (v. 38) reveal about their operating system? How does Mark point his readers to a bigger reality in v. 36b? What is the connection between calming the storm and the parables in chapter 4?

4. Jonah got into a storm because of his *disobedience* (Jonah 1); the disciples got into a storm because of their *obedience* (Mark 4:35-41). How we respond to the storms in our lives shapes and reveals our character, all in real-time view of the “watching universe”. Setbacks are opportunities for growth and character development.
5. What can we learn from the intertwined story of Jairus’ daughter and the woman with chronic bleeding? (Mark 5:21-34; Monday’s lesson) How do you understand the words of Jesus, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your disease.” (5:34) Why do most Christians read it as, “Woman, your strong conviction has made you well”? Jesus could have said: “Woman, my miraculous power has made you well.” But he did not, because it would obscure an important truth about a healing relationship of trusting confidence. What transformation can vital love bring into one’s life?
6. When the woman touched Jesus, instantly two things happened: she was not only healed but also discovered. She fell to the ground, consumed with grief and remorse. What does it say to us about God that Jesus leaned toward her, lifted her in his arms, and called her his daughter? What does it say to us about God that Jesus noticed that the little girl was hungry (5:43)?
7. What is so significant about the story of Job (Tuesday’s lesson)? How did Job respond in Job 19:23–27 and 23:8–12? Life’s storms result not from God’s will but from the fallout of rebellion in the universe. God is not the author of tragedy. “An enemy has done this” becomes a meaningful theological category. The question is about God’s character, not Job’s behavior.
8. Why does Luke tell the story of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus? “Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts?” (Luke 24:38, NKJV). What are we supposed to learn from the story besides the fact that, “too often, we forget that Jesus walks beside us in our valleys. Too often we don’t recognize Him. Too often we forget that there’s much more to the story.” (Wednesday’s lesson)?
9. What is the significance of the fact that three times Luke uses the verb “to open” (*dianoigo*) [eyes in v. 31; Scripture in v. 32; minds to understand the Scripture in vs. 44, 45] in this story? How can we “see” Jesus today?
10. Jesus wants to open our eyes and our minds so that we see the beautiful story of Scripture “that testifies of Him”. God does not “send storms to teach lessons”. But He can redeem suffering and transforming it for good without being its cause.
11. The cosmic conflict model gives hope that evil is temporary and not part of God’s eternal design. Storms happen because we live in a war zone. God is not the cause; He is the healer and restorer. Evil has an expiration date. One day God’s justice and healing will be universal and visible to all.
12. If we miss the big story, we miss everything. If we see the cathedral, we will see what God is trying to accomplish by restoring the Paradise lost into Paradise renewed.

## Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Lou: But you referred to Job. If I remember correctly, God called Job a perfect person. He referred to him as perfect. And yet as you come to the end of the book of Job, it says he repented.

Graham: In dust and ashes.

Lou: Yes. Now, what did he have to repent of? What does repentance mean when God has said, "Here is a perfect man?" He says that to Lucifer, to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? A good and perfect man."

Graham: That's right. In the hearing of the on-looking universe God said, "Here is a perfect man." And the perfect man says, "I repent." Well, I notice that we are more inclined to point out his repentance rather than God's word that he is perfect. We need to re-read the whole book here this evening. But my understanding is that under the pressure of the bad advice of his friends, Job finally came to the place where he said, "God, I'm sorry I have talked about things beyond my understanding." And God immediately intervened and said, "Don't give up, Job. You have done splendidly! You have said of Me what is right. Don't let these three theologians discourage you. In fact, pray for them. They need a lot of help to know Me the way you do" (Job 42:7, 8).

So we really need to take that book as a whole. God said he was perfect. Job in his humility said, "God, I have said a lot, and I've said it with a great deal of feeling. If I seem the least bit irreverent, I repent."

God said, "A man who is covered with boils and has lost his whole family; oh, I can understand why you cry the way you have. You did not insult Me by this. You honored Me with your confidence." Which, by the way, comes up next week when we have "Talking To God As A Friend." Job is a marvelous example of how freely we can talk to God, yet still be reverent. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #14 with Lou Venden, "God Can Completely Heal the Damage Done" recorded May 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/14MMCAG>

Lou: We must move on to some other very important questions in this same connection. This phrase, "Thy will be done." If we really want and mean for God's will to be done, why ask for anything? Wouldn't it be more trusting really to just say, "God, do what You're going to do"?

Graham: Ah, yes. So many things come to mind, but especially watching Jesus do it. He really was an example in almost every important area. He would say to His Father, "Thy will be done; nevertheless . . ." I think that if prayer is conversation with God, we will be honest with Him. I do not relish what's coming. I want to understand this, and I want You to do things Your way. I want to defer to Your wisdom. Nevertheless, may I talk to You about this? May I tell You honestly I

want this, I want that, I shrink from this, I shrink from that?” That’s real, honest conversation. But behind it all, we are going to defer to God’s wisdom; of course. I think it underscores the idea that it’s genuine, honest conversation.

Lou: But to turn that the other way, there are those who express real concern that when you are praying, for example, for someone who is very seriously ill, a loved one that you very much want to be healed, that it’s somehow an expression of a lack of faith, to, after you’ve said, “Lord, please heal my mother or my child,” then to say, “Nevertheless, Thy will be done.” Wouldn’t it be more trusting to just say, “Lord, heal. I believe You are going to”?

Graham: Because we want to tell Him what to do. It would seem to me, it shows much more trust to say, “God, You know best, and You do that for this person.”

Lou: You’re saying then that it’s perfectly all right to express my will very forcibly, I mean, to tell God exactly what I want?

Graham: Or I’m not telling the truth. I want this person to be well. This is my mother. Please make her well.

Lou: But then is that a lack of trust?

Graham: “Thy will be done” is much more trust.

Lou: Not a lack of faith.

Graham: No, and I love it when the person you are praying for says, “Look, you don’t have to dictate to God. He doesn’t have to heal me for me to trust Him. I’m willing for Him to do whatever is best, and you may pray that way.” And you know from experience, isn’t it easy to pray around the bedside when the patient, someone you love especially, trusts God like that. I’ve had many, many experiences like that. It is very moving. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #15 with Lou Venden, “Talking to God as a Friend” recorded May 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/15MMCAG>*

### **Further Study with Ellen White**

Never are we absent from the mind of God. God is our joy and our salvation. {CTr 357.2}

We know that in sadness and grief we feel very frail, but we know that Jesus is right by our side to sympathize with us, and He will help us. We can commune with our best Friend; He is right by our side. We need not go into the heavens to bring Him down, for He is right by us to help us. {CTr 42.4}

The precious Saviour will send help just when we need it. The way to heaven is consecrated by His footprints. Every thorn that wounds our feet has wounded His. Every cross that we are called

to bear He has borne before us. The Lord permits conflicts, to prepare the soul for peace. The time of trouble is a fearful ordeal for God's people; but it is the time for every true believer to look up, and by faith he may see the bow of promise encircling him. {GC 633.1}

The Saviour ministered to both the soul and the body. The gospel which He taught was a message of spiritual life and of physical restoration. Deliverance from sin and healing of disease were linked together. {ML 154.2}

Jesus never disappoints the one who comes to Him for help. He is saying to you today, "Come unto me, . . . and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). He will give you rest in Him. No one who comes to Him goes away unhelped. Take your burdens to the divine Burden Bearer and leave them with Him, knowing that He will carry them for you. . . . {HP 275.2}

"Be not therefore anxious for the morrow." Matthew 6:34, R. V. We are to follow Christ day by day. God does not bestow help for tomorrow. He does not give His children all the directions for their life journey at once, lest they should become confused. He tells them just as much as they can remember and perform. The strength and wisdom imparted are for the present emergency. "If any of you lack wisdom,"—for today,—let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." James 1:5. {DA 313.4}

In the darkest days, when appearances seem most forbidding, have faith in God. He is working out His will, doing all things well in behalf of His people. The strength of those who love and serve Him will be renewed day by day. {MH 482.1}

He is able and willing to bestow upon His servants all the help they need. He will give them the wisdom which their varied necessities demand. {MH 482.2}

Jesus did not first reveal Himself in His true character to them, and then open the Scriptures to their minds; for He knew that they would be so overjoyed to see Him again, risen from the dead, that their souls would be satisfied. They would not hunger for the sacred truths which He wished to impress indelibly upon their minds, that they might impart them to others, who should in their turn spread the precious knowledge, until thousands of people should receive the light given that day to the despairing disciples as they journeyed to Emmaus. {5BC 1125.11}

He maintained His disguise till He had interpreted the Scriptures, and had led them to an intelligent faith in His life, His character, His mission to earth, and His death and resurrection. He wished the truth to take firm root in their minds, not because it was supported by His personal testimony, but because the typical law, and the prophets of the Old Testament, agreeing with the facts of His life and death, presented unquestionable evidence of that truth. When the object of His labors with the two disciples was gained, He revealed Himself to them, that their joy might be full, and then vanished from their sight (ST Oct. 6, 1909). {5BC 1125.12}

The Bible is its own expositor. Scripture is to be compared with scripture. The student should learn to view the Word as a whole and to see the relation of its parts. He should gain a

knowledge of its grand central theme—of God’s original purpose for the world, of the rise of the great controversy, and of the work of redemption. He should understand the nature of the two principles that are contending for the supremacy, and should learn to trace their working through the records of history and prophecy, to the great consummation. He should see how this controversy enters into every phase of human experience; how in every act of life he himself reveals the one or the other of the two antagonistic motives; and how, whether he will or not, he is even now deciding upon which side of the controversy he will be found. {LHU 115.2}

The truth will be continually unfolding, expanding, and developing, for it is divine, like its Author. {3SM 188.2}

The truths of redemption are capable of constant development and expansion. Though old, they are ever new, constantly revealing to the seeker for truth a greater glory and a mightier power. {COL 127.3}

In every age there is a new development of truth, a message of God to the people of that generation. The old truths are all essential; new truth is not independent of the old, but an unfolding of it. It is only as the old truths are understood that we can comprehend the new. When Christ desired to open to His disciples the truth of His resurrection, He began “at Moses and all the prophets” and “expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself.” Luke 24:27. {COL 127.4}

Jesus consents to bear our burdens only when we trust Him. He is saying: “Come unto me, all ye weary and heavy laden; give Me your load; trust Me to do the work that it is impossible for the human agent to do.” Let us trust Him. Worry is blind and cannot discern the future. But Jesus sees the end from the beginning, and in every difficulty He has His way prepared to bring relief. Abiding in Christ, we can do all things through Him who strengthens us. {AG 113.6}

God has given us every facility, every grace. He has provided the riches of heaven’s treasure, and it is our privilege to draw continually from this capital. {AG 235.6}

In the experience of the apostle John under persecution, there is a lesson of wonderful strength and comfort for the Christian. God does not prevent the plottings of wicked men, but He causes their devices to work for good to those who in trial and conflict maintain their faith and loyalty. {AA 574.2}

God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him. {FLB 64.3}

Our heavenly Father has a thousand ways to provide for us of which we know nothing. Those who accept the one principle of making the service of God supreme, will find perplexities vanish and a plain path before their feet. {FLB 64.6}

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

### Second Quarter 2026: *Growing in a Relationship With God*

#### Lesson 12 “Share Him”

#### Read for this week’s study

Matthew 28:18–20; 2 Peter 3:18; 1 Peter 3:8–15; Hosea 7; Zechariah 10.

#### Memory Text

“ ‘The Lord GOD has given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to hear as the learned’ ” (Isaiah 50:4, NKJV).

#### Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Out of the Overflow
- III. Unforced but With Power
- IV. Tips for Sharing Jesus
- V. A Wandering Child
- VI. Bring Them Back
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

##### Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. [Our] “every interaction, to both acquaintances and strangers, should be bathed in love that flows from an abiding relationship with God. You never know how your actions, especially as a believer, can impact others.” (Sabbath Afternoon)
2. How are the mission of Jesus and our mission similar? Isaiah’s 50<sup>th</sup> chapter is about Israel’s sin and the Servant’s Obedience. People feel that God had been forced to exile them, as though someone compelled him to “divorce” their mother (50:1) or “sell” them into captivity to pay off their debt (v. 1). God asserts that none of that is true. It is only because of their “transgressions” that the exile will have occurred. There is no compelling reason that God cannot restore them to himself. It is not a matter of strength, the “arm” raised in judgment (50:1; 9:12) can stretch out to save (51:5.9; 52:10; 53:1). There is a new exodus coming (50:2-3).
3. The instrument of the Servant is his “tongue” (50:4; 49:2; 11:4). The emphasis is on his sensitivity and submissiveness (50:4-5), characteristics distinctly lacking in servant Israel. He is submissive not only to God but also to humans (v. 6).

4. The Great Commission given in Matthew 28:18-20 (and Matthew 24:14) can also be described as the Great Co-mission (Sunday's lesson). God initiated mission, but as soon as one becomes a Christian, it becomes a joint venture. In the traditional understanding of the Great Commission, the focus is on baptizing (after accepting a set of doctrines) in order to get "members". After you have been baptized, you have "arrived".
5. Such Christianity is a matter of "right believing" in order to receive benefits from Christ. One is "bar-coded" for heaven, and in this way someone can be a Christian, though never become a disciple, because in that model discipleship is optional and the character is unchanged. As a result, then, 98% of Christians are not equipped for mission in 95% of their waking lives.
6. "I have been given say over all things in heaven and on earth. So wherever you go, *make disciples* to me from all kinds of people, *submerge* them in Trinitarian reality, and *teach* them to do everything that I commanded you. And look, I am always with you, until the job is done." (Matt. 28:18-20)
7. The New Testament teaching is that Jesus is the ultimate Lord over everything. Our mission is then to become disciples of Jesus. Discipleship is the process through which individuals who have received new life "from above" take on the character of Jesus Christ by a combination of *effort* and *grace*. It is "Growth in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 3:18; Monday's lesson)
8. Discipleship takes the form of an increase in the degree to which our lives are dominated by *grace* (God acting in our life) and *knowledge* (interactive relationship with God). It is not a matter of behaving in certain ways, but of being inwardly and thoroughly transformed into a different kind of person: having the character of Jesus Christ.
9. As an apprentice of Jesus, I am *learning* from Him how to lead my life as Jesus would lead my life, if He was in my place today. Thus, every vocation is sacred and has its place in society (1 Peter 3:8-15; Tuesday's lesson). What you do matters to God. We can inspire others to live as disciples of Jesus, wherever they are and whatever they do.
10. Sharing faith is not merely conveying correct doctrine, but embodying God's character so the universe can "see" what He is like. Mission is therefore character revelation. Persuasion happens through compassionate love, loving presence, sharing your story, and uncalculated goodness—not force or manipulation.
11. The central issue in the cosmic conflict is misunderstanding God's character. Witnessing therefore combats Satan's accusations by demonstrating what God is actually like. Witnessing is participation in the war against lies about God.
12. Success is measured by faithfulness, presence, relational transformation, and revealing Christlike love—not by numeric outcomes. Witnessing is not primarily about increasing numbers, but revealing God's character of self-giving love; countering lies about God; participating in God's healing mission.
13. Every act of goodness is witnessing. Therefore, healing, justice, service, compassion, hospitality, sacrifice—these are all "weapons" in the cosmic conflict. Our mission is

participating in God's restorative work, giving people hope. Witnessing is joining Jesus' mission to reveal the Father.

14. Witnessing in the cosmic conflict model is about joining God's restorative mission in a universe where His character is misrepresented. Witnessing becomes part of spiritual warfare—not against people, but against false pictures of God.
15. What can you do this coming week to become a tool of compassion, graciousness and blessing to someone in your sphere of influence? What can we do collectively as a body of believers to experience and promote genuine apprenticeship to Jesus so that the world might see who God is (Habakkuk 2:14)?

### Further Study with Ellen White

God will accept the wholehearted service, and will Himself make up the deficiencies.—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 150. (1905) {CM 109.2}

Through Christ's redeeming work the government of God stands justified. The Omnipotent One is made known as the God of love. Satan's charges are refuted, and his character unveiled. Rebellion can never again arise. Sin can never again enter the universe. Through eternal ages all are secure from apostasy. By love's self-sacrifice, the inhabitants of earth and heaven are bound to their Creator in bonds of indissoluble union. {DA 26.2}

Christ recognized no distinction of nationality or rank or creed. The scribes and Pharisees desired to make a local and a national benefit of all the gifts of heaven and to exclude the rest of God's family in the world. But Christ came to break down every wall of partition. He came to show that His gift of mercy and love is as unconfined as the air, the light, or the showers of rain that refresh the earth. {9T 190.4}

In the person of Christ we behold the eternal God engaged in an enterprise of boundless mercy toward fallen man. {FLB 98.3}

It is our privilege to have a calm, close, happy walk with Jesus every day we live. {TMK 320.4}

The God of heaven is constantly at work. It is by His power that vegetation is caused to flourish, that every leaf appears and every flower blooms. Every drop of rain or flake of snow, every spire of grass, every leaf and flower and shrub, testifies of God. These little things so common around us teach the lesson that nothing is beneath the notice of the infinite God, nothing is too small for His attention. {8T 260.1}

Since God is infinite, and in Him are all the treasures of wisdom, we may to all eternity be ever searching, ever learning, yet never exhaust the riches of His wisdom, His goodness, or His power. {Ed 172.2}

God's dealings with rebellion will result in fully unmasking the work that has so long been carried on under cover. The results of Satan's rule, the fruits of setting aside the divine statutes, will be laid

open to the view of all created intelligences. The law of God will stand fully vindicated. It will be seen that all the dealings of God have been conducted with reference to the eternal good of His people, and the good of all the worlds that He has created. Satan himself, in the presence of the witnessing universe, will confess the justice of God's government and the righteousness of His law. {PP 338.4}

Nothing can happen in any part of the universe without the knowledge of Him who is omnipresent. Not a single event of human life is unknown to our Maker. While Satan is constantly devising evil, the Lord our God overrules all, so that it will not harm His obedient, trusting children. The same power that controls the boisterous waves of the ocean can hold in check all the power of rebellion and of crime. God says to one as to the other, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther." {3BC 1141.5}

All who consecrate soul, body, and spirit to God will be constantly receiving a new endowment of physical and mental power. The inexhaustible supplies of heaven are at their command. Christ gives them the breath of His own spirit, the life of His own life. The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in heart and mind. The grace of God enlarges and multiplies their faculties, and every perfection of the divine nature comes to their assistance in the work of saving souls. Through co-operation with Christ they are complete in Him, and in their human weakness they are enabled to do the deeds of Omnipotence. {DA 827.3}

The Lord Jesus is our efficiency in all things; His Spirit is to be our inspiration; and as we place ourselves in His hands to be channels of light, our means of doing good will never be exhausted, for the resources of the power of Jesus Christ are to be at our command. We may draw upon His fullness and receive of that grace which has no limit. The Captain of our salvation at every step would teach us that almighty power is at the demand of living faith. He says, "Without me ye can do nothing;" but again declares that "greater works than these shall ye do; because I go unto my Father." {HP 319.4}

One of the divine plans for growth is impartation. The Christian is to gain strength by strengthening others. "He that watereth shall be watered also himself." This is not merely a promise; it is a divine law, a law by which God designs that the streams of benevolence, like the waters of the great deep, shall be kept in constant circulation, continually flowing back to their source. In the fulfilling of this law is the secret of spiritual growth (ST June 12, 1901). {7BC 947.3}

Sanctification is not the work of a moment, an hour, or a day. It is a continual growth in grace. We know not one day how strong will be our conflict the next. Satan lives, and is active, and every day we need to earnestly cry 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 (RH May 6, 1862). {7BC 947.5}

Jesus employed no miraculous agency to compel men to believe in him. They were left to choose or reject him, of their own free will. No direct power was to force them into obedience, and destroy the free moral agency that God has given to man. {4Red 86.3}

God does not force anyone. He leaves all free to choose. But He says, "By their fruits ye shall know them." The Lord will not write as wise those who cannot distinguish between a tree that bears thorn berries and a tree that bears olives.—*Manuscript 57*, 1896 (*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 18, pp. 361-363). {CTr 14.6}

Through the ministry of the angels the Holy Spirit is enabled to work upon the mind and heart of the human agent and draw him to Christ. . . . But the Spirit of God does not interfere with the freedom of the human agent. The Holy Spirit is given to be a helper, so that man may cooperate with the Divine, and it is given to Him to draw the soul but never to force obedience. {TMK 57.2}

In the very fact that men are free moral agents, God teaches us not to be forced or compelled into any course of action, also that as responsible beings in copartnership with God we are to represent God in character. We are to have an interest in our brother, in our neighbor, in all around (Letter 65, 1895). {5BC 1098.1}

Our will is not to be forced into co-operation with divine agencies, but it must be voluntarily submitted. Were it possible to force upon you with a hundredfold greater intensity the influence of the Spirit of God, it would not make you a Christian, a fit subject for heaven. {MB 142.1}

In the great closing work we shall meet with perplexities that we know not how to deal with, but let us not forget that the three great powers of heaven are working, that a divine hand is on the wheel, and that God will bring His purposes to pass. {Mar 252.2}

If in our ignorance we make missteps, the Saviour does not forsake us. We need never feel that we are alone. Angels are our companions. The Comforter that Christ promised to send in His name abides with us. In the way that leads to the City of God there are no difficulties which those who trust in Him may not overcome. There are no dangers which they may not escape. There is not a sorrow, not a grievance, not a human weakness, for which He has not provided a remedy. {MH 249.1}

## **Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes**

### **Second Quarter 2026: *Growing in a Relationship With God***

### **Lesson 13 “Into Eternity”**

#### **Read for this week’s study**

Psalm 80; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; Revelation 21:9–27; Isaiah 25:8; Revelation 7:17; Revelation 21:4; John 6:44.

#### **Memory Text**

“Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” (1 John 3:2, NKJV).

#### **Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide**

- I. Introduction
- II. Living Today
- III. Finally, Face-to-Face
- IV. The Bride
- V. Follow the Lamb
- VI. “Come!”
- VII. Further Study

#### **Questions and Notes for Consideration**

##### **Facilitator: Daniel Duda**

1. “This week, we will learn about the reward of heaven (Matt. 5:12, Rev. 22:12), what heaven will be like; and ultimately, how incredible it will be to finally be with One who created us, loved us unto death, has redeemed us from our sin, and is coming back soon. We need to just hold on in faith until then.” (Sabbath Afternoon)
2. What is the main thrust of the memory text? What is it that John wants to convey to his audience? Why do you think that the text is used in Adventism as a warning against apostasy and spreading doubts about our position? How can that be overcome?
3. Sunday’s lesson focuses on Psalm 80. It is dominated by the threefold refrain of verses 3, 7, and 19. Who is responsible for the dire circumstances of Israel? Verses 4-7 acknowledge that the current trouble is rooted in God’s anger. Verses 8-11 detail the “saving history” of Israel. This prepares us for the “why then?” of verse 12 that attributes the current disorder to God. Verses 14-17 are asking God to reverse his action and “have regard” again for the people now abandoned. Verse 18 anticipates a time of well-being that will be caused by God’s restoration. God is asked to “turn back” in order to restore Israel. In the end, the psalm exhibits a confident trust that the God who judges is the God who will save! At what stage of faith do you think that would put the author of the psalm?

4. Monday's lesson centers on restoration of a face-to-face relationship with God at the Second Coming and the resurrection of the dead (1 Thessalonians 4:17). "Every persevering prayer, every moment we've prioritized time with Him, every time we've spoken boldly for Him, every trial—will be culminated in seeing His face (Rev. 22:4)."
5. What analogy is given in Revelation 21:9–11, and why do you think it was used? (Tuesday's lesson) A wedding day is a turning point of a new life together for the bride and groom. If the bride is collective (not individual), in what sense will this also be true of our relationship with God upon His return at the Second Coming?
6. What blessings might we look forward to in eternity (Isaiah 25:8; Revelation 7:17; 21:4)? (Wednesday's lesson) What does it mean to "follow the Lamb wherever He goes" (14:4)?
7. Thursday's lesson wants us to notice God's invitation to come to Him in Matthew 11:28–30; Isaiah 55:1–3; John 6:44. And the quarter ends asking us to pray for the faith to endure, for the faith to allow us to surrender wholly and completely to the One who died for us and is coming back quickly.
8. If the whole quarter is about "Growing in a Relationship with God," how do the events of the "Day of the Lord" (series of events around the Second Coming, vindicating judgment before the Millennium and clarifying judgment during Millennium, third coming, and the resurrection of the wicked with final judgment and then creation of renewed earth) help us in gaining a new perspective on God's character?
9. "The Day of the Lord" is a process, not a one-time outburst of God's wrath. The judgment is primarily a revelation of truth, not a mechanical division of people into two groups without context. The cosmic conflict shows that these events are not just about our personal destiny, but about the defense of God's character before the entire universe.
10. Why are the tears wiped away at the end of Millennium and not at the Second Coming when "we all get to heaven" and see Jesus? If the Bible speaks about the resurrection of the body, the redeemed must reconnect the mind, emotion, relationships and spirituality. This requires a process which cannot be accomplished quickly. In serious conflict, it is necessary to move slowly, to feel deeply, and to allow space for God to work in everyone's heart.
11. The result is a new understanding of self (healing), empathy for others, and interconnectedness (collective body = bride). Where there is integration, there is health; where integration is lacking, there is chaos or rigidity.
12. Think about Joseph and the elaborate process he goes through with his brothers (Genesis 42-45), in order to allow the old wounds to be healed, make new and better choices and create a new reality. Healing is not magical; pacing is also part of healing. Doing this process well reveals that Joseph's family is ready for the next chapter of God's story.
13. Similarly, God has a universe-wide problem to solve, not just the problems of individual sinners. God must heal the *patterns* in individuals, families and communities, not just sooth the symptoms of individuals by relocating them to heaven. Forgiveness must function without naivety and grace without a denial of reality.
14. If you want God, truth, goodness, beauty; if you want to live in reality with Him, whatever that costs, then God offers an eternally growing relationship and a new community, not

just a better post-mortem postcode. Heaven is then not a bonus prize, but the full flowering of total transformation. Such a God is attractive even for people who instinctively reject manipulative or coercive religion.

15. What can you do so that this quarter be the start of a deeper, ever-growing relationship with God for each of us individually and as a body of believers?

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

I will treat them as though they had always been my loyal children. That's all God has ever wanted. But he's had to add a lot of things, hasn't he? And that's Galatians 3. The law was added because of transgression, to be our guardian, our custodian, to bring us to Christ, to bring us back to the place where we say, "You be our God; and we'll be your people. We're willing to listen. We trust you." And God can save and heal all who trust him. If only we could understand that we wouldn't need so many other aids.

But God's a good teacher. If we don't trust him, he'll lay hands on us; he'll discipline us; he'll raise his voice; he'll give us a thousand rules to protect us in our ignorance and immaturity. But all he wants in the end is that we trust him. The whole plan of salvation, the cross, everything, if it does not lead us back to trust him, it will do us no good whatsoever. God can only save those who trust him.

The only people who are safe to save are those whom he can trust, and who will behave as described earlier in Jeremiah and all the other prophets. There's nothing legalistic about that. It isn't even a legal problem. It's a problem of trust, of honesty, integrity, humility, willingness to listen. And God, the Infinite One, has all the power needed to heal the damage done. He's not so concerned with forgiveness as with healing the damage done and restoring us to the condition we were in before sin ever came into the universe, when there was no need to mention law. It was written on the hearts of the angels. There's a magnificent description here of what God really wants. Are we emphasizing this at this present time? Are we known for this? Well, here's a way to test it. Look at Jeremiah 9:23 in the light of all this. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Jeremiah & Lamentations, recorded February 1982, Riverside, California}

### Recommended Listening:

Conversations About God #20 "At Peace with our Heavenly Father" is available at:

<http://pkp.cc/20MMCG>

## Further Study with Ellen White

And while Christ opens heaven to man, the life which He imparts opens the heart of man to heaven. Sin not only shuts us away from God, but destroys in the human soul both the desire and the capacity for knowing Him. All this work of evil it is Christ's mission to undo. The faculties of the soul, paralyzed by sin, the darkened mind, the perverted will, He has power to invigorate and to restore. He opens to us the riches of the universe, and by Him the power to discern and to appropriate these treasures is imparted. {Ed 28.3}

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the three holy dignitaries of heaven, have declared that they will strengthen men to overcome the powers of darkness. All the facilities of heaven are pledged to those who by their baptismal vows have entered into a covenant with God (MS 92, 1901). {5BC 1110.8}

A voice, richer than any music that ever fell on mortal ear, will be heard saying, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." {Mar 305.4}

There immortal minds will study with never-failing delight the wonders of creative power, the mysteries of redeeming love. There is no cruel, deceiving foe to tempt to forgetfulness of God. Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body. {SR 432.2}

The living righteous are changed "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." At the voice of God they were glorified; now they are made immortal and with the risen saints are caught up to meet their Lord in the air. Angels "gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Little children are borne by holy angels to their mothers' arms. Friends long separated by death are united, nevermore to part, and with songs of gladness ascend together to the City of God. {GC 645.1}

In this life we can only begin to understand the wonderful theme of redemption. With our finite comprehension we may consider most earnestly the shame and the glory, the life and the death, the justice and the mercy, that meet in the cross; yet with the utmost stretch of our mental powers we fail to grasp its full significance. The length and the breadth, the depth and the height, of redeeming love are but dimly comprehended. The plan of redemption will not be fully understood, even when the ransomed see as they are seen and know as they are known; but through the eternal ages new truth will continually unfold to the wondering and delighted mind. Though the griefs and pains and temptations of earth are ended and the cause removed, the people of God will ever have a distinct, intelligent knowledge of what their salvation has cost. {GC 651.1}

The resurrection of Jesus was a sample of the final resurrection of all who sleep in Him. The risen body of the Saviour, His deportment, the accents of His speech, were all familiar to His followers. In like manner will those who sleep in Jesus rise again. We shall know our friends even as the disciples knew Jesus. Though they may have been deformed, diseased, or disfigured in this mortal life, yet in their resurrected and glorified body their individual identity will be perfectly preserved, and we shall recognize, in the face radiant with the light shining from the face of Jesus, the lineaments of those we love. {TMK 362.3}

As through Jesus we enter into rest, heaven begins here. We respond to His invitation, Come, learn of Me, and in thus coming we begin the life eternal. Heaven is a ceaseless approaching to God through Christ. The longer we are in the heaven of bliss, the more and still more of glory will be opened to us; and the more we know of God, the more intense will be our happiness. As we walk with Jesus in this life, we may be filled with His love, satisfied with His presence. {DA 331.3}