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“WHO CARES ABOUT CHRISTIAN STANDARDS?”

by Pastor Stephen Bohr

Lesson #1 - The Ripple Principle

Grand Teton National Park

- One of my favorite national parks in the United States is Grand Teton.
- There is a certain crystal clear lake that I love visiting early in the morning when there is no wind.
- In the background is a majestic snow-capped mountain with beautiful pine trees at its foot.
- When there is no wind, the reflection of the background in the lake is so perfect that in pictures you cannot distinguish the original from the reflection.
- Imagine throwing a **stone** into the lake. it causes a **small ripple** at first, then larger and larger ripples as you move away from the center.
- All of the ripples **derive** from the original ripple.
- The ripples are an **extension and enlargement** of the original ripple.

God’s method of making lifestyle choices in the church

Love for God:

Love for God is the **foundational principle** of the universe. This is, so to speak, the original ripple. Any choice we make, anything we do, should reflect our **love for God**.

Deuteronomy 6:4, 5

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! ⁵ You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength."

Love for our neighbor:

However, there is a **second related** principle, a **larger ripple**, if you please. Our love for God should **spill over** into love for our fellow human beings.

However, what does it mean to love our fellow human beings?

Leviticus 19:18

"You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord."

1 John 4:20

"If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? ²¹ And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also."

Jesus affirmed both principles (ripples):

Matthew 22:34-39: Both principles

*"But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. ³⁵ Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, ³⁶ 'Teacher, which is the **great commandment** in the law?' ³⁷ Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' ³⁸ This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹ And the **second is like it**: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"*

The Ten Commandments

Deuteronomy 4:12-13

The Ten Commandments **amplify** these two principles—the **third ripple**.

The **first table** defines and amplifies what it means to love God and the **second** amplifies what it means to love our neighbor.

*“And the Lord spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of the words, but saw no form; you only heard a voice. ¹³ So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, the **Ten Commandments**; and He wrote them on **two tablets** of stone.”*

The entire Bible amplifies the Ten Commandments:

However, there is a **broader explanation** of the principle still—a **fourth ripple**, if you please. The entire **Bible** further amplifies the Ten Commandments. In effect, the Bible is an expanded **commentary** on the Ten Commandments. It gives **real life illustrations** of what happens when **we obey** the Ten Commandments and when **we disobey** them. For example, the seventh commandment commands us not to commit adultery but it does not define what adultery is nor what are its severe consequences. The story of David’s sin of adultery and murder helps us understand that the act of adultery springs from covetousness and leads to deadly results.

Matthew 22:40

*“On these two commandments hang **all** the Law and the Prophets.”*

The Spirit of Prophecy amplifies the Bible:

However, there is still **another ripple**, a **fifth**, and that is the Spirit of Prophecy. The Spirit of Prophecy provides the broadest expansion of the original ripple.

Revelation 12:17

*“And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the **testimony of Jesus Christ**.”*

Revelation 19:10

*“And I fell at his feet to worship him. However, he said to me, “See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is **the spirit of prophecy**.”*

The Role of Ellen White

Some have accused Ellen White of adding to the Bible standards that are there. However, this is simply not true. Ellen White does not add any principles to

Scripture but rather expands upon the principles that the Bible already contains. Ellen White explained her role:

*"Brother J would confuse the mind by seeking to make it appear that the light God has given through the Testimonies **is an addition** to the word of God, but in this he presents the matter in a false light. God has seen fit in this manner to bring the minds of His people **to His word**, to give them a clearer understanding of it." The **word of God is sufficient** to enlighten the most beclouded mind and may be understood by those who have any **desire to understand it**. However, notwithstanding all this, some who profess to make the word of God their study are found living in direct opposition to its plainest teachings. Then, to leave men and women **without excuse**, God gives plain and pointed testimonies, bringing them **back to the word** that they have neglected to follow. The word of God abounds in **general principles** for the formation of correct habits of living, and the testimonies, general and personal, have been calculated to **call their attention more especially to these principles**." 5T, pp. 663, 664*

"Always act from principle, never from impulse." MH, p. 491

Messages to Young People

Some have been **critical**, for example, of the book *Messages to Young People* because, in their opinion, it is unduly **legalistic and restrictive**.

This compilation from Ellen White's publications frowns on **gambling, competitive sports, dancing, novel reading, competitive sports**, going to the **movies**, the use of **tobacco and alcohol** (even in moderation), playing **cards, immodest dress, gaudy adornment** and **music** that appeals to the baser elements of human nature.

Many believe that Ellen White was **adding her own opinions** to the Bible. After all, where do you find in the Bible statements such as these?

- 'thou shalt not gamble'
- 'thou shalt not go to the movies'
- 'thou shalt not smoke'
- 'thou shalt not play poker'
- 'thou shalt not dance'

- ‘thou shalt not drink wine with your meals’
- ‘thou shalt not watch soaps’
- ‘thou shalt not wear clothes that entice the opposite sex’
- ‘thou shalt not have premarital sex’
- ‘thou shalt not listen to rock music’

Is Ellen White **really adding anything** to the Bible when she discourages all these things? Are the standards of the SDA church **unduly restrictive**? Some wonder why we have all these standards. Have we perhaps missed the **main point** and that is that all these standards are merely **enlargements of Biblical principles** or of the **original ripple**, so to speak? Should we perhaps look at **why she says** all these things? Should we not look for the **principle behind** her counsel? Let us take a few examples.

The edges of the Sabbath:

*“We should jealously **guard the edges of the Sabbath**. Remember that every moment is consecrated, holy time. Whenever it is possible, employers should give their workers the hours from Friday noon until the beginning of the Sabbath. Give them time for preparation, that they may welcome the Lord's day with quietness of mind. By such a course you will suffer no loss even in temporal things.” Counsels to the Church, p. 263*

Example of the curtain at **ICOLVEN**.

Gambling:

“We have need of men who, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, will rebuke gambling and liquor drinking, which are such prevalent evils in these last days.” Manuscript 117, 1907.

Does gambling violate certain biblical principles? How about these?

- ‘Thou shalt not **covet**’
- Is it loving to be a **winner** at everyone **else's expense**
- We are to earn our living by work: ‘Six days shall you **labor**’
- Is playing the lottery a manifestation of **greed**?
- Does gambling have the danger of causing an **addiction**?

- Would it not be better to give the money for charitable purposes instead of gambling?

Smoking:

Nowhere in the Bible do we find a specific prohibition to smoke. Does this mean that smoking tobacco is acceptable in the sight of God? To answer yes would border on absurdity! Yet Ellen White has some strong counsel against smoking. Is she really adding anything of substance to biblical principles? Notice the following principles:

- Does smoking affect my **relationship to God?**
- Does it **steal years** from His service?
- Is it **enslaving?**
- Does it destroy our **will power** to do what is right?
- Does second hand smoke **help our neighbor?**
- Is spending money on tobacco **good stewardship?**
- Does it destroy **God's body temple?**

“Tobacco using is a habit which frequently affects the nervous system in a more powerful manner than does the use of alcohol. It binds the victim in stronger bands of slavery than does the intoxicating cup; the habit is more difficult to overcome. Body and mind are, in many cases, more thoroughly intoxicated with the use of tobacco than with spirituous liquors; for it is a more subtle poison. CG, pp. 403, 404

Dress:

What about dress? Does it make any difference whether a person wears provocative clothes that entices others to harbor impure thoughts? Notice the following principles:

- Is it a loving thing to incite **impure thoughts** in others? Is this **loving our neighbor** as ourselves?
- Will God accept the common excuse: “If others covet, it is their problem, not mine”?
- Does it attract **attention and bring glory to me** rather than to Jesus?
- I spending money for display a good investment of God's money?

Ellen White expands upon the biblical principle of modesty in our attire:

*“The Bible teaches modesty in dress. ‘In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel.’ 1 Timothy 2:9. This forbids display in dress, gaudy colors, profuse ornamentation. Any device designed to **attract attention to the wearer** or to **excite admiration** is excluded from the modest apparel that God's word enjoins.*

*Our dress is to be **inexpensive**,--not with "gold, or pearls, or costly array." Money is a trust from God. It is not ours to expend for the **gratification pride or ambition**. In the hands of God's children, it is **food for the hungry and clothing for the naked**. It is a defense to the oppressed, a means of health to the sick, or **preaching the gospel** to the poor. You could bring **happiness to many hearts** by using wisely the money that is now spent for show. Consider the life of Christ. Study His character, and be partakers with Him in His self-denial. In the professed Christian world enough is expended for jewels and needlessly expensive dress to feed all the hungry and to clothe the naked. Fashion and display absorb the means that might **comfort the poor and the suffering**. They **rob the world** of the gospel of the Savior's love. . . .” MYP, pp. 351, 352*

Do Ellen White’s remarks **make sense**? Moreover, are they in harmony with and do they expand biblical principles?

Social drinking:

Science has found that any amount of alcohol, no matter how small, destroys **brain cells**. Yes, someone might object, ‘but it also **lowers cholesterol** and serves as an **anti-oxidant**’. This is true, but what the **industry does not tell** you is that simple grape juice also lowers cholesterol and serves as an anti-oxidant but without the **collateral damage!** What are the principles behind the prohibition to drink?

- Does the consumption of alcohol improve my **ability to communicate** with God?
- Does it lead to **clear thinking**, stronger **will power**, and **clearer choices**?
- Will driving **under the influence** deprive others of life?

- Does alcohol destroy the **body temple** that belongs to God? (1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; 6:9, 10).
- The Bible has abundant counsel on the issue of drinking alcohol. We have the stories of Nadab and Abihu Leviticus 10:, Noah (Genesis 9:21), Lot (Genesis 19:34, 35), Belshazzar (Daniel 5:1, 2) and verses such as Proverbs 20:1; Proverbs 23:30, 31; 31:4)
- Unfortunately, ‘minimal Christians’ seek to justify drinking by misusing certain biblical texts. Why should we seek to do the minimum when God wants us to be ‘maximum Christians’?

*“All these **nerve irritants** are wearing away the **life-forces**, and the **restlessness** caused by shattered nerves, the impatience, the mental feebleness, become a warring element, antagonizing to spiritual progress. Then should not those who advocate temperance and reform be awake to counteract the evils of these injurious drinks? In some cases it is as difficult to break up the tea-and-coffee habit as it is for the inebriate to discontinue the use of liquor. The money expended for tea and coffee is worse than wasted. They do the user only harm, and that continually. Those who use tea, coffee, opium, and alcohol, may sometimes live to old age, but this fact is no argument in favor of the use of these stimulants. What these persons might have accomplished, but failed to do because of their intemperate habits, the great day of God alone will reveal.” Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene, pp. 34, 35*

Music:

Young people say: “I like it, it makes me **feel good**, and I cannot **see anything wrong** with it.

- There are definite **principles** of right and wrong in music. Laws of **melody, harmony, rhythm**, etc.
- Before you choose your music ask: “Is this violating biblical principles?”
- Is this drawing me **closer to Jesus**? If your sincere answer is ‘no’ then change you habits.

Music can appeal to the **baser human nature** or elevate:

*“I feel alarmed as I witness everywhere the frivolity of young men and young women who profess to believe the truth. **God does not seem** to be in their*

thoughts. Their minds are filled with nonsense. Their conversation is only empty, vain talk. They have a keen ear for music, and Satan knows what **organs to excite** to animate, engross, and charm the mind so that Christ is not desired. The spiritual longings of the soul for divine knowledge, for a growth in grace, are wanting.” *AH*, p. 407

Theater:

Another **no brainer**. What do they emphasize? **Killing, lying, cheating, adultery, covetousness, ostentation.**

Ask yourself:

- Do the movies bring me **closer to Jesus?**
- Do they give me an intense **desire for spiritual things?**
- Would **Jesus watch** this junk with me?
- Do these things make me **more like Jesus?**
- Do these things make me **long for heaven?**
- Do these things help me **love more the people** for whom Jesus died?

Philippians 4:8

“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy — meditate on these things.”

*“Among the most dangerous resorts for pleasure is the theater. Instead of being a school for morality and virtue, as is so often claimed, it is the very hotbed of immorality. Vicious habits and sinful propensities are **strengthened and confirmed** by these entertainments. Low songs, lewd gestures, expressions, and attitudes **deprave the imagination** and **debase the morals**. Every youth who **habitually attends** such exhibitions will be **corrupted in principle**. There is no influence in our land more powerful to **poison the imagination**, to **destroy religious impressions**, and to blunt the relish for the **tranquil pleasures** and sober realities of life than theatrical amusements. The love for these scenes increases with every indulgence as the desire for **intoxicating drink** strengthens with its use. The only safe course is to shun the theater, the circus, and every other questionable place of amusement”. *AH*, p. 516*

Dancing:

The Bible links social dancing with apostasy. **Salome, golden calf**, etc.

Once again, '**minimal Christians**' in order to justify the practice say, 'but **David danced** before the Lord'. The Bible does **not condone** what David did; it just makes a **statement of fact**. Do not use **biblical statements** of fact as justification for your choices.

David's dance was celebrating a **particular religious event**, the return of the Ark of the Covenant. David's dance was more like jumping for joy. He danced **alone** and his dance was **not romantic**. The reality is that romantic dancing gets the **sexual juices** flowing and this frequently leads to sin against God.

*"David's dancing in reverent joy before God has been cited by pleasure lovers in justification of the fashionable modern dance, but there is no ground for such an argument. In our day dancing is associated with folly and midnight reveling. Health and morals are sacrificed to pleasure. By the frequenters of the ballroom God is not an object of thought and reverence; prayer or the song of praise would be felt to be out of place in their assemblies. This test should be decisive. Amusements that have a tendency to weaken the **love for sacred things** and lessen our **joy in the service of God** are not to be sought by Christians. The music and dancing in joyful praise to God at the removal of the ark had not the faintest resemblance to the dissipation of modern dancing. The one tended to the remembrance of God and exalted His holy name. The other is a device of Satan to cause men to forget God and to dishonor Him." PP, p. 707*

Competitive sports:

*"How much **time** is spent by intelligent human beings in horse racing, cricket matches, and ball playing! However, will indulgence in these sports give men a desire to know truth and righteousness? Will it keep **God in their thoughts**? Will it lead them to inquire, how is it with my soul?" CT, p. 456*

What is the **principle** behind these statements by Ellen White? These habits are **time consuming**, there is no time for **Bible study, prayer and witnessing** and the result is alienation from God and no time to bless our fellow human beings. Do competitive contact sports run the risk of **damaging the Lord's body temple**?

Dating a non-SDA:

The Bible clearly forbids the union of believers with unbelievers and yet some Adventists justify marrying a non-Adventist who is a member of a different denomination. Notice the following statement:

*“My sister, dare you disregard these plain and positive directions? As a child of God, a subject of Christ's kingdom, the purchase of His blood, how can you connect yourself with one who does not acknowledge His claims, who is not controlled by His Spirit? The commands I have quoted are not the word of man, but of God. Though the companion of your choice were in all other respects worthy (which he is not), yet **he has not accepted the truth for this time; he is an unbeliever,** and you are forbidden of heaven to unite yourself with him. You cannot, without peril to your soul, disregard this divine injunction.” Testimonies for the Church, volume 5, p. 364*

The Need for Instruction

It is not true that if the heart is right there will be **no need for instruction** in the matter of standards because we will spontaneously do what is right. Even when the heart is right there is need of instruction on God's expectations. there will be no problem giving up what is not in harmony with biblical principles. Even when I have learned to drive I still need eternal road signs, especially when I am in unknown territory.

Satan has a counterfeit series of ripples that lead even Christians astray (take a look at the chart).

The Selfish Ripples

Proverbs 14:12

“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.”

Jeremiah 17:9, 10

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” ¹⁰ I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.”

Proverbs 28:26

“He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but whoever walks wisely will be delivered.”

- Use the story of Uzzah (trusted his impulses)
- Saul (acted on the basis of the situation)
- Samson (followed his senses, emotions, feelings)
- Abraham obeyed God although His commands appeared absurd)
- Noah built an ark (when rain was scientifically impossible)
- Work on the Sabbath (Abraham Acosta),
- Eve (chose to follow the testimony of her senses, logic and emotions)

The key question is not does it **look** right, does it **seem** right, does it **feel** right, does it **sound** right but rather, is it right, is it in harmony with **God’s principles** of supreme **love for him** and love for **our neighbor** as found in the **Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy**.

However, how do you know whether an action is loving, or not? Is it alright to **lie in order to save** someone’s life? Is it all right to steal from the rich to give to the poor? (Socialism). This will be our next subject of study.

Strengthening Principles

How do our principles **become strong**? Every time **we choose to live** by them, they become **stronger** and every time we violate them, they become **weaker**.

- **Mark Twain** once remarked: It is easy to quit smoking, I have done it a thousand times
- If we ignore the sound of an **alarm clock** we will eventually reach the point of not hearing it.
- The story of **Gulliver’s Travels** illustrates how small threads can eventually bind us.



“WHO CARES ABOUT CHRISTIAN STANDARDS?”

by Pastor Stephen Bohr

Lesson #2 - Deadly White Lies

Introduction

From the very beginning, even **before sin**, the **standard** of right and wrong has been **outside** of man as **defined by God’s Word**. Eve thought that she could distinguish between good and evil on her own:

Genesis 2:15-17

*“Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to tend and keep it. ¹⁶ And the **LORD God commanded** the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”*

I can’t be wrong if it feels so right

Philosophies from the Objective to the Subjective

There are certain philosophies that have led to ethical relativism. Some of them are:

Pragmatism: You can never know if the result is good until you try the means.

- John Dewey
- William James
- Experimentation and trial and error

- Does not work in the realm of morality

Existentialism: Just **be yourself** and **question all authority** except your own. Be **authentic**. This was the way of thinking of the **hippies** when **Kierkegaard**, **Heidegger** and **Sartre** were in vogue. The **60's** was a watershed decade and we are reaping the consequences.

Situation Ethics: Joseph Fletcher:

- It is sometimes necessary, **even good to lie** when it will bring about a good (for example to save lives: **The Gestapo**).
- Doing the **loving thing** sometimes requires a person to lie
- Love is **above and overrules** the Ten Commandments.
- The **end justifies** the means.
- **Robin Hood** ethics.
- **All's well** that ends well.
- The situation along with your **"sanctified reason"** dictates what is right or wrong, not an **external standard**

Post-modern thinking: No moral absolutes. Truth is **inside** not outside. Truth is **relative**

*"He reiterated his claim that angels needed **no control**, but should be left to follow their **own will**, which would ever **guide them right**. He denounced the divine statutes as a restriction of their liberty and declared that it was his purpose to secure the abolition of law; that, **freed from this restraint**, the hosts of heaven might enter upon a more exalted, more glorious state of existence." **GC**, p. 499*

Are there Categories of Lies?

It is **customary** for us to talk of:

- **Gray areas**
- **Half-truths**
- **White lies**
- **Harmless fibs**

When it comes to lying:

- There are **no gray areas**. Telling a lie and telling the truth **are opposites**.
- There is **black and white**
- A half-truth is a **whole lie**
- **A fib** may appear harmless but in the **sight of God** it is **as much a lie** as a so-called big lie
- Certainly saying 'white lie' is not only a **misnomer** but also an **oxymoron**. There is no such thing as a white lie. **A lie is a lie!**

When it comes to integrity, '**honesty is the best policy**'. We must learn to "tell the **truth**, the **whole truth** and **nothing but** the truth so help us God!"

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 309

*"False speaking in **any matter**, every attempt or purpose to **deceive our neighbor**, is here included. An **intention to deceive** is what constitutes falsehood. By a **glance of the eye**, a **motion of the hand**, an **expression of the countenance**, a falsehood may be told as effectually **as by words**. All **intentional overstatement**, every hint or insinuation calculated to convey an **erroneous or exaggerated** impression, even the statement of facts in such a manner as **to mislead**, is falsehood. This precept forbids every effort to injure our neighbor's reputation by misrepresentation or evil surmising, by slander or tale bearing. Even the **intentional suppression of truth**, by which **injury may result** to others, is a violation of the ninth commandment."*

Abraham and Pharaoh

Genesis 12:10-20: Grave consequences of lying to save life:

*"Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to dwell there, for the famine was severe in the land. ¹¹ And it came to pass, when he was close to entering Egypt that he said to Sarai his wife "Indeed I know that you are a woman of beautiful countenance. ¹² Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, 'This is his wife'; and **they will kill me**, but they will let you live. ¹³ Please **say you are my sister**, that it may be **well with me for your sake**, and that **I may live** because of you." ¹⁴ So it was, when Abram*

came into Egypt, that the Egyptians saw the woman, that she was very beautiful.
¹⁵ The princes of Pharaoh also saw her and commended her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken to Pharaoh's house. ¹⁶ He treated Abram **well for her sake.** **[Apparently it was good to lie]** He had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female servants, female donkeys, and camels. ¹⁷ **But the LORD PLAGUED** Pharaoh and his house with great plagues **because of Sarai**, Abram's wife. ¹⁸ And Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this **you have done to me?** Why did you not tell me that she **was your wife?** **[why did you tell me a half-truth]** ¹⁹ Why did you say, 'She is my sister'? I might have taken her as my wife. Now therefore, here is your wife; take her and go your way."

Ellen White:

"During his stay in Egypt, Abraham gave evidence that he was **not free from human weakness and imperfection.** In **concealing** the fact that Sarah was his wife, he betrayed a **distrust of the divine care, a lack of that lofty faith and courage** so often and nobly exemplified in his life. Sarah was fair to look upon, and he doubted not that the dusky Egyptians would covet the beautiful stranger, and that in order to secure her, they would not scruple to slay her husband. **He reasoned** that he was **not guilty of falsehood** in representing Sarah as his sister, for **she was the daughter of his father,** though not of his mother. But this **concealment** of the real relation between them was **deception.** No **deviation from strict integrity** can meet God's approval. Through Abraham's **lack of faith,** Sarah was placed in great peril. The king of Egypt, being informed of her beauty, caused her to be taken to his palace, intending to make her his wife. **But the Lord,** in His great mercy, protected Sarah by sending judgments upon the royal household. By this means the monarch learned the truth in the matter, and, **indignant at the deception** practiced upon him, he reproved Abraham and restored to him his wife, saying, "What is this that thou hast **done unto me?** Why saidst thou, She is my sister? So I might have taken her to me to wife. Now therefore behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way." *PP*, p. 130

Abraham and Abimelech

Genesis 20:2-13: Abraham's second lie:

*"Now Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah. ³ But **God came to Abimelech in a dream** by night, and said to him, "Indeed **you are a dead man** because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife." ⁴ But Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, "Lord, will You **slay a righteous** nation also? ⁵ Did **he not say** to me, 'She is my sister'? And she, even **she herself said**, 'He is my brother.' In the integrity of my heart and innocence of my hands I have done this." ⁶ And God said to him in a dream, "Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart. For **I also withheld you** from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her. ⁷ Now therefore, restore the man's wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live. But if you do not restore her, know that **you shall surely die, you and all who are yours.**" ⁸ So Abimelech rose early in the morning, called all his servants, and told all these things in their hearing; and the men were very much afraid. ⁹ And Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, "**What have you done to us?** How have I offended you that you have brought on me and on my kingdom **a great sin?** You have done deeds to me that **ought not to be done.**" ¹⁰ Then Abimelech said to Abraham, "What did you have in view, that you have done this thing?" ¹¹ And Abraham said, "Because **I thought**, surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they **will kill me** on account of my wife. ¹² But indeed she is **truly my sister**. She is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife."*

Jacob's Lie

God had promised that Jacob would receive the birthright. The time came for Isaac to bless Esau and Jacob and his mother believed that they had **to help God** by deception. Jacob and his mother believed that the **end justifies the means**. They applied **situation ethics**. They believed they had to **help God** fulfill His promise by deception. However, God can fulfill His promises without our having to lie!

*“Jacob and Rebekah succeeded in their purpose, but they **gained only trouble and sorrow** by their **deception**. God had declared that Jacob should receive the birthright, and **His word would have been fulfilled** in His own time had they **waited in faith** for **Him to work** for them. But like many who now profess to be children of God, they were unwilling to **leave the matter in His hands**. **[Here are the consequences]** Rebekah **bitterly repented** the wrong counsel she had given her son; it was the means of **separating him from her**, and she never saw his face again. From the hour when he received the birthright, Jacob was **weighed down with self-condemnation**. He had sinned against his **father**, his **brother**, his **own soul**, and against **God**. In **one short hour** he had made work for a **lifelong repentance**.”*

The results of Jacob’s sin:

- Did **not see his mother** alive again.
- Was **deceived many times** by Laban (what you **sow you reap**).
- Lying becomes **a habit** once you begin the process.
- Was **hated by his own brother**.
- Lived with **guilt and remorse** for over twenty years until he struggled with the Angel of the Covenant.

David’s Lie

1 Samuel 21:1, 2, 8

*“Now David came to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest. And **Ahimelech was afraid** when he met David, and said to him, “Why are you alone, and no one is with you?”*

*² So David said to Ahimelech the priest, “The **king has ordered** me on some business **[lie #1]**, and said to me, ‘Do not let anyone know anything about the business on which I send you, or what I have commanded you.’ And I have directed my young men to such and such a place. **[David then eats the showbread that he had no right to eat]**⁸ And David said to Ahimelech, “Is there not here on hand a spear or a sword? For I have brought neither my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king’s business required haste **[lie #2]**.”*

1 Samuel 22:7: Doeg the Edomite was watching

“Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the LORD. And his name was Doeg, an Edomite, the chief of the herdsmen who belonged to Saul.”

1 Samuel 22:18-22

*“And the king said to Doeg, “You turn and kill the priests!” So Doeg the Edomite turned and struck the priests, and killed on that day **eighty-five men** who wore a linen ephod. ¹⁹ Also Nob, the city of the priests, he struck with the edge of the sword, both **men and women, children and nursing infants, oxen and donkeys and sheep** with the edge of the sword. ²⁰ Now one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped and fled after David. ²¹ And Abiathar told David that Saul had killed the LORD's priests. ²² So David said to Abiathar, “I knew that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul. **I have caused the death** of all the persons of your father's house.”*

Signs of the Times, September 21, 1888

*“David had not taken a **straightforward course** before the priest, he had **dissimulated**, and on this account he had brought the whole family of the priesthood into peril.”*

- The **high priest** was killed
- **85 priests** were killed
- All **men, women, children and even the animals** of the city were killed
- The **entire city** was razed to the ground

The Martyrs

Testimonies for the Church, volume 4, p. 336

*“Even life itself should not be purchased with the **price of falsehood**. By a word or a nod the martyrs might have **denied the truth** and **saved their lives**. By consenting to cast a single grain of incense upon the idol altar they might have*

been saved from the rack, the scaffold, or the cross. But they **refused to be false** in word or deed, though life was the boon they would receive by so doing. They, rather than deliverance on **condition of deception, falsehood, and apostasy** welcomed imprisonment, torture, and death, with a clear conscience. By fidelity and faith in Christ they earned spotless robes and jeweled crowns. Their lives were ennobled and elevated in the sight of God because they **stood firmly for the truth** under the most aggravated circumstances.”

Deceptive Words: Hume

“It is said that Hume, the skeptic, was in early life a conscientious believer in the Word of God. Being connected with a **debating society**, he was appointed to present the **arguments in favor of infidelity**. He studied with earnestness and perseverance, and his keen and active mind became imbued with the sophistry of skepticism. Ere long he **came to believe** its delusive teachings, and his whole afterlife bore the **dark impress of infidelity**.” *CG*, p. 196

The Desire of Ages, p. 323

“But the words are more than an indication of character; they have power to **react on the character**. Men are **influenced by their own words**. Often under a momentary impulse, prompted by Satan, they give utterance to jealousy or evil surmising, expressing that which they **do not really believe**; but the expression **reacts on the thoughts**. They are **deceived by their words**, and come to **believe that true** which was spoken at Satan's instigation. Having once expressed an opinion or decision, they are often too proud to retract it, and try to prove themselves in the right, until they **come to believe that they are**.”

2 Thessalonians 2:9-12: It is said that if one **repeats a lie** enough times he will come to believe that it is the truth:

“The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and **lying** wonders,¹⁰ and with all unrighteous **deception** among those who perish, because they did not receive **the love of the truth**, that they might be saved.¹¹ And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they **should believe the lie**,¹² that they all may be condemned who **did not believe the truth** but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

The Problem with Lies of Convenience

- **Selling a car** (it is in tip top shape)
- Returning a **partial tithe**
- Cheating on our **taxes**
- How do you like **my dress?**

Acting based on the **situation** rather than what God has said has several down sides:

- It is **disobedient**.
- It is centered in **man's supposed foresight**. We don't know the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:9, 10).
- Our role is not to **measure the consequences** of a lie but rather to always tell the truth and leave the consequences to God.
- It has a **sick and sentimental concept of love** (Romans 13:10). Love is not what **you feel** to be right but what **God says is right**.
- It **undermines the principles** so that it becomes easier and easier to lie.

A Way that Seems Right

Proverbs 14:12

*"There is a way that **seems right** to a man, but its end is the way of death."*

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 634

*"In **deciding** upon any course of action we are not to ask whether we can see that **harm will result** from it, but whether it is in **keeping with the will of God**.
"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death." Proverbs 14:12"*

Proverbs 28:26

"He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but whoever walks wisely will be delivered."

Conflict and Courage, p. 119:

*"It is better **to die** than to sin; better **to want** than to defraud; better **to hunger** than to lie."*

Testimonies for the Church, volume 5, p. 53

*"Those who would **rather die than perform a wrong act** are the only ones who will be found faithful."*

Testimonies for the Church, volume 5, pp. 573, 574

*"Men of principle need not the restriction of locks and keys; they do not need to be watched and guarded. They will deal **truly and honorably** at all times, alone, with no eye upon them, as well as in public."*

What about Rahab

God did not extol Rahab for lying. He spoke positively about her receiving the spies and being hospitable.

Joshua 2:1: The spies **lodged** in Rahab's house

Joshua 2:4: She **hid them** even though the **king of Jericho knew** that she had received them.

Joshua 6:17: She was delivered when the city was destroyed because **she hid** the spies.

Hebrews 11:31: She did not perish because **she received** the spies.

James 2:25: She **received** the spies and sent them out **another way**.

Even if Rahab **had lied**, she did the **best she could** on the basis of the knowledge that she had. How sad that we have to use a **harlot from a pagan nation** to justify our lying.

Review and Herald, September 16, 1873

*“God had said that the city of Jericho should be accursed, and that all should perish except Rahab and her household. They should be saved **because of the favor** that Rahab showed the messengers of the Lord.”*

The End Time Generation

Revelation 14:5

*“And in their mouth was found **no deceit**, for they are without fault before the throne of God.”*

Revelation 21:7-8

*“He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. ⁸ **But** the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and **all liars** shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”*

Revelation 22:14-15

*“Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. ¹⁵ But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever **loves and practices a lie**.”*

Psalm 119:163

*“I hate and **abhor lying**, but I love Your law.”*

Psalm 101:7

*“He who **works deceit** shall not dwell within my house; He who **tells lies** shall not continue in my presence.”*

Education, p. 57

*“The greatest want of the world is the want of men--men who will not be **bought or sold**, men who in their inmost souls are **true and honest**, men who do not fear*

*to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will **stand for the right** though the heavens fall.”*



“WHO CARES ABOUT CHRISTIAN STANDARDS?”

by Pastor Stephen Bohr

Lesson #3 - Love not the World

Denouncing the World

The Bible has some unusually strong denunciations of the world. Let's read some of them:

1 John 2:15-17

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”

James 4:4

“Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

What do you think of when I say: ‘He is a worldly person’ or ‘she is a worldly person?’ What does it mean to be worldly?

If you have been an SDA most of your life, you will probably say that a worldly person is one who smokes and drinks, parties, dances, goes to the movies, gambles, plays poker, dresses in a provocative manner and listens to rock music. However, is this the whole story?

Biblically speaking, **what does it mean** to be worldly? Let's see.

Three Greek Words

Our English word 'world' is a translation of **three Greek words**:

- *aion*
- *kosmos*
- *oikoumene*

Aion

This word is frequently translated 'world' in the **KJV**. It refers to the world in its **temporal sphere**, that is, within the **framework of time**.

Three periods are connected with this word:

- The **past ages** of eternity before sin.
- The **present evil age** we live in.
- The **age to come** when sin has been eradicated from the universe.

The God of this Age

The Bible speaks **negatively of the world** in its **present** evil stage. In its **present evil stage** (as contrasted with the future world), this world **has a god** who is in control of it.

2 Corinthians 4:3-5

*But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴ whose minds the **god of this age** has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them."*

Examples of Aion

Luke 18:29-30: Forsake **family**

*"So He said to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, ³⁰ who shall not receive many times more in this **present time**, and in the **age to come** eternal life.'"*

Luke 16:8: Sons of this world versus **sons of light**

*“So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the **sons of this world** are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.”*

Matthew 13:37-39: **Harvest** at the end of the age

*“He answered and said to them: “He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸ The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. ³⁹ The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the **end of the age**, and the reapers are the angels.*

Luke 20:34, 35: The **resurrection**

*“Jesus answered and said to them, “The **sons of this age** marry and are given in marriage. ³⁵ But those who are counted worthy to attain **that age**, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; ³⁶ nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.”*

Mark 4:18-19: Cares of this world

*“Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word, ¹⁹ and the **cares of this world**, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.”*

2 Timothy 4:10: **Demas**

*“. . . for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this **present world**, and has departed for Thessalonica.”*

Romans 12:2: Don't be **conformed** to this world

*“And do not be **conformed to this world**, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”*

Galatians 1:3-5: **Present evil age**

*“Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this **present evil age**,*

according to the will of our God and Father, ⁵ to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen”

Ephesians 6:12-13: An age of **darkness**

*For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the **darkness of this age**, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”*

Matthew 28:20

*“I am with you always, even to the **end of the age**.”*

Kosmos

The New Testament uses this word to describe the world in its **material composition**.

It is also used to describe an **all-embracing system** which is alienated and at **enmity with God**. It embraces **all spheres** human life.

We are told **not to love** the world (James 4:4; I John 2:15-17)

The world **did not know Jesus** (John 1:10)

We are told that it avails us nothing to **gain the whole world** and lose our soul (Matthew 16:26).

Satan offered Jesus the **glitter of the world** (Matthew 4:8).

We are told that the **peace which Jesus gives** is different than the peace the world gives (John 14:27).

This world **defiles** (James 1:27).

The **wisdom of this world is foolishness** (I Corinthians 1:26-29).

This world is governed by a **supernatural spirit** (I Corinthians 2:12) who is identified as the great ***kosmokrator*** or **prince of this world** (John 14:30; 12:31; 16:11).

And yet we are also told that **God so loved the world** that He gave His Only Begotten Son to save it (John 3:16-17).

Jesus came to **take away the sin of the world** (John 1:29).

Oikoumene

This word is **less common** in the New Testament. Its meaning is mainly ‘the **inhabited world**.’ It refers to the people who **abide on the earth** (Matthew 24:14: preaching the gospel to all the world; Luke 4:5, the use of **oikoumene** here is parallel to kosmos in Matthew 4:8; in Revelation it refers to earth dwellers, a **technical term** that describes those who **make earth their home**).

Two Orientations

The Bible makes it clear that there are **two orientations** or centers of focus in life:

- The present period of existence in this world.
- The future period of existence in the world to come.

This **present world** with its **systems** of politics, education, literature, art, law, commerce, music, entertainment, medicine, science, **is in alienation** from God. It operates **without reference** to God, it **ignores** God; it acts **as if God does not exist**.

In Biblical thought, to be worldly is to be **earth-focused** in the various spheres of life. It means to live our **daily life without reference** to God. It does not necessarily mean to **deny Him** but rather to **ignore Him** or to act **as if** He does not exist.

It is to be **secular** or **this worldly** (the Latin word is *Saecolorum*) **rather than holy** and **otherworldly**. It means that we make God an **addendum or appendix** to our life. It means that spiritual life is only one **small ingredient** in our daily routine. It means that **church is one interest among many** and not necessarily the most important one. It means to live for the **here and now** and not for the **sweet by and by**. It means living **as if** this world were **our lasting home**, although we **profess** to be looking for the world to come. It means paying God **lip service**. It means having a **form of Godliness** without the power thereof. It means making God an **afterthought in life**.

The “world” is a **philosophy**, an **outlook**, a **way of thinking** a **mindset** that leads us to live in a certain way.

Ellen White on the World

Ellen G. White puts it in a nutshell when she comments about the professed people of God when Jesus came to earth:

*“Christ’s coming was at a time of intense **worldliness**. Men were **subordinating** the **eternal** to the **temporal**, the claims of the **future** to the affairs of the **present**. They were mistaking **phantoms** for **realities**, and realities for phantoms. They did not by faith behold the **unseen world**. Satan presented before them the **things of this life** as **all-attractive** and **all-absorbing**, and they gave heed to his temptations.” *COL*, p. 366.*

2 Corinthians 4:17, 18

*“For our **light affliction [now]**, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal **weight of glory [in heaven]**,¹⁸ while we do not look at the things which are **seen [here]**, but at the things which are **not seen [in heaven]**. For the things which are seen are **temporary [only for this lifetime]**, but the things which are not seen are **eternal [forever]**. “*

Examples of a Worldly Focus

Allow me to put this in **twenty-first century terms**. I am going to **wax bold**, so please hang on to your seats.

If I find reading the **Bible** and going to **church boring** and yet can watch television for hours without blinking, I am worldly.

If I **talk on the phone** with my friends for hours about money, movies, the latest CD’s, new clothes I shopped for, sports, job, movie stars but cannot think of anything to say when I am speaking **to my heavenly father**, I am worldly.

If I am so **tired of work** at the end of the week that I do not have the energy to **come to church**, I am worldly.

If I would rather stay at home watching television rather than coming to **Prayer Meeting**, I am worldly. Even a **boring prayer meeting** is better than an exciting television program.

If I have plenty of **money in the bank** and there are pressing financial needs in the Church, I am worldly.

If I can scream and holler when my preferred team scores a touchdown but cannot even **whimper an Amen** when something is said in Church about how Jesus has won salvation for us, I am worldly. For those who say it is **not in our culture** to respond in the worship service, I would like to know why **culture changes at an athletic event!** For example, in **Argentina**.

If you want to **go home at 12 o'clock sharp** on Sabbath but think nothing about long hours playing **video games** and watching your favorite movies, you are worldly.

If you are more concerned about your **external physical appearance** than dressing and adorning the **inward person** with the character of Christ, you are worldly.

If you look forward more to a **vacation in Hawaii** than to our coming vacation in heaven, you are worldly!

How Christians should relate to the world

We are **pilgrims and strangers**:

Hebrews 11:8-10, 13-16

“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹ By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; ¹⁰ for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. . . These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. ¹⁴ For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. ¹⁵ And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.”

Our present existence is like a **tent**, we are **on the move**; we have no **permanent home**. Like Abraham, we have **left Babylon** and are on our way **to Jerusalem** and meanwhile we do not have a **permanent home!**

Our **citizenship** is in heaven:

Philippians 3:20-21

*“For our **citizenship is in heaven**, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself. “*

When I **travel overseas**, I cannot **wait to get home** and when I come back to the United States, I have a **perfect right** to come in. Though I am in Colombia, my citizenship is here. When we went to the mission field, we went through many **trials and tribulations** (**tell some of them**). We always were **thinking of home** but we stayed because we wanted to **save souls**. We are on this earth to save souls but our minds should be on home.

The word ‘church’ comes from *ekklesia*, the **‘called out ones’**.

Jesus came to this earth as a **stranger and pilgrim**. He came to **influence** the world without being **tarnished** by it. He came to the world, entered in **contact** with the world but did **not participate** in its sin. His mind was ever with His **Father in heaven**. Likewise, God sends us **into the world** to be in it but **not of it**. **John 17:15**

We are like salt (**Matthew 5:13**). Salt does not **lose its saltiness** when it enters in contact with food, it actually brings out its flavor.

We are also like light (**Matthew 5:14-16**) Light does **not become darkness**, it actually dissipates the darkness.

World Hates

When we **relate to the world in this way**, the result will be that the world will **hate us**. Are we so concerned about what the **world thinks about us** today that we are not willing to present, by **precept and example**, the truth as it is in Jesus? Is our primary focus on what the **world thinks of us?**

When we are in the world but not of the world, the **inevitable result is hatred** or enmity.

John 15:17-18

*"If the world **hates you**, you know that it **hated Me** before it hated you. ¹⁹ If you were **of the world**, the world would **love its own**. Yet because you are **not of the world**, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the **world hates you**."*

John 17:14-16

*"I have given them Your word; and the **world has hated them** because they are **not of the world**, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁵ I do not pray that You should **take them out** of the world, but that You should **keep them** from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are **not of the world**, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. ¹⁸ As You sent Me into the world, I also have **sent them into the world**."*

I Timothy 3:12

*"Yes, and all who desire to **live godly** in Christ Jesus will **suffer persecution**."*

"There is another and more important question that should engage the attention of the churches of today. The apostle Paul declares that "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." 2 Timothy 3:12. Why is it, then, that persecution seems in a great degree to slumber? The only reason is that the church has conformed to the world's standard and therefore awakens no opposition. The religion which is current in our day is not of the pure and holy character that marked the Christian faith in the days of Christ and His apostles. It is only because of the spirit of compromise with sin, because the great truths of the word of God are so indifferently regarded, because there is so little vital godliness in the church, that Christianity is apparently so popular with the world. Let there be a revival of the faith and power of the early church, and the spirit of persecution will be revived, and the fires of persecution will be rekindled." GC, p. 48

World is Temporal

The world is passing away (I John 2:17). Is **disintegrating, vaporizing** (Fresno fog), **dissolving, disappearing**. If you knew that **your bank** was going

to close for good in a week, do would you put **large sums of money** in it to save it from collapse? You would not put **even one cent** in it because it has no future. You put nothing in it because you expect nothing from it.

Warnings in the Bible:

- World is **passing away** (I John 2:17).
- This present evil age will **come to an end** (Gal 1:4).
- The temporal is **worthless** (II Cor. 4:17-18).
- The cares of this life should **not overwhelm** us (**Luke 21:34**).
- We must focus on the **things above** (**Colossians 3:1-2**).
- What value is there to gain the whole world and **lose our soul**? (**Matthew 16:26**).

We live our **deepest beliefs**. The world is a **mindset**, an **outlook**, a **way of thinking** which leads to a **particular lifestyle**. The problem is not with **our behavior** (because it is only a symptom) but with **the mind**.

Romans 12:1-2: Do not **take the mold** of the world, do not become **shaped by it** but rather be **transformed** (metamorphosis) by the **renewing of the mind**. This is called conversion where I give a **180-degree turn**.

Change the way of thinking. **Evangelism, p. 272**.

*“There is no need to make the dress question the **main point** of your religion. There is something richer to speak of. Talk of Christ, and when the **heart is converted**, everything that is out of harmony with the Word of God will **drop off**. It is only labor in vain to **pick leaves** off a living tree. The leaves will reappear. The ax must be laid at the **root of the tree**, and then the leaves will fall off, never to return. Ev, p. 272.1”*

Our Duty

Colossians 3:2

“Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.”

Titus 2:11-15

*“For the **grace of God** that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ¹² **teaching us that** denying **ungodliness** and **worldly lusts**, we should live soberly,*

righteously, and godly in **the present age**,¹³ **looking for** the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,¹⁴ who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every **lawless deed** and **purify** for Himself His own special people, zealous for **good works**.”

2 Peter 3:10-14

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be **burned up**.¹¹ Therefore, since all these things will be **dissolved**, what manner of persons ought you to be in **holy conduct and godliness**,¹² **looking for and hastening** the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be **dissolved**, being on fire, and the **elements** will melt with fervent heat?¹³ Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for **new heavens and a new earth** in which righteousness dwells.”

Lots' wife was focused on this world.

End by talking about **Enoch** and how he became disconnected with the world and finally God took him.



“WHO CARES ABOUT CHRISTIAN STANDARDS?”

by Pastor Stephen Bohr

Lesson #4 - The Mixed Multitude

Only Two Ways

Matthew 7:13, 14

*“Enter by the **narrow** gate; for **wide** is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. ¹⁴ Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.”*

John 2:15, 16

*“Do not love the **world** or the things in the world. If **anyone loves the world**, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world.”*

James 4:4

*“Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that **friendship** with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an **enemy** of God.”*

Matthew 6:24

*“No one can serve **two masters**; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”*

2 Corinthians 6:14-16

*“Do not be unequally **yoked together** with **unbelievers**. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?¹⁵ And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?¹⁶ And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”*

A Third Category: The Mixed Multitude

Even though there are **truly** only **two opposite lifestyles**, there is a **third category** among God’s people. There are those who are **among** the people but **not of** the people. They are **worldlings in sheep’s clothing**. They are worldly although they **call themselves Christians**. They are a **mixed multitude**. They journey the **wide path** but they **join those** who are on the **narrow path** to **entice them** and constantly **tempt them** to do evil. These are **more dangerous** than the openly worldly.

Description of the Mixed Multitude

Exodus 12:37, 38

*“Then the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children.³⁸ A **mixed multitude** went up with them also, and flocks and herds — a great deal of livestock.”*

The History of the Mixed Multitude

Israel left Egypt and journeyed **to Canaan**. The **purpose** of this trek through the wilderness was to **cut out and purge** Israel from her **worldly customs** and habits they had **picked up in Egypt**—dress, idols, jewelry, diet, music, dance, entertainment, etc., so she could enter the **land of Canaan** a **healthy, happy, holy, peculiar, different** people. Canaan life would be very different from their life in Egypt. Thus, the purpose of their journey was to **purge herself of the Egyptian lifestyle** and learn God’s lifestyle so she could enjoy to the fullest her **new home** where **all would be different**.

Satan was opposed to the **success** of this endeavor and he did his utmost to **destroy Israel** by **outside circumstances** (Egyptians, snakes, etc.) but he could not. Seeing that he could not destroy them **from outside**, he decided to introduce a **leavening agent inside**. This leavening agent was the **mixed multitude**. These people joined God's people **out of convenience** but did not **leave the Egyptian lifestyle** completely behind. They were **half-Christians, half-converted, lax, careless**, and were a source of **continual temptation** and trouble. They constantly suggested a **return to Egypt**.

Ellen White on the Multitude

*"In this multitude were not only those who were actuated by faith in the God of Israel, but also a far **greater number** who desired only to **escape** from the plagues, or who followed in the wake of the moving multitudes merely from **excitement and curiosity**. This class were ever a **hindrance** and a **snare** to Israel." PP, p. 281*

Also heard that the people were going to a better land, a land of milk and honey!

*"The mixed multitude that came up with the Israelites from Egypt were a source of **continual temptation and trouble**. They **professed** to have renounced idolatry and to worship the true God; but their early education and training had molded their habits and character, and they were **more or less corrupted** with idolatry and with irreverence for God. They were **oftenest the ones** to stir up strife and were the **first to complain**, and they **leavened** the camp with their idolatrous practices and their murmurings against God." PP, p. 408*

- Idolatry at **Mt. Sinai**
- The **Manna**
- No **Water**
- **Leadership of Moses**
- A case of **Sabbath breaking**
- On the **borders of Canaan**

The Golden Calf

*"Especially was this the case with the **mixed multitude**. They were **impatient** to be on their way to the Land of Promise--the land flowing with milk and honey. It was only on **condition of obedience** that the goodly land was promised them, but*

they had lost sight of this. The "mixed multitude" had been the **first to indulge** murmuring and impatience, and they were the **leaders in the apostasy** that followed." *PP*, pp. 315, 316

"The people of Israel, especially the mixed multitude, would be constantly disposed to rebel against God. They would also **murmur against their leader**, and would grieve him by their **unbelief and stubbornness**, and it would be a laborious and soul-trying work to lead them through to the Promised Land. Their sins had already forfeited the favor of God, and justice called for their destruction. The Lord therefore proposed to destroy them, and make of Moses a mighty nation." *PP*, p. 318

The Manna Episode

Numbers 11:7-8: Manna was **delicious food**:

"Now the manna was like coriander seed, and its color like the color of bdellium.
⁸ The people went about and gathered it, ground it on millstones or beat it in the mortar, cooked it in pans, and made cakes of it; and its taste was like the taste of pastry prepared with oil.

Exodus 16:31: **Sweet tooth**

"And the house of Israel called its name Manna. And it was like white coriander seed, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey."

Numbers 11:4: The mixed **multitude murmurs**:

"Now the **mixed multitude** who were among them yielded to **intense craving**; so the **children of Israel** also wept again and said: "Who will give us meat to eat?
⁵ We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; ⁶ but now our whole being is dried up; there is nothing at all except this manna before our eyes!"

Psalms 106:14, 15

"But **lusted exceedingly** in the wilderness, and **tested God** in the desert."

Numbers 11:18-2: **God promises to give them flesh**:

"Then you shall say to the people, 'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat; for you have wept in the hearing of the Lord, saying, "Who will give

*us meat to eat? For it was well with us in Egypt." Therefore, the Lord will give you meat, and you shall eat. ¹⁹ You shall eat, not one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten days, nor twenty days, ²⁰ but for a whole month, until it **comes out of your nostrils** and becomes **loathsome to you**, because you have despised the Lord who is among you, and have wept before Him, saying, "Why did we ever come up out of Egypt?"*

Numbers 11:31: God sent the **quail**

"Now a wind went out from the Lord, and it brought quail from the sea and left them fluttering near the camp, about a day's journey on this side and about a day's journey on the other side, all around the camp, and about two cubits above the surface of the ground."

Numbers 11:32: They gathered a **surplus:**

"And the people stayed up all that day, all night, and all the next day, and gathered the quail (he who gathered least gathered ten homers); and they spread them out for themselves all around the camp."

Numbers 11:33: God's reaction:

*"However, while the meat was still **between their teeth**, before it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was aroused against the people, and the Lord struck the people with a very great plague.*

Ellen White about the Manna:

*"He came with his temptations first to the **mixed multitude**, the **believing Egyptians**, and stirred them up to seditious murmurings. They would not be content with the healthful food that God had provided for them. Their depraved appetites craved a greater variety, especially **flesh meats**.' CD, pp. 375, 376*

*"After three days' journey open complaints were heard. These originated with the **mixed multitude**, many of whom were not fully united with Israel, and were continually watching for some cause of censure. The complainers were not pleased with the direction of the march, and they were continually finding fault with the way in which Moses was leading them, though they well knew that he, as well as they, was following the guiding cloud. Dissatisfaction is contagious, and it soon spread in the encampment.' PP, p. 377*

The Balaam Episode

Numbers 23:21, 23: Balaam **cannot curse** Israel:

*"He has not observed **iniquity** in Jacob, nor has He seen **wickedness** in Israel. The Lord his **God is with him**, and the shout of a King is **among them**.²² God brings them out of Egypt; He has strength like a wild ox.²³ "For there is **no sorcery** against Jacob, nor **any divination** against Israel. It now must be said of Jacob and of Israel, 'Oh, what God has done!'"*

Numbers 23:28: Curse from **another place:**

*"Then Balak said to Balaam, "Please come, I will take you to **another place**; perhaps it will please God that you may curse them for me **from there**."*

Numbers 25:1, 2, 9: Plan 'B'

*"Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and the people began to **commit harlotry** with the **women of Moab**.² They invited the people to the **sacrifices of their gods**, and the people **ate** and **bowed down** to their gods.³ So Israel was **joined** to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the Lord was aroused against Israel.⁹ And those who died in the plague were twenty-four thousand."*

Balaam in Revelation

The seven churches represent seven periods of church history

Revelation 2:10: The church of **Smyrna** has much **death language:**

*"Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into **prison**, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be **faithful until death**, and I will give you the crown of life."*

- Smyrna (**bittersweet myrrh** used to embalm the dead)
- Satan tries to destroy the church by **persecution from outside**
- **Tertullian:** The more you mow us down, the more we are, the blood of Christians is seed"
- **Pagan temples** were emptying
- **Eusebius described the Council of Nicea** (325) Priests mangled from 10 years of persecution under **Diocletian**

- If these people are **willing to die** for what they believe in then what they believe in must be **worth it!**
- Christianity was pure while **persecuted from the outside**. It spreads like a **California grassfire**.
- *“The early Christians were indeed a peculiar people. Their blameless deportment and unswerving faith were a continual reproof that disturbed the sinner's peace. Though few in numbers, without wealth, position, or honorary titles, they were a terror to evil-doers wherever their character and doctrines were known. Therefore they were hated by the wicked, even as Abel was hated by the ungodly Cain. For the same reason that Cain slew Abel did those who sought to throw off the restraint of the Holy Spirit, put to death God's people.” GC, p. 46*

Revelation 2:14: The church of **Pergamum compromises:**

*“But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the **doctrine of Balaam**, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.*

- Satan sees he is **losing ground** he changes his methods.
- The next church is **Pergamum** which is condemned for the doctrine of Balaam.
- **Constantine**. The whole **empire is baptized** and the **doors of the church are opened to all**.
- The church is now on **the heights** (acropolis or elevation).
- **Religion is easy** and **persecution ceases**.
- It **become fashionable** to be a Christian.
- **Standards are lowered** to allow the **entrance of half-converted** multitudes who bring in **customs and practices** of the world with them.

A message to the SDA church

1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 11: The **story of Balaam** has lessons for those who live in the **end time:**

“Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, ² all were baptized into Moses in the

cloud and in the sea, ³ all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. ⁵ But with most of them God was **not well pleased**, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. ⁶ Now these things **became our examples**, to the intent that **we should** not lust after **evil things as they also lusted**. ¹¹ Now all these things happened to them as **examples**, and they were written for **our admonition**, upon whom the **ends of the ages** have come.”

We are on our way from **Egypt to Canaan**. What is the **purpose of this trek?** Is it not to **purge ourselves** from worldly **customs and habits**—dress, music, dance, jewelry, entertainment, food, language, idols.

Heaven will be **radically different**. If we do not prepare for the **heavenly life** style now we would be **miserable there**. This **present wilderness journey** is a **preparation** and training for our **heavenly home** so we can arrive a healthy, happy, holy people.

Ellen White:

*“There is another and more important question that should engage the attention of the churches of today. The apostle Paul declares that “all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” 2 Timothy 3:12. Why is it, then, that persecution seems in a great degree to slumber? The **only reason** is that the church has **conformed to the world's standard** and therefore awakens no opposition. The religion which is current in our day is **not of the pure and holy character** that marked the Christian faith in the days of Christ and His apostles. It is only because of the **spirit of compromise** with sin, because the **great truths** of the word of God are so indifferently regarded, because there is **so little vital godliness** in the church, that Christianity is apparently **so popular** with the world. Let there be a revival of the **faith and power of the early church**, and the spirit of persecution will be revived, and the fires of persecution will be rekindled.”*
GC, p. 48

Acceptance of Members

5 stages of evangelism:

- Planning
- Conception

- **Gestation**
- Birth
- **Growth**

*“The accession of members who have not been renewed in heart and reformed in life is a source of **weakness to the church**. This fact is often ignored. Some ministers and churches are so desirous of securing an increase of numbers that they do not bear faithful testimony against unchristian habits and practices. Those who accept the truth are not taught that they cannot safely be worldlings in conduct while they are Christians in name. Heretofore they were Satan’s subjects; henceforth they are to be subjects of Christ. The life must testify to the change of leaders. Public opinion favors a profession of Christianity. Little self-denial or self-sacrifice is required in order to put on a form of godliness and to have one’s name enrolled upon the church book. Hence many join the church without first becoming united to Christ. In this Satan triumphs. Such converts are his most efficient agents. They serve as decoys to other souls. They are false lights, luring the unwary to perdition. It is in vain that men seek to make the Christian’s path broad and pleasant for worldlings. God has not smoothed or widened the rugged, narrow way. If we would enter into life, we must follow the same path which Jesus and His disciples trod--the path of humility, self-denial, and sacrifice.”* 5T, p. 172

*“**Half-hearted Christians** are worse than infidels; for their deceptive words and non-committal position may lead many astray. The infidel **shows his colors**. The lukewarm Christian **deceives both parties**. He is neither a **good worldling** nor a **good Christian**. Satan uses him to do a work that no one else can do.”* Spalding Magan, p. 260

*“A **partial observance** of the Sabbath law is not accepted by the Lord and has a worse effect upon the minds of sinners than if you made no profession of being a Sabbath keeper. They perceive that your life contradicts your belief, and lose faith in Christianity. The Lord means what He says, and man cannot set aside His commands with impunity.”* 4T, p. 248

1 John 3:1-3

“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. ² Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. ³ And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”

The Final Test

*“The time is not far distant when **the test will come** to every soul. The mark of the beast will be urged upon us. Those who have **step by step yielded to worldly demands and conformed to worldly customs** will not find it a hard matter to yield to the powers that be, rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death. The contest is between the commandments of God and the commandments of men. In this time the **gold will be separated from the dross in the church**. True godliness will be **clearly distinguished** from the **appearance and tinsel of it**. Many a star that we have admired for its brilliancy will then **go out in darkness**. Chaff like a cloud will be borne away on the wind, even from places where we see **only floors of rich wheat**. All who assume the **ornaments** of the sanctuary, but are **not clothed** with Christ's righteousness, will appear in the shame of their own nakedness.” 5T, p. 81*

1 John 2:19

*“They **went out from us**, but they **were not of us**; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they **went out**, that they might be made manifest that they were **not all of us**.”*



“WHO CARES ABOUT CHRISTIAN STANDARDS?”

by Pastor Stephen Bohr

Lesson #5 - Unfaithful Mammon

The Purpose of the Parable

“Christ's coming was at a time of intense worldliness. Men were subordinating the eternal to the temporal, the claims of the future to the affairs of the present. They were mistaking phantoms for realities, and realities for phantoms. They did not by faith behold the unseen world. Satan presented before them the things of this life as all-attractive and all-absorbing, and they gave heed to his temptations.” COL, p. 366

2 Corinthians 4:17, 18

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,¹⁸ while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

The Parable

Luke 16:1-13

“He also said to His disciples: “There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods.² So he called him and said to him, ‘What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.’³ “Then the steward said within himself, ‘What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away

from me. I cannot **dig**; I am ashamed to **beg**.⁴ I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may **receive me** into their houses.'⁵ "So he called every one of his master's debtors to him, and said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?'⁶ And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' So he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.'⁷ Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' So he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.' The dishonest steward was **worldly shrewd**. He decided to give his lord's clients a discount on the merchandise that they had already purchased, but had not yet paid for. By doing this, he was defrauding his lord but at the same time, making provision for the clients to receive him into their houses once his lord released him from employment.⁸ So the **master commended** the unjust steward because he had dealt **shrewdly**. For the sons of **this world** are more shrewd in their generation than the **sons of light**⁹ "And I say to you, **make friends** for yourselves by unrighteous mammon [like the steward did after he saw the light], that when you fail, **they** may **receive you** into an everlasting home.¹⁰ He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.¹¹ Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous **mammon**, who will commit to your trust the **true riches**?¹² And if you have not been faithful in what is **another man's**, who will give you what is **your own**?"¹³ "No servant can serve **two masters**; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve **God** and **mammon**." (Luke 16:1-13)

Luke 16:1, 2: Up to this point, the steward has used the **master's goods** for his **own selfish purposes**:

"He also said to His disciples: "There was a certain **rich man** who had a **steward**, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting **his** goods. So he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an **account** of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.'

EGW Note

"To the unfaithful steward his lord's goods had been entrusted for **benevolent purposes**; but he had **used them for himself**." COL, p. 369

Luke 16:3: He is now in a **difficult situation** because he discerns that reckoning day is coming and his **misuse of the master's goods** will **leave him destitute**

*"Then the steward said within himself, 'What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot **dig**; I am ashamed to **beg**."*

Note: "With the prospect of discharge before him, the steward saw **three paths** open to his choice. He must **labor, beg, or starve**." COL, p. 367

Luke 16:4: So he **prepares a plan** to secure his **temporal future**:

*"I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, **they [his friends]** may receive me into **their houses**."*

Luke 16:5-7: Shrewd in planning for his **temporal future** but by **dishonest** means:

*"So he called every one of his master's debtors to him, and said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' ⁶ And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' So he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and **write fifty**.' ⁷ Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' So he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and write **eighty**.'"*

EGW Note

*"Christ **did not commend** the unjust steward, but He made use of a **well-known** occurrence to illustrate the lesson He desired to teach." COL, p. 367*

*"This unfaithful servant made others sharers with him in his dishonesty. He defrauded his master to advantage them, and by accepting this advantage, they placed themselves **under obligation** to receive him as a friend into **their homes**." COL, p. 367*

Luke 16:8, first part

*"So the **master [lord, KJV]** **commended** the unjust steward because he had dealt **shrewdly**."*

EGW Note

*"The worldly man praised the sharpness of the man who had defrauded him. However, the rich man's commendation was not the commendation of God."
COL, p. 367*

Application of the Parable

Luke 16:8, second part: Now comes the application of the parable. Comparison of this man planning for his future temporal needs with the sons of light and their eternal needs:

"For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light."

These are not the words of the steward's master but rather an assessment by Jesus. Jesus will now apply the parable to the sons of the light. Here the contrast is between the children of this world who are shrewd in making provision for the future temporal needs and the sons of the light who lay no plans for their future eternal needs.

Luke 16:9: Now Jesus will speak of what the sons of light should do to prepare for their eternal future:

"And I say to you [Jesus is speaking to the sons of light], make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon that when you fail, they [who is 'they'?] may receive you [the sons of light] into an everlasting home [heaven]."

Various Versions on Verses 8, 9

Luke 16:8-10: New Century Version

"So, the master praised the dishonest manager for being smart. Yes, worldly people are smarter with their own kind than spiritual people are. ⁹ "I tell you, make friends for yourselves using worldly riches [unrighteous mammon] so that when those riches are gone, you will be welcomed in those homes that continue forever."

Luke 16:8-10: NIV

*"The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the **people of this world** are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the **people of the light**.⁹ I tell you, use **worldly wealth** to gain **friends** for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be **welcomed into eternal dwellings**."*

Luke 16:8, 9, Good News:

*"As a result the master of this dishonest manager praised him for doing such a shrewd thing; because the **people of this world** are much more shrewd in handling their affairs than the people who **belong to the light**."⁹ And Jesus went on to say, "And so I tell you: make friends for yourselves with **worldly wealth**, so that when it **gives out**, you will be **welcomed in the eternal home**."*

Luke 16:8, 9, New Living

*"The rich man had to admire the dishonest rascal for being so shrewd. And it is true that the **children of this world** are more shrewd in dealing with the world around them than are the **children of the light**.⁹ Here's the lesson: Use your **worldly resources** to **benefit others and make friends**. Then, when your **earthly possessions are gone**, they will **welcome you to an eternal home**."*

Addressed to the Publicans

*"There had been **among the publicans [tax collectors] just such a case** as that represented in the parable, and in Christ's description they recognized **their own practices**. Their **attention** was arrested, and from the picture of their own dishonest practices, many of them learned a lesson of **spiritual truth**. *COL*, p. 368*

*"Christ was seeking by every means to win them to **higher aims** and **nobler principles [investing for eternity]**. This purpose He had in mind in the story of the unfaithful steward." *COL*, p. 368*

Spoken to the Disciples

*"The parable was, however, spoken directly **to the disciples**." *COL*, p. 368*

Note: They were to use the master's goods for the blessing of others and not for their own advancement.

Spoken to the Pharisees

“And the Savior was speaking also to the Pharisees. He did not relinquish the hope that they would perceive the force of His words. Many had been deeply convicted, and as they should hear the truth under the dictation of the Holy Spirit, not a few would become believers in Christ.” COL, p. 369

“The Pharisees, filled with self-importance and self-righteousness, were misapplying the goods lent them by God to use for His glory.” COL, p. 369.4

“The scene known to have taken place among the publicans He holds up before the Pharisees both as representing their course of action and as showing the only way in which they can redeem their errors.” COL, p. 369

“So with Israel. God had chosen the seed of Abraham. With a high arm He had delivered them from bondage in Egypt. He had made them the depositories of sacred truth for the blessing of the world. He had entrusted to them the living oracles that they might communicate the light to others. But His stewards had used these gifts to enrich and exalt themselves.” COL, p. 369.3

Decision to Redeem Past Failure

“The servant in the parable had made no provision for the future. The goods entrusted to him for the benefit of others he had used for himself; but he had thought only of the present. When the stewardship should be taken from him, he would have nothing to call his own.” COL, p. 369

“But his master's goods were still in his hands, and he determined to use them so as to secure himself against future want. To accomplish this he must work on a new plan. Instead of gathering for himself, he must impart to others.” COL, p. 369, 370

“Thus he might secure friends, who, when he should be cast out, would receive him. So with the Pharisees. The stewardship was soon to be taken from them, and they were called upon to provide for the future. Only by seeking the good of

***others** could they **benefit themselves**. Only by **imparting** God's gifts in the **present life** could they **provide for eternity**.” COL, p. 36*

Lessons for Everyone

*“The lesson of this parable is **for all**. Everyone will be **held responsible** for the grace given him through Christ. Life is too solemn to be absorbed in temporal or earthly matters. The Lord desires that we shall **communicate to others** that which the eternal and unseen communicates to us.” COL, p. 373*

*“The Lord has endowed them with **capabilities, and power, and influence**; He has entrusted them with **money**, that they may be **co-workers** with Him in the great redemption. All His gifts are to be **used in blessing** humanity, in **relieving the suffering** and the needy. We are to feed the **hungry**, to clothe the **naked**, to care for the **widow** and the **fatherless**, to **minister** to the distressed and downtrodden.” COL, p. 370*

*“Alas, how many are **appropriating to themselves** the gifts of God! How many are adding **house to house** and **land to land**. How many are spending their money for **pleasure**, for the gratification of **appetite**, for extravagant **houses, furniture, and dress**. Their fellow beings are left to misery and crime, to disease and death. **Multitudes are perishing** without one pitying look, one word or deed of sympathy.” COL, p. 371*

*“They are **embezzling** His entrusted goods.” COL, p. 371, 372*

*“Everyone will be required to **render up** his entrusted gifts. In the day of **final judgment** men's **hoarded wealth** will be worthless to them. They have nothing they can call their own.” COL, p. 372.1*

*“Those who spend their lives in laying up **worldly treasure** show less wisdom, less thought and care for their **eternal well-being**, than did the unjust steward for his **earthly support**. Less wise than the children of this world in their generation are these professed children of the light. COL, p. 372*

*“And I say to you, **make friends** for yourselves by unrighteous mammon [**like the steward did after he saw the light**], that when you fail, **they** may **receive you** into an everlasting home.*

The Welcoming Friends

*“**God and Christ and angels** are all ministering to the afflicted, the suffering, and the sinful. Give yourself to God for this work, **use His gifts** for this purpose, and you enter into **partnership with heavenly beings**. Your heart will throb in sympathy with theirs. You will be assimilated to them in character. To you these **dwellers in the eternal tabernacles** will not be strangers. When **earthly things [unrighteous mammon]** shall have passed away, the **watchers at heaven's gates will bid you welcome.**” COL, p. 373*

*“God desires us to choose the **heavenly in place of the earthly**. . . When the riches that moth devours and rust corrupts shall be swept away, Christ's followers can rejoice in their **heavenly treasure**, the riches that are imperishable.” COL, p. 374*

Albert Barnes

“This may be done by using our riches as we ‘should do;’ that is, by not suffering them to entangle us in cares and perplexities dangerous to the soul, engrossing the time, and stealing away the affections; by employing them in works of mercy and benevolence, aiding the poor, contributing to the advance of the gospel, bestowing them where they will do good, and in such a manner that God will ‘approve’ the deed, and will bless us for it.”

*“To those who **have squandered** His goods, Christ **still gives opportunity to secure lasting riches [we will face the judgment but it has not taken place yet]**. He says, “Give, and it shall be given unto you.” “Provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.” Luke 6:38; 12:33. “Charge them that are rich in this world, . . . that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.” 1 Timothy 6:17-19. COL, pp. 374, 375*

Summary

“If. . .

- A worldly person who has squandered his master’s goods
- Starts thinking about the future
- Begins benefitting others albeit with dishonest methods
- So that his friends will welcome him to their homes,

. . . How much more”:

- Should the children of the light who have squandered God’s goods
- Start thinking about the future
- Use the masters resources to benefit others
- So that the heavenly beings will welcome them to the heavenly home.

Verses 10-13

Luke 16:10-13

*“He who is faithful in what is least [**the riches in this life**] is faithful also in much [**the riches in the world to come**]; and he who is unjust in what is least [**in this life**] is unjust also in much [**in the life to come**]. ¹¹ Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous **mammon** [**the worldly wealth in this life**], who will commit to your trust the **true riches** [**the riches of wealth in heaven**]? ¹² And if you have not been faithful in what is **another man's**, who will give you what is **your own**? ¹³ “No servant can serve **two masters** [**love the Lord and hoard worldly riches**]; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve **God** and **mammon** [**claim to serve God and yet hoard riches in this life that don’t belong to you**].”*



“WHO CARES ABOUT CHRISTIAN STANDARDS?”

by Pastor Stephen Bohr

Lesson #6 - Faithful Unto Death

Then there are those who are willing alienate family in order to be faithful to their convictions.

Matthew 10:34-37: If we are not willing to **give up all** we cannot be His disciples:

*"Do not think that I came to bring **peace on earth**. I did not come to bring peace **but a sword**.³⁵ For I have come to 'set a man **against** his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law';³⁶ and 'a **man's enemies** will be those of his own household.'³⁷ He who loves father or mother **more** than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter **more** than Me is not worthy of Me.³⁸ And he who does not take his **cross** and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.³⁹ He who **finds his life** will lose it, and he who **loses his life** for My sake will find it."*

- Several years ago, I presented a **week of prayer** at the Seventh-day Adventist University near **Lima, Peru**.
- I presented a series on **Elijah** the first **four days** and then talked on the **battle of Armageddon**.
- A **21 year old** girl in **Peru** called **Lizette** came to talk with me on **Friday evening**.
- My family and I are **staunch Pentecostals**.

- “I have decided to be **baptized** into the Seventh-day Adventist Church” even at the **risk of infuriating** and **alienating my mother**.
- I told her to **go ahead** and be baptized if she felt the **conviction of the Holy Spirit**.
- Her mother came on **Sabbath the afternoon** of the baptism and told her to get all her **stuff together** because they were going home.
- However, what about “*honor your father and your mother*”? There is another **Bible verse that trumps** this one and it is “*it is more necessary to obey God than man.*”
- She is **back at school** without the **financial support** of her mother. The school will pay for her **room and board** but she is still looking for help to pay for her tuition.

Tell the story of **Josefina Mendez** (for the full story watch the video presentation available from Secrets Unsealed).

Is one thing to give up family and another to **give up life! What are you willing to die for?**

Luke 14:26, 27

*“If anyone comes to Me and **does not hate** his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and **his own life** also, he cannot be My disciple.
²⁷ And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”*

Some people are willing to die to protect their possessions

Bocanegra **stolen bicycle** (at **ICOLVEN**)

Some people are willing to die for the ideals of their country—we call it the ultimate sacrifice)

- On my way from **Miami to Fresno**
- A **25 year-old sergeant** stationed in **Iraq** came and sat next to me on the **AB side** of the aircraft. I could tell that **she** was **severely jet lagged**
- She had actually flown from **Iraq** to **Kuwait** to **Germany** to **Dallas** to **Fresno**.
- I had bought a **sandwich** and a bag of chips before boarding.

- I offered to **share half of my sandwich** and chips with her and as she ate it with **great relish** she said: *“this is the best food I have had in the last six months.”*
- We struck up a **conversation** that lasted the **whole 3-hour** flight.
- It so happens that she is from **El Salvador** and has family members that live in **Jacksonville, Houston, Washington State**.
- She told me she came to the United States when she was **5 years old** and enlisted in the **army** because she **loves the United States** and is willing to fight for its **ideals**.
- Toward the **end** of our conversation with **tears** in her eyes, she told me that she was coming to Fresno (actually **Hanford**) because her husband of **one and one half years** had advised her that he wanted a **divorce** because he had met **someone else** while she was gone.
- As she tried to **hold back the tears** (after all, **tough military personnel** are not supposed to cry, right?) she told me that she was going to **tell him what she thought of him**.
- He is **not expecting her** and in fact he had told her **not to show up** but just to **sign the papers**.
- I told her not to do **anything drastic** and told her that I would **pray** that the Lord would give her **wisdom to speak**. She is a Lutheran.
- She gave me **her card** and I promised to send her sermons on **DVD**.
- She told me that her **brother enlisted** because of the college **benefit** he could receive—the **GI bill**. He can’t wait to get out of the military. He is **not willing to die** he is merely serving for **mercenary motives**. However, **she is willing to put her life on the line** to uphold the ideals of the United States.

Some people are willing to die for a cause they believe in

- The **Muslim suicide bombers**.
- But say what we may about them, they are so **firm in their convictions** that they are willing to make the **ultimate sacrifice** for them.

Some people are willing to die for a friend

John 15:13

“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.”

Some military personnel have been willing to serve as **human shields** to protect their **fellow soldiers**.

Some are willing to die for Jesus and His truth

One of the places I wanted to visit in **Lima** was the palace of the **Inquisition**. Latin America had **three places** where the Inquisition functioned: **Colombia, Peru and Mexico**.

As one enters the palace, a large mural portrays what an **auto de fé** was like. Then one takes a left turn to enter the **torture chamber**. I was amazed as the **young girl** who was the tour guide **emotionless** described the methods that the Peruvian inquisition used to torture heretics. They used **dummies** to illustrate the various implements.

First, there was the **Strappado**:

- The victims **wrists were bound behind their back** and the rope would be **tossed over a beam**.
- With their arms behind their back the victims would be **slowly raised** and then **suddenly dropped** thus **dislocating** their arms and shoulders.
- Sometimes with weights up to **25 pounds** bound **to their feet**.

Then there was the **whipping post**:

- With hands and feet in the **stocks** the prisoner was beaten on the back with a whip a minimum of **50 times** and a maximum of **200 times**.

We took a **left turn** and on the left hand, side there was **the rack**:

- The inquisitors **laid the victim face up on a table** with **arms and legs extended**. The victim's **ankles and wrists** were then tied with **ropes**.
- **Wheels** at **either end** of the board were **turned** pulling the **legs downward** and the **arms upward** as the ropes got **tighter and tighter** until the body was stretched in **opposite directions** until **dislocation** of every joint occurred.
- The **shoulders, elbows, thighs and ankles** were **slowly dislocated** as the prisoner **writhed in pain**.

On the right hand was the **Garotte**:

- This implement **slowly strangled** the victim.
- The victims **hands and feet** were bound with a rope and a **noose was put around the neck**.
- In back of the chair was **a wheel** that worked as a **tourniquet**.
- The wheel was **slowly turned** and this **pulled the rope** tighter and tighter around the hands, feet and neck until the victim died of **strangulation**.

Water boarding was next:

- Another **left** and we are at **a bench** where the victim was **laid down face up**, his **nostrils were pinched** shut and water was poured down a **funnel** into the **victim's throat**.
- Sometimes **a cloth** was **forced down the throat** while **pouring the water** causing the sensation of **suffocation by drowning**.
- Anyone care to tell me what this method of torture is called today? **Water Boarding!** In times of a national emergency strange things happen!

Then we went down deep into **underground tunnels** where **dungeons** had been **hewn into the rock**.

- The **cubicles** were **barely larger than the person** who was forced into them.
- For days, they **were shut in** by the **cold** and in **absolute darkness** with barely enough room to **wiggle** without their **families even knowing** where they were.

Some victims were taken to the **Plaza de Armas** and **burned at the stake**.

These people were willing to suffer torture for their **faith** and even **death**.

The martyrs **loved not their lives even unto death** because their **love for Jesus and His truth** was **stronger than death** itself.

Revelation 12:10-12

"Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of

our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.¹¹ And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.¹² Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."

Job served God **without mercenary motives**. Does Job serve God for nothing? Job said: "though **He** slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

The **three young men** in the fiery furnace served God just **out of love**. Loyalty to God was more important than life itself.

Practical Questions

Let us talk about some **practical things** that will help us **evaluate** where we are:

- If we don't return a faithful **tithe** and give love **offerings** it shows that we are not committed. How do we think we will be willing to give all up even **our lives** if we do not return **the portion** that is His now?
- How committed are we when the **nominating committee** has to twist our arms to the **breaking point** to take a position of responsibility in the church?
- How committed are we when we say we don't have **time to come to prayer meeting** because we are **too tired** but we have time for the things that we enjoy doing such as **watching television**?
- There is a vital principle and it is this: If we are not willing **to live for Jesus**, we will not be willing to **die for Him**.

What are we going to say when we have to face Jesus on the **Day of Judgment**?

- Lord I was **too indebted** to be faithful to you in my tithes and offerings.
- Lord, I was **too busy** at my job to come to Prayer Meeting.
- Lord I was too **tired from working** all week to come to church.

The question I want to frame my talk around is this: Are we **so identified with Christ**, Is he so precious to us, is he **so important** that we would be willing to **give up everything for Him**? Would be willing to give up all our things and even our life for Him?

Peter felt **very sure** that he would **never deny Jesus** too and look at what happened. He was always **looking out for number one**. What shall we have? He was thinking about the **material and positional** advantages of being a follower of Jesus.

Is our **relationship with Jesus so strong** that we would be willing to **die for it**? Do we love Jesus so much that we would be willing **to give everything** up for Him? It will **happen again**, you can take it to the bank

*“God's word has given warning of the impending danger; let this be unheeded, and the Protestant world will learn what the purposes of Rome really are, only when it is too late to escape the snare. She is silently growing into power. Her doctrines are exerting their influence in legislative halls, in the churches, and in the hearts of men. She is piling up her lofty and massive structures in the **secret recesses of which her former persecutions will be repeated**. Stealthily and unsuspectedly she is strengthening her forces to further her own ends when the time shall come for her to strike. All that she desires is vantage ground, and this is already being given her. We shall soon see and shall feel what the purpose of the **Roman element** is. Whoever shall believe and obey the word of God will thereby incur **reproach and persecution**.” GC, p. 581*

The Central Focus of Jesus in His Time of Trouble

Jesus loved us so much that He was **willing to die** and remain **forever separated** from the Father. His **center of focus** was on us.

Isaiah 53:10-12: He **saw you personally** while He was on the cross. He would have come only for you! This is what **gave Him strength** to go through the time of anguish:

*“Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. He shall **see the labor of His soul**,*

and be satisfied. *By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many for He shall bear their iniquities."*

Hebrews 12:1-2

*"Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who ***for the joy that was set before Him*** endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."*

We were ***His top priority***; we were ***foremost in His mind***. ***His only focus*** on us got Him through His time of trouble. His ***only priority was us!***

Is our only priority Him? Do we have ***that kind of love*** for Jesus? It will be the ***only thing*** that will take us through the crisis ahead.

*"With the issues of the conflict before Him, Christ's soul was ***filled with dread*** of separation from God. Satan told Him that if He became the surety for a sinful world, the separation would be ***eternal***. He would be identified with Satan's kingdom, and would ***nevermore be one with God.***" *DA*, p. 686*

*"Three times has He uttered that prayer. Three times has humanity shrunk from the last, crowning sacrifice. But now the ***history of the human race*** comes up before the world's Redeemer. He sees that the transgressors of the law if left to themselves ***must perish***. He sees the ***helplessness of man***. He sees the power of sin. The woes and lamentations of a doomed world rise before Him. He beholds its impending fate, and ***His decision is made***. He will save man at ***any cost to Himself***. He accepts His baptism of blood that through Him ***perishing millions*** may gain everlasting life. He has left the courts of heaven, where all is purity, happiness, and glory, to save the one lost sheep, the one world that has fallen by transgression. And He will not turn from His mission. He will become the propitiation of a race that has willed to sin. His prayer now breathes only submission: "If this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done." *DA*, pp. 692, 693*

Nothing will separate us

Romans 8:32-35

*"Who shall **separate us** from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written: "For your sake **we face death** all day long; we are considered as sheep to be **slaughtered**." ³⁷ No, in all these things we are **more than conquerors** through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither **death nor life**, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will **be able to separate us** from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17:

*"For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the **dead in Christ** will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."*

Revelation 2:8-11: Tell the story of the early church during the period of Smyrna:

*"And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, 'These things says the First and the Last, who **was dead, and came to life**: ⁹ "I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. ¹⁰ Do not fear any of those things which you are about **to suffer**. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into **prison**, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation **ten days**. Be faithful **until death**, and I will give you the crown of life. ¹¹ "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the **second death**.'"*

Psalm 116:15

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

“WHO CARES ABOUT CHRISTIAN STANDARDS?”

by Pastor Stephen Bohr

Lesson #7 – STRANGE FIRE

Daniel was **18 years old** when he arrived in Babylon. Parents not there. Priests not there. Peer pressure from others.

Daniel 1:1, 2: The two sides in the conflict are introduced

*“In the third year of the reign of **Jehoiakim** king of Judah, **Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon** came to **Jerusalem** and besieged it. ² And **the Lord gave** Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the articles of the **house of God**, which he carried into the land of Shinar to the **house of his god**; and he brought the articles into the treasure house of **his god**.”*

- **Two kings:** Jehoiakim versus Nebuchadnezzar
- **Two gods:** Yahweh versus Marduk
- **Two cities:** Babylon versus Jerusalem
- **Two temples:** the temple of God versus the temple of Marduk
- **Two peoples:** The Hebrews versus the Babylonians

On the surface, Nebuchadnezzar appeared to have the **upper hand**. He and his god appeared to be **more powerful** than Jehoiakim and His God. However, Daniel 1:1, 2 removes the veil and shows that Nebuchadnezzar prevailed only because **God allowed it**. It was necessary that Daniel end up in Babylon because God had a very important work for him there:

Change of Diet

Daniel 1:5: The king appoints the diet. This was a small test. Nobody was looking.

The king appeared to have control by appointing the diet of Daniel and his friends. This diet differed radically from the original diet that God had appointed in Eden:

“And the king appointed for them a daily provision of the king's delicacies and of the wine which he drank, and three years of training for them, so that at the end of that time they might serve before the king.”

The king attempted to control the diet of Daniel and his friends in this way exhibiting his sovereignty over them. However, the Daniel and his friends refused to eat his rich food and drink his wine. This refusal on the part of Daniel and his friends reveals that Nebuchadnezzar was not in full control.

Daniel 1:8

“But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank.”

*“What if Daniel and his companions had made a compromise with those heathen officers, and had yielded to the pressure of the occasion, by eating and drinking as was customary with the Babylonians? That single instance of departure from principle would have weakened their sense of right and their abhorrence of wrong. Indulgence of appetite would have involved the sacrifice of physical vigor, clearness of intellect, and spiritual power. One wrong step would probably have led to others, until, their connection with Heaven being severed, they would have been swept away by temptation.” *FE*, pp. 80, 81*

Change of Names

Daniel 1:7: The king changed the names of the Hebrew worthies. In the Bible, the name is a revelation of the person's character:

“To them the chief of the eunuchs gave names: he gave Daniel the name Beltshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abed-Nego.”

The king appeared to be in control because he **changed the names** of Daniel and his friends. That the change had an **intentional purpose** as we can see in Daniel 4:8 where Nebuchadnezzar **brags** that he changed Daniel's name Belteshazzar to honor his gods rather than the God of Daniel.

Daniel 5:12 Even though the eunuch changed the names, he did so because the **king instructed** him to do so:

*"Inasmuch as an excellent spirit, knowledge, understanding, interpreting dreams, solving riddles, and explaining enigmas were found in this Daniel, whom **the king named Belteshazzar**, now let Daniel be called, and he will give the interpretation."*

Daniel 4:8:

*"But at last Daniel came before me (his name is Belteshazzar according to the **name of my god**)."*

Nebuchadnezzar's desire to control is revealed in the **rest of the book** by the fact that the king always refers to the Hebrew worthies by their Babylonian names. However, God and the Hebrew worthies employ their **Hebrew names**.

Change of Education

We see the king's desire to exhibit his control also by the fact that he had the Hebrew worthies enrolled in the **educational system** of Babylon. He wanted to **change their religion and world view** by putting them into the **school of Babylon** with the wise men; but the young men **were not buying!** Daniel and his friends never used the **divination methods** of the wise men. In fact, the wise men **hated them** because of their religious principles.

Daniel and his friends **made up their minds** that they would be faithful to the **God of their fathers** and God rewarded them by giving them true wisdom from heaven.

Daniel 1:17

*"As for these four young men, **God gave** them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams."*

The result of their faithfulness was apparent: Daniel and his friends were **ten times better** than **all** the wise men that ate Babylon's food and studied in the Babylon's school. Because of their faithfulness, God brought **them to prominence** in the kingdom.

Daniel 3

Image Chaldeans (3:8)
Worship and law (12 X)
King enraged (3:13)
Who shall deliver (3:15) **DELIVER**
Our God will deliver (3:16-18) **DELIVER**
Furnace 7 times hotter (3:18)
Countenance changed (19)
Son of God **DELIVERED** (3:25)
Angel **DELIVERED** (3:28)
Daniel trusted in His God (3:28)
King announces that God **DELIVERS** (3:29)

Daniel 6

6:4, 5: **Law** of his God
6:6-9: The **plot**
6:10: Daniel **prays as usual**
6:11: **Spies discover** Daniel praying
6:12, 13: They **complain** to the king
6:14: King **displeased** wants to **DELIVER**
6:16: May your **God DELIVER**
6:20: Has your God been **able to DELIVER?**
6:21, 22: My God has **DELIVERED**
6:23: **Believed** in his God
6:27: God **DELIVERS**

Daniel 12:1 (previous context): **Michael the archangel** will deliver

Revelation 13:3, 4: Who is like the beast?

Psalm 34:7: The Angel of the Lord delivers

Exodus 3:2: The Angel of the Lord in the bush
Exodus 23:20: The Angel has Jehovah's name

Obedience and trust is the key

- Abraham (leaving Ur and sacrificing Isaac)
- Nadab and Abihu
- Uzzah
- King Saul
- Noah
- Samson
- Gideon
- Moses leaving Egypt

“Men of principle need not the restriction of locks and keys; they do not need to be watched and guarded. They will deal truly and honorably at all times, alone, with no eye upon them, as well as in public. They will not bring a stain upon their souls for any amount of gain or selfish advantage. They scorn a mean act. Although no one else might know it, they would know it themselves, and this would destroy their self-respect. Those who are not conscientious and faithful in little things would not be reformed were there laws and restrictions and penalties upon the point.” 4T, pp. 573, 574



“WHO CARES ABOUT CHRISTIAN STANDARDS?”

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Lesson #8 - The Mind Manipulators

Physical and Spiritual Laws

A law of our physical being: We are physically composed of what we eat through our mouth.

A law of our spiritual being: We are spiritually composed of what we eat through our five senses, primarily our eyes and ears.

Deuteronomy 8:3, 4 makes the comparison between the physical and spiritual:

“So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.”

Ellen White measures in:

“It is a law both of the intellectual and the spiritual nature that by beholding we become changed. The mind gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is allowed to dwell. It becomes assimilated to that which it is accustomed to love and reverence.” GC, p. 555

The Human Brain

- Weighs an average of **3.3 pounds**.
- Has the capacity to record the entire library of congress **40 times over**. The library of congress has **16 million volumes** so $40 \times 16 \text{ million} = \mathbf{640 \text{ million}}$.
- You would have to build a **computer** the size of the **Empire State Building**, need all the water in **Niagara Falls** to cool it.
- The brain has a far greater capacity than a computer because it can **choose, love, reason**.
- The brain records **everything that comes** into it by the **five senses** and **we are what we allow to come in**.
- The brain is the **capital** of the body. It gives **orders** based on what we have **programmed** into it. What **goes in comes out**. He who **controls the brain controls you**. If you don't believe this, just think of a **hypnotist** that can program a person even to kill another.

Every **TV program**, every **radio program**, every **billboard** advertisement, every **book and magazine**, every **person seen**, every **suspicion cherished**, every **word spoken**, are indelibly recorded there. Our **character is composed** of what we allow to enter through our **five senses**.

Ellen White wrote:

*"The brain is the **capital** of the body, **the seat of all** the nervous forces and of mental action. The nerves proceeding from the brain **control the body** [so **whoever controls the brain controls the body**]. By the brain nerves, mental impressions are conveyed to all the nerves of the body as by telegraph wires, and they **control the vital action** of every part of the system. All the organs of motion are governed by the communications they **receive from the brain**." 3T, p. 69*

Many thoughts and actions that we assume are **spontaneous and uniquely our own** are instead **responses to information programed** into our **subconscious being** without being aware of the **process or the consequences**. The assault on our senses **by the media** is extremely **dangerous** because it is **subliminal** and **unperceived**. When we go to the

supermarket, we think that we are choosing the product when we are really making the choice based on what advertisers have programmed into our brain.

Ivan Petrovich Pavlov

Behavioral responses can be programmed by what goes into the brain.

Russian scientist, Ivan Petrovich Pavlov experimented with dogs and showed how the responses of people can be programmed. At the sound of a bell he would give them food. After doing this several times the dog salivated at the sound of the bell. Dashers salivates when my wife taps on his metal dish. Describe the psychology class at Andrews University with Professor Proctor.

Bottom line: Whoever has control of your brain controls you!

Advertisements

Let's do an experiment:

Pop, pop, fiz fiz oh what a relief it is _____

I can't believe I ate the whole thing _____

The choice of a new generation _____

Things go better with _____

There is always room for _____

Fly the friendly skies of _____

I'd walk a mile for a _____

Go _____ and leave the driving to us

Cleans like a white tornado _____

Victory or defeat in the Christian life depends on what we allow to enter our brain. What we allow to come into our brain through the five senses transforms it and determines our behavior. Let's analyze the implications of this for our spiritual life.

A Metamorphosis

2 Corinthians 3:18

*“But we all, with unveiled face, **beholding** as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are **being transformed [metamorphoo]** into the **same image** from glory to glory, just as by the **Spirit** of the Lord.”*

Illustration of the Word Metamorphosis

Allow me to provide an illustration. When I was a child living in **Venezuela**, I became quite a **proficient butterfly collector**. I learned so much about butterflies that I practically became an **amateur entomologist**.

The Caterpillar stage:

- A beautiful butterfly actually has **two births**.
- The **first birth** is from an egg as a **caterpillar**.
- The Caterpillar **slowly drags** itself along the branches of the tree where the **eggs were laid**.
- The Caterpillar **eats from one source**, it grows and then it **buries itself** in a cocoon.

The butterfly stage:

- **Inside the cocoon** a spectacular **miracle** takes place. A **transformation** occurs which is one of the **great marvels** of the natural world. Through a process that is known as **metamorphosis**, the caterpillar is **transformed** into a **beautiful butterfly**. I don't think anyone can **fully explain** how it happens but we can see that it does by the **results**.
- Even the **name of the creature** changes. It used to be called a caterpillar and now we call it a butterfly.
- Do its **habits change**?
- Does its **appearance change**?
- Does what it **eats** change?
- Does the **place it lives** change? Yes!
- Everything is **new and different**.

How did the transformation take place?

- The change **did not come** about because the caterpillar **made an effort** to change.
- The change came as a result of a **miracle of God**. The caterpillar became a new creation by a **miracle of God!!**
- A butterfly is **not a caterpillar with wings**. A butterfly is a totally **new creation**:

2 Corinthians 5:17

*“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a **new creation**; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”*

- You cannot **see the power** that transformed the caterpillar into a butterfly but you can **see the results** of that power in the beautiful butterfly.
- Jesus taught a similar lesson when He told **Nicodemus** that we cannot **see the wind** but we can see the **effects of the wind**.

Ellen White well remarks:

*“He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law is attempting **an impossibility**. There is no safety for one who has merely a **legal religion**, a **form of godliness**. The Christian's life is not a **modification** or **improvement** of the old, but a **transformation of nature**. There is a death to self and sin, and a **new life altogether**. This change can be brought about only by the effectual working of the **Holy Spirit**.” DA, p. 172*

Abiding in Jesus

- Describe my **jar, carbon tetra chloride**.

Speak of the process of catching Morpho butterflies in **Guamitas**. I **discovered their weakness** and they were easy prey (for the full story watch the video presentation available from Secrets Unsealed).

- We must **abide in Jesus** by **constantly beholding Him** because the **great hunter** is on the loose.

- We must **abide in Christ** if we want to be **safe and secure**.
- The butterflies that **left the refuge** became easy prey and were dead.
- The change is not a **once-for-all event**. We must abide in him by speaking with Him in **prayer**, studying His **Word** and **talking about Him**.

John 15:4

*“**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.”*

How to Abide in Jesus

As we behold **Jesus in the law** day by day, we are **being transformed** into **His image**. Every day I **love Jesus more** and I **hate sin** more and more and because of **what it did** to Jesus. Every day I wish to reflect in my life the **holiness of Jesus**. And the Holy Spirit, whom I received at conversion, provides **the power** to make this possible.

When I have this experience neither my parents, nor my pastor will have to tell me **how to dress**, **what to eat**, what **programs on television** not to watch, **what music** not to listen to.

My **life will not change** because I fear **being lost** or because I want a **heavenly reward**. The **motivating factor** will simply be that I want to be **like Jesus!**

*“By **beholding** Christ, by **talking** of Him, by **beholding** the loveliness of His character we become changed. Changed from glory to glory. And what is glory? Character,--and he becomes changed from character to character. Thus we see that there is a **work of purification** that goes on by beholding Jesus.” SD, p. 337*

We do not overcome sin by **fighting sin** but by **looking to Jesus**. We see **two things** when we look unto Jesus. *One of the things is beautiful and the other is ugly. I see His perfection and then I see Him mangled on the cross.*

*“It would be well for us to spend a **thoughtful hour each day** in contemplation of the life of Christ. We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones. As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice*

for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit. If we would be saved at last, we must learn the lesson of penitence and humiliation at the foot of the cross.”
DA, p. 83

Hebrews 12:1-3

*“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us **lay aside every weight**, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² **looking unto Jesus**, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”*

Jorge Rico, Teenie Finley, Ivan Duque

Romans 12:1, 2

*“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present **your bodies** a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.
² And do not be **conformed [to take the form of something. The world is the mold and we are poured into it and take its shape]** to **this world**, but be **transformed [metamorphoo]** by [how] the **renewing** of your mind, [the result] that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”*

The Bible is boring. Tell the story of **Tarzan novels** at **Wisconsin Academy**. How can the Bible compete with **Tarzan swinging** through trees in the jungle? When one is accustomed to **junk food**, healthy food is considered **boring and tasteless**. I had to **force myself** to enjoy Bible study.

1Corinthians 9:27: Use your **will power** along with prayer to subject your **sinful desires**:

“Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. ²⁵ And everyone who competes for the

prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. ²⁶ Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. ²⁷ But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.”

Tell story of our arrival in Colombia and how we ate **plantains** as bananas. Also some of our other experiences if I have time. How we learned to eat **papaya** (for the full story watch the video presentation available from Secrets Unsealed).

Beholding Jesus will change the way we **look at Christian standards**. We will not see them as **legalistic rules and regulations** that inhibit our freedom. We will want to dress modestly, be careful about what we read, what we watch, what we listen to, what we eat and drink, in order to reflect the beautiful character of Jesus.



“WHO CARES ABOUT CHRISTIAN STANDARDS?”

by Pastor Stephen Bohr

Lesson #9 – The Power of Music

Personal Premises

- I do not believe that it is wrong to use musical instruments in the worship service. However, I do believe that musicians can use instruments in a way that is spiritually destructive. The way in which instruments are used that determines the quality of the music. A trumpeter can play jazz or hymns.
- I believe that there is a clear distinction between sacred music and secular music and that we should not mingle the sacred with the common. The use of secular music is inappropriate in the Church.
- I believe that the quality of the music is just as important as the lyrics. Music is not neutral. There is good and bad music.
- I do not believe that we can only sing hymns from the Seventh-day Adventist Church Hymnal. There are some very appropriate praise songs.
- I believe that the music that God would have us use in worship is transnational and transcultural. God does not have different genres of music of music in heaven depending on what planet the music is being sung. Heaven has a music style that all the beings of the universe use.

- I believe that where **much is given much is expected**. God expects **higher quality** of music from individuals who are **professional musicians** than the **common church member** who has no knowledge of the components of music theory. To whom much has been given, **much will be expected**.

Theology and Music Style at Indiana

Ellen White had some very solemn things to say about **famous camp meeting** that took place in Muncie, Indiana in **September of 1900**.

Some have **minimized** what happened at the Indiana camp meeting stating that Ellen White objected to the **holy flesh theology** but **not to the music and worship style**. Those who say this are **simply not reading** what Ellen White wrote. Ellen White repeatedly **took issue** with the **worship style**, particularly the **music**.

Before I share with you what Ellen White **actually said** about the music at the Indiana camp meeting, I want to say something about a **theory** that has proliferated primarily in **many youth departments** of our local churches and **conferences**—a theory that is **theologically and scientifically baseless**. The idea is that **music in itself is neutral**, that what really matters are the **lyrics**. If the song has **Christian lyrics** then the **music style** that accompanies the words makes **no difference**.

This **idea is absurd**. Scientists have clearly done studies that reveal the **demoralizing or elevating** power of music. **Therapists** use music to **heal** and **rock musicians** use their music to **demoralize and debase**.

Lucifer the Musician

Remember that **Lucifer** was the leader of the **heavenly choirs** so he **must know** all about the **power of music**. Music **causes emotional reactions**.

Provide here the example of a **terror** movie with a **waltz**. Music does have a **deep psychological impact** on young people.

*“The art of sacred melody was diligently cultivated [in the schools of the prophets]. No **frivolous waltz** was heard, nor **flippant song** that should extol*

man and divert the attention from God; but sacred, solemn psalms of praise to the Creator, exalting His name and recounting His wondrous works. Thus music was made to serve a holy purpose, to lift the thoughts to that which was pure and noble and elevating, and to awaken in the soul devotion and gratitude to God.” Counsels to the Church, p. 172

Some have **questioned** whether Lucifer was a **musician**. His most effective method is to **intermingle** the good with the bad.

First of all **Ezekiel 28:13** makes it abundantly clear that when God created Lucifer He prepared musical instruments for him.

Secondly, Ellen White explicitly states that Lucifer was the leader of the heavenly choirs:

*“Satan had **led the heavenly choir**. He had raised the **first not** and then all the angelic host had united with him, and glorious strains of music had resounded through heaven in honor of God and His dear Son.” Story of Redemption, p. 25*

Ellen White has also clearly warned that **Satan** knows which **organs to stimulate** in the **youth** so that Christ is not desired:

*“I feel alarmed as I witness everywhere the **frivolity** of **young** men and **young** women who **profess** to believe the truth. God does not seem to be in their thoughts. Their minds are filled with **nonsense**. Their conversation is only **empty, vain** talk. They have a **keen ear** for music, and Satan knows what **organs** to excite to **animate, engross, and charm** the mind so that Christ is **not desired**. The spiritual longings of the soul for divine **knowledge**, for a **growth** in grace, are wanting.” Testimonies for the Church, volume 1, p. 496*

Is it just possible that some of the music that some **Adventist churches use** is actually leading our young people **to not desire Christ**? Would this be Satan’s prime objective to mingle the sacred and the common in order to confuse?

Speaking at a Workers Meeting

I was once was invited to speak at a **workers’ meeting** in a certain conference and after my presentation, **three pastors** challenged my remarks about the **dangers of allowing culture** to dictate the music we use for worship. They

argued that this kind of music should be encouraged in order to **retain the youth in the church**. I then asked them the question:

*“Do you believe that **all** contemporary Christian Music is appropriate in Seventh-day Adventist worship?”*

They all answered in unison:

“No”

Then I asked them:

“Which music is appropriate and which is not?”

There was **total silence** for a few moments and one of the pastors said:

“Good question. I had not thought about that.”

Elements of Ellen White’s Comments on Indiana

Ellen White’s comments regarding the Indiana camp meeting are in **Selected Messages, volume 2**, pp. Even a quick reading of these pages reveals **several undeniable facts**.

- Satan used this **style of music** to distract people from the **present Truth** in order to **neutralize** the power and influence of the **third angel’s message**.
- The Holy Spirit **never manifests himself** in this style of worship.
- This style of worship is **not needed to convert souls** to the Truth.
- This style of worship will be **seen once more** in our camp meetings just before the **close of probation**.
- We **should not encourage** this style of worship.
- Ellen White’s criticism had to do with the **style of music** that was used and also the way in which the **musical instruments** were employed.

Ellen G. White Quotes

Here are some excerpts:

*“The Holy Spirit never reveals itself in such **methods**, in such a **bedlam of noise**.”*

*“This is an invention of Satan to cover up his ingenious methods for making of **none effect** the pure, sincere, elevating, ennobling, sanctifying **truth for this time**.”*

*“Better never have the worship of God blended with music than to **use musical instruments** to do the work which last January was represented to me would be brought into **our camp meetings**.”*

*“The **truth for this time** needs nothing of this kind in its work of **converting souls**. A **bedlam of noise** shocks the senses and perverts that which if conducted aright might be a blessing.”*

*“The powers of satanic agencies **blend with the din and noise**, to have a carnival, and this is termed the Holy Spirit's working.”*

*“I will not go into all the painful history; it is too much. But last January the Lord showed me that **erroneous theories and methods** would be brought into our camp meetings, and that the **history of the past would be repeated**.”*

*“I felt greatly distressed. I was instructed to say that at these demonstrations **demons in the form of men** are present, working with all the ingenuity that Satan can employ to make **the truth disgusting** to sensible people; that the enemy was trying to arrange matters so that the camp meetings, which have been the means of bringing **the truth of the third angel's message** before multitudes, should **lose their force and influence** . . .”*

*“The **third angel's message** is to be given in **straight lines**. It is to be kept free from every thread of the **cheap, miserable inventions of men's theories**, prepared by the father of lies, and disguised as was the brilliant serpent used by Satan as a medium of deceiving our first parents. Thus Satan tries to put his stamp upon the work God would have stand forth in purity.”*

*“The **Holy Spirit** has nothing to do with such a confusion of **noise** and **multitude of sounds** as passed before me last January. Satan works amid the din*

and confusion of **such music**, which, **properly conducted**, would be a praise and glory to God. He makes its effect like the poison sting of the serpent . . .”

“Those things, which have been in the past, **will be in the future**. Satan will make **music a snare** by **the way in which it is conducted**. God calls upon His people, who have the light before them in the Word and in the Testimonies, to read and consider, and to take heed.”

“Clear and definite instruction has been given in order that all may understand. But the **itching desire to originate something new** results in strange doctrines, and largely destroys the influence of those who would be a power for good if they held firm the beginning of their confidence in the truth the Lord had given them.”

“The things you have described as taking place in Indiana, the Lord has shown me **would take place just before the close of probation** . . .”

“Every uncouth thing will be demonstrated. There will be **shouting, with drums, music, and dancing**. The senses of rational beings will become so confused that they cannot be trusted to make right decisions. And this is **called the moving of the Holy Spirit**.”

It will be noticed that sister White repeatedly emphasizes the **importance of present** truth and the three angels’ message for this time. The music in our worship services must **communicate** the **unique message** and **mission** of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We cannot **simply sing the repetitive and insipid praise songs** that have been composed by evangelical and Pentecostal composers because they are **totally oblivious** to what Jesus is presently doing in the **most holy place** of the heavenly sanctuary. They are worshiping in the **holy place** while Jesus is in the most holy place.

Hymns for the Occasion

A few years ago, I received an invitation to speak at a **camp meeting** on the subject of worship. I underlined how the **sermon should be central** in the worship service and that music should **support the sermon**. After my presentation, a staunch **advocate of CCM** brought to my attention that in the **heavenly worship scenes** in the book of Revelation there is no sermon but rather **just singing and praise**. His point was that in heaven, **praise music**

trumps the message. To be honest, I did not have as **good answer** to his argument until I sat down to study the matter.

When I studied the worship scenes in the book of **Revelation** I discovered that the heavenly beings **don't sing just to sing.** In other words, they don't just put a concert together with a **collection of praise songs.** Each hymn that they sing has a **central theme** and focus that is based on a **historical event** that has just transpired before they sing the song. So to speak, the live **historical event is the sermon** of the worship service and the **music is the response** to the historical event. Let's take the worship scenes one by one.

It has become common in many Adventist worship services to dedicate the **majority of the time** to praise, leaving very **little time** for the preaching of the word of God. I will **say more about this** at the end of the sermon but for now allow me to read a statement from the Spirit of Prophecy:

*"Let not your efforts be to follow the **world's way** but to follow God's way. Outward display will not do the work the Lord desires to have done to arouse the higher classes to a conviction that they have heard the truth. Do not **divest the truth of its dignity and impressiveness by preliminaries** that are more after the order of the world than after the order of heaven. Let your hearers understand that you do not hold Sunday evening meetings to **charm their senses with music** and other things, but **to preach the truth** in all its solemnity, that it may come to them as a warning, arousing them from their deathlike sleep of self-indulgence. It is the naked truth that, like a sharp, two-edged sword, cuts both ways . . ."*
Evangelism, p. 148

Revelation 4

In **Revelation 4** before Jesus arrived in heaven at the ascension the focus of heaven was upon **God the Father** who was sitting on His throne. In harmony with the occasion, the music the **twenty-four elders** and the **four living creatures** sang on this occasion centered on God the Father as the **Creator**:

Revelation 4:11:

*"You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You **created** all things, and by Your will they exist and were **created.**"*

Death on the Cross

When Jesus **died on the cross**, the worship music of the heavenly throng centered on the **victory of Jesus over Satan**:

Revelation 12:10

*"Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven: "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the **accuser of our brethren**, who accused them before our God day and night, **has been cast down.**"*

Father's Acceptance of Christ's Sacrifice

When Jesus **arrived in heaven** at His ascension, the theme of the **choral music** shifted from God the Father as the Creator to **Jesus the Redeemer**. The four living creatures, the twenty-four elders and the angelic host sang a new song for the occasion:

Revelation 5:9-12, NIV

*"You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because **you were slain**, and **with your blood you purchased** men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth." Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they sang: "**Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain**, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"*

Taking over the Kingdom

When Jesus finally **takes over the kingdoms** of this world at the sounding of the seventh trumpet, the central theme song of the heavenly beings will focus on this great event:

Revelation 11:15, 16

*"Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The **kingdoms of this world** have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His*

*Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying: "We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was and who is to come, because **You have taken Your great power and reigned.**"*

Victory over the Beast and his Image

When God's people **finally gain the victory** over the beast and his image they will sing the Song of Moses and the Lamb, the song of their deliverance:

Revelation 15:3, 4:

*"Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints! Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, for Your **judgments have been manifested.**" Revelation 15:3, 4*

Judging the Harlot

When God finally **judges the harlot** who has shed the blood of His people, the song of the heavenly choirs will reflect this event:

Revelation 19:1, 2

*"After these things I heard a loud voice of a **great multitude in heaven**, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God! ² For true and righteous are His judgments, **because He has judged the great harlot** who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her."*

New Heavens and Earth

Finally, when the redeemed are in the **Holy City** and the wicked are outside, the song of the righteous will reflect that which they anticipate:

Revelation 21:3, 4:

*"And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He **will** dwell with them, and they **shall** be His people. God Himself **will** be with them and be their God. And God **will** wipe away every tear from their*

eyes; there **shall** be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There **shall** be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

The point is that our Seventh-day Adventist worship experience **today must reflect our unique message and mission**. The present truth message for today is that Jesus is in the **most holy place** and He is about to begin the judgment of the living. Should not our worship experience **reflect this fact?** Should not our **theology** determine our **doxology**? Should not present truth dictate what we sing in the worship service?

If we worship **like the Pentecostals and evangelicals**, what reason do we have **to exist?** How can we say that our worship service is **Adventist** when we **rarely sing or preach** about what Jesus is doing presently in the heavenly sanctuary and what we should do in parallel fashion on earth?

Final Counsels from Ellen White

*"No words can properly set forth the deep blessedness of genuine worship. When human beings sing with the Spirit and the understanding, **heavenly musicians** take up the strain, and **join in the song** of thanksgiving. He who has bestowed upon us all the gifts that enable us to be workers together with God, expects His servants to **cultivate their voices**, so that they can speak and sing in a way that all can understand. It is **not loud singing** that is needed, but **clear intonation, correct pronunciation, and distinct utterance**. Let all take time to cultivate the voice, so that God's praise can be sung in **clear, soft** tones, not with **harshness** and **shrillness** that offend the ear. The ability to sing is the gift of God; let it be used to His glory." 9T, pp. 143, 144. (1909)*

*"In some of our churches I have heard **solos** that were altogether unsuitable for the service of the Lord's house. The **long-drawn-out notes** and the peculiar sounds common in **operatic singing** are not pleasing to the angels. They delight to hear the **simple songs** of praise sung in a **natural tone**. The songs in which every word is uttered **clearly**, in a **musical tone**, are the songs that they join us in singing. They take up the refrain that is sung **from the heart** with the **spirit** and the **understanding**." Manuscript 91, 1903*

Satan does not want people to hear the solemn, life and death message for today, therefore he **substitutes** all sorts of gimmicks which are **excite the emotions, the feelings and the senses**. But these are only **temporary fixes to a mortal spiritual illness**. They may **excite, alleviate, and calm for a season** but they offer no real and permanent remedy for the sickness called sin. They are like taking a **Tylenol** or a shot of **adrenalin** to cure **cancer**. Tylenol may make the person **feel better for a while**, but it will not cure the cancer.

Things to Remember about Music

- The lyrics must present the unique and distinctive Adventist message.
- The great Christian hymns have a building pattern where each stanza builds upon the other and when the hymn is finished you have a complete argument (example, How Great Thou Art).
- It should contain a balance between melody and harmony with the melody predominating.

*“No words can properly set forth the deep blessedness of genuine worship. When human beings sing with the Spirit and the understanding, **heavenly musicians** take up the strain, and **join in the song** of thanksgiving. He who has bestowed upon us all the gifts that enable us to be workers together with God, expects His servants to **cultivate their voices**, so that they can speak and sing in a way that all can understand. It is **not loud singing** that is needed, but **clear intonation, correct pronunciation, and distinct utterance**. Let all take time to cultivate the voice, so that God's praise can be sung in **clear, soft** tones, not with **harshness** and **shrillness** that offend the ear. The ability to sing is the gift of God; let it be used to His glory.” 2T, pp. 143, 144. (1909)*

- Music is **subliminal** because it bypasses the centers of reason and logic.
- Music should not be characterized by **vain repetition**.
- Music not only expresses feelings and emotions, it also has power to **impact feelings**. It can cause sadness, fear, joy and suspense.

- Music should not be **shrill and loud** in volume because the din and noise makes it more difficult to hear God's voice:

Great improvement can be made in singing. Some think that the louder they sing the more music they make; but noise is not music. Good singing is like the music of the birds--subdued and melodious. Evangelism, p. 510

- It should harmonize with the **natural rhythm of the body**. It should not use constant syncopation
- Scientists have studied effects of various contemporary music genres such as rock, rap, jazz, and have found that they have a profoundly negative physical and moral effect. These musical genres, among others, are frequently accompanied by vice, dance, partying, and sexual promiscuity. Many of these musical styles had the origins in New Orleans and they ought to stay there.
- The voice should not be distorted no use long, drawn out notes

*"In some of our churches I have heard **solos** that were altogether unsuitable for the service of the Lord's house. The **long-drawn-out notes** and the peculiar sounds common in **operatic singing** are not pleasing to the angels. They delight to hear the **simple songs** of praise sung in a **natural tone**. The songs in which every word is uttered **clearly**, in a **musical tone**, are the songs that they join us in singing. They take up the refrain that is sung **from the heart** with the **spirit** and the **understanding**." Manuscript 91, 1903*

- God is pleased when we use **musical instruments** when used properly: **Psalm 150**.

"Let the talent of singing be brought into the work. The use of musical instruments is not at all objectionable. These were used in religious services in ancient times. The worshipers praised God upon the harp and cymbal, and music should have its place in our services. It will add to the interest." Evangelism p. 150

- Music should not attract the attention of the people **to the artist** nor should its main objective be financial gain.

Abide by Principle

“The work of the enemy is not abrupt; it is not, at the outset, sudden and startling; it is a secret undermining of the strongholds of principle. It begins in apparently small things--the neglect to be true to God and to rely upon Him wholly, the disposition to follow the customs and practices of the world.” PP, p. 717

“Some have so long sacrificed principle that they cannot see the difference between the sacred and the common. Those who refuse to give heed to the Lord's instruction will go steadily downward in the path of ruin.” 8T, p. 96



“WHO CARES ABOUT CHRISTIAN STANDARDS?”

by Pastor Stephen Bohr

Lesson #10 - Are Christian Standards for Puritans?

Introduction

It has become fashionable in some circles of our own beloved SDA church that our lifestyle standards are too strict. Traditionally the church has frowned on drinking coffee, eating in restaurants on Sabbath, eating pork and other unclean meats, drinking wine with our meals, smoking tobacco, using drugs, going to the theater, listening to certain types of music, wearing jewelry, marrying one not of our faith, etc.

Some in our midst are claiming that following all these rules is legalistic, that they were fine for the 19th century during the life of Ellen White but we have outgrown them. They were all right for puritans but not for the sophisticated people of the 21st century.

Father Knows Best

We must begin by saying that God is all-knowing.

Because His knowledge is full and complete He certainly knows what is best for us, what will strengthen our relationship with him and what will weaken it.

My Experience with my Parents

- Running behind **a wagon**. I thought I knew better than my **legalistic**, nitpicking parents did. I have a **cap on my front tooth** as a result
- My parents told me not to **play with matches**.
- My parents told me not to **throw rocks** and I a fellow student's leg.
- You might think that I was a **regular wreck** and sometimes I was

Did my parents **establish these rules** for me because they wanted me to be **unhappy**?

Standards are an expression of **God's love for us**. He does not ask us to do or not do anything **just because He says so** but because it is for **our own good**. After all, God has been **around a lot longer** than we have, and **knows a lot more** than we do and He should know what is for **our good and what is not**.

Deuteronomy 6:24

*"And the Lord commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, **for our good always**, that He might preserve us alive, as it is this day."*

Proverbs 3:1, 2

*"My son, do not forget my law, but let your heart keep my commands; ² For **length of days** and **long life** and peace they will add to you."*

Proverbs 4:20-22

*"My son, **give attention** to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. ²¹ **Do not let them depart** from your eyes; **keep them** in the midst of your heart; ²² for they **are life** to those who find them, and **health** to all their flesh."*

Examples from Secular Society

Automobile Owner's Manual:

Is it **legalism** to follow its instructions? Is it legalism to follow the manual standards about **oil, tire pressure, transmission fluid**, etc.? Of course not. The

instructions are given so that your **car will function** the way it should and have a **long life** so we do not have large **expense bills**. THE **MANUFACTURER KNOWS BEST!**

A Traffic Light:

Why do I stop at a traffic light? Why do you **obey traffic signals**? Why do we not **drive DWI**? Are these laws **nitpicking legalistic** or are they there to **preserve life**? There are **two ways** of looking at a stop light

Health Laws:

Why has God given us health laws? They exist to **guarantee good health** so that we are **not sick** all the time. Pork, alcohol, tobacco, lobster, coffee are a **detriment to our health** and happiness. **God does not want** us to suffer and to pay money for **doctors and hospitals**.

Standards of Marriage:

I give my wife **birthday cards, anniversary presents**, and take her **out to eat**. And she **cares for the house**. I give her a **mother's day** present and do not run around with **other women**. You see, there are **standards and laws** in marriage. If my wife did not love me or me her, doing all these things would be **an obligation** and **a burden**. However, because of love, these things are **spontaneous and natural**. If love is in the heart, I will observe the standards because **love flows** from the heart.

Many see God's laws and standards as a **yoke of bondage**. They think that God's standards are **excessively restrictive** but they are not. They are **for our good** always!

The Issue of Artificial Adornment

I would like to dedicate our **remaining time** to address a practice that has become **ever more prevalent** in the church in the **last few decades**, the use of **jewelry**. Let us go back to the place where this practice is **first mentioned** in the Bible, albeit, **indirectly**.

Genesis 6:1-4

*“Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them,² that the **sons of God** saw the **daughters of men**, that they were **beautiful**; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.³ And the Lord said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.”⁴ There were **giants** on the earth in those days, and **also afterward**, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they **bore children to them**. Those were the mighty men who were of old, **men of renown** [same expression used in **Genesis 11:3, 4**].⁵ Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”*

The Common View

A common view held by **commentators** and **Bible versions** today is that the sons of God were **fallen angels** that had sexual relations with **human women** and produced a race of mighty **hybrids**, part demon and part human—**the giants**.

Some **Bible translations** have followed the lead of Jewish tradition and have translated the word:

- ‘giants’ as ‘nephilim’ (**NIV, ESV**)
- ‘children of the supernatural beings’ (**Contemporary English Version**)
- ‘the fallen ones’ (**Young’s Literal Translation**)
- ‘evil beings from the spirit world’ (**Living Bible**)

The Bible View of the Sons of God and Daughters of Men

So, **who are** the sons of God and the giants? The **context** rather than the **interpreters and Bible versions** must give us the answer.

#1: Let us consider first the **immediate context**:

- Genesis 4: The Genealogy of **Cain** (the wicked)
- Genesis 5: The Genealogy of **Seth** (the righteous)

- Genesis 6: The **sons of God** (righteous) and the **daughters of men** (wicked)

#2: Bible Commentators:

Martin Luther:

“The true meaning of the passage [Genesis 6:1-4] is that Moses designates as sons of God those people who had the promise of the blessed Seed.”

#3: Ellen G. White:

*“**Unhallowed marriages** of the **sons of God** with the **daughters of men** resulted in apostasy which ended in the **destruction** of the world by a flood.” 5T, p. 93*

*“Seth was one of more noble stature than Cain or Abel, and resembled Adam more than did any of his other sons. The **descendants of Seth** separated themselves from the wicked **descendants of Cain**. They **cherished the knowledge** of God's will, while the ungodly race of Cain had **no respect for God** and his sacred commandments. But when men **multiplied** upon the earth, the **children of Seth** saw that the **daughters of the descendants of Cain** were very beautiful, and they departed from God and displeased him by **taking wives** as they chose of the idolatrous race of Cain.” Signs of the Times, February 20, 1879.*

Sons of God in Job

However, is it not true that that the **book of Job** refers to the ‘the sons of God’ as angels? Yes. However, here we have another **very important principle**. Just because a word or expression means one thing in one context does not mean that we must understand it in the same way **in another context**.

- For example, **a lion** can refer to Christ, Satan, Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar or Judah.
- **Leaven** can symbolize sin or the secret of church growth.
- A **sword** can represent the Bible or the punitive power of the state to punish transgressions of the civil code.

It is true that the expression ‘sons of God’ is **used of angels** (Job 38:7; 1:8; 2:1) but in **other contexts** it is used of human beings who have been **converted** to the Lord. Here is **one example**:

Romans 8:14

*“For as many as are led **by the Spirit of God**, these are sons of God.”*

Who were the Giants?

The ‘giants’ **cannot be** a hybrid amalgamation of angels with human women for at least **three reasons**:

- There were giants both **before** and **after** the sons of God came in to the daughters of men.
- There were *nephilim* **in Canaan** long after the flood (Numbers 13:33). These giants in Canaan could **not refer to the pre-flood giants** because the flood destroyed all the pre-flood giants. If the universal flood destroyed them, how could they be alive in **Canaan eight hundred years** later?
- Furthermore, Jesus said that angels **do not marry** nor are they given in marriage. There is no Scripture evidence that angels procreate (Luke 20:34, 35).
- They were ‘giants’ in **size, intellect and length of life and evil**.

Something true about the View of Jewish Tradition

Obviously, Jewish tradition is wrong, but there is one detail in **Jewish tradition** that is quite **accurate**. The **sons of God saw something** in the ‘daughters of men’ that they **did not see** in the daughters of God. What was it?

Jewish Tradition:

*“Flee therefore, fornication, my children, and command your wives and your daughters, that they **adorn** not their **heads and faces** to deceive the mind, because every woman who uses **these wiles** hath been reserved for eternal punishment. For thus they **allured the Watchers** who were before the flood.” T. Reuben 5:5-7*

*“And it came to pass when the sons of men began to multiply on the face of the ground, and beautiful daughters were born to them, that the **sons of the great ones** saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, with **eyes painted** and **hair***

curled, walking in ***nakedness of flesh***, and they conceived lustful thoughts; and they ***took them wives*** of all they chose." *Targum of Pseudo Jonathan* 6:1-2

"Azazel is represented in the Book of Enoch as the leader of the rebellious giants in the time preceding the flood; he taught men the ***art of warfare***, of making swords, knives, shields, and coats of mail, and ***women the art of deception by ornamenting the body, dyeing the hair, and painting the face and the eyebrows***, and also revealed to the people the secrets of ***witchcraft and corrupted their manners***, leading them into wickedness and impurity; until at last he was, at the Lord's command, ***bound*** hand and foot by the archangel Raphael and ***chained*** to the rough and jagged rocks of [Ha] Duduael (= Beth Hadudo), where he is to abide in ***utter darkness*** until the great Day of Judgment, when he will be cast into the fire to be ***consumed forever*** (Enoch viii. 1, ix. 6, x. 4-6, liv. 5, lxxxviii. 1; see Geiger, "Jüd. Zeit." 1864, pp. 196-204).

Genesis 6:2: Sons of God (**the lineage of the righteous**) that the daughters of men (**the lineage of Cain**) were **beautiful**. Something **caught the eye** of the sons of God.

Notice that the sons of God took the **initiative**. **They chose** among them, they **went in** to them.

Key question:

What did the sons of God see in the daughters of men that they did **not see** in the **daughters of God**.

The Meaning of Names

Genesis 6:2 emphasizes that they **were beautiful**. Something **external and visible** caught the eye of the sons of God.

The genealogy of **Seth has no women** in it—all men while the genealogy of Cain has three women mentioned. There are **three woman** mentioned there and their names highlight their external physical qualities.

Peter and Paul

1 Peter 3:1-4

*“Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the **conduct** of their wives,² when they observe your **chaste conduct** accompanied by fear.³ Do not let your **adornment** be merely *[this word is added by the NKJV]* **outward**—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—⁴ rather let it be the **hidden person of the heart**, with the incorruptible **beauty** of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is **very precious** in the sight of God.”*

1 Timothy 2:8-10, NIV

*“I also want women to dress **modestly**, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes,¹⁰ but with **good deeds**, appropriate for women who **profess** to worship God.”*

Lucifer and Jesus

Lucifer’s Beauty:

Ezekiel 28:17: Beauty led to his downfall

*“Your **heart** was **lifted up** because of your **beauty**.” God covered him with every precious stone. Therefore, some people say that God put jewelry on him so we can use it as well.*

Christ’s beauty:

Isaiah 53:2-3: He had **no physical attractiveness**. He was not to **attract attention to Himself** but rather **to His father**. He was **ordinary**:

*“For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has **no form or comeliness**; and when we see Him, there is **no beauty** that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows*

and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him."

*"The world's Redeemer did not come with **outward display**, or a show of worldly wisdom. Men could not see, beneath the guise of humanity, the glory of the Son of God. He was "despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." He was to them as "a root out of a dry ground," with "no form nor comeliness," [Isaiah 53:3, 2.] that they should desire Him." GW, p. 49*

The **Sanctuary** was very ordinary **outside** but beautiful **inside**. The sanctuary represented the different aspects of the character of Jesus. In the Bible, we have **no physical description** of Jesus but we have an abundance of information about the beauty of his character. **External beauty** is certainly **skin deep**. Real beauty is internal and is manifested eternally in a character similar to Jesus!

A woman I was giving a Bible study to:

"If I don't use makeup and use jewelry my husband will not give me a second look!" She saw the light and now uses no jewelry and she is faithful to the Lord revealing a sweet disposition."

Ellen White wrote:

*"Christians **are not to** decorate the person with costly array or expensive ornaments. All this display imparts **no value** to the character. The Lord desires every **converted** person to put away the idea that dressing as **worldlings dress**, will give **value to his influence**. The ornamentation of the person with **jewels and luxurious things** is a species of **idolatry**. This **needless display** reveals a love for those things which are supposed to place a **value upon the person**. It gives evidence to the world of a heart **destitute of the inward adornment**. Expensive dress and adornments of jewelry give an **incorrect representation** of the truth that should always be represented as of the highest value. An over-dressed, **outwardly adorned person** bears the sign of **inward poverty**. A **lack of spirituality** is revealed." Bible Training School, May 1, 1908*

A Concluding Statement

The process from Christ to the world is slow and imperceptible:

*“The work of the enemy is **not abrupt**, it is **not sudden** and startling; it is a **secret undermining** of the strongholds of **principle**. It commences in **small things**-- the neglect to be true to God and to rely upon him wholly, the disposition to concede to the **demands of the world** for the sake of **gaining numbers** on the church book.” Review and Herald, August 12, 1884*

“Men of principle need not the restriction of locks and keys; they do not need to be watched and guarded. They will deal truly and honorably at all times, alone, with no eye upon them, as well as in public. They will not bring a stain upon their souls for any amount of gain or selfish advantage. They scorn a mean act. Although no one else might know it, they would know it themselves, and this would destroy their self-respect. Those who are not conscientious and faithful in little things would not be reformed were there laws and restrictions and penalties upon the point.” 4T, pp. 573, 574



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SECRETS UNSEALED

5949 E. Clinton Ave.

Fresno, CA 93727

559-264-2300

888-REV-1412 | 888-738-1412

info@secretsunsealed.org

SecretsUnsealed.org | SUMTV.org

