

Our Abiding Christ Bible Study Guide

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Lesson 1

The Farmer and the True Vine

This lesson is based on John 15:1.

Jesus and the disciples were on the way to Gethsemane, at the foot of Mount Olivet, a retired spot which He had often visited for meditation and prayer. The Saviour had been explaining to His disciples His mission to the world, and the spiritual relation to Him which they were to sustain. Now He illustrates the lesson. The moon is shining bright, and reveals to Him a flourishing grapevine. Drawing the attention of the disciples to it, He employs it as a symbol. {DA 674.2}

(1) IN CHRIST'S ILLUSTRATION, WHO IS REPRESENTED BY THE "TRUE VINE"?

“I [Jesus] am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. (John 15:1 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 15:5; Psalm 80:8; Genesis 49:10, 11; 1 Kings 4:25; 2 Corinthians 3:5

“I am the true Vine,” He says. Instead of choosing the graceful palm, the lofty cedar, or the strong oak, Jesus takes the vine with its clinging tendrils to represent Himself. The palm tree, the cedar, and the oak stand alone. They require no support. But the vine entwines about the trellis, and thus climbs heavenward. So Christ in His humanity was dependent upon divine power. “I can of Mine own self do nothing,” He declared. John 5:30. {DA 674.3, 675}

(2) WHO IS REPRESENTED BY THE “VINEDRESSER”?

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. (John 15:1 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Corinthians 3:9; James 5:7; Isaiah 61:3; Matthew 20:1

God claims the whole earth as His vineyard. Though now in the hands of the usurper, it belongs to God. By redemption no less than by creation it is His. For the world Christ’s sacrifice was made. “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.” John 3:16. It is through that one gift that every other is imparted to men. Daily the whole world receives blessing from God. Every drop of rain, every ray of light shed on our unthankful race, every leaf and flower and fruit, testifies to God’s long forbearance and His great love. {COL 301.3}

On the hills of Palestine our heavenly Father had planted this goodly Vine, and He Himself was the husbandman. Many were attracted by the beauty of this Vine, and declared its heavenly origin. But to the leaders in Israel it appeared as a root out of a dry ground. They took the plant, and bruised it, and trampled it under their unholy feet. Their thought was to destroy it forever.

But the heavenly Husbandman never lost sight of His plant. After men thought they had killed it, He took it, and replanted it on the other side of the wall. The vine stock was to be no longer visible. It was hidden from the rude assaults of men. But the branches of the Vine hung over the wall. They were to represent the Vine. Through them grafts might still be united to the Vine. From them fruit has been obtained. There has been a harvest which the passers-by have plucked. {DA 675.2}

(3) WHAT IS ANOTHER TITLE THAT SCRIPTURE CALLS CHRIST THAT PROCLAIMS HIMAS “TRUE”?

That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. (John 1:9 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 2:8; John 6:32; Jeremiah 10:10

In the manifestation of God to His people, light had ever been a symbol of His presence. At the creative word in the beginning, light had shone out of darkness. Light had been enshrouded in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, leading the vast armies of Israel. Light blazed with awful grandeur about the Lord on Mount Sinai. Light rested

over the mercy seat in the tabernacle. Light filled the temple of Solomon at its dedication. Light shone on the hills of Bethlehem when the angels brought the message of redemption to the watching shepherds. {DA 464.2}

God is light; and in the words, “I am the light of the world,” Christ declared His oneness with God, and His relation to the whole human family. It was He who at the beginning had caused “the light to shine out of darkness.” 2 Cor. 4:6. He is the light of sun and moon and star. He was the spiritual light that in symbol and type and prophecy had shone upon Israel. But not to the Jewish nation alone was the light given. As the sunbeams penetrate to the remotest corners of the earth, so does the light of the Sun of Righteousness shine upon every soul. {DA 464.3}

(4) WHO AND WHAT IS “TRUTH”?

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. (John 14:6 NKJV)

The entirety of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever. (Psalms 119:160 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 8:31, 32; 17:17; 2 Timothy 2:15; John 15:26; 16:13; Ephesians 5:9; 1 John 5:6

The Word of God is to be our spiritual food. “I am that bread of life” (John 6:48), Christ said. . . . The world is perishing for want of pure, unadulterated truth. Christ is the truth. His words are truth, and they have a deeper significance

than appears on the surface, and a value beyond their unpretending appearance. Minds that are quickened by the Holy Spirit will discern the value of these words. When our eyes are anointed with the holy eyesalve, we shall be able to detect the precious gems of truth, even though they may be buried beneath the surface. {RC 111.2}

Truth is delicate, refined, elevated. When it molds the character, the soul grows under its divine influence. Every day the truth is to be received into the heart. Thus we eat Christ's words, which He declares are spirit and life. The acceptance of truth will make every receiver a child of God, an heir of heaven. Truth that is cherished in the heart is not a cold, dead letter, but a living power. {RC 111.3}

Truth is sacred, divine. It is stronger and more powerful than anything else in the formation of a character after the likeness of Christ. In it there is fullness of joy. When it is cherished in the heart, the love of Christ is preferred to the love of any human being. This is Christianity. This is the love of God in the soul. Thus pure, unadulterated truth occupies the citadel of the being. The words are fulfilled, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." There is a nobleness in the life of the one who lives and works under the vivifying influence of the truth. . . . {RC 111.4}

Many are supposed to be converted who will not stand the stress of trial and temptation. . . . They have no depth of spiritual experience. They do not apply the truth to the heart and conscience. . . . There is a lack of pure-toned piety; and this lack makes them weaklings in

the army of the Lord, when they might be giants if they were but willing to be truly converted. . . . {RC 111.5}

We are living in perilous times. In the fear of God I tell you that the true exposition of the Scriptures is necessary for the correct moral development of our characters. When mind and heart are controlled by the Holy Spirit, when self is dead, the truth is capable of constant expansion and development. When the truth as it is in Jesus molds our characters, it will be seen to be truth indeed.

As it is contemplated by the believer, it will grow brighter, shining with its original beauty. It will increase in value, quickening and vivifying the mind. . . . It will elevate our aspirations, enabling us to reach the perfect standard of holiness.-- Review and Herald, Feb. 14, 1899. {RC 111.6}

(5) HOW CAN WE APPLY THE “TRUTH” TO OUR DAILY LIVES AND, AS A RESULT, ABIDE IN CHRIST?

Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, (1 Peter 1:22 NKJV)

Related Texts: Galatians 5:16, 25; Romans 8:1, 4; 1 John 3:18; Ephesians 4:15

When one is fully emptied of self, when every false god is cast out of the soul, the vacuum is filled by the inflowing of the Spirit of Christ. Such a one has the faith that purifies the soul from defilement. He is conformed to the Spirit, and he minds the things of the Spirit. He has no confidence in self.

Christ is all and in all. He receives with meekness the truth that is constantly being unfolded, and gives the Lord all the glory, saying, “God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit.” “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.” [1 COR. 2:10, 12.] {GW 287.1}

(6) HOW DOES ABIDING IN JESUS – THE “TRUTH” AND THE “TRUE VINE” – AFFECT OUR DAILY LIVES?

And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:32 NKJV)

Related Texts: Ps. 40:11; 61:7; 51:6; 91:4

The means by which we can overcome the wicked one is that by which Christ overcame,—the power of the word. God does not control our minds without our consent; but if we desire to know and to do His will, His promises are ours: “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” “If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching.” John 8:32; 7:17, R. V. Through faith in these promises, every man may be delivered from the snares of error and the control of sin. {DA 258.5}

Every man is free to choose what power he will have to rule over him. None have fallen so low, none are so vile, but that they can find deliverance in Christ. The demoniac, in place of prayer, could utter only the words of Satan; yet the heart’s unspoken appeal was heard. No cry from a soul in need, though it fail of utterance in words, will be unheeded.

Those who will consent to enter into covenant relation with the God of heaven are not left to the power of Satan or to the infirmity of their own nature. They are invited by the Saviour, “Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me.” Isa. 27:5. The spirits of darkness will battle for the soul once under their dominion, but angels of God will contend for that soul with prevailing power. The Lord says, “Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered? . . . Thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.” Isa. 49:24, 25. {DA 258.6, 259}

(7) WHAT DID CHRIST – THE TRUE VINE – COME TO THIS EARTH TO PROVIDE FOR ALL HUMANITY?

The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. (John 10:10 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 3:16, 17; 6:33; 6:51; Matthew 20:28

All created beings live by the will and power of God. They are recipients of the life of the Son of God. However able and talented, however large their capacities, they are replenished with life from the Source of all life. He is the spring, the fountain, of life. . . . The life which He had laid down in humanity, He again took up and gave to humanity.

“I am come,” He says, “that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”...{SD 237.4}

Christ became one with humanity, that humanity might become one in Spirit and life with Him. By virtue of this union in obedience to the Word of God, His life becomes their life. He says to the penitent, “I am the resurrection, and the life.” {SD 237.5}

(8) HOW CAN WE BECOME CONNECTED TO CHRIST – THE TRUE VINE?

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: (John 1:12 NKJV)

Related Texts: Galatians 3:6, 7; Matthew 10:40; 18:2-5

Those who would follow Christ, must believe in Him; they must open the heart to receive Him as an abiding guest. They must abide in Christ, as the branch abides in the living vine. There is a vital union formed between the parent stock and the branch, and the same fruit appears upon the branch that is seen upon the tree. Thus the Lord will work through the human agent who unites himself to Jesus Christ.

Those who have an abiding trust in Christ, will, like Enoch, have a sense of the abiding presence of God. Why is it that there are so many who feel in uncertainty, who feel that they are orphans?—It is because they do not cultivate faith in the precious assurance that the Lord Jesus is their sin-bearer. It was in behalf of those who had transgressed

the law, that Jesus took upon Him human nature, and became like unto us, in order that we might have everlasting peace and assurance. We have an advocate in the heavens, and whosoever accepts Him as his personal Saviour is not left an orphan to bear the curse of his own sins. {SD 287.2}

We must daily cultivate faith, daily contemplate Him who has undertaken our case, who is a merciful and faithful high priest; “for in that he himself hath suffered being tempted {not in a few things, but in all points like as we are}, he is able to succour them that are tempted.” “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.” Even now, in heaven, He is afflicted with our afflictions; and as a living Saviour, as an interested Advocate, He is making intercession for us. {SD 287.3}

We should daily exercise faith; and that faith should daily increase as it is exercised, as we realize that He has not only redeemed us, but has loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and the Father. {SD 287.4}

Through this powerful illustration, I now better understand Christ’s mission in this world and the relationship that must exist between God the Father, Jesus His Son, and us His Children.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I appreciate the love of God – the Husbandman – in every drop of rain He provides and every ray of light shed on

Circle: Yes Undecided

Circle: Yes Undecided

Circle: Yes Undecided

Circle: Yes Undecided

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



Lesson 2

The Fruit-bearing Branch

This lesson is based on John 15:2.

(1) WHO IS REPRESENTED BY THE “BRANCH” IN THIS ILLUSTRATION GIVEN BY CHRIST?

“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. (John 15:5 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 60:21; 61:3;
Proverbs 11:28; Romans 11:16

Though He [Christ] was about to be removed from them, their spiritual union with Him was to be unchanged. The connection of the branch with the vine, He said, represents the relation you are to sustain to Me. The scion is engrafted into the living vine, and fiber by fiber, vein by vein, it grows into the vine stock. The life of the vine becomes the life of the branch. So the soul dead in trespasses and sins receives life through connection with Christ.

By faith in Him as a personal Saviour the union is formed. The sinner unites his weakness to Christ's strength, his emptiness to Christ's fullness, his frailty to Christ's enduring might. Then he has the mind of Christ. The humanity of Christ has touched our humanity, and our humanity has touched divinity. Thus through the agency of the Holy Spirit man becomes a partaker of the divine nature. He is accepted in the Beloved. {DA 675.3}

(2) WHAT MUST BE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE “TRUE VINE,” THE “VINE-DRESSER,” AND US – THE “BRANCHES” – IF WE ARE TO ABIDE IN HIM?

that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. (John 17:21 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 17:11, 22, 23; 10:30; Galatians 2:20

Christ's connection with His believing people is illustrated by this parable as by no other. All who receive Christ by faith become one with Him. The branches are not tied to the vine; they are not joined to it by any mechanical process of artificial fastening. They are united to the vine, so as to become part of it. They are nourished by the roots of the vine. So those who receive Christ by faith become one with Him in principle and action. They are united to Him, and the life they live is the life of the Son of God. They derive their life from Him who is life. {HP 56.3}

(3) WHAT IS THE KEY ELEMENT THAT ALLOWS CHRIST TO DWELL IN OUR HEARTS AND IS THE BASIS OF OUR ABIDING RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM?

that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, (Ephesians 3:17 NKJV)

Related Texts: Hebrews 11:6; Romans 1:17; 1 Peter 1:5; John 3:36; Philippians 3:9

Christ has provided means whereby our whole life may be an unbroken communion with Himself; but the sense of Christ's abiding presence can come only through living faith. {HP 56.5}

You may be united to the Living Vine. Every member of your whole being may be united to that Vine, and the sap and nourishment that come from the Vine will nourish the branch that is in the Vine, until you are one with Christ as He was one with the Father. Thus His blessings will be imparted to you. But brethren, we have not had faith. We have dishonored God by unbelief long enough. {FW 66.5, 67.1}

(4) WHAT IS OUR VITAL PART IN ESTABLISHING AND KEEPING AN ABIDING CONNECTION WITH CHRIST?

And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. (Jeremiah 29:13 NKJV)

Related Texts: James 4:7, 8; Joshua 22:5; Luke 14:33; Romans 10:3, 4; 1 Peter 4:19; Hosea 10:12

The whole heart must be yielded to God, or the change can never be wrought in us by which we are to be restored to His likeness. By nature we are alienated from God. The Holy Spirit describes our condition in such words as these: “Dead in trespasses and sins;” “the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint;” “no soundness in it.” We are held fast in the snare of Satan, “taken captive by him at his will.” Ephesians 2:1; Isaiah 1:5, 6; 2 Timothy 2:26. God desires to heal us, to set us free. But since this requires an entire transformation, a renewing of our whole nature, we must yield ourselves wholly to Him. {SC 43.2}

The warfare against self is the greatest battle that was ever fought. The yielding of self, surrendering all to the will of God, requires a struggle; but the soul must submit to God before it can be renewed in holiness. {SC 43.3}

Baptism may be repeated over and over again, but of itself it has no power to change the human heart. The heart must be united with Christ’s heart, the will must be submerged in His will, the mind must become one with His mind, the thoughts must be brought into captivity to Him. {HP 56.4}

Let all contemplate the completeness it is their privilege to have and ask themselves the question, Is my will submerged in Christ’s will? Is the fullness and richness of the Living Vine—His goodness, His mercy, His compassion and love—seen in my life and character? {HP 56.6}

(5) WHAT “FRUIT” WILL THOSE

WHO ARE CONNECTED TO THE TRUE VINE BEAR?

*(for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),
(Ephesians 5:9 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Galatians 5:22,23;
James 3:17, 18; Romans 6:22

The life of the vine will be manifest in fragrant fruit on the branches. “He that abideth in Me,” said Jesus, “and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing.” When we live by faith on the Son of God, the fruits of the Spirit will be seen in our lives; not one will be missing. {DA 676.4}

“Herein is My Father glorified,” said Jesus, “that ye bear much fruit.” God desires to manifest through you the holiness, the benevolence, the compassion, of His own character. Yet the Saviour does not bid the disciples labor to bear fruit. He tells them to abide in Him. “If ye abide in Me,” He says, “and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” It is through the word that Christ abides in His followers. This is the same vital union that is represented by eating His flesh and drinking His blood. The words of Christ are spirit and life. Receiving them, you receive the life of the Vine. You live “by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” Matt. 4:4. The life of Christ in you produces the same fruits as in Him. Living in Christ, adhering to Christ, supported by Christ, drawing nourishment from Christ, you bear fruit after the similitude of Christ. {DA 677.1}

(6) HOW ARE THESE FRUITS

PRODUCED IN THE LIFE OF AN ABIDING CHRISTIAN?

being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. (Philippians 1:11 NKJV)

Related Texts: Philippians 1:6; John 14:10; 15:7; Romans 12:2

As you receive the Spirit of Christ—the Spirit of unselfish love and labor for others—you will grow and bring forth fruit. The graces of the Spirit will ripen in your character. Your faith will increase, your convictions deepen, your love be made perfect. More and more you will reflect the likeness of Christ in all that is pure, noble, and lovely. {COL 67.3}

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” Gal. 5:22, 23. This fruit can never perish, but will produce after its kind a harvest unto eternal life. {COL 68.1}

“When the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.” Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own. {COL 69.1}

It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, (2 Peter 3:12, margin). Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last great harvest would be ripened, and

Christ would come to gather the precious grain. {COL 69.2}

(7) WHAT HAPPENS TO THE BRANCHES THAT DO NOT BEAR FRUIT?

Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. (John 15:2 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 3:10; 15:13; 21:19; 13:40-42

“My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away.” While the graft is outwardly united with the vine, there may be no vital connection. Then there will be no growth or fruitfulness. So there may be an apparent connection with Christ without a real union with Him by faith. A profession of religion places men in the church, but the character and conduct show whether they are in connection with Christ. If they bear no fruit, they are false branches. Their separation from Christ involves a ruin as complete as that represented by the dead branch. “If a man abide not in Me,” said Christ, “he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.” {DA 676.5}

(8) WHAT HAPPENS TO THE FRUIT BEARING BRANCHES?

Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. (John 15:2 NKJV)

Related Texts: Job 17:9; Psalm 51:7; Malachi 3:3; Matthew 3:12; Isaiah 60:21

“And every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth [pruneth] it, that it may bring forth more fruit.” From the chosen twelve who had followed Jesus, one as a withered branch was about to be taken away; the rest were to pass under the pruning knife of bitter trial. Jesus with solemn tenderness explained the purpose of the husbandman. The pruning will cause pain, but it is the Father who applies the knife. He works with no wanton hand or indifferent heart.

There are branches trailing upon the ground; these must be cut loose from the earthly supports to which their tendrils are fastening. They are to reach heavenward, and find their support in God. The excessive foliage that draws away the life current from the fruit must be pruned off. The overgrowth must be cut out, to give room for the healing beams of the Sun of Righteousness. The husbandman prunes away the harmful growth, that the fruit may be richer and more abundant. {DA 676.6}

(9) WHAT IS THE MIRACULOUS RESULT OF THE PRUNING OR PURGING PROCESS?

Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. (Hebrews 12:11 NKJV)

Related Texts: 2 Corinthians 4:17; Isaiah 6:7

The disciples are represented as the branches of the vine. As the branches are dependent upon their connection with the stock for life and productiveness, so the Christian is dependent upon union with Christ for spiritual life and fruitfulness.

He who professes to be in Christ is expected to bring forth fruits appropriate to his profession. These fruits are elsewhere termed “the fruit of the Spirit” (Gal. 5:22; Eph. 5:9), or “fruits of righteousness” Phil. 1:11; cf. Heb. 12:11), that is, fruits which are righteousness. These fruits are evident in the character and the life. When these “good fruits” (James 3:17) are absent it becomes necessary to sever the fruitless branch.

The character is “purged” by the tests and trials of life. The Father, the heavenly Husbandman, oversees the process. And though the “chastening” may seem to be grievous, “nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby” Hebrews. 12:11.

There can be no life without growth. As long as there is life there is need of continual development. Character development is the work of a lifetime. {5BC 1042}

Dear Heavenly Father, it is my desire to receive Christ by faith and become one with Him in principle and action.

Circle: Yes Undecided

Please help me to not only unite with You but that our union will demonstrate that connection.

Circle: Yes Undecided

My desire is that the life of the Vine will be manifested in fragrant fruit through me. Please prune me that I may be purged of my many transgressions and continually yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness that will bring You glory.

Circle: Yes Undecided



Lesson 3

Abiding in the Cleansing Word

This lesson is based on John 15:3.

(1) WHAT AFFECT DOES THE WORD OF GOD HAVE ON THOSE WHO CHOOSE TO ABIDE IN IT?

*You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.
(John 15:3 NKJV)*

Related Texts: John 17:17; Psalm 119:9, 11; Ephesians 5:26; 1 Peter 1:22, 23

When a real love for the Bible is awakened, and the student begins to realize how vast is the field and how precious its treasure, he will desire to seize upon every opportunity for acquainting himself with God's Word. Its study will be restricted to no special time or place. And this continuous study is one of the best means of cultivating a love for the

Scriptures. Let the student keep his Bible always with him and, as he has opportunity, read a text and meditate upon it. While walking in the streets, waiting at a railway station, waiting to meet an engagement, let him improve the opportunity to gain some precious thought from the treasure house of truth. {CT 463.1}

It is through the Word that Christ abides in His followers. This is the same vital union that is represented by eating His flesh and drinking His blood. The words of Christ are spirit and life. Receiving them, you receive the life of the Vine. You live “by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” Matt. 4:4. The life of Christ in you produces the same fruits as in Him. Living in Christ, adhering to Christ, supported by Christ, drawing nourishment from Christ, you bear fruit after the similitude of Christ. {DA 677.1}

(2) WHO INSPIRED THE WRITING OF GOD’S WORD THROUGH HUMAN INSTRUMENTS?

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God... (2 Timothy 3:16 NKJV)

Related Texts: 2 Peter 1:21; Hebrews 1:1; Luke 1:70

Every part of the Bible is given by inspiration of God and is profitable. The Old Testament, no less than the New, should receive attention. As we study the Old Testament we shall find living springs bubbling up where the careless reader discerns only a desert. {CT 462.2}

The Bible presents a perfect standard of character. This sacred book, inspired by God, and written by holy men, is a perfect guide under all circumstances of

life. It sets forth distinctly the duties of both young and old. If made the guide of life, its teachings will lead the soul upward. It will elevate the mind, improve the character, and give peace and joy to the heart... {FE 100, 101}

(3) WHAT ARE THE BIBLICAL DEFINITIONS OF THE “WORD” OF GOD?

And the Word [Jesus] became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14 NKJV)

For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. (John 1:17 NKJV)

If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), (John 10:35 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 1:1; 17:14, 17; 1 John 5:7; Revelation 19:13; Deuteronomy 8:3; John 6:68

Christ said: “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me.”

How many of those who are laboring in word and doctrine are eating Christ’s flesh and drinking His blood? How many can comprehend this mystery?

The Saviour Himself explains this matter: “It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” The word of God must be interwoven with the living character of those who believe it. The only vital faith is that faith which receives and assimilates the truth until it is a part of the being and the motive power of the life and action.

Jesus is called the Word of God. He accepted His Father’s law, wrought out its principles in His life, manifested its spirit, and showed its beneficent power in the heart. Says John: “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”

The followers of Christ must be partakers of His experience. They must assimilate the word of God. They must be changed into its likeness by the power of Christ and reflect the divine attributes. They must eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God, or there is no life in them. The spirit and work of Christ must become the spirit and work of His disciples. {5T 575.2}

(4) WHO IS REVEALED IN THE PAGES OF GOD’S WORD?

You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me [Christ]. (John 5:39 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 5:46; Luke 24:27, 44

There is nothing more calculated to

energize the mind and strengthen the intellect than the study of the word of God. No other book is so potent to elevate the thoughts, to give vigor to the faculties, as the broad, ennobling truths of the Bible. If God's word were studied as it should be, men would have a breadth of mind, a nobility of character, and a stability of purpose that are rarely seen in these times. The search for truth will reward the seeker at every turn, and each discovery will open up richer fields for his investigation. {CT 460.1}

The Old Testament sheds light upon the New, and the New upon the Old. Each is a revelation of the glory of God in Christ. Christ as manifested to the patriarchs, as symbolized in the sacrificial service, as portrayed in the law, and as revealed by the prophets is the riches of the Old Testament. Christ in His life, His death, and His resurrection; Christ as He is manifested by the Holy Spirit, is the treasure of the New. Both Old and New present truths that will continually reveal new depths of meaning to the earnest seeker. {CT 462.3}

(5) WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHARACTERISTICS AND PURPOSES OF GOD'S WORD?

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 NKJV)

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for in-

struction in righteousness, (2 Timothy 3:16 NKJV)

Related Texts: Proverbs 30:5; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Timothy 4:5, 6; Psalm 119:50, 104, 105, 140, 160

The truths of the Bible, treasured in the heart and mind and obeyed in the life, convince and convert the soul, transform the character, and comfort and uplift the heart. . . . The Word makes the proud humble, the perverse meek and contrite, the disobedient obedient. The sinful habits natural to man are interwoven with the daily practice. But the Word cuts away the fleshly lusts. It is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the mind. It divides the joints and marrow, cutting away the lusts of the flesh, making men willing to suffer for their Lord. {TMK 199.2}

The Bible is of the highest value because it is the word of the living God. Of all the books in the world it is the most deserving of study and attention, for it is eternal wisdom. The Bible is a history that tells us of the creation of the world and opens to us past centuries. Without it we should have been left to conjecture and fable in regard to the occurrences of the remote past. It reveals to us the Creator of the heavens and the earth, with the universe that He has brought into being, and it sheds a glorious light over the world to come. {CT 421.1}

The Bible is a field where are concealed heavenly treasures, and they will remain hidden until, by diligent mining, they are discovered and brought to light. The Bible is a casket containing jewels of inestimable value, which should be so presented as to be seen in their intrinsic luster. But the beauty and excellence

of these diamonds of truth are not discerned by the natural eye. The lovely things of the material world are not seen until the sun, dispelling the darkness, floods them with its light. And so with the treasures of God's word; they are not appreciated until they are revealed by the Sun of Righteousness. {CT 421.2}

(6) WHAT ARE 3 DANGERS THAT CAN RENDER GOD'S WORD TO BE INEFFECTIVE IN OUR LIVES?

Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. (Luke 8:14 NKJV)

Related Texts: Luke 8:11-15; Mark 4:19

Christ specified the things that are dangerous to the soul. As recorded by Mark He mentions the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things. Luke specifies the cares, riches, and pleasures of this life. These are what choke the word, the growing spiritual seed. The soul ceases to draw nourishment from Christ, and spirituality dies out of the heart. {COL 51.1}

“The cares of this world.” No class is free from the temptation to worldly care. To the poor, toil and deprivation and the fear of want bring perplexities and burdens. To the rich come fear of loss and a multitude of anxious cares. Many of Christ's followers forget the lesson He has bidden us learn from the flowers of the field. They do not trust to His constant care. Christ cannot carry their burden, because they do not cast it upon Him. Therefore the cares of life, which should drive them

to the Saviour for help and comfort, separate them from Him. {COL 51.2}

“The deceitfulness of riches.” The love of riches has an infatuating, deceptive power. Too often those who possess worldly treasure forget that it is God who gives them power to get wealth. They say, “My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth.” Deut. 8:17. Their riches, instead of awakening gratitude to God, lead to the exaltation of self. They lose the sense of their dependence upon God and their obligation to their fellow men. Instead of regarding wealth as a talent to be employed for the glory of God and the uplifting of humanity, they look upon it as a means of serving themselves. Instead of developing in man the attributes of God, riches thus used are developing in him the attributes of Satan. The seed of the word is choked with thorns. {COL 52.2}

“And pleasures of this life.” There is danger in amusement that is sought merely for self-gratification. All habits of indulgence that weaken the physical powers, that becloud the mind, or that benumb the spiritual perceptions, are “fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.” 1 Peter 2:11. {COL 53.1}

“And the lusts of other things.” These are not necessarily things sinful in themselves, but something that is made first instead of the kingdom of God. Whatever attracts the mind from God, whatever draws the affections away from Christ, is an enemy to the soul. {COL 53.2}

(7) HOW LONG WILL THE WORD OF GOD ENDURE?

The grass withers, the flower fades, But

the word of our God stands forever.”
(Isaiah 40:8 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 46:10; Matthew 24:35; Mark 13:31; 1 Peter 1:25; Psalm 111:7, 8

Like the builders of the houses on the rock, said Jesus, is he who shall receive the words that I have spoken to you, and make them the foundation of his character and life. Centuries before, the prophet Isaiah had written, “The word of our God shall stand forever” (Isaiah 40:8); and Peter, long after the Sermon on the Mount was given, quoting these words of Isaiah added, “This is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you” (1 Peter 1:25). The word of God is the only steadfast thing our world knows. It is the sure foundation. “Heaven and earth shall pass away,” said Jesus, “but My words shall not pass away.” Matthew 24:35. {MB 148.1}

“The word of our God shall stand forever.” “All His commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness.” Isaiah 40:8; Psalm 111:7, 8. Whatever is built upon the authority of man will be overthrown; but that which is founded upon the rock of God’s immutable word shall stand forever. {GC 288, 289}

(8) WHAT METHOD DOES THE BIBLE RECOMMEND IN THE STUDY OF ITS PAGES?

For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little.”
(Isaiah 28:10 NKJV)

Related Texts: Revelation 22:18, 19; 1

Thessalonians 2:13; Colossians 2:8; 2 Peter 1:19

We are so thankful that we have a sure word of prophecy, so that none of us need be deceived. We know that there are heresies and fables in our world at the present time, and we want to know what is truth. It becomes us to search carefully for ourselves that we may gain this knowledge. We cannot do this with a mere reading of the Scriptures, but we must compare scripture with scripture.

We must search the Scriptures for ourselves, so that we shall not be led astray; and while many may be led astray because there are all kinds of doctrines in our world, there is one truth. Many may come to you and tell you that they have the truth, but it is your privilege to search the Scriptures for yourself. “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” (Isaiah 8:20). We must be acquainted with the Scriptures ourselves, that we may understand the true reason of the hope that is within us. {LHU 114.2}

The apostle says, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.” 2 Timothy 3:16). The Bible is its own expositor. One passage will prove to be a key that will unlock other passages, and in this way light will be 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. (Isaiah 28:10). {FE 187.2}

(9) WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE THAT WE ARE BELIEVING AND ABIDING DISCIPLES OF CHRIST?

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. (John 8:31 NKJV)

Related Texts: Luke 8:15; John 7:17; Psalm 119:10, 11, 101; Hosea 6:3

No man, woman, or youth can attain to Christian perfection and neglect the study of the word of God. By carefully and closely searching His word we shall obey the injunction of Christ, “Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me.” (John 5:39). This search enables the student to observe closely the divine Model, for they testify of Christ. The Pattern must be inspected often and closely in order to imitate it.

As one becomes acquainted with the history of the Redeemer, he discovers in himself defects of character; his unlikeness to Christ is so great that he sees he cannot be a follower without a very great change in his life. Still he studies, with a desire to be like his great Exemplar; he catches the looks, the spirit, of his beloved Master; by beholding he becomes changed. “Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.” (Heb.12:2) ... {CSW 17.1}

It is not enough for us to know and respect the words of the Scriptures. We must enter into the understanding of them, studying them earnestly, eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of God. Christians will reveal

the degree to which they do this by the healthiness of their spiritual character. We must know the practical application of the Word to our own individual character-building. We are to be holy temples, in which God can live and walk and work. Never must we strive to lift ourselves above the servants whom God has chosen to do His work and to honor His holy name. "All you are brethren." Let us apply this Word to our individual selves, comparing scripture with scripture.

In our daily lives, before our brethren and before the world, we are to be living interpreters of the Scriptures, doing honor to Christ by revealing His meekness and His lowliness of heart. Christ's teachings are to be to us as the leaves of the tree of life. As we eat and digest the bread of life, we shall reveal a symmetrical character. By our unity, by esteeming others better than ourselves, we are to bear to the world a living testimony of the power of the truth.

When men submit entirely to God, eating the bread of life and drinking the water of salvation, they will grow up into Christ. Their characters are composed of that which the mind eats and drinks. Through the Word of life, which they receive and obey, they become partakers of the divine nature. Then their entire service is after the divine similitude, and Christ, not man, is exalted (Letter 64, 1900).

It is now clear to me that ALL the Word of God is inspired by Him and is acceptable for reproof and doctrine that I may grow and abide in Him.

Circle: Yes Undecided

Circle: *Yes* *Undecided*

Circle: Yes Undecided

Circle: *Yes* *Undecided*

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Lesson 4

Abiding in Faith

This lesson is based on John 15:4.

**(1) WHAT MUST THE “BRANCH”
DO BEFORE IT WILL BEAR FRUIT?**

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. (John 15:4 NKJV)

Related Texts: 2 John 9; John 6:56-58; Isaiah 26:3

A continuous abiding in a living connection with Christ is essential for growth and fruitfulness. Occasional attention to matters of religion is not sufficient. Riding high on a wave of religious fervor one day, only to fall low into a period of neglect the next, does

not promote spiritual strength. To abide in Christ means that the soul must be in daily, constant communion with Jesus Christ and must live His life (Gal. 2:20). It is not possible for one branch to depend upon another for its vitality; each must maintain its own personal relationship to the vine. Each member must bear its own fruits. {5BC 1042}

The root sends its nourishment through the branch to the outermost twig. So Christ communicates the current of spiritual strength to every believer. So long as the soul is united to Christ, there is no danger that it will wither or decay. {DA 676.3}

(2) WHY DOES ABIDING WITH CHRIST AT TIMES SEEM SO DIFFICULT?

For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. (Galatians 5:17 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 26:41;
Romans 7:18-25; 8:7

Every individual, by his own act, either puts Christ from him by refusing to cherish His spirit and follow His example, or he enters into a personal union with Christ by self-renunciation, faith, and obedience. We must, each for himself, choose Christ, because He has first chosen us. This union with Christ is to be formed by those who are naturally at enmity with Him. It is a relation of utter dependence, to be entered into by a proud heart. This is close work, and many who profess to be followers of Christ know nothing of it. They nomi-

nally accept the Saviour, but not as the sole ruler of their hearts. {FLB 135.2} Every Christian must stand on guard continually, watching every avenue of the soul where Satan might find access. He must pray for divine help and at the same time resolutely resist every inclination to sin. By courage, by faith, by persevering toil, he can conquer. But let him remember that to gain the victory Christ must abide in him and he in Christ. ... It is only by personal union with Christ, by communion with Him daily, hourly, that we can bear the fruits of the Holy Spirit. {FLB 135.5}

(3) WHAT TWO-PART CONDITION MUST WE MEET TO EXPERIENCE THE BLESSING REST THAT A MUTUALLY ABIDING RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST OFFERS?

Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (Matthew 11:29 NKJV)

Related Texts: Mark 10:21; Colossians 2:6; 1 John 2:6

We are to bear the yoke of Christ that we may be placed in complete union with Him. “Take my yoke upon you,” He says. Obey My requirements. But these requirements may be in direct opposition to the will and purposes of the human agent. What then is to be done? Hear what God says: “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.” The yoke and the cross are symbols representing the same thing,—the giving up of the will to God.

Wearing the yoke unites finite man in companionship with the dearly beloved Son of God. Lifting the cross cuts away self from the soul, and places man where he learns how to bear Christ's burdens. We cannot follow Christ without wearing His yoke, without lifting the cross and bearing it after Him. If our will is not in accord with the divine requirements, we are to deny our inclinations, give up our darling desires, and step in Christ's footsteps.

Men frame for their own necks yokes that seem light and pleasant to wear, but they prove galling in the extreme. Christ sees this, and He says, "Take My yoke upon you. The yoke you would place upon your own neck, thinking it a precise fit, will not fit at all. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me the lessons essential for you to learn; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."

The Lord never makes a false estimate concerning His heritage. He measures the men with whom He is working. When they submit to His yoke, when they give up the struggle that has been unprofitable for themselves and for the cause of God, they will find peace and rest. When they become sensible of their own weakness, their own deficiencies, they will delight to do God's will. They will submit to the yoke of Christ. Then God can work in them to will and to do of His good pleasure, which is often entirely contrary to the plans of the human mind. When the heavenly anointing comes to us, we shall learn the lesson of meekness and lowliness, which always brings rest to the soul (RH Oct. 23, 1900).

(4) WHAT IS THE FUNDAMEN-

TAL ELEMENT IN AN ABIDING RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST?
For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.” (Romans 1:17 NKJV)

Related Texts: Hebrews 10:38; 12:1, 2; Galatians 3:11; Colossians 2:6

Do you ask, “How am I to abide in Christ?” In the same way as you received Him at first. “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.” “The just shall live by faith.”... You gave yourself to God, to be His wholly, to serve and obey Him, and you took Christ as your Saviour.

You could not yourself atone for your sins or change your heart; but having given yourself to God, you believe that He for Christ’s sake did all this for you. By faith you became Christ’s, and by faith you are to grow up in Him—by giving and taking. You are to give all,—your heart, your will, your service,—give yourself to Him to obey all His requirements; and you must take all,—Christ, the fullness of all blessing, to abide in your heart, to be your strength, your righteousness, your everlasting helper,—to give you power to obey. {SC 69.2}

The Lord manifests His grace and His power over and over again, and this should teach us that it is always profitable under all circumstances to cherish faith, to talk faith, to act faith. We are not to have our hearts and hands weakened by allowing the suggestions of suspicious minds to plant in our hearts the seeds of doubt and distrust [Heb. 3:12] (Letter 97, 1898).

(5) WHAT IS FAITH?

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 64:10; 27:13; 34:8; 36:7; Matthew 8:13; 17:20

Jesus said: “If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.” All things are possible with God, and by faith we may lay hold on His power. But faith is not sight; faith is not feeling; faith is not reality. “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” To abide in faith is to put aside feeling and selfish desires, to walk humbly with the Lord, to appropriate His promises, and apply them to all occasions, believing that God will work out His own plans and purposes in your heart and life by the sanctification of your character; it is to rely entirely, to trust implicitly, upon the faithfulness of God. If this course is followed, others will see the special fruits of the Spirit manifested in the life and character. {FE 341.3}

(6) WHY IS FAITH THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IN AN ABIDING RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST?

...by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law... (Galatians 2:16 NKJV)

Related Texts: Ephesians 2:8; 1 John 5:4; 1 Peter 1:3-5

Without the grace of Christ, the sinner is in a hopeless condition; nothing can be

done for him; but through divine grace, supernatural power is imparted to the man, and works in mind and heart and character. It is through the impartation of the grace of Christ that sin is discerned in its hateful nature, and finally driven from the soul temple.

It is through grace that we are brought into fellowship with Christ, to be associated with Him in the work of salvation. Faith is the condition upon which God has seen fit to promise pardon to sinners; not that there is any virtue in faith whereby salvation is merited, but because faith can lay hold of the merits of Christ, the remedy provided for sin. Faith can present Christ's perfect obedience instead of the sinner's transgression and defection.

When the sinner believes that Christ is his personal Saviour, then, according to His unfailing promises, God pardons his sin, and justifies him freely. The repentant soul realizes that his justification comes because Christ, as his substitute and surety, has died for him, is his atonement and righteousness. {1SM 366, 367}

(7) AS OUR FAITH AND TRUST IN CHRIST DEEPENS, HOW WILL WE FEEL FROM DAY TO DAY?

*You will keep him in perfect peace,
Whose mind is stayed on You, Because
he trusts in You. (Isaiah 26:3 NKJV)*

Related Texts: John 14:27; 16:33; Philippians 4:6, 7; Ephesians 2:14; Isaiah 57:19-21; Psalm 85:8

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}

Jesus says, “Abide in Me.” These words convey the idea of rest, stability, confidence. Again He invites, “Come unto Me, . . . and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28. The words of the psalmist express the same thought: “Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him.” And Isaiah gives the assurance, “In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.” Psalm 37:7; Isaiah 30:15. This rest is not found in inactivity; for in the Saviour’s invitation the promise of rest is united with the call to labor: “Take My yoke upon you: . . . and ye shall find rest.” Matthew 11:29. The heart that rests most fully upon Christ will be most earnest and active in labor for Him. {SC 71.1}

(8) FROM WHOM DOES THE “BRANCH” RECEIVE STRENGTH TO ABIDE IN THE VINE AND REFLECT HIS IMAGE?

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (Philippians 4:13 NKJV)

Related Texts: 2 Corinthians 12:9;

Ephesians 3:16; 6:10, 11; Colossians 1:11; Isaiah 41:10

Jesus asks us to consecrate ourselves to Him. He has placed signal honor upon the human race; for He says, “As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.” Shall we not, then, give to Christ that which He has died to redeem? If you will do this, He will quicken your conscience, renew your heart, sanctify your affections, purify your thoughts, and set all your powers at work for Him. Every motive and every thought will be brought into captivity to Jesus Christ. {7BC 909}

“Without Me,” says Christ, “ye can do nothing;” but with His divine grace working through our human efforts, we can do all things. His patience and meekness will pervade the character, diffusing a precious radiance which makes bright and clear the pathway to heaven. By beholding and imitating His life we shall become renewed in His image. The glory of heaven will shine in our lives and be reflected upon others. At the throne of grace we are to find the help we need to enable us to live thus. This is genuine sanctification, and what more exalted position can mortals desire than to be connected with Christ as a branch is joined to the vine? {5T 306}

(9) ON WHAT AWESOME EVENT SHOULD OUR MINDS DAILY DWELL SO THAT OUR FAITH AND ASSURANCE IN CHRIST WILL INCREASE?

so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many.... (Hebrews 9:28 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Peter 3:18; 1 John 3:5; Isaiah 53:4-7

“... Those who have an abiding trust in Christ, will, like Enoch, have a sense of the abiding presence of God. Why is it that there are so many who feel in uncertainty, who feel that they are orphans?—It is because they do not cultivate faith in the precious assurance that the Lord Jesus is their sin-bearer. It was in behalf of those who had transgressed the law, that Jesus took upon Him human nature, and became like unto us, in order that we might have everlasting peace and assurance. We have an advocate in the heavens, and whosoever accepts Him as his personal Saviour is not left an orphan to bear the curse of his own sins. {SD 287.2}

We must daily cultivate faith, daily contemplate Him who has undertaken our case, who is a merciful and faithful high priest; “for in that he himself hath suffered being tempted {not in a few things, but in all points like as we are}, he is able to succour them that are tempted.” “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.” Even now, in heaven, He is afflicted with our afflictions; and as a living Saviour, as an interested Advocate, He is making intercession for us. {SD 287.3}

We should daily exercise faith; and that faith should daily increase as it is exercised, as we realize that He has not only redeemed us, but has loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and the Father. {SD 287.4}

I realize that a continuous abiding in a living connection with Christ is essential for growth and fruitfulness and

Circle: *Yes* *Undecided*

Circle: Yes Undecided

Circle: Yes Undecided

Circle: Yes Undecided

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Lesson 5

The Source of Abiding

This lesson is based on John 15:5.

(1) WHAT WILL CHRIST ONE DAY SAY TO THOSE WHO HAVE ATTEMPTED TO SERVE HIM WITHOUT AN ABIDING CONNECTION?

And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' (Matthew 7:23 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 7:20-22; 13:40; John 10:14; Luke 13:25-27; 2 Timothy 3:1-5

And many who are working with a very different purpose, fall into a like error. They are working for others' good; their duties are pressing, their responsibilities are many, and they allow their labor to crowd out devotion. Communion with God through prayer and a study of His word is neglected. They forget that

Christ has said, “Without Me ye can do nothing.” John 15:5.

They walk apart from Christ, their life is not pervaded by His grace, and the characteristics of self are revealed. Their service is marred by desire for supremacy, and the harsh, unlovely traits of the unsubdued heart. Here is one of the chief secrets of failure in Christian work. This is why its results are often so meager. {COL 52.1}

(2) WHAT DOES CHRIST SAY WE CAN ACCOMPLISH IF WE ABIDE IN HIM?

“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. (John 15:5 NKJV)

Related Texts: 2 Corinthians 3:5; Hosea 14:8; Philippians 1:11; 2 Peter 1:3

This union with Christ, once formed, must be maintained. Christ said, “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me.” This is no casual touch, no off-and-on connection. The branch becomes a part of the living vine. The communication of life, strength, and fruitfulness from the root to the branches is unobstructed and constant.

Separated from the vine, the branch cannot live. No more, said Jesus, can you live apart from Me. The life you have received from Me can be preserved only by continual communion. Without Me you cannot overcome one sin, or resist one temptation. {DA 676.1}

“Abide in Me, and I in you.” Abiding in Christ means a constant receiving of His Spirit, a life of unreserved surrender to His service. The channel of communication must be open continually between man and his God. As the vine branch constantly draws the sap from the living vine, so are we to cling to Jesus, and receive from Him by faith the strength and perfection of His own character. {DA 676.2}

The root sends its nourishment through the branch to the outermost twig. So Christ communicates the current of spiritual strength to every believer. So long as the soul is united to Christ, there is no danger that it will wither or decay. {DA 676.3}

(3) AS WE ABIDE IN HIM, WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT FRUIT THAT WE WILL BEAR?

And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. (1 Corinthians 13:13 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; 1 John 4:8; Galatians 5:6; 5:22, 23; 1 Peter 4:8; Mark 12:29-31

Wherever there is union with Christ there is love. Whatever other fruits we may bear, if love be missing, they profit nothing. Love to God and our neighbor is the very essence of our religion. No one can love Christ and not love His children. When we are united to Christ, we have the mind of Christ. Purity and love shine forth in the character, meekness and truth control the life. The very expression of the countenance is changed. Christ abiding in the soul exerts a transforming power, and the outward aspect bears witness to the peace

and joy that reign within. We drink in the love of Christ, as the branch draws nourishment from the vine.

If we are grafted in Christ, if fiber by fiber we have been united with the Living Vine, we shall give evidence of the fact by bearing rich clusters of living fruit. If we are connected with the Light, we shall be channels of light, and in our words and works we shall reflect light to the world. Those who are truly Christians are bound with the chain of love which links earth to heaven, which binds finite man to the infinite God. The light that shines in the face of Jesus Christ shines in the hearts of His followers, to the glory of God. {1SM 337.2}

(4) WHAT PROMISE CAN WE CLAIM IN OUR STRUGGLE AGAINST SIN IF WE ARE ABIDING IN CHRIST?

Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. (1 John 3:6 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 3:9; 5:4; 5:18; Galatians 5:16

Jesus teaches the same thing when He says, “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. . . . Without Me ye can do nothing.” John 15:4, 5. You are just as dependent upon Christ, in order to live a holy life, as is the branch upon the parent stock for growth and fruitfulness. Apart from Him you have no life. You have no power to resist temptation or to grow in grace and holiness. Abiding in Him, you may flourish. Drawing your life

from Him, you will not wither nor be fruitless. You will be like a tree planted by the rivers of water. {SC 68.3}

This union with Christ, once formed, must be maintained. Christ said, “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me.” This is no casual touch, no off-and-on connection. The branch becomes a part of the living vine. The communication of life, strength, and fruitfulness from the root to the branches is unobstructed and constant. Separated from the vine, the branch cannot live. No more, said Jesus, can you live apart from Me. The life you have received from Me can be preserved only by continual communion. Without Me you cannot overcome one sin, or resist one temptation. {DA 676.1}

(5) LIKE THE WHEAT DESCRIBED IN THIS TEXT, WHAT MUST HAPPEN TO SELF BEFORE WE BEAR MUCH FRUIT?

Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. (John 12:24 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 12:25; 1 Corinthians 15:36-38; Galatians 2:20; Mark 8:35

And all who would bring forth fruit as workers together with Christ must first fall into the ground and die. The life must be cast into the furrow of the world's need. Self-love, self-interest, must perish. But the law of self-sacrifice is the law of self-preservation. The seed buried in the ground produces fruit, and in turn this is planted. Thus the harvest is multiplied. The husbandman pre-

serves his grain by casting it away. So in human life, to give is to live. The life that will be preserved is the life that is freely given in service to God and man. Those who for Christ's sake sacrifice their life in this world, will keep it unto life eternal. {COL 86, 87}

(6) WHAT IS THE FIRST ACTION WE MUST TAKE BEFORE CHRIST CAN IMPUTE HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS TO US?

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. (James 4:8 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 55:6, 7; Zechariah 1:3; 1 Chron. 28:9; 2 Chron. 15:2

Christ has said, "Without me ye can do nothing." The resolutions you may make in your own finite strength, will be only as ropes of sand; but if you pray in sincerity, surrendering yourself, soul, body, and spirit, unto God, you put on the whole armor of God, and open the soul to the righteousness of Christ; and this alone,—Christ's imputed righteousness,—makes you able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

The work of every soul is to resist the enemy in the power and might of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the promise is that the devil shall flee from us. But let all realize that they are in peril, and there is no assurance of safety except as they comply with the conditions of the text. The Lord says, "Draw nigh to God." How?—By secret, earnest examination of your own heart; by childlike, heart-felt, humble dependence upon God, making known your weakness to

Jesus; and by confessing your sins. Thus you may draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. {SD 346.3, 347.1}

(7) WITHOUT A LOVE - INFUSING, CHARACTER - CHANGING, CONNECTION WITH CHRIST, WHAT WILL BE THE RESULT OF OUR ATTEMPTS TO LABOR FOR HIM?

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. (1 Corinthians 13:1 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Corinthians 13:2, 3; 1 John 3:10; Matthew 25:45; 1 Peter 4:8

O that all might realize that without Christ they can do nothing! Those who do not gather with Him scatter abroad. Their thoughts and actions will not bear the right character, and their influence will be destructive of good. Our actions have a twofold influence; for they affect others as well as ourselves. This influence will either be a blessing or a curse to those with whom we associate. How little we appreciate this fact.

Actions make habits, and habits, character, and if we do not guard our habits, we shall not be qualified to unite with heavenly agencies in the work of salvation, nor be prepared to enter the heavenly mansions that Jesus has gone to prepare; for no one will be there except those who have surrendered their will and way to God's will and way. He whose character is proved, who has stood the test of trial, who is a partaker of the divine nature, will be among those whom Christ pronounces blessed. {FE 194.1}

Without Christ we can do nothing. The pure principles of uprightness, virtue, and goodness are all from God. A conscientious discharge of duty, Christlike sympathy, love for souls and love for your own soul, because you belong to God, and have been bought with the precious blood of Christ, will make you a laborer together with God, and endow you with persuasive, drawing power.

You must respect your own faith in order successfully to introduce it to others. By example as well as precept, you must show that you reverence your faith, speaking reverently of sacred things. Never allow one expression of lightness and trifling to escape your lips when quoting Scripture. As you take the Bible in your hands, remember that you are on holy ground. Angels are around you, and could your eyes be opened, you would behold them.

Let your conduct be such that you will leave the impression upon every soul with whom you associate that a pure and holy atmosphere surrounds you. One vain word, one trifling laugh, may balance a soul in the wrong direction. Terrible are the consequences of not having a constant connection with God. {FE 194.2}

(8) WHO IS THE SOURCE THROUGH WHOM CHRIST INFUSES SPIRITUAL LIFE TO THE SOUL THAT WE MAY BE FRUITFUL?

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 3:24; 4:12, 13;

Romans 8:9; Ephesians 3:16, 17

The Lord Jesus acts through the Holy Spirit; for it is His representative. Through it He infuses spiritual life into the soul, quickening its energies for good, cleansing it from moral defilement, and giving it a fitness for His kingdom. Jesus has large blessings to bestow, rich gifts to distribute among men. He is the wonderful Counselor, infinite in wisdom and strength; and if we will acknowledge the power of His Spirit, and submit to be molded by it, we shall stand complete in Him. What a thought is this! In Christ “dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him” (Col. 2:9, 10).

Never will the human heart know happiness until it is submitted to be molded by the Spirit of God. The Spirit conforms the renewed soul to the model, Jesus Christ. Through the influence of the Spirit, enmity against God is changed into faith and love, and pride into humility. The soul perceives the beauty of truth, and Christ is honored in excellence and perfection of character. As these changes are effected, angels break out in rapturous song, and God and Christ rejoice over souls fashioned after the divine similitude. {AG 196.4}

***I realize that Christ's words are true:
“Without me ye can do nothing.”***

Circle: Yes Undecided

***I realize that my union with Christ,
once formed, must be maintained. I
cannot spiritually survive with a casual
connection and hope to live.***

Circle: Yes Undecided

Circle: Yes Undecided

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



Lesson 6

The Withered Branch

This lesson is based on John 15:6.

**(1) WHAT ARE THE THREE
LONG TERM CONSEQUENCES
IF THE BRANCH FAILS TO RE-
TAIN ITS VITAL CONNECTION
TO THE VINE?**

*If anyone does not abide in Me, he is
cast out as a branch and is withered;
and they gather them and throw them
into the fire, and they are burned.
(John 15:6 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Matthew 3:10; 7:18-20;
Isaiah 14:19; Ezekiel 17:9, 10

The delusion, “once in grace always
in grace,” is denied by this condi-
tion. It is possible for those who have

been in Christ to sever their connection with Him and be lost. Salvation is conditional upon abiding in Christ until the end.

The Christian represented by the severed branch may carry on a form of religion, but the vital power is lacking (2 Tim. 3:5). Under test and trial the shallowness of his profession is seen. As the severed branches are eventually gathered and burned, so the unfruitful Christian, along with the nonprofessor, will suffer ultimate extinction (Matt. 10:28; 13:38–40; 25:41, 46). No overt act of disobedience is mentioned, simply the sin of neglect. Compare the parable of the Sheep and the Goats (Matt. 25:31–46). Those to the left of the King were excluded from the kingdom for neglect of practical Christian duty. {5BC 1042}

“My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away.” While the graft is outwardly united with the vine, there may be no vital connection. Then there will be no growth or fruitfulness. So there may be an apparent connection with Christ without a real union with Him by faith.

A profession of religion places men in the church, but the character and conduct show whether they are in connection with Christ. If they bear no fruit, they are false branches. Their separation from Christ involves a ruin as complete as that represented by the dead branch. “If a man abide not in Me,” said Christ, “he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.” {DA 676.5}

(2) FROM WHOM DOES THE ABILITY TO LIVE A HOLY AND

BLAMELESS LIFE COME?

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thessalonians 5:23 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Thessalonians 3:13; Leviticus 20:8; Jude 1:1

This union with Christ, once formed, must be maintained. Christ said, “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me.” This is no casual touch, no off-and-on connection. The branch becomes a part of the living vine.

The communication of life, strength, and fruitfulness from the root to the branches is unobstructed and constant. Separated from the vine, the branch cannot live. No more, said Jesus, can you live apart from Me. The life you have received from Me can be preserved only by continual communion. Without Me you cannot overcome one sin, or resist one temptation. {DA 676.1}

“Abide in Me, and I in you.” Abiding in Christ means a constant receiving of His Spirit, a life of unreserved surrender to His service. The channel of communication must be open continually between man and his God. As the vine branch constantly draws the sap from the living vine, so are we to cling to Jesus, and receive from Him by faith the strength and perfection of His own character. {DA 676.2}

The root sends its nourishment through the branch to the outermost twig. So Christ communicates the current of

spiritual strength to every believer. So long as the soul is united to Christ, there is no danger that it will wither or decay. {DA 676.3}

(3) WHAT TWO VITAL STEPS DID PAUL TEACH THAT WE AS SINNERS CAN TAKE TO CONNECT TO CHRIST THE LIVING VINE AND BRING FORTH THE FRUIT OF A HOLY LIFE?

testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. (Acts 20:21 NKJV)

Related Texts: Acts 10:43; 11:18; Romans 3:22-26

As the severed branch, leafless, and apparently lifeless, is ingrafted into the living stock, and, fiber by fiber, and vein by vein, drinks in the life and strength of the vine until it buds and blossoms and bears fruit, even so may the sinner, by repentance and faith, connect himself with Christ, become a partaker of the divine nature, and bring forth in words and deeds the fruit of a holy life. {OHC 145.2}

Jesus “has life in himself,” and this life He offers to impart freely, to souls that are dead in trespasses and sins. Yes, He shares with them His purity, His honor, and exaltation. . . . The sapless branch, ingrafted into the living vine, becomes a part of the vine. It lives while united to the vine. So the Christian lives by virtue of his union with Christ. The sinful and human is linked to the holy and divine. The believing soul abides in Christ, and becomes one with Him. When persons are closely united in the relations of this life, their tastes become similar, they come to love the same

things. So those who abide in Christ will love the things which He loves. They will sacredly cherish and obey His commandments... . {OHC 145.3}

(4) WHAT CAN WE DO TO ABIDE IN CHRIST THROUGH TRIALS AND DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES?

casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 34:7; 34:19; Matthew 6:25-33

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}

(5) IF WE COMMUNICATE WITH GOD BY PRAYER WITH SUPPLICATION AND THANKSGIVING, WHAT PROMISE CAN WE CLAIM IN ANY CIRCUMSTANCE?

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 26:3, 4; 45:7;
John 14:27

It is our privilege to have daily a calm, close, happy walk with Jesus. We need not be alarmed if the path lies through conflicts and sufferings. We may have the peace which passeth understanding; but it will cost us battles with the powers of darkness, struggles severe against selfishness and inbred sin. The victories gained daily through persevering, untiring effort in well-doing will be precious through Christ who has loved us, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a “peculiar people, zealous of good works.” . . . {LHU 98.5}

Christ suffers trial to come upon His followers that they may be led to seek the Lord more earnestly. Then when trials come, do not think that the Lord is your enemy. He purges for a reason. He does not want you to be discouraged; but He would prove you, to see if you will be true to Him and will conduct

yourselves circumspectly under every circumstance. He does not want to drive you away, but to drive you nearer to the Lord. In God is the Christian's only hope in time of perplexity. {UL 303.2} Do not talk to others about your trials, for they have enough of their own to bear, and our human friends cannot always understand. It is your privilege to go to One who will always understand, because His life on earth was one of constant trial and perplexity, borne without failure and sin. . . . {UL 303.3}

(6) WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE OF A HEALTHY, ABIDING RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST?

By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. (1 John 4:13 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 3:24; Romans 8:9, 11, 14-16

The presence of the Spirit in the Christian's life is a proof that God is dwelling in him, for it is through the Spirit that God abides in a man ...{7 BC 658}

The Holy Spirit is the breath of spiritual life in the soul. The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ. It imbues the receiver with the attributes of Christ. The Holy Spirit will enter the heart that can boast of nothing. The love of Jesus will fill the vacuum that is made by the emptying out of self. Those who see Christ in His true character, and receive Him into the heart, have everlasting life. It is through the Spirit that Christ dwells in us; and the Spirit of God, received into

the heart by faith, is the beginning of the life eternal. {FLB 57.2-4}

We do not see Christ and speak to Him, but His Holy Spirit is just as near us in one place as in another. It works in and through every one who receives Christ. Those who know the indwelling of the Spirit reveal the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith. {FLB 57.5}

(7) LIKE KING DAVID, WHAT PRACTICAL THING CAN WE ASK GOD TO DO IN US EACH DAY TO PREVENT OUR WITH-ERING?

Cause me to hear Your lovingkindness in the morning, For in You do I trust; Cause me to know the way in which I should walk, For I lift up my soul to You. (Psalms 143:8 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 25:4, 5; 32:8; 86:4-7; 5:2, 3; Proverbs 3:5, 6

It is by communion with Him, daily, hourly—by abiding in Him—that we grow in grace. He is not only the author, but the finisher of our faith. It is Christ first and last and always. He is to be with us, not only at the beginning and the end of our course, but at every step of the way. {AG 293.4}

Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work. Let your prayer be, “Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee.” This is a daily matter. Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. Surrender all your plans to

Him, to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate. Thus day by day you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be molded more and more after the life of Christ. {SC 70.1}

(8) TO KEEP OUR SPIRITUAL CONNECTION TO THE VINE FROM WITHERING, WHAT MUST WE CHOOSE TO DO ON A DAILY BASIS?

And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” (Joshua 24:15 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 King 18:21; Matthew 6:24; Romans 6:16; 1 Corinthians 10:21; 2 Corinthians 6:14

Our first work is with our own hearts. The true principles of reform should be practiced. The heart must be converted and sanctified else we have no connection with Christ. While our hearts are divided, we shall never, never be fitted for usefulness in this life or for the future life. As intelligent beings, we need to sit down and think whether we are really seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. The very best thing we can do is to think soberly and candidly whether we desire to put forth the effort necessary to obtain the Christian hope and secure the Christian’s heaven. If through the grace of Christ we decide that we do, the next question is: What is there that I must cut away from my life in order that I shall not stumble? {TDWG 48}

It is my prayer that, by His Grace, I can retain an abiding, vital connection to Christ.

Circle: Yes Undecided

It is my desire Lord, by your grace, to stand under test and trial to bear fruit to your glory and to the glory of the Father.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I desire and choose to have a union with Christ that is no casual on and off connection. It is my desire to cling to Jesus and to constantly receive the presence of His Spirit.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I realize that this type of relationship with Christ requires a daily and hourly connection.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I claim Christ to be not only the Author but also the Finisher of my faith. I choose to have Him not only at the end of my path but every step along the way.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I choose to separate from anything in my life that may cause me to stumble; and, by faith, allow Him to live out His divine character within me.

Circle: Yes Undecided



Lesson 7

Abiding in Prayer

This lesson is based on John 15:7.

(1) WHAT IS THE RESULT IF WE ABIDE IN HIM AND HIS WORD?

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. (John 15:7 NKJV)

Related Texts: Jeremiah 15:16; Colossians 3:16, 17; John 16:23; 1 John 5:14, 15; 1 John 3:21, 22

The abiding is mutual as expressed in verse 4. As men abide in Christ, Christ dwells in them and they become partak-

ers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). Their thoughts become so identified with the divine will that only such requests are made as are in harmony with that will. Furthermore, no sin intervenes to prevent a favorable answer.

My words abide. These words show that the indwelling of Christ is not wholly a mystical, inexplicable experience. Men receive Christ by receiving His word. As they feed upon that word it enlightens the mind. And as they make an intelligent choice to follow that word and obey it implicitly through the enabling power of Heaven, Christ, the hope of glory, is formed within (Col. 1:27). Furthermore, for this experience to be constant they feed daily upon the word. {5BC 1043}

(2) HOW DOES THIS VERSE SYMBOLICALLY DESCRIBE HOW TO HAVE CHRIST'S WORDS ABIDE IN US?

Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. (John 6:53 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 119:11; Acts 17:11

Study the Bible as the word of God, and feed upon its truths, which are the flesh and blood of the Son of God! "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood [that is, continues to receive the words of Christ, and practice them], hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My

blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him.”
“And he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us. {FE 385.3}

(3) WHAT AWESOME AVENUE OF COMMUNICATION HAS GOD PROVIDED THAT WE MAY “ASK” FOR OUR HEART’S DESIRES?

Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you PRAY, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. (Mark 11:24 NKJV)

Related Texts: Luke 11:9-13; John 14:13; 2 Chronicles 7:14; Isaiah 55:6

Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him. {SC 93.2}

The Lord has sought to show us how ready is God to hear and answer our request by the use of a most familiar and commonplace occurrence. He said: “What man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?” (Matt. 7: 9-11).

Christ made an appeal to us concerning the willingness of God to help, arguing from the natural love of the parent to his offspring. What father could turn from his son who asks bread? Should anyone

dishonor God by imagining that He will not respond to the call of His children? Would we think a parent capable of trifling with his child, and tantalizing him by raising his expectation only to disappoint him? Will a father promise to give good and nourishing food to his child and then give him a stone? If ye then, being human and evil, give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him? The Lord assures those that ask Him that He will give them the Holy Spirit. {1SM 329.1}

(4) IN ADDITION TO ASKING, WHAT MUST WE DO IN ORDER TO RECEIVE OUR HEART'S DESIRES?

Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, BELIEVE that you receive them, and you will have them. (Mark 11:24 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 21:22; James 5:15; 1 John 5:14, 15

True faith lays hold of and claims the promised blessing before it is realized and felt. We must send up our petitions in faith within the second veil and let our faith take hold of the promised blessing and claim it as ours. We are then to believe that we receive the blessing, because our faith has hold of it, and according to the Word it is ours. “What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.” Mark 11:24.

Here is faith, naked faith, to believe that we receive the blessing, even before we realize it. When the promised blessing is realized and enjoyed, faith is swallowed

up. But many suppose they have much faith when sharing largely of the Holy Spirit and that they cannot have faith unless they feel the power of the Spirit. Such confound faith with the blessing that comes through faith. The very time to exercise faith is when we feel destitute of the Spirit. When thick clouds of darkness seem to hover over the mind, then is the time to let living faith pierce the darkness and scatter the clouds.

True faith rests on the promises contained in the Word of God, and those only who obey that Word can claim its glorious promises. “If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” John 15:7. “Whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.”

1 John 3:22. {EW 72.2, 73}

Not because we see or feel that God hears us are we to believe. We are to trust in His promises. When we come to Him in faith, every petition enters the heart of God. When we have asked for His blessing, we should believe that we receive it, and thank Him that we have received it. Then we are to go about our duties, assured that the blessing will be realized when we need it most. When we have learned to do this, we shall know that our prayers are answered. God will do for us “exceeding abundantly,” “according to the riches of His glory,” and “the working of His mighty power.” Eph. 3:20, 16; 1:19. {DA 200}

(5) HOW SHOULD WE PRAY TO RECEIVE ANSWERS FROM THE FATHER?

Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. (James 5:16 NKJV)

Related Texts: Jeremiah 29:12, 13; Genesis 32:28; Ephesians 6:18; Proverbs 8:17; Hosea 5:15

God will be to us everything we will let Him be. Our languid, half-hearted prayers will not bring us returns from heaven. Oh, we need to press our petitions! Ask in faith, wait in faith, receive in faith, rejoice in hope, for everyone that seeketh findeth. Be in earnest in the matter. Seek God with all the heart. People put soul and earnestness into everything they undertake in temporal things, until their efforts are crowned with success. With intense earnestness learn the trade of seeking the rich blessings that God has promised, and with persevering, determined effort you shall have His light and His truth and His rich grace. {OHC 131.3}

In sincerity, in soul hunger, cry after God. Wrestle with the heavenly agencies until you have the victory. Put your whole being into the Lord's hands, soul, body, and spirit, and resolve to be His loving, consecrated agency, moved by His will, controlled by His mind, infused by His Spirit. {OHC 131.4}

(6) WHAT TYPE OF DAILY PRAYER IS CRUCIAL IN AN ABIDING RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST?

But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the

secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. (Matthew 6:6 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 14:23; Luke 6:12; 5:16

How precious is secret prayer—the soul communing with God! Secret prayer is to be heard only by the prayer-hearing God. No curious ear is to receive the burden of petitions. Calmly, yet fervently, the soul is to reach out after God; and sweet and abiding will be the influence emanating from Him who sees in secret, whose ear is open to the prayer arising from the heart. He who in simple faith holds communion with God will gather to himself divine rays of light to strengthen and sustain him in the conflict with Satan. {TMK 272.4}

Family prayer and public prayer have their place; but it is secret communion with God that sustains the soul-life. It was in the mount with God that Moses beheld the pattern of that wonderful building which was to be the abiding-place of His glory. It is in the mount with God—the secret place of communion—that we are to contemplate His glorious ideal for humanity. Thus we shall be enabled so to fashion our character-building that to us may be fulfilled the promise, “I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” [2 COR. 6:16.] {GW 254.1}

(7) WHEN IS IT A GOOD TIME TO PRAY ESTABLISHING YOUR ABIDING CONNECTION IN CHRIST FOR EACH NEW DAY?

My voice You shall hear in the morn-

*ing, O LORD; In the morning I will direct it to You, And I will look up.
(Psalms 5:3 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Psalm 63:1; 90:14; Isaiah 26:9; Job 1:5

The very first outbreathing of the soul in the morning should be for the presence of Jesus. “Without Me,” He says, “ye can do nothing.” It is Jesus that we need; His light, His life, His Spirit, must be ours continually. We need Him every hour.

And we should pray in the morning that as the sun illuminates the landscape, and fills the world with light, so the Sun of Righteousness may shine into the chambers of mind and heart, and make us all light in the Lord. We cannot do without His presence one moment. The enemy knows when we undertake to do without our Lord, and he is there, ready to fill our minds with his evil suggestions that we may fall from our steadfastness; but it is the desire of the Lord that from moment to moment we should abide in Him, and thus be complete in Him... {ML 15}

Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work. Let your prayer be, “Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee.” This is a daily matter. Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. Surrender all your plans to Him, to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate. Thus day by day you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be molded more and more after the life of Christ. {SC 70.1}

(8) IF WE ARE TO CONTINUE TO ABIDE, HOW OFTEN WILL

WE BE IN COMMUNICATION WITH HEAVEN?

but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” (Acts 6:4 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Luke 18:1; Daniel 6:10; Colossians 4:2

Pray often to your heavenly Father. The *more often* you engage in prayer, the closer your soul will be drawn into a sacred nearness to God. The Holy Spirit will make intercession for the sincere petitioner with groanings which cannot be uttered, and the heart will be softened and subdued by the love of God. The clouds and shadows which Satan casts about the soul will be dispelled by the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and the chambers of mind and heart will be illuminated by the light of Heaven. {HP 89.2}

Pray in your closet, and as you go about your daily labor let your heart be often uplifted to God. It was thus that Enoch walked with God. These silent prayers rise like precious incense before the throne of grace. Satan cannot overcome him whose heart is thus stayed upon God. {SC 98.3}

There is no time or place in which it is inappropriate to offer up a petition to God. There is nothing that can prevent us from lifting up our hearts in the spirit of earnest prayer. In the crowds of the street, in the midst of a business engagement, we may send up a petition to God and plead for divine guidance, as did Nehemiah when he made his request before King Artaxerxes. A closet of communion may be found wherever we are. We should have the door of the heart open continually and our invitation go-

ing up that Jesus may come and abide as a heavenly guest in the soul. {SC 99.1}

(9) WHAT IS THE PRIMARY CONDITION OF ANSWERED PRAYER?

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. (1 John 5:14-15 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 26:39; 7:21; John 4:34; Mark 11:25; Psalm 66:18; Proverbs 28:9; James 4:3

The consistent course is to commit our desires to our all-wise heavenly Father, and then, in perfect confidence, trust all to Him. We know that God hears us if we ask according to His will. But to press our petitions without a submissive spirit is not right; our prayers must take the form, not of command, but of intercession. {MH 230.2}

There are thousands of prayers daily offered that God does not answer. There are faithless prayers. “He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” Heb. 11:6. There are selfish prayers, proceeding from a heart that is cherishing idols. . . . There are petulant, fretful prayers, murmuring because of the burdens and cares of life, instead of humbly seeking grace to lighten them. Those who offer such petitions are not abiding in Christ. They have not submitted their will to the will of God. They do not comply with the condition of the promise, and it is not fulfilled to them. {OHC 147.3}

They that are abiding in Jesus have the assurance that God will hear them, because they love to do His will. They offer no formal, wordy prayer, but come to God in earnest, humble confidence as a child to a tender father, and pour out the story of their grief and fears and sins, and in the name of Jesus present their wants; they depart from His presence rejoicing in the assurance of pardoning love and sustaining grace. {OHC 147.4}

(10) WHEN WE PRAY IN FAITH, WHAT WONDERFUL PROMISE CAN WE CLAIM?

Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. (Mark 11:24 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 7:7-11; John 16:23, 24; 1 John 5:14, 15; James 1:17

Every saint who comes to God with a true heart, and sends his honest petitions to Him in faith, will have his prayers answered. Your faith must not let go of the promises of God, if you do not see or feel the immediate answer to your prayers. Be not afraid to trust God. Rely upon His sure promise: “Ask, and ye shall receive.” God is too wise to err, and too good to withhold any good thing from His saints that walk uprightly.

Man is erring, and although his petitions are sent up from an honest heart, he does not always ask for the things that are good for himself, or that will glorify God. When this is so, our wise and good Father hears our prayers, and will answer, sometimes immediately; but He gives us the things that are for our best good and His own glory. God

gives us blessings; if we could look into His plan, we would clearly see that He knows what is best for us and that our prayers are answered. Nothing hurtful is given, but the blessing we need, in the place of something we asked for that would not be good for us, but to our hurt. {1T 120.2}

I am also grateful for the gift and privilege of prayer and see its vital importance in maintaining a constant connection with Christ.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I choose to believe God's promise that if I ask according to His will I will receive what I ask.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I realize that faith is the critical element that will allow me to take hold and claim the promised blessings of God.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I choose to open my heart to God in prayer day-by-day, and minute-by-minute so that He can impart His divine will into my heart and life.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I trust God to know what is best for me. He is too wise to err and too good to withhold any good thing from me so I leave the outcome of my prayers in His hands.

Circle: Yes Undecided



Lesson 8

Bearing Fruit to God's Glory

This lesson is based on John 15:8.

(1) HOW DO WE BRING GLORY TO THE FATHER AS WE BECOME HIS DISCIPLES?

By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. (John 15:8 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 92:12-14; Isaiah 60:21; 61:3; Matthew 5:16

The vine-branch, nourished from the parent stock, becomes flourishing and fruitful. Its rich and fragrant clusters attest its union with the living vine. So the Christian, abiding in Jesus, will bring

forth fruit. In character and life will be manifested, like the teeming cluster of the vine, the precious graces of the Spirit,—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance... {OHC 145.4}

It is glory to a vinedresser when his plants bear well. Thus glory comes to God when His image is reflected in the lives of His followers. Satan claims that the requirements of God are too severe and that men cannot attain to the ideal of Christian perfection. Thus the character of God is vindicated when men, through divine grace, become partakers of the divine nature.

The reflection of the Christian graces is evidence of discipleship. Without a vital connection with Christ it impossible to bring forth the fruits of righteousness. {5BC 1043}

(2) WHAT IS OUR ROLE IN OVERCOMING SIN SO THAT WE CAN BEAR FRUIT TO GOD’S GLORY?

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts. (Romans 13:14 NKJV)

Related Texts: James 4:7; Luke 9:23; Romans 6:11; Philippians 2:5; Colossians 3:1, 2; 2:6; Galatians 5:16, 17

Temptation must be met and resisted. Day by day the spiritual battle goes on. Day by day we are to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. It is God that works in us, to will and to do of His good pleasure. Every soul is to strive with “all diligence” to add constantly to his spiritual attainments, strengthening every grace, increasing in efficiency that he may grow in usefulness and holiness, as a fruit-bearing tree

in the Lord's garden. He is to be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. True religion leads to the cultivation of the gifts that make a man more precious in God's sight than the gold of Ophir. "All diligence" means much. It means a daily diligence. There is danger that we shall be blind in regard to the working of satanic agencies, and that we shall be ensnared by Satan's alluring temptations. Therefore the word comes to us, "Giving all diligence," add to your character the graces that will make you strong to resist evil. "He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off." He does not realize his spiritual poverty [2 Peter 1:10, 11 quoted] (Letter 144, 1903).

(3) WHO IS ULTIMATELY THE SOURCE OF VICTORY OVER SIN AND THE FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IN OUR LIVES?

Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. (Hebrews 13:20-21 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 15:5; Philippians 2:13; 1:6; Hebrews 13:20, 21; 1 Peter 5:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 24

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 ac-

comply with 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}

Many have an idea that they must do some part of the work alone. They have trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of sin, but now they seek by their own efforts to live aright. But every such effort must fail. Jesus says, "Without me ye can do nothing." Our growth in grace, our joy, our usefulness—all depend upon our union with Christ. It is by communion with Him, daily, hourly—by abiding in Him—that we grow in grace. He is not only the author, but the finisher of our faith. It is Christ first and last and always. He is to be with us, not only at the beginning and the end of our course, but at every step of the way. David says, "I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved" (Ps. 16:8). {AG 293.2}

"Without Me," says Christ, "ye can do nothing;" but with His divine grace working through our human efforts, we can do all things. His patience and meekness will pervade the character, diffusing a precious radiance which makes bright and clear the pathway to heaven. By beholding and imitating His life we shall become renewed in His image. The glory of heaven will shine in our lives and be reflected upon others. At the throne of grace we are to find the help we need to enable us to live thus. This is genuine sanctification, and what more exalted position can mortals desire than to be connected with Christ as a branch is joined to the vine? {5T 306}

(4) ONCE WE HAVE DIED TO

SELF, HOW DOES CHRIST ACTUALLY DWELL WITHIN US?

By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. (1 John 4:13 NKJV)

When one is fully emptied of self, when every false god is cast out of the soul, the vacuum is filled by the inflowing of the Spirit of Christ. Such a one has the faith that purifies the soul from defilement. He is conformed to the Spirit, and he minds the things of the Spirit. He has no confidence in self. Christ is all and in all. He receives with meekness the truth that is constantly being unfolded, and gives the Lord all the glory, saying, "God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." [1 COR. 2:10, 12.] {GW 287.1}

(5) AS WE CONTINUALLY WALK IN THE SPIRIT, HOW WILL IT AFFECT OUR DAILY LIVES?

I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. (Galatians 5:16 NKJV)

Related Texts: Galatians 5:25; 6:8; Romans 8:1-14

The Lord Jesus acts through the Holy Spirit; for it is His representative. Through it He infuses spiritual life into the soul, quickening its energies for good, cleansing it from moral defilement, and giving it a fitness for His kingdom. Jesus has large blessings to bestow, rich gifts to distribute among men. He is the wonderful Counselor, infinite in wisdom and strength; and if

we will acknowledge the power of His Spirit, and submit to be molded by it, we shall stand complete in Him. What a thought is this! In Christ “dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him” (Col. 2:9, 10). Never will the human heart know happiness until it is submitted to be molded by the Spirit of God. The Spirit conforms the renewed soul to the model, Jesus Christ. Through the influence of the Spirit, enmity against God is changed into faith and love, and pride into humility. The soul perceives the beauty of truth, and Christ is honored in excellence and perfection of character. As these changes are effected, angels break out in rapturous song, and God and Christ rejoice over souls fashioned after the divine similitude. {AG 196.4}

(6) WHAT ARE WE CALLED TO DO IN OUR SECULAR OCCUPATIONS AND DAILY ACTIVITIES?

Brethren, let each one remain with God in that state in which he was called. (1 Corinthians 7:24 NKJV)

Related Texts: Proverbs 11:20; 11:1; Philippians 2:3; Matthew 22:37-39

The vine-branch, nourished from the parent stock, becomes flourishing and fruitful. Its rich and fragrant clusters attest its union with the living vine. So the Christian, abiding in Jesus, will bring forth fruit. In character and life will be manifested, like the teeming cluster of the vine, the precious graces of the Spirit,—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. ... {OHC 145.4}

The apostle says, “Let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.” 1 Corinthians 7:24. The businessman may conduct his business in a way that will glorify his Master because of his fidelity. If he is a true follower of Christ he will carry his religion into everything that is done and reveal to men the spirit of Christ. The mechanic may be a diligent and faithful representative of Him who toiled in the lowly walks of life among the hills of Galilee. Everyone who names the name of Christ should so work that others, by seeing his good works, may be led to glorify their Creator and Redeemer. {SC 82.1}

(7) AS GOD ABIDES IN US AND REFORMS OUR CHARACTERS, WHAT WILL WE PROCLAIM?

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; (1 Peter 2:9 NKJV)

Related Texts: Hebrews 13:15; Ephesians 5:12; Isaiah 61:3; 43:21

It is a law of nature that our thoughts and feelings are encouraged and strengthened as we give them utterance. While words express thoughts, it is also true that thoughts follow words. If we would give more expression to our faith, rejoice more in the blessings that we know we have,—the great mercy and love of God,—we should have more faith and greater joy.

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. {MH 251.4}

“Let the peace of God rule in your hearts; . . . and be ye thankful.” Colossians 3:15. Forgetting our own difficulties and troubles, let us praise God for an opportunity to live for the glory of His name. Let the fresh blessings of each new day awaken praise in our hearts for these tokens of His loving care. When you open your eyes in the morning, thank God that He has kept you through the night. Thank Him for His peace in your heart. Morning, noon, and night, let gratitude as a sweet perfume ascend to heaven. {MH 253.2}

Our confession of His faithfulness is Heaven’s chosen agency for revealing Christ to the world. We are to acknowledge His grace as made known through the holy men of old; but that which will be most effectual is the testimony of our own experience. We are witnesses for God as we reveal in ourselves the working of a power that is divine. Every individual has a life distinct from all others, and an experience differing essentially from theirs. God desires that our praise shall ascend to Him, marked with our own individuality. These precious acknowledgments to the praise of the glory of His grace, when supported by a Christlike life, have an irresistible power that works for the salvation of souls. {MH 100.2}

(8) WHAT WILL BE THE EVIDENCE OF OUR ABIDING RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD WHICH WILL BRING GLORY TO HIM?

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 58:8; Ephesians 2:10; 1 Timothy 5:25; Titus 3:8, 14
Everyone who believes in Christ as a personal Saviour is under bonds to God to be pure and holy, to be a spiritual worker, seeking to save the lost, whether they are great or small, rich or poor, bond or free. The greatest work on earth is to seek and to save those who are lost, for whom Christ has paid the infinite price of His own blood. Everyone is to do active service. . . . The sheep unsought is not brought back to the fold. {LHU 358.4}

(9) HOW WILL OUR LOVE AND GRATITUDE TO GOD BE PRACTICALLY DEMONSTRATED IN OUR LIVES?

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Corinthians 10:31; Romans 12:1, 2; 6:19

All men have been bought with this infinite price. By pouring the whole treasury of heaven into this world, by giving us in Christ all heaven, God has purchased the will, the affections, the mind, the soul, of every human being. Whether believers or unbelievers, all men are the Lord's property. {AG 173.2}

We are His by creation and by redemption. Our very bodies are not our own, to treat as we please, to cripple by habits that lead to decay, making it impossible to render to God perfect service. Our lives and all our faculties belong to Him. He is caring for us every moment; He keeps the living machinery in action; if we were left to run it for one moment, we should die. We are absolutely dependent upon God. {AG 173.3}

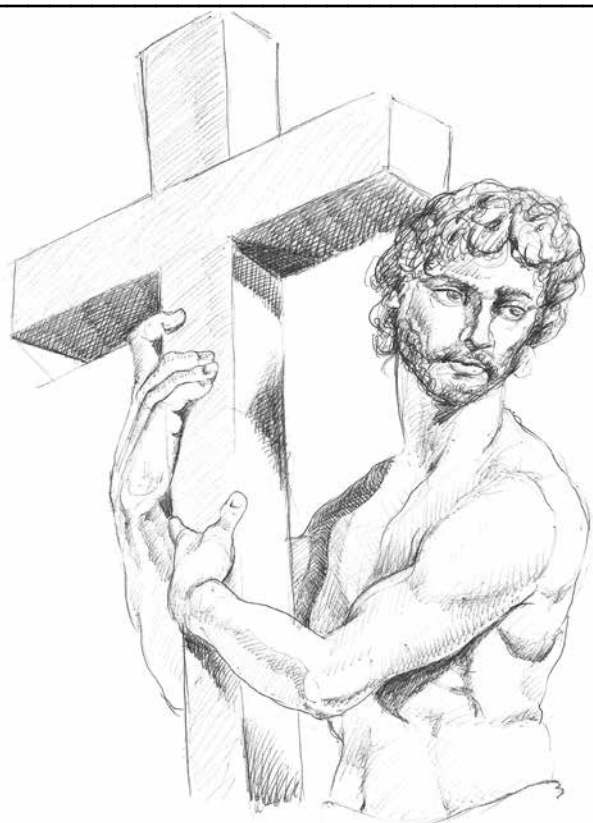
A great lesson is to be learned when we understand our relation to God, and His relation to us. The words, “Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price,” should be hung in memory’s hall, that we may ever recognize God’s right to our talents, our property, our influence, our individual selves. We are to learn how to treat this gift of God, in mind, in soul, in body, that as Christ’s purchased possession, we may do Him healthful, savory service. {AG 173.4}

I love God the Father and Jesus the Son with all my heart and it is my earnest desire to bring Them glory.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I know that I am not my own and have been purchased at a high price and so, in love, I dedicate my talents and all I possess to the glory of God and advancing of His kingdom.

Circle: Yes Undecided



Lesson 9

Abiding in Obedience

This lesson is based on John 15:9, 10

(1) HOW IS CHRIST'S ABIDING LOVE FOR US MEASURED?

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

Related Texts: John 17:21, 26; 15:13; Ephesians 3:17-19; 1 John 3:16: 4:8

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” (Jer. 31:3). {HP 18.3}

To abide in Christ means to abide in the shelter of His love. It is comforting to know Christ’s love for us is as abiding as the Father’s love for the Son. More than that, “the Father himself loveth you” (ch. 16:27) with the same love with which He loves the Son (EGW RH Nov 4, 1890).

(2) WHICH CAME FIRST: GOD’S ABIDING LOVE FOR US OR CHRIST’S SACRIFICE?

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16 NKJV)

Related Texts: Jeremiah 31:3; Ephesians 2:4-7; Romans 5:8; 1 John 3:1

But this great sacrifice was not made in order to create in the Father’s heart a love for man, not to make Him willing to save. No, no! “God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son.” John 3:16. The Father loves us, not because of the great propitiation, but He provided the propitiation because He loves us. Christ was the medium

through which He could pour out His infinite love upon a fallen world. “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.” 2 Corinthians 5:19. God suffered with His Son. In the agony of Gethsemane, the death of Calvary, the heart of Infinite Love paid the price of our redemption. {SC 13.2}

Jesus said, “Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again.” John 10:17. That is, “My Father has so loved you that He even loves Me more for giving My life to redeem you. In becoming your Substitute and Surety, by surrendering My life, by taking your liabilities, your transgressions, I am endeared to My Father; for by My sacrifice, God can be just, and yet the Justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.” {SC 14.1}

(3) HOW DOES CHRIST DESCRIBE THE ABIDING LOVE RELATIONSHIP THAT HE DESIRES BETWEEN THE FATHER, HIMSELF, AND US?

I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. (John 17:23 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 17:21, 26; 16:27; 3:35; 5:20, 21; Ephesians 3:17-19

O what an assurance is this, that the love of God may abide in the hearts of all who believe in Him!...One who knows, has said, “The Father himself loveth you.” One who has had an experimental knowledge of the length, and breadth, and height, and depth of that love, has declared unto us this amazing fact. This love is ours through faith in the Son of

God, therefore a connection with Christ means everything to us.

We are to be one with Him as He is one with the Father, and then we are beloved by the infinite God as members of the body of Christ, as branches of the living Vine. We are to be attached to the parent stock, and to receive nourishment from the Vine. Christ is our glorified Head, and the divine love flowing from the heart of God, rests in Christ, and is communicated to those who have been united to Him. This divine love entering the soul inspires it with gratitude, frees it from its spiritual feebleness, from pride, vanity, and selfishness, and from all that would deform the Christian character. {FE 178.1}

(4) WHAT IS THE PRIVILEGE AND DUTY OF EVERY CHRISTIAN?

And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. (Jeremiah 29:13 NKJV)

Related Texts: Jeremiah 24:7; Deuteronomy 4:29; Psalm 119:2

It is not only the privilege but the duty of every Christian to maintain a close union with Christ and to have a rich experience in the things of God. Then his life will be fruitful in good works. Said Christ, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit" (John 15:8). When we read the lives of men who have been eminent for their piety we often regard their experiences and attainments as far beyond our reach. But this is not the case. Christ died for all; and we are assured in His word that He is more willing to give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him

than are earthly parents to give good gifts to their children. The prophets and apostles did not perfect Christian character by a miracle. They used the means which God had placed within their reach; and all who will put forth the same effort will secure the same results. {SL 83.3}

(5) WHAT IS EVIDENCE THAT WE LOVE GOD AND HIS ABIDING LOVE IS IN US?

But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked. (1 John 2:5-6 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 3:21-24; 5:3, 4; John 14:15, 21; 1 Thessalonians 4:1

We do not earn salvation by our obedience; for salvation is the free gift of God, to be received by faith. But obedience is the fruit of faith. “Ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him.” 1 John 3:5, 6.

Here is the true test. If we abide in Christ, if the love of God dwells in us, our feelings, our thoughts, our purposes, our actions, will be in harmony with the will of God as expressed in the precepts of His holy law. “Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous.” 1 John 3:7. Righteousness is defined by the standard of God’s holy law, as expressed in the ten precepts given on Sinai. {SC 61.1}

Christ attaches a weight of importance to the obedience of His people to the commandments of God. They are to have an intelligent knowledge of them, and bring them into their daily life. Man cannot keep the commandments of God, only as he is in Christ, and Christ in him. And it is not possible for him to be in Christ, having light on His commandments, while disregarding the least of them. By steadfast, willing obedience to His word, they evidence their love for the Sent of God. {TDWG 142.1}

Not to keep the commandments of God is not to love Him. None will keep the law of God unless they love Him who is the only begotten of the Father. And nonetheless surely; if they love Him, they will express that love by obedience to Him. All who love Christ will be loved of the Father, and He will manifest Himself to them. In all their emergencies and perplexities they will have a helper in Jesus Christ. {TDWG 142.2}

God loves not only those who love His Son, He loves the world (John 3:16; cf. Rom. 5:8). Nevertheless when men respond to the love of God a greater manifestation of that love is possible. {5BC 1049}

(6) WHAT IS THE ULTIMATE TEST OF OUR LOVE AND LOYALTY TO GOD AND THE STATE OF OUR CHARACTERS?

“If you love Me, keep My commandments. (John 14:15 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Corinthians 7:19; Revelation 22:14; 2 Peter 2:21

God's great object in the working out of His providences is to try men, to give them opportunity to develop character. Thus He proves whether they are obedient or disobedient to His commands. Good works do not purchase the love of God, but they reveal that we possess that love. If we surrender the will to God, we shall not work in order to earn God's love. His love as a free gift will be received into the soul, and from love to Him we shall delight to obey His commandments. {COL 283.2}

There are only two classes in the world today, and only two classes will be recognized in the judgment—those who violate God's law and those who obey it. Christ gives the test by which to prove our loyalty or disloyalty. "If ye love Me," He says, "keep My commandments. . . . He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me. And he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him. . . . He that loveth Me not keepeth not My sayings; and the word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's which sent Me." "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love." John 14:15-24; 15:10. {COL 283.3}

(7) WHAT DOES WILLFUL SIN CAUSE WHICH PREVENTS AN ABIDING RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST?

But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear. (Isaiah 59:2 NKJV)

Related Texts: Jeremiah 5:25; 2:17-19; Proverbs 15:29; Micah 3:4

Let none deceive themselves with the belief that they can become holy while willfully violating one of God's requirements. The commission of a known sin silences the witnessing voice of the Spirit and separates the soul from God. "Sin is the transgression of the law." And "whosoever sinneth [transgresseth the law] hath not seen Him, neither known Him." 1 John 3:6.

Though John in his epistles dwells so fully upon love, yet he does not hesitate to reveal the true character of that class who claim to be sanctified while living in transgression of the law of God. "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected." 1 John 2:4, 5.

Here is the test of every man's profession. We cannot accord holiness to any man without bringing him to the measurement of God's only standard of holiness in heaven and in earth. If men feel no weight of the moral law, if they belittle and make light of God's precepts, if they break one of the least of these commandments, and teach men so, they shall be of no esteem in the sight of Heaven, and we may know that their claims are without foundation. [Matt. 5:19]. {GC 472.3}

(8) WHEN WE LOVE GOD AND CHOOSE TO ABIDE IN HIM, BY WHOSE POWER ARE WE ABLE TO OBEY THE COMMANDMENTS AND OVERCOME SIN?

The sting of death is sin, and the

strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:56-57 NKJV)

Related Texts: Philippians 3:9; Romans 7:22-25; 2 Corinthians 12:9

There are but few who have an appreciation of the grievous character of sin, and who comprehend the greatness of the ruin that has resulted from the transgression of God's law. By examining the wonderful plan of redemption to restore the sinner to the moral image of God, we see that the only means for man's deliverance was wrought out by the self-sacrifice, and the unparalleled condescension and love of the Son of God. He alone had the strength to fight the battles with the great Adversary of God and man, and, as our substitute and surety, He has given power to those who lay hold of Him by faith, to become victors in His name, and through His merits. {FE 135.1}

This robe—[Christ's robe of righteousness]—woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us. "All our righteousness are as filthy rags." Isa. 64:6. Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God "was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin." Sin is defined to be "the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:5, 4. But Christ was obedient to every requirement of the law. He said of Himself, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart." Ps. 40:8.

When on earth, He said to His disciples, "I have kept My Father's command-

ments.” John 15:10. By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God’s commandments. 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. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {COL 311.4}

(9) IN AN ABIDING PARTNERSHIP WITH CHRIST, WHAT IS OUR ROLE IN OVERCOMING SIN?

Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. (James 4:7-8 NKJV)

Related Texts: Acts 3:19; John 15:4, 5; Matthew 26:41; Galatians 2:20

Let no man present the idea that man has little or nothing to do in the great work of overcoming; for God does nothing for man without his cooperation. Neither say that after you have done all you can on your part, Jesus will help you. Christ has said, “Without me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5). From first to last man is to be a laborer together with God.

Unless the Holy Spirit works upon the human heart, at every step we shall

stumble and fall. Man's efforts alone are nothing but worthlessness; but co-operation with Christ means a victory. Of ourselves we have no power to repent of sin. Unless we accept divine aid we cannot take the first step toward the Saviour. He says, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end" (Rev. 21:6) in the salvation of every soul. {1SM 381.2}

But though Christ is everything, we are to inspire every man to unwearied diligence. We are to strive, wrestle, agonize, watch, pray, lest we shall be overcome by the wily foe. For the power and grace with which we can do this comes from God, and all the while we are to trust in Him, who is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him. Never leave the impression on the mind that there is little or nothing to do on the part of man; but rather teach man to cooperate with God, that he may be successful in overcoming. {1SM 381.3}

Let no one say that your works have nothing to do with your rank and position before God. In the judgment the sentence pronounced is according to what has been done or to what has been left undone (Matt. 25:34-40). {1SM 381.4}

Effort and labor are required on the part of the receiver of God's grace; for it is the fruit that makes manifest what is the character of the tree. Although the good works of man are of no more value without faith in Jesus than was the offering of Cain, yet covered with the merit of Christ, they testify *to* the worthiness of the doer to inherit eternal life. That which is considered morality in the world does not reach the divine standard and has no more merit before Heaven

than had the offering of Cain.--Manuscript 26a, 1892. {1SM 381.5}

(10) WHEN WE ARE YOKED IN AN ABIDING RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST, WHAT AWESOME PROMISE CAN WE CLAIM?

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30 NKJV)

Related Texts: Jeremiah 6:16; Hebrews 4:9-11; Isaiah 26:3

...We are to find rest by wearing His yoke and bearing His burdens. In being co-workers with Christ in the great work for which He gave His life, we shall find true rest. When we were sinners, He gave His life for us. He wants us to come to Him and learn of Him. Thus we are to find rest. He says He will give us rest. “Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.” In doing this you will find in your own experience the rest that Christ gives, the rest that comes from wearing His yoke and lifting His burdens (GCB April 4, 1901).

In accepting Christ’s yoke of restraint and obedience, you will find that it is of the greatest help to you. Wearing this yoke keeps you near the side of Christ, and He bears the heaviest part of the load. “Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.” To learn the lessons Christ teaches is the greatest treasure students can find. Rest comes to them in the consciousness that they are trying to please the Lord (Letter 144, 1901).

I realize that because He loves me the Father provided the sacrifice of His Son.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I realize that I cannot earn salvation by my obedience; for salvation is the free gift of God to be received by faith. I choose to accept His amazing gift and I want to bring glory to Him by doing what is right in my life.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I see that righteousness is defined by the standard of God's holy law, as expressed in the ten precepts given on Sinai. I realize also that I do not have the ability on my own to obey them.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I understand that to overcome sin and obey His commandments I must enter into a divine – human partnership with Christ. My role is to abide in Him and resist the devil with every effort possible, realizing that all victory comes from Him.

Circle: Yes Undecided

From first to last I choose to be a laborer together with God. I know that unless the Holy Spirit works upon my human heart, at every step I will stumble and fall. My efforts alone are nothing but worthlessness; but if I am in cooperation with Christ this means certain victory.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I realize that ultimately these victories in my life will be directly proportional to my abiding connection to Christ. Today I choose to spend time in His Word daily and live minute-by-minute in submission to His will.

Circle: Yes Undecided



Lesson 10

Abiding in Joy

This lesson is based on John 15:11.

(1) WHAT WAS CHRIST’S PURPOSE IN SHARING THESE DIVINE TRUTHS ABOUT ABIDING IN HIM WITH US?

“These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. (John 15:11 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 17:13; 10:10; 14:27

God is the eternal, uncreated fountain of all good. All who look to Him and trust in Him find Him to be this. To those who serve Him, cleaving to Him as their heavenly Father, He gives the assurance that He will fulfil His promises. His joy will be in their hearts, and their joy will be full. {Letter 203, Sept. 14, 1903}

(2) WHO IS THE SOURCE OF JOY?

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13 NKJV)

Related Texts: Ecclesiastes 2:26; Isaiah 65:18; Jeremiah 31:13; Luke 2:10

God is the source of life and light and joy to the universe. Like rays of light from the sun, blessings flow out from Him to all the creatures He has made. In His infinite love He has granted men the privilege of becoming partakers of the divine nature, and, in their turn, of diffusing blessings to their fellow men. This is the highest honor, the greatest joy, that it is possible for God to bestow upon men. Those are brought nearest to their Creator who thus become participants in labors of love. He who refuses to become a “laborer together with God,”—the man who for the sake of selfish indulgence ignores the wants of his fellow men, the miser who heaps up his treasures here,—is withholding from himself the richest blessing that God can give him.--R. & H., Dec. 6, 1887.

(3) WHAT DO THOSE WHO ACCEPT CHRIST AS THEIR SIN PARDONING SAVIOUR RECEIVE IN EXCHANGE FOR

THEIR SORROW FOR SIN?

To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.” (Isaiah 61:3 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 35:10; Psalm 70:4; 5:11; John 17:13

As God raised Christ from the dead, that He might bring life and immortality to light through the gospel, and thus save His people from their sins, so Christ has raised fallen human beings to spiritual life, quickening them with His life, filling their hearts with hope and joy. {HP 7.2}

It is the duty of Christians to convince the world that the religion of Christ disrobes the soul of the garments of heaviness and mourning and clothes it with joy and gladness. Those who receive Christ as a sin-pardoning Saviour are clothed with His garments of light. He takes away their sin and imparts to them His righteousness. Their joy is full. {CME 26.3}

Who have better right than Christians to sing songs of rejoicing? Have they not the expectation of being members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King? Is not the gospel good tidings of great joy? When the promises of God are freely and fully accepted, heaven's brightness is brought into the life. . . . {CME 26.4}

(4) WHY DOES ABIDING IN CHRIST BRING JOY TO THE HEART?

To console those who mourn in Zion, To

give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.” (Isaiah 61:3 NKJV)

Related Texts: Acts 2:28; 1 Thessalonians 2:19

Why should not our joy be full—full, lacking nothing? We have an assurance that Jesus is our Saviour, and that we may draw freely from Him. We may partake freely of the rich provision that He has made for us in His Word. We may take Him at His word, believe on Him, and know that He will give us grace and power to do just as He bids us. . . . We may constantly seek the joy of His presence. We need not be all the time upon our knees in prayer, but we may be constantly asking for His grace, even when we are walking on the streets, or when we are engaged in our ordinary daily duties. We may constantly keep the mind ascending to Christ, and He will freely impart to us of His grace. . . . {2 SAT 293}

(5) FROM WHOM DO WE EXPERIENCE JOY THAT WE MAY THEN IMPART IT TO THE WORLD?

for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Romans 14:17 NKJV)

Related Texts: Galatians 5:22; Acts 13:52; 1 Thessalonians 1:6

As the divine endowment—the power of the Holy Spirit—as given to the disci-

ples, so it will today be given to all who seek aright. This power alone is able to make us wise unto salvation and to fit us for the courts above. Christ wants to give us a blessing that will make us holy. “These things have I spoken unto you,” He says, “that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.” John 15:11. Joy in the Holy Spirit is health-giving, life-giving joy. In giving us His Spirit, God gives us Himself, making Himself a fountain of divine influences, to give health and life to the world. {7T 273.1}

As God so liberally bestows His gifts on you, remember that it is in order that you may return them to the Giver, multiplied by being imparted. Bring into the lives of others light and joy and peace. Every day we need the discipline of self-humiliation, that we may be prepared to receive the heavenly gift, not to hoard it, not to rob God’s children of His blessing, but to give it in all its rich fullness to others. When more than now shall we need a heart open to receive, aching, as it were, with its longing to impart? {7T 273.2}

(6) WHAT BRINGS JOY TO THE HEART OF CHRIST?

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, (Jude 1:24 NKJV)

Related Texts: Hebrews 12:2; Matthew 25:21; Luke 15:7, 10

To share eternity with the ransomed of all ages and the unfallen beings of other worlds was a prospect that brought utter joy to our Lord as He suffered in Gethsemane and on the cross of Calvary.

{7BC 481} The joy of Christ lay in the consciousness of a successfully accomplished mission. The Saviour had joy in carrying out the divine purpose in man's redemption and in enduring that men might be saved. His purpose in life was to glorify His Father. {5BC 1043}

(7) WHEN WE ARE ABIDING IN CHRIST, WHAT WILL BRING JOY TO OUR HEARTS?

He who continually goes forth weeping, Bearing seed for sowing, Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, Bringing his sheaves with him. (Psalms 126:6 NKJV)

Related Texts: Proverbs 11:25; Isaiah 58:6-8; John 4:36

And he who seeks to give light to others will himself be blessed. "There shall be showers of blessing." "He that watereth shall be watered also himself." Prov. 11:25. God could have reached His object in saving sinners without our aid; but in order for us to develop a character like Christ's, we must share in His work. In order to enter into His joy,—the joy of seeing souls redeemed by His sacrifice,—we must participate in His labors for their redemption. {DA 142.2} Is it not a privilege to be thus copartners with Jesus? Is it not an honor to be connected with the grand work of saving souls, acting the part assigned us by our Saviour? And none can impart a blessing to others without receiving benefit himself. {CH 508.1}

The service rendered in sincerity of heart has great recompense. "Thy Father which seeth in secret Himself shall reward thee openly." By the life we live

through the grace of Christ the character is formed. The original loveliness begins to be restored to the soul. The attributes of the character of Christ are imparted, and the image of the Divine begins to shine forth. The faces of men and women who walk and work with God express the peace of heaven. They are surrounded with the atmosphere of heaven. For these souls the kingdom of God has begun. They have Christ's joy, the joy of being a blessing to humanity. They have the honor of being accepted for the Master's use; they are trusted to do His work in His name. {DA 312.2}

(8) UPON WHAT SUBJECT MUST OUR MINDS DWELL IN ORDER TO ENTER INTO THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST'S JOY?

Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. (Colossians 3:2 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 8:5, 6; 12:2; Isaiah 26:3; 2 Corinthians 4:18

When God's people take their eyes off the things of this world and place them on heaven and heavenly things they will be a peculiar people, because they will see the mercy and goodness and compassion that God has shown to the children of men. His love will call forth a response from them, and their lives will show to those around them that the Spirit of God is controlling them, that they are setting their affections on things above, not on the things of the earth. {Mar 322.1}

In thinking of heaven, we may put our imagination to the utmost stretch and think the loftiest thoughts that we are capable of thinking, and our minds will

grow weary in the effort to comprehend the breadth and depth and height of the subject. It is impossible for our minds to take in the great themes of eternity. It is impossible for us even to make an effort to understand these things without the effort affecting our whole character for good and having an uplifting influence on our minds. As we think of how Christ came to our world to die for fallen man, we understand something of the price that was paid for our redemption, and we realize that there is no true goodness or greatness apart from God. {Mar 322.2}

Only by the light shining from the cross of Calvary can we know to what depths of sin and degradation the human race has fallen through sin. Only by the length of the chain let down from heaven to draw us up can we know the depths to which we had sunk. And it is only by keeping the unseen realities in view that we can understand anything of the wonderful theme of redemption. {Mar 322.3}

We are almost home; we shall soon hear the voice of the Saviour richer than any music, saying, Your warfare is accomplished. Enter into the joy of thy Lord. Blessed, blessed benediction; I want to hear it from His immortal lips. I want to praise Him; I want to honor Him that sitteth on the throne. I want my voice to echo and re-echo through the courts of heaven. Will you be there? . . . God help us, and fill us with all fullness and power, and then we can taste of the joys of the world to come. {Mar 322.4}

(9) WHAT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE DO SO THAT HIS JOY CAN REMAIN IN US?

Therefore let that abide in you which

you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. (1 John 2:24 NKJV)

Related Texts: Deuteronomy. 4:9; Colossians 2:6; Hebrews 12:2; Romans 1:17

The Lord would have all His sons and daughters happy, peaceful, and obedient. Jesus says, “My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” “These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.” John 14:27; 15:11. {SC 124.1}

Even here Christians may have the joy of communion with Christ; they may have the light of His love, the perpetual comfort of His presence. Every step in life may bring us closer to Jesus, may give us a deeper experience of His love, and may bring us one step nearer to the blessed home of peace. Then let us not cast away our confidence, but have firm assurance, firmer than ever before. “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us,” and He will help us to the end. 1 Samuel 7:12.

Let us look to the monumental pillars, reminders of what the Lord has done to comfort us and to save us from the hand of the destroyer. Let us keep fresh in our memory all the tender mercies that God has shown us,—the tears He has wiped away, the pains He has soothed, the anxieties removed, the fears dispelled, the wants supplied, the blessings bestowed,—thus strengthening ourselves for all that is before us through the remainder of our pilgrimage. {SC 125.1}

(10) AS CHRIST’S FOLLOW-

ERS HOW SHOULD WE DEMONSTRATE OUR LOVE FOR CHRIST TO THE WORLD?

Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous; And shout for joy, all you upright in heart! (Psalms 32:11 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 40:16; 43:4

Why should not our joy be full—full, lacking nothing? We have an assurance that Jesus is our Saviour, and that we may draw freely from Him. We may partake freely of the rich provision that He has made for us in His Word. We may take Him at His word, believe on Him, and know that He will give us grace and power to do just as He bids us.... {OHC 148.3}

The joy of Christ is a pure, unalloyed cheerfulness. It is not a cheap gaiety, that leads to vanity of words or lightness of conduct. No, we are to have His joy, and His greatest joy was to see men obeying the truth. . . . Plead with God, saying, “I make an entire surrender. I give myself away to Thee.” Then be joyful. The Word is in you, purifying and cleansing your character. God does not want His children to go about with anxiety and sorrow expressed in their faces. He wants the lovely expression of His countenance to be revealed in every one of us who are partakers of the divine nature; for we have power to escape the corruptions of the world. . . . {OHC 148.4}

We are not, because Christ died, left a company of orphans. . . . It is possible for us to obtain victory after victory, and be the most happy people on the face of the earth. {OHC 148.5}

I am thankful that, as He suffered on

calvary, it brought joy to the heart of Christ knowing He was redeeming me by His sacrifice.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I choose to be clothed with His garment of righteousness that He may impart to me the fullness of joy He offers through salvation.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I realize that even here on earth I may experience the joy of communion with Christ that can only be experienced in His presence. I, by His grace, choose to abide in Him.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I understand that those who become a participant in Christ's labor of love for the lost are brought nearest to their Creator. I choose to be a partaker in this greatest joy known to fallen man.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I long for the day when Christ's joy will be complete as we – the ransomed – enter through the gates of His kingdom to be eternally with Him and the Father.

Circle: Yes Undecided



Lesson 11

Abiding in Love

This lesson is based on John 15:12.

(1) WHAT COMMANDMENT DOES CHRIST ASK US TO FOLLOW WHICH DEMONSTRATES OUR ABIDING CONNECTION WITH HIM?

***This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.
(John 15:12 NKJV)***

Related Texts: John 13:34, 35; 1 John 4:16; Ephesians 5:2; 1 Peter 4:8

Followers of great teachers reflect the characteristics of their teachers. Love was one of the principal attributes of Jesus. Jesus' life had been a practical demonstration of love in action. A manifestation of this same kind of love by the disciples of Jesus would give evidence of their relationship and close association with their Master. It is love rather than profession that marks the Christian... constant, fervent manifestations of love, rather than isolated, fitful outbursts of charitableness, are the evidences of discipleship. {5BC 1031}

The command to love was not in itself new. It belonged to the instructions given by the Lord through Moses (Lev. 19:18)...The command was new in that a new demonstration had been given of love, which the disciples were now bidden to emulate. By His revelation of His Father's character Jesus had opened to men a new concept of the love of God. The new command enjoined men to preserve the same relationship with one another that Jesus had cultivated with them and mankind generally. Where the old commandment enjoined men to love their neighbors as themselves, the new urged them to love as Jesus had loved. The new was, in fact, more difficult than the old, but grace for its accomplishment was freely provided. {5BC 1031}

(2) HOW IS LOVE DEFINED AND WHAT DOES THE PRESENCE OF IT INDICATE?

And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and

God in him. (1 John 4:16 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 4:7, 8; 2:4, 5; 3:16, 17

It is the greatest and most fatal deception to suppose that a man can have faith unto life eternal, without possessing Christlike love for his brethren. He who loves God and his neighbor is filled with light and love. God is in him and all around him. Christians love those around them as precious souls for whom Christ has died. There is no such thing as a loveless Christian; for “God is love,” and “hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” ... “This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.” This is the fruit that is to be given back to God (MS 133, 1899).

Love to man is the earthward manifestation of the love of God. It was to implant this love, to make us children of one family, that the King of glory became one with us. And when His parting words are fulfilled, “Love one another, as I have loved you” (John 15:12); when we love the world as He has loved it, then for us His mission is accomplished. We are fitted for heaven; for we have heaven in our hearts. {DA 641.3}

(3) WHO IS THE SOURCE OF LOVE AND WHAT MUST HAPPEN IN US BEFORE IT CAN BE PRACTICED?

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. (1 John

4:7 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Thessalonians 3:12; 4:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:5; 2 Timothy 1:7; Romans 5:5

The soul is fed by the streams of pure love that flow from the heart of Christ, as a wellspring that never fails. O, how is the heart quickened, how are its motives ennobled, its affections deepened, by this communion! Under the education and discipline of the Holy Spirit, the children of God love one another, truly, sincerely, affectedly—“without partiality, and without hypocrisy.” And this because the heart is in love with Jesus. Our affection for one another springs from our common relation to God...(Letter 63, 1896).

Love is the basis of godliness. Whatever the profession, no man has pure love to God unless he has unselfish love for his brother. But we can never come into possession of this spirit by trying to love others. What is needed is the love of Christ in the heart. When self is merged in Christ, love springs forth spontaneously. The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within—then the sunshine of heaven fills the heart and is revealed in the countenance. {COL 384.2}

(4) WHAT DOES LOVE HAVE THE POWER TO ACCOMPLISH?

Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all sins. (Proverbs 10:12 NKJV)

Related Texts: Song of Sol. 8:6, 7; 1 John 4:18; Romans 13:10

Love is power. Intellectual and moral strength are involved in this principle, and cannot be separated from it. The power of wealth has a tendency to corrupt and destroy; the power of force is strong to do hurt; but the excellence and value of pure love consist in its efficiency to do good, and to do nothing else than good. Whatsoever is done out of pure love, be it ever so little or contemptible in the sight of men, is wholly fruitful; for God regards more with how much love one worketh than the amount he doeth. Love is of God. The unconverted heart cannot originate nor produce this plant of heavenly growth, which lives and flourishes only where Christ reigns. {2T 135.1}

Love cannot live without action, and every act increases, strengthens, and extends it. Love will gain the victory when argument and authority are powerless. Love works not for profit nor reward; yet God has ordained that great gain shall be the certain result of every labor of love. It is diffusive in its nature and quiet in its operation, yet strong and mighty in its purpose to overcome great evils. It is melting and transforming in its influence, and will take hold of the lives of the sinful and affect their hearts when every other means has proved unsuccessful.

Wherever the power of intellect, of authority, or of force is employed, and love is not manifestly present, the affections and will of those whom we seek to reach assume a defensive, repelling position, and their strength of resistance is increased. Jesus was the Prince of Peace. He came into the world to bring resistance and authority into subjection to Himself. Wisdom

and strength He could command, but the means He employed with which to overcome evil were the wisdom and strength of love. Suffer nothing to divide your interest from your present work until God shall see fit to give you another piece of work in the same field. Seek not for happiness, for it is never to be found by seeking for it. Go about your duty. Let faithfulness mark all your doings, and be clothed with humility. {2T 135.2}

(5) HOW ARE WE, IN A PRACTICAL WAY, ABLE TO LOVE OTHERS AS CHRIST LOVED AND THUS FULFILL THE LAW?

For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.” (Galatians 5:13-14 NKJV)

Related Texts: Galatians 6:2; John 15:12, 13; 1 John 3:16-18; Hebrews 13:16; Ephesians 5:1, 2

If the Majesty of heaven could do so much to show His love for man, what ought not men to be willing to do to help one another out of the pit of darkness and suffering! Said Christ, “Love one another, as I have loved you;” not with a greater love; for “greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” Our love is frequently selfish, for we confine it to prescribed limits. When we come into close union and fellowship with Christ, our love and sympathy and our works of benevolence will reach down deeper and will widen and strengthen with exercise.

The love and interest of Christ's followers must be as broad as the world. Those who live merely for "me and mine" will fail of heaven. God calls upon you as a family to cultivate love, to become less sensitive in regard to yourselves and more sensitive to the griefs and trials of others. This selfish spirit that you have cherished all your lives is correctly represented by the priest and the Levite who passed by the unfortunate on the other side. They saw that he needed help, but purposely avoided him. {3T 529.2}

Christ's love is deep and earnest, flowing like an irrepressible stream to all who will accept it. There is no selfishness in His love. If this heaven-born love is an abiding principle in the heart, it will make itself known, not only to those we hold most dear in sacred relationship, but to all with whom we come in contact. It will lead us to bestow little acts of attention, to make concessions, to perform deeds of kindness, to speak tender, true, encouraging words. It will lead us to sympathize with those whose hearts hunger for sympathy (MS 17, 1899).

(6) WHAT DOES OUR LOVE FOR OUR FELLOW MAN REVEAL ABOUT OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD?

No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. (1 John 4:12 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 4:16, 20; 3:10; 3:14, 17; 5:2; John 13:34, 35; 15:14, 17

Love to man is the earthward manifestation of the love of God. It was to im-

plant this love, to make us children of one family, that the King of glory became one with us. And when His parting words are fulfilled, “Love one another, as I have loved you” (John 15:12); when we love the world as He has loved it, then for us His mission is accomplished. We are fitted for heaven; for we have heaven in our hearts. {DA 641.3}

All this is but a fulfillment of the principle of the law,—the principle that is illustrated in the story of the good Samaritan, and made manifest in the life of Jesus. His character reveals the true significance of the law, and shows what is meant by loving our neighbor as ourselves. And when the children of God manifest mercy, kindness, and love toward all men, they also are witnessing to the character of the statutes of heaven. They are bearing testimony to the fact that “the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.” Ps. 19:7. And whoever fails to manifest this love is breaking the law which he professes to revere. For the spirit we manifest toward our brethren declares what is our spirit toward God. The love of God in the heart is the only spring of love toward our neighbor. “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” Beloved, “if we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us.” 1 John 4:20, 12. {DA 505.1}

(7) IN THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN, WHAT EXAMPLE DID CHRIST TEACH AND PRACTICE?

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved

you, that you also love one another.
(John 13:34 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 13:35; Galatians 6:2; Romans 12:10

In the story of the good Samaritan, Jesus gave a picture of Himself and His mission. Man had been deceived, bruised, robbed, and ruined by Satan, and left to perish; but the Saviour had compassion on our helpless condition. He left His glory, to come to our rescue. He found us ready to die, and He undertook our case. He healed our wounds. He covered us with His robe of righteousness. He opened to us a refuge of safety, and made complete provision for us at His own charges. He died to redeem us. ... {DA 503.6, 504}

The Samaritan had fulfilled the command, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,” thus showing that he was more righteous than those by whom he was denounced. Risking his own life, he had treated the wounded man as his brother. This Samaritan represents Christ. Our Saviour manifested for us a love that the love of man can never equal. When we were bruised and dying, He had pity upon us. He did not pass us by on the other side, and leave us, helpless and hopeless, to perish. He did not remain in His holy, happy home, where He was beloved by all the heavenly host. He beheld our sore need, He undertook our case, and identified His interests with those of humanity. He died to save His enemies. He prayed for His murderers. Pointing to His own example, He says to His followers, “These things I command you, that ye love one another”; “as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.” John 15:17; 13:34. {COL 381.1}

(8) WHAT SPEAKS LOUDER THEN WORDS IN THE LIFE OF ONE CLAIMING THE TITLE OF “CHRISTIAN”?

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. (James 1:22 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 13:35; 8:31; Matthew 5:14-16; Luke 11:28

Divine truth exerts little influence upon the world, when it should exert much influence through our practice. The mere profession of religion abounds, but it has little weight. We may claim to be followers of Christ, we may claim to believe every truth in the word of God; but this will do our neighbor no good unless our belief is carried into our daily life. Our profession may be as high as heaven, but it will save neither ourselves nor our fellow men unless we are Christians. A right example will do more to benefit the world than all our profession. {COL 383.2}

By no selfish practices can the cause of Christ be served. His cause is the cause of the oppressed and the poor. In the hearts of His professed followers there is need of the tender sympathy of Christ—a deeper love for those whom He has so valued as to give His own life for their salvation. These souls are precious, infinitely more precious than any other offering we can bring to God. To bend every energy toward some apparently great work, while we neglect the needy or turn the stranger from his right, is not a service that will meet His approval. {COL 383.3}

(9) WHAT, IN AN AMAZING DEMONSTRATION OF LOVE,

DID GOD GIVE TO FALLEN HUMANITY?

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:9; 3:1

God decided to give human beings unmistakable evidence of the love with which He regarded them. He “so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”...{CH 222.1}

The Godhead was stirred with pity for the race, and the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit gave Themselves to the working out of the plan of redemption. In order fully to carry out this plan, it was decided that Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, should give Himself an offering for sin. What line can measure the depth of this love? God would make it impossible for man to say that He could have done more. With Christ He gave all the resources of heaven, that nothing might be wanting in the plan for man’s uplifting. Here is love—the contemplation of which should fill the soul with inexpressible gratitude! Oh, what love, what matchless love! The contemplation of this love will cleanse the soul from all selfishness. It will lead the disciple to deny self, take up the cross, and follow the Redeemer. {CH 222.2}

God’s love embraces all mankind, but directly benefits only those who respond to it. Love requires reciprocity in order to be fully effective. But significantly, God’s love embraces those who reject

it as well as those who accept it. None of the lost can accuse God of not loving them... {5BC 929}

(10) WHAT IS THE GREATEST DEMONSTRATION OF LOVE AND THE AMAZING SACRIFICE CHRIST HAS MADE FOR US?

*Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.
(John 15:13 NKJV)*

Related Texts: John 10:11; Romans 5:6, 7; Ephesians 5:2; Philippians 2:8

How did Christ manifest His love for poor mortals? By the sacrifice of His own glory, His own riches, and even His most precious life. Christ consented to a life of humiliation and great suffering. He submitted to the cruel mockings of an infuriated, murderous multitude, and to the most agonizing death upon the cross. Said Christ: "This is My commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

Every earthly blessing has come to us because of the infinite price that has been paid in our behalf. If it has cost so great a price to redeem man, so that he should not perish, but have everlasting life, how we should rejoice that we are privileged to become co-workers with Christ in saving those for whom He has given His precious life! The Lord Jesus loves those for whom He has made the greatest sacrifice. He gave His own most precious life to bring life and immortality to light to all those who should believe. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent" {John 17:3}.

Those who receive Christ are in copartnership with Him, and will not mistake their lifework. They will heed the words spoken by Christ. They will be guided by the Holy Spirit, and become more and more intelligent in regard to the requirements of God, and will reveal the love and grace that were revealed in the life of Christ toward those with whom He came in contact. {R & H, Jan. 14, 1896.; SW 53.1}

(11) LIKE PAUL, ON WHAT TREMENDOUS THEME SHOULD OUR LIPS SPEAK AND OUR MINDS CONSTANTLY DWELL?

For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. (1 Corinthians 2:2 NKJV)

Related Texts: Ephesians 3:17-19 Romans 5:6-8

What a theme for meditation is the sacrifice that Jesus made for lost sinners! "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." {Isaiah 53:5}. How shall we estimate the blessings thus brought within our reach? Could Jesus have suffered more? Could He have purchased for us richer blessings? Should it not melt the hardest heart when we remember that for our sakes He left the happiness and glory of heaven and suffered poverty and shame, cruel affliction and a terrible death? Had He not by His death and resurrection opened for us the door of hope, we should have known nothing but the horrors of darkness and the miseries of despair.

In our present state, favored and blessed as we are, we cannot realize from what depths we have been rescued. We cannot measure how much deeper our afflictions would have been, how much greater our woes, had not Jesus encircled us with His human arm of sympathy and love, and lifted us up. {5T 316.1}

Many who profess to be Christians become excited over worldly enterprises, and their interest is awakened for new and exciting amusements, while they are coldhearted, and appear as if frozen, in the cause of God. Here is a theme, poor formalist, which is of sufficient importance to excite you. Eternal interests are here involved. Upon this theme it is sin to be calm and unimpassioned. The scenes of Calvary call for the deepest emotion. Upon this subject you will be excusable if you manifest enthusiasm. That Christ, so excellent, so innocent, should suffer such a painful death, bearing the weight of the sins of the world, our thoughts and imaginations can never fully comprehend.

The length, the breadth, the height, the depth, of such amazing love we cannot fathom. The contemplation of the matchless depths of a Saviour's love should fill the mind, touch and melt the soul, refine and elevate the affections, and completely transform the whole character. The language of the apostle is: "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." We also may look toward Calvary and exclaim: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." {2T 212.3}

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



Lesson 12

An Abiding Friendship

This lesson is based on John 15:14, 15.

**(1) IF WE LOVE AND HONOR
CHRIST WITH OUR OBEDIENCE,
WHAT DOES HE CONSIDER US?**

*You are My friends if you do whatever
I command you. (John 15:14 NKJV)*

Related Texts: John 14:21, 23; Isaiah

Those who live in close fellowship with Christ will be promoted by Him to positions of trust. The servant who does the best he can for his Master is admitted to familiar intercourse with the One whose commands he loves to obey. In the faithful discharge of duty we may become one with Christ, for those who are obeying God's commands may speak to Him freely. The one who talks most familiarly with his divine leader has the most exalted conception of His greatness and is the most obedient to His commands. {TMK 296.2}

The character of the one who comes to God in faith will bear witness that the Saviour has entered into his life, directing all, pervading all. Such a one is continually asking, "Is this Thy will and way, O my Saviour?" Constantly he looks to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of his faith. He consults the will of his divine Friend in reference to all his actions, for he knows that in this confidence is his strength. He has made it a habit to lift up the heart to God in every perplexity. ... {TMK 296.4}

He who accepts God as his sovereign must take the oath of allegiance to Him. He must put on the Christian uniform and bear aloft the banner that shows to whose army he belongs. He must make an open avowal of his allegiance to Christ. Concealment is impossible. Christ's impress must appear in the life in sanctified works. {TMK 296.5}

(2) HOW DOES OUR HEAVENLY FATHER DAILY DEMONSTRATE HIS FRIENDSHIP TOWARD US?

Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. (Psalms 103:2-5 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 103:6-18; Lamentations 3:22, 23; Matthew 7:11

“Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord.” Have any of us duly considered how much we have to be thankful for? Do we remember that the mercies of the Lord are new every morning and that His faithfulness faileth not? Do we acknowledge our dependence upon Him and express gratitude for all His favors? On the contrary, we too often forget that “every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.” {5T 315.1}

How often those who are in health forget the wonderful mercies that are continued to them day by day, year after year. They render no tribute of praise to God for all His benefits. But when sickness comes, God is remembered. The strong desire for recovery leads to earnest prayer, and this is right. God is our refuge in sickness as in health. But many do not leave their cases with Him; they encourage weakness and disease by worrying about themselves. If they would cease repining and rise above depression and gloom, their recovery would be more sure.

They should remember with gratitude how long they enjoyed the blessing of health; and should this precious boon be restored to them, they should not forget that they

are under renewed obligations to their Creator. When the ten lepers were healed, only one returned to find Jesus and give Him glory. Let us not be like the unthinking nine, whose hearts were untouched by the mercy of God. {5T 315.2}

(3) LIKE PETER AND JOHN, WHAT WILL BE OUR NATURAL REACTION AFTER EXPERIENC- ING THE TRUE FRIENDSHIP OF CHRIST?

For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.” (Acts 4:20 NKJV)

Related Texts: Acts 1:8; 18:5; 22:14, 15; 2 Samuel 23:2

No sooner does one come to Christ, than there is born in his heart a desire to make known to others what a precious friend he has found in Jesus; the saving and sanctifying truth cannot be shut up in his heart. If we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ, and are filled with the joy of His indwelling Spirit, we shall not be able to hold our peace. If we have tasted and seen that the Lord is good, we shall have something to tell...And the effort to bless others will react in blessings upon ourselves. This was the purpose of God in giving us a part to act in the plan of redemption. ...{AG 305.3-4}

If you will go to work as Christ designs that His disciples shall, and win souls for Him, you will feel the need of a deeper experience and a greater knowledge in divine things, and will hunger and thirst after righteousness. You will plead with God, and your faith will be strengthened, and your soul will drink deeper drafts at the well of salvation. Encountering opposition and trials will drive you to the Bible and prayer. You will grow in grace

and the knowledge of Christ, and will develop a rich experience. {AG 305.5}

(4) WHAT IS THE TRUE TESTIMONY OF AN ABIDING FRIENDSHIP IN CHRIST?

...if you do whatever I command you. (John 15:14 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 14:15; Matthew 12:50; 1 John 2:5; Hebrews 10:38

This is the condition imposed; this is the test that proves men's characters. Feelings are often deceiving, emotions are no sure safeguard; for they are variable and subject to external circumstances. Many are deluded by relying on sensational impressions. The test is: What are you doing for Christ? What sacrifices are you making? What victories are you gaining? A selfish spirit overcome, a temptation to neglect duty resisted, passion subdued, and willing, cheerful obedience rendered to the will of Christ are far greater evidences that you are a child of God than spasmodic piety and emotional religion. {4T 188.1}

(5) WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CHRIST CALLING US FRIENDS INSTEAD OF SERVANTS?

No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. (John 15:15 NKJV)

You have the Pattern, Christ Jesus; walk in His footsteps, and you will be qualified to fill any and every position that you may be called upon to occupy. You will be "rooted and built up in Him, and stab-

lished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.”

You are not to feel that you are a bond-slave, but a son of God; that you are highly favored in that you have been regarded of so great value that God has made you His by paying an infinite ransom for your freedom. Jesus says, “I call you not servants;... but I have called you friends.”

When you appreciate His wondrous love, love and gratitude will be in your heart as a wellspring of joy. {FE 303.2}

(6) WHERE DOES THE LORD LOOK FOR EVIDENCE TO SEE IF WE ARE HIS BONDSERVANT OR ABIDING FRIEND?

*...for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”
(1 Samuel 16:7 NKJV)*

Related Texts: 1 Samuel 15:22; Proverbs 21:27; 15:8, 9

The present is a season of solemn privilege and sacred trust to the servants of God. If these trusts are faithfully kept, great will be the reward of the faithful servant when the Master shall say: “Give an account of thy stewardship.” The earnest toil, the unselfish work, the patient, persevering effort, will be rewarded abundantly; Jesus will say: Henceforth I call you not servants, but friends, guests.

The approval of the Master is not given because of the greatness of the work performed, because many things have been gained, but because of the fidelity in even a few things. It is not the great results we attain, but the motives from which we act, that weigh with God. He prizes goodness and faithfulness more

than the greatness of the work accomplished. {2T 510.2}

(7) LIKE ABRAHAM, WHAT IS OUR PART IN THIS FRIENDSHIP WITH CHRIST?

And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS ACCOUNTED TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” And he was called the friend of God. (James 2:23 NKJV)

Related Texts: Galatians 3:9; Hebrews 11:6; James 4:4

Faith is evidence of Christianity. When you receive help and comfort, sing to the praise of God. Talk with God. Thus you will become a friend of God. You will rely on Him. You will obtain a faith that will trust whether you feel like trusting or not. Remember that feeling is not an evidence that you are a Christian. Implicit faith in God shows that you are His child. Trust in God. He will never disappoint you. He says, “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me: because I live, ye shall live also” (John 14:18, 19). We do not see Christ in person. It is by faith that we behold Him. Our faith grasps His promises. Thus it was that Enoch walked with God.--MS 27, 1901. {2MCP 538.2}

(8) WHAT IS OUR INVITATION THAT SHOULD BE OUR MOTIVATION FOR SEEKING FRIENDSHIP WITH CHRIST?

Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him! (Psalms 34:8 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 11:29, 30;
Ephesians 3:17-19

The shortness of time is frequently urged as an incentive for seeking righteousness and making Christ our friend. This should not be the great motive with us; for it savors of selfishness. Is it necessary that the terrors of the day of God should be held before us, that we may be compelled to right action through fear? It ought not to be so.

Jesus is attractive. He is full of love, mercy, and compassion. He proposes to be our friend, to walk with us through all the rough pathways of life. He says to us, I am the Lord thy God; walk with Me, and I will fill thy path with light.

Jesus, the Majesty of heaven, proposes to elevate to companionship with Himself those who come to Him with their burdens, their weaknesses, and their cares. He will count them as His children, and finally give them an inheritance of more value than the empires of kings, a crown of glory richer than has ever decked the brow of the most exalted earthly monarch. {LHU 98.3}

It is our duty to love Jesus as our Redeemer. He has a right to command our love, but He invites us to give Him our heart. He calls us to walk with Him in the path of humble, truthful obedience. His invitation to us is a call to a pure, holy, and happy life—a life of peace and rest, of liberty and love—and to a rich inheritance in the future, immortal life. Which will we choose—liberty in Christ, or bondage and tyranny in the service of Satan? . . . If we choose to live with Christ through the ceaseless ages of eternity, why not choose Him now as our most

loved and trusted friend, our best and wisest counselor. {LHU 98.4}

(9) WHAT DOES CHRIST ASK OF THOSE WHO DESIRE TO FOLLOW AFTER HIM?

Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. (Matthew 16:24 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Peter 2:21; Matthew 6:31-33; 5:39-42; 11:29; Mk 12:42-44
There are some who seem to be always seeking for the heavenly pearl. But they do not make an entire surrender of their wrong habits. They do not die to self that Christ may live in them. Therefore they do not find the precious pearl. They have not overcome unholy ambition and their love for worldly attractions. They do not take up the cross and follow Christ in the path of self-denial and sacrifice. Almost Christians, yet not fully Christians, they seem near the kingdom of heaven, but they cannot enter there. Almost but not wholly saved, means to be not almost but wholly lost. {COL 118.1}

We are Christ’s witnesses, and we are not to allow worldly interests so to absorb our time and attention that we pay no heed to the things that God has said must come first. There are higher interests at stake. “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.” Christ gave His all to the work that He came to do, and His word to us is, “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” “So shall ye be My disciples.”

Willingly and cheerfully Christ gave Himself to the carrying out of the will

of God. He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Shall we feel it a hardship to deny ourselves? Shall we draw back from being partakers of His sufferings? His death ought to stir every fiber of the being, making us willing to consecrate to His work all that we have and are. As we think of what He has done for us, our hearts should be filled with love. {MYP 314.3}

When those who know the truth practice the self-denial enjoined in God's word, the message will go with power. The Lord will hear our prayers for the conversion of souls. God's people will let their light shine forth, and unbelievers, seeing their good works, will glorify our heavenly Father. --R & H, 12/1/1910 {MYP 315.1}

(10) HOW IS THE FREEDOM FOUND IN AN ABIDING FRIENDSHIP WITH CHRIST IMPARTED AND SUSTAINED IN HIS FOLLOWERS?

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. (John 8:31 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 6:53-58; Revelation 1:3; 22:7; Luke 11:28

The Author of this spiritual life is unseen, and the exact method by which that life is imparted and sustained, it is beyond the power of human philosophy to explain. Yet the operations of the Spirit are always in harmony with the written word. As in the natural, so in the spiritual world. The natural life is preserved moment by moment by divine power; yet it is not sustained by a direct miracle, but through the

use of blessings placed within our reach. So the spiritual life is sustained by the use of those means that Providence has supplied. If the follower of Christ would grow up “unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13), he must eat of the bread of life and drink of the water of salvation. He must watch and pray and work, in all things giving heed to the instructions of God in His word. {AA 284.2}

Our life is to be bound up with the life of Christ; we are to draw constantly from Him, partaking of Him, the living Bread that came down from heaven, drawing from a fountain ever fresh, ever giving forth its abundant treasures. If we keep the Lord ever before us, allowing our hearts to go out in thanksgiving and praise to Him, we shall have a continual freshness in our religious life. Our prayers will take the form of a conversation with God as we would talk with a friend. He will speak His mysteries to us personally. Often there will come to us a sweet joyful sense of the presence of Jesus. Often our hearts will burn within us as He draws nigh to commune with us as He did with Enoch. When this is in truth the experience of the Christian, there is seen in his life a simplicity, a humility, meekness, and lowliness of heart, that show to all with whom he associates that he has been with Jesus and learned of Him. {COL 129.3}

**(11) ONCE WE EXPERIENCE
FRIENDSHIP WITH JESUS,
WHAT PRINCIPLE WILL WE
APPLY IN OUR RELATIONSHIP
WITH OTHERS?**

And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering

and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. (Ephesians 5:2 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 4:7, 8; Proverbs 17:17; 18:24; Job 6:14

The love that is inspired by the love we have for Jesus will see in every soul, rich and poor, a value that cannot be measured by human estimate. The world sinks into insignificance in comparison with the value of one soul. The love of God revealed for man is beyond any human computation. It is infinite. And the human agent who is a partaker of the divine nature will love as Christ loves, will work as Christ worked. There will be an inborn compassion and sympathy which will not fail or be discouraged.

This is the spirit that should be encouraged to live in every heart and be revealed in every life. This love can only exist and be kept refined, holy, pure, and elevated through the love in the soul for Jesus Christ, nourished by daily communion with God. All this coldness on the part of Christians is a denial of the faith. But this spirit will melt away before the bright beams of Christ's love in the follower of Christ. Willingly, naturally, he will obey the injunction, "Love one another as I have loved you." {WM 83.1}

I realize that those who refuse to obey the will of God for fear of displeasing earthly friends are not the friends of God. I choose to seek the friendship of the Lord above my friendships of this world.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I am thankful Christ sacrificed all for me. I know I am not even worthy to be called His servant but He has called me friend. For this amazing privilege I am

eternally grateful!

Circle: Yes Undecided

My prayer is that He will give me a stronger love and the joy of obedience in my heart for Him that I can be worthy to be called His friend.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I realize that as His friend I am called to go to work and win souls. I know the present time is a season of solemn privilege and sacred trust to the servants of God.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I am grateful for this wonderful privilege and look forward to the deeper experience and greater knowledge of divine things that it will bring.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I want to walk in Christ's footsteps, and allow Him to qualify me to fill any and every position that He calls me to occupy that one day I can hear the words, "my good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of the Lord."

Circle: Yes Undecided



Lesson 13

Chosen and Ordained

This lesson is based on John 15:16.

(1) THOUGH WE ARE UNDESERVING, WHAT TWO AMAZING THINGS HAS CHRIST DONE FOR US?

You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. (John 15:16 NKJV)

Related Texts: Revelation 17:14; Isaiah 41:8, 9; Deuteronomy 7:6; Psalm 33:12;

James 2:5; 1 Peter 2:9

The purpose which God seeks to accomplish through His people today is the same that He desired to accomplish through Israel when He brought them forth out of Egypt. By beholding the goodness, the mercy, the justice, and the love of God revealed in the church, the world is to have a representation of His character. And when the law of God is thus exemplified in the life, even the world will recognize the superiority of those who love and fear and serve God above every other people on the earth.

The Lord has His eye upon every one of His people; He has His plans concerning each. It is His purpose that those who practice His holy precepts shall be a distinguished people. To the people of God today as well as to ancient Israel belong the words written by Moses through the Spirit of Inspiration: "Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth." Deuteronomy 7:6. ... {6T 12.1}

In order to manifest the character of God, in order that we may not deceive ourselves, the church, and the world by a counterfeit Christianity, we must become personally acquainted with God. If we have fellowship with God, we are His ministers, though we may never preach to a congregation. We are workers together with God in presenting the perfection of His character in humanity. {6T 13.3}

(2) WHO DOES GOD NOT CALL TO BE THE GREATEST ADVOCATES OF HIS CAUSE?

For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. (1 Corinthians 1:26 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Corinthians 1:27; 3:18-20; Matthew 11:25; James 3:13-18

There are Christian workers who have not received a collegiate education because it was impossible for them to secure this advantage, but God has given evidence that He has chosen them and ordained them to go forth and labor in His vineyard. He has made them effectual coworkers with Himself. They have a teachable spirit; they feel their dependence upon God; and the Holy Spirit is with them to help their infirmities. It quickens and energizes the mind, directs the thoughts, and aids in the presentation of truth. {CT 509.1}

So we see that the highest line of earthly education may be obtained, and yet the men possessing it may be ignorant of the first principles which would make them subjects of the kingdom of God. Human learning cannot qualify for that kingdom. The subjects of Christ's kingdom are not made thus by forms and ceremonies, by a large study of books. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou has sent." The members of Christ's kingdom are members of His body, of which He himself is the head. They are the elect sons of God, "a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people," that they should show forth the praises of Him who has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. {FE 413.1}

(3) AFTER HEARING HIS CALL,

LIKE THE PROPHET ISAIAH, WHAT SHOULD BE OUR RE- SPONSE?

Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: “Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.” (Isaiah 6:8 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 9:4; Ephesians 2:10; Matthew 28:18-20

The councils of heaven are looking upon you who claim to have accepted Christ as your personal Saviour, to see you make known the salvation of God to those who sit in darkness. They are looking to see you making known the significance of the dispensation of the Holy Spirit; how that through the working of this divine agency the minds of men, corrupted and defiled by sin, may become disenchanted with the lies and presentations of Satan, and turn to Christ as their only hope, their personal Saviour. {TDWG 51.3}

Christ says: “I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain” (John 15:16). As Christ’s ambassador, I would entreat of all who read these lines to take heed while it is called today. “If ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts” (Heb. 3:15; 4:7). Without waiting a moment, inquire, What am I to Christ? and what is Christ to me? What is my work? What is the character of the fruit I bear?--Review and Herald, Feb. 12, 1895. {TDWG 51.4}

(4) WHAT IS OUR FIRST AND HIGHEST CALLING AS WE PREPARE FOR CHRIST’S SOON COMING?

And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. (1 John 2:28 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 2:27; 2 John 1:9; John 15:4, 5

Our first and highest duty is to know that we are abiding in Christ. He must do the work. We are to seek to know “What saith the Lord,” yielding our lives to His guidance. When we have the Spirit of an abiding Christ, everything will take on a changed aspect. The Saviour alone can give us the rest and peace we so much need.

And, in every invitation He gives us to seek the Lord that He may be found of us, He is calling us to abide in Him. This is an invitation, not merely to come to Him, but to remain in Him. It is the Spirit of God that moves us to come. When we have this rest and peace, our daily worries will not lead us to be coarse and rough and uncourteous. We shall no longer follow our own way and will. We will want to do the will of God, abiding in Christ as the branches in the vine. {TDWG 140.3}

(5) WHAT HAS CHRIST CALLED US TO DO AND, BY HIS SPIRIT, WHAT FRUIT ARE WE ORDAINED TO BEAR?

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), (Ephesians 5:8-9 NKJV)

Related Texts: Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter

2:9; Galatians 5:22, 23; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Revelation 17:14

There is work for you to do in the church and out of the church. “Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.” The fruit we bear is the only test of the character of the tree before the world. This is the proof of our discipleship. If our works are of such a character that as branches of the living Vine we bear rich clusters of precious fruit, then we wear before the world God’s own badge as His sons and daughters. We are living epistles, known and read of all men. {5T 348.2}

The character of the Christian is shown by his daily life. Said Christ, “Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit” (Matt. 7:17). Our Saviour compares Himself to a vine, of which His followers are the branches. He plainly declares that all who would be His disciples must bring forth fruit; and then He shows how they may become fruitful branches. “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me” (John 15:4). {SL 80.1}

The apostle Paul describes the fruit which the Christian is to bear. He says that it “is in all goodness and righteousness and truth.”... And again, “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance”... These precious graces are but the principles of God’s law carried out in the life. {SL 80.2}

(6) WHAT COMMISSION AND PRIVILEGE DOES CHRIST GIVE TO HIS FRUIT BEARING REP-

REPRESENTATIVES?

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (Matthew 28:19 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 49:6; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46, 47; Acts 1:8; 26:16; Matthew 5:14-16

As His representatives among men, Christ does not choose angels who have never fallen, but human beings, men of like passions with those they seek to save. ...{DA 296.4}

He who called the fisherman of Galilee is still calling men to His service. And He is just as willing to manifest His power through us as through the first disciples. However imperfect and sinful we may be, the Lord holds out to us the offer of partnership with Himself, of apprenticeship to Christ. He invites us to come under the divine instruction, that, uniting with Christ, we may work the works of God. {DA 297.1}

The true worker for God wrestles with God in prayer, and puts intense earnestness into the work of saving lost souls. He does not seek to exalt self by word or deed, but simply seeks to win souls. God pronounces the purest, the meekest, the most childlike Christian, the best worker for Him, the mightiest in labor for souls. Heavenly intelligences can work with the man or woman who will not absorb the glory to himself, but who will be willing that all the glory shall redound to the honor of God.

It is the man who most feels his need of divine wisdom, the man who pleads for heavenly power, that will go forth from communion with Christ, to hold converse with souls perishing in their sins; and because he is anointed with the Spirit of the Lord, he will be successful where the learned minister may have failed. God has given lessons that are all-important in regard to the duty of every disciple. Not one need be in darkness; for it is evident that every Christian is to be a living epistle, known and read of all men. {LHU 358.3}

(7) WHEN WE ARE ABIDING IN CHRIST, WHAT WILL WE REFLECT TO THE WORLD?

“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:14, 16 NKJV)

Related Texts: Proverbs 4:18; Isaiah 58:8; 60:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 5:4-9

The light of truth should be allowed to shine so that men, by seeing the righteous course of those who know the truth, will acknowledge that there is power in the truth, because it has accomplished so great a work for those who have received it. They will fall in love with the principles of holiness that shine forth in the lives of the representatives of truth, and they will accept the truth and glorify God by consecrating themselves to Him to become lights to the world in their turn. {HP 315.3}

As Abraham and other holy men of old were a light in their generation, so must

God's people be a light in the world. The beams of heaven's attractive loveliness are to shine forth from us, showing the only good and right way, and ever showing the superiority of God's law above every human enactment. Bible religion is not to be hidden away in the dark. It delights to be examined. Every additional ray of light that shines upon our pathway is in God's plan a fresh element of strength, an added power by which to draw the world to God. {HP 315.4}

Christ declares, "Ye are the light of the world." Christ is the source of light and power for His church. If the heart is pure and right, if godliness is dwelling there, it will be revealed in the life. It will pervade the conversation and all the relations of man to his fellow man. He will be a doer of the words of Christ. . . . His every action will shine with a holy luster. He will be invested with power, for the divine presence is with him. {HP 315.5}

(8) AS WE – HIS CHOSEN – GO FORTH IN FAITH TO BEAR FRUIT, WHAT UNLIMITED PROMISE CAN WE CLAIM IF WE ASK IN CHRIST'S NAME?

You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. (John 15:16 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 14:13; 16:23, 24; Isaiah 41:9, 10

Through Christ we may present our petitions at the throne of grace. Through Him, unworthy as we are, we may obtain all spiritual blessings. {AG 85.2}

My brethren and sisters, plead for the Holy Spirit, God stands back of every promise He has made. With your Bibles in your hands, say: "I have done as Thou hast said, I present Thy promise, 'Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.'" Christ declares: "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." Matthew 7:7; Mark 11:24; John 14:13. {8T 23.1}

Make your requests known to your Maker. Never is one repulsed who comes to Him with a contrite heart. Not one sincere prayer is lost. Amid the anthems of the celestial choir, God hears the cries of the weakest human being. We pour out our heart's desire in our closets, we breathe a prayer as we walk by the way, and our words reach the throne of the Monarch of the universe. They may be inaudible to any human ear, but they cannot die away into silence, nor can they be lost through the activities of business that are going on. Nothing can drown the soul's desire. It rises above the din of the street, above the confusion of the multitude, to the heavenly courts. It is God to whom we are speaking, and our prayer is heard. {AG 85.3}

(9) AFTER ACCEPTING THE PRIVILEGED CALL AS CHRIST'S CHOSEN, HOW ARE WE ABLE TO CONTINUE TO BEAR FRUIT?

***Seek the LORD and His strength;
Seek His face evermore! (1 Chronicles
16:11 NKJV)***

Related Texts: John 15:4, 7, 9; 6:56-58;

1 John 4:15; 2:10; 2 John 9

It is not a casual touch with Christ that is needed, but it is to abide with Him. He called you to abide with Him. He does not propose to you a short-lived blessedness that is realized occasionally through earnest seeking of the Lord and passes away as you engage in the common duties of life. Your abiding with Christ makes every necessary duty light, for He bears the weight of every burden. He has prepared for you to abide with Him. This means that you are to be conscious of an abiding Christ, that you are continually with Christ, where your mind is encouraged and strengthened. . . . {HP 55.2}

Do not stand outside of Christ, as many professed Christians of today. To “abide in me, and I in you” is a possible thing to do, and the invitation would not be given if you could not do this. Jesus our Saviour is constantly drawing you by His Holy Spirit, working with your mind that you will abide with Christ. . . . The blessings He bestows are all connected with your own individual action. Shall Christ be refused? He says, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37). Of another class He says, “Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life” (John 5:40). . . . {HP 55.3}

Have you, have I, fully comprehended the gracious call, “Come unto me”? He says, “Abide in me,” not Abide with Me. “Do understand My call. Come to Me to stay with Me.” He will freely bestow all blessings connected with Himself upon all who come to Him for life. He has something better for you than a short-lived blessedness that you feel when you seek the Lord in earnest prayer. That is but as a drop in the

bucket, to have a word with Christ. You are privileged with His abiding presence in the place of a short-lived privilege that is not lasting as you engage in the duties of life. ...{HP 55.4}

(10) IF WE WALK WITH GOD AS ENOCH WALKED, WHAT WILL BE SAID AS A TESTIMONY OF OUR LIVES?

By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, “AND WAS NOT FOUND, BECAUSE GOD HAD TAKEN HIM”; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. (Hebrews 11:5 NKJV)

Related Texts: 2 Corinthians 3:2, 3

“By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; . . . for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.”... To such communion God is calling us. As was Enoch’s, so must be their holiness of character who shall be redeemed from among men at the Lord’s second coming. {GW 54.1&2}

In the midst of a life of active labor, Enoch steadfastly maintained his communion with God. The greater and more pressing his labors, the more constant and earnest were his prayers. He continued to exclude himself at certain periods from all society. After remaining for a time among the people, laboring to benefit them by instruction and example, he would withdraw, to spend a season in solitude, hungering and thirsting for that divine knowledge which God alone can impart. {GW 52.1}

The infinite, unfathomable love of God through Christ, became the subject of

his [Enoch's] meditations day and night. With all the fervor of his soul he sought to reveal that love to the people among whom he dwelt. {GW 51.2}

Enoch's walk with God was not in a trance or a vision, but in all the duties of his daily life. He did not become a hermit, shutting himself entirely from the world; for he had, in the world, a work to do for God. In the family and in his intercourse with men, as a husband and father, a friend, a citizen, he was the steadfast, unwavering servant of God. {GW 51.3}

"... a connection with Christ means everything to us. We are to be one with Him as He is one with the Father, and then we are beloved by the infinite God as members of the body of Christ, as branches of the living Vine. We are to be attached to the parent stock, and to receive nourishment from the Vine. ..." {Ed 178}

Resolve that you will be fruit-bearing members of the living Vine. The scion can flourish only as it receives life and strength from the parent stock. Improve, then, every opportunity to connect yourselves more closely with Christ. It is by believing Him, loving Him, copying Him, and depending wholly upon Him, that you are to become one with Him; and through you His life and character will be revealed to the world. {OHC 145.5}

Through the course of these lessons, I see that to abide in Christ is my first and highest privilege. I realize that I must have this experience in order for me to manifest the character of God to the world. I choose to seek Him with all my heart that I may be constantly connected to Him.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I understand that once I have accepted Christ as my Saviour I am then called and ordained to bear fruit for His kingdom. Without a living connection this is impossible. It is my desire to spend time with Him each day so that I may be a fruit bearing branch.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I realize that the fruit I bear is the test of my character before the world and the test of my true discipleship. It is my prayer, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to bear rich clusters of precious fruit. My longing is to wear before the world God's badge as His child. I want to be a living epistle, known and read of all men to God's glory.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I choose from this day forward to seek a constant connection to Christ – the Living Vine – through prayer, study of His Word, and sharing my faith with others. I want to be one with Christ as He is one with the Father, so that as His branch, I can receive nourishment from the Vine.

Circle: Yes Undecided

RESOURCE ABBREVIATIONS

[Book code, Title, # of Volumes, year first published, publisher, edition, pages]

AA = The Acts of the Apostles. 1911. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1911. 633 pp.

AG = God's Amazing Grace. 1973. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1973. 383 pp.

#BC = SDA Bible Commentary: Ellen G. White Comments. 7 vols. plus supplement (vol. 7A). 1953-1957. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1970.

CH = Counsels on Health. 1923. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1957. 687 pp.

CME = A Call to Medical Evangelism and Health Education. 1933. Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1954. 47 pp.

COL = Christ's Object Lessons. 1900. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1941. 436 pp.

CSW = Counsels on Sabbath School Work. 1938. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1938. 192 pp.

CT = Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students. 1913. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Assoc., 1943. 575 pp.

DA or DOA = *The Desire of Ages*. 1898. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1940. 863 pp.

EW = Early Writings of Ellen G. White. 1882. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1945. 324 pp.

FE = Fundamentals of Christian Education. 1923. Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1923. 576 pp.

FLB = *The Faith I Live By*. 1958. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1973. 426 pp.

FW = Faith and Works. 1979. Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Assoc., 1979. 122 pp.

GC = The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan. 1911. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1950. 719 pp.

GCB = The General Conference Bulletin.

GW = Gospel Workers. 1915. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1948. 534 pp.