

SABBATH BIBLE LESSONS

Senior Division



PRAYER

Vol. 94, No. 3

July–September, 2018

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Sabbath Bible Lessons, a daily study program, is based solely on the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy without additional comments. The quotations are as brief as possible to provide concise, direct thoughts. Brackets [] are supplied in some cases to ensure clarity, proper context, and smooth readability. Further study in the source materials is strongly recommended.

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Foreword

“Our heavenly Father waits to bestow upon us the fullness of His blessing. It is our privilege to drink largely at the fountain of boundless love. What a wonder it is that we pray so little! God is ready and willing to hear the sincere prayer of the humblest of His children, and yet there is much manifest reluctance on our part to make known our wants to God. What can the angels of heaven think of poor helpless human beings, who are subject to temptation, when God’s heart of infinite love yearns toward them, ready to give them more than they can ask or think, and yet they pray so little and have so little faith? . . .

“The darkness of the evil one encloses those who neglect to pray. The whispered temptations of the enemy entice them to sin; and it is all because they do not make use of the privileges that God has given them in the divine appointment of prayer. Why should the sons and daughters of God be reluctant to pray, when prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven’s storehouse, where are treasured the boundless resources of Omnipotence? Without unceasing prayer and diligent watching we are in danger of growing careless and of deviating from the right path. The adversary seeks continually to obstruct the way to the mercy seat, that we may not by earnest supplication and faith obtain grace and power to resist temptation.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 94, 95.

What a great privilege we have to come before God, our Father, in prayer. At times we may not be able to kneel down and pray formally to Him, but we can still commune with Him. He who knows how to supply us abundantly above all we can ask or think will hear and answer our prayers, not always as we desire, but as He sees best. As we make prayer a priority and a regular habit, we will turn to Him for guidance as naturally as the plant turns toward the sun. “Not one sincere prayer is lost. Amid the anthems of the celestial choir, God hears the cries of the weakest human being. We pour out our heart’s desire in our closets, we breathe a prayer as we walk by the way, and our words reach the throne of the Monarch of the universe. They may be inaudible to any human ear, but they cannot die away into silence, nor can they be lost through the activities of business that are going on. Nothing can drown the soul’s desire. It rises above the din of the street, above the confusion of the multitude, to the heavenly courts. It is God to whom we are speaking, and our prayer is heard.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 174.

May God help us as we study these lessons this quarter to learn to trust our heavenly Father more and to have unbroken communion with Him.

The General Conference Sabbath School Department

First Sabbath Offering for the Media Departments in Moldova and the East-European Unions

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Mathew 28:19, 20).

Taking into consideration the commission of Jesus, the churches in Moldova and Ukraine recognize that the Gospel is to be preached through all means at our disposal. Today we live in a world where the internet and electronic media have become the main source of information for many in our region.

Recognizing this reality, on September 17, 2012, a mini studio began its work in Chisinau, Moldova. Here we recorded videos that were afterward published on the internet. During this period, more than 650 videos were recorded in the Romanian and Russian languages. Russian was chosen as the main language as it is the most widespread language in Eurasia and the most prevalent native language in Europe. Nearly 300 million people use Russian as either their primary or secondary language.

In Ukraine, we have been broadcasting religious meetings since 2012 through our YouTube channel, SDARM_UA. More than 2000 videos have been published on the channel. These include lectures on healthful living, evangelistic and doctrinal subjects, the History of Reformation, youth topics and Christian music. We have also published *Sabbath Bible Lessons* and sermons for the deaf. We now plan to create a website where we will publish missionary videos and Bible courses for unbelievers in audio and video formats. We also have a project to develop an internet radio channel that will broadcast via the internet for different age groups.

For the development of these projects we need to create a studio and we need additional equipment and lighting. However, our means are limited. That's why we are appealing to you, our dear brothers and sisters from around the world, to support us in this work! Thank you kindly for your generosity in helping us fund this work.



The Media Departments of Moldova and the East-European Unions

What Is Prayer?

“Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray” (Psalm 5:1, 2).

“Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 93.

Suggested Reading: *Steps to Christ*, pp. 93–104.

Sunday

July 1

1. TALKING TO GOD

- a. How did our first parents talk with God, and how did sin interrupt this communication? Genesis 1:27–30; 3:8–10; 1 Timothy 2:5.**

“After the transgression of Adam, the Lord spoke no longer directly with man; the human race was given into the hands of Christ, and all communication came through Him to the world.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 237.

- b. What privilege has God provided so that we who are sinners can still individually communicate freely with Him? John 16:23 (last part), 24; Matthew 7:7, 8.**

“Prayer is the breath of the soul. It is the secret of spiritual power. No other means of grace can be substituted, and the health of the soul be preserved. Prayer brings the heart into immediate contact with the Well-spring of life, and strengthens the sinew and muscle of the religious experience. Neglect the exercise of prayer, or engage in prayer spasmodically, now and then, as seems convenient, and you lose your hold on God. The spiritual faculties lose their vitality, the religious experience lacks health and vigor. . . .

“It is only as we behold Jesus that we desire to be like Him, only as we view His righteousness that we hunger and thirst to possess it; and it is only as we ask in earnest prayer, that God will grant us our heart’s desire.

“God’s messengers must tarry long with Him, if they would have success in their work.”—*Gospel Workers*, pp. 254, 255.

2. COMMUNICATION ESSENTIAL TO FRIENDSHIP

- a. God wants you to be His friend. What three aspects are the basis for this relationship? John 15:13–15.
-

“Every association we form, however limited, exerts some influence upon us. The extent to which we yield to that influence will be determined by the degree of intimacy, the constancy of the intercourse, and our love and veneration for the one with whom we associate. Thus by acquaintance and association with Christ we may become like Him, the one faultless Example.

“Communion with Christ—how unspeakably precious! Such communion it is our privilege to enjoy if we will seek it, if we will make any sacrifice to secure it.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 222, 223.

- b. To how many people does God offer this relationship? John 3:16. Name someone who took up God’s offer of friendship. James 2:23.
-

- c. How do friendships usually begin? Proverbs 18:24. While obeying God will be the evidence of our friendship with Him (John 15:14), what action is essential in order to build our friendship with Him? Philippians 4:6.
-

“Our heavenly Father waits to bestow upon us the fullness of His blessing. It is our privilege to drink largely at the fountain of boundless love. What a wonder it is that we pray so little! God is ready and willing to hear the sincere prayer of the humblest of His children, and yet there is much manifest reluctance on our part to make known our wants to God. What can the angels of heaven think of poor helpless human beings, who are subject to temptation, when God’s heart of infinite love yearns toward them, ready to give them more than they can ask or think, and yet they pray so little and have so little faith? The angels love to bow before God; they love to be near Him. They regard communion with God as their highest joy; and yet the children of earth, who need so much the help that God only can give, seem satisfied to walk without the light of His Spirit, the companionship of His presence.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 94.

3. SUBMITTING OURSELVES ENTIRELY

- a. How many times did Jesus pray in Gethsemane for the same difficulty? Did the words of His prayer change? Matthew 26:39, 42, 44.
-

“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.’”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 690, 693.

- b. How did Jesus submit Himself to the Father? Matthew 26:39 (last part). Did the Father answer the prayer of Jesus to save Him from the cross? Verses 45, 46; Romans 8:32 (first part).
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- c. What can we learn from Jesus’ prayer of submission? James 4:6–8.
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“It is hard for us to submit to the crucifixion of self; but when the work is all submitted to God, to Him who knows our weaknesses and our sinfulness, He takes the very best way to bring about the desired results. It was through constant conflict and simple faith that Enoch walked with God. We may all do the same.”—*The Review and Herald*, June 22, 1886.

“The Lord will do His part if the human agent will submit to the control of the Holy Spirit. If we consecrate to God body, soul, and spirit, He will do just as He said—He will be found of all those who seek Him diligently.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 10, pp. 96, 97.

4. PERSISTENT PLEADING WHEN IN DIFFICULTY

- a. What did Jacob pray for when he heard that his brother Esau was coming to meet him with 400 men as he was returning to his father's house in Palestine? Genesis 32:9–11.
-

- b. After sending a present to Esau to appease him, how did Jacob again lay his fears and cares before God? Hosea 12:4. What persistence and determination did Jacob demonstrate? Genesis 32:24–31.
-

“Jacob sent his family across the ford of the river, while he alone remained behind. He had decided to spend the night in prayer, and he desired to be alone with God. God could soften the heart of Esau. In Him was the patriarch's only hope.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 196.

- c. How did God, in answering Jacob's prayer, change both Jacob and Esau? Genesis 32:31; 33:4.
-

“The error that had led to Jacob's sin in obtaining the birthright by fraud was now clearly set before him. He had not trusted God's promises, but had sought by his own efforts to bring about that which God would have accomplished in His own time and way. As an evidence that he had been forgiven, his name was changed from one that was a reminder of his sin, to one that commemorated his victory. ‘Thy name,’ said the Angel, ‘shall be called no more Jacob [the supplanter], but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.’

“Jacob had received the blessing for which his soul had longed. . . .

“While Jacob was wrestling with the Angel, another heavenly messenger was sent to Esau. In a dream, Esau beheld his brother for twenty years an exile from his father's house; he witnessed his grief at finding his mother dead; he saw him encompassed by the hosts of God. This dream was related by Esau to his soldiers, with the charge not to harm Jacob, for the God of his father was with him.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 197, 198.

5. TRUE COMMUNION CHANGES LIVES

- a. What does God know about us? Matthew 6:8 (last part). What is our greatest need? Ezekiel 36:26, 27.

“The change we need is a change of heart, and can only be obtained by seeking God individually for His blessing, by pleading with Him for His power, by fervently praying that His grace may come upon us, and that our characters may be transformed. This is the change we need today, and for the attainment of this experience we should exercise persevering energy and manifest heartfelt earnestness.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 187.

- b. What assurance do we have that God has an answer prepared before we pray? Isaiah 65:24; Matthew 6:8. What is the purpose of God in prayer? John 14:13, 14.

“Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 93.

“Prayer is not intended to work any change in God; it brings us into harmony with God. It does not take the place of duty.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, August 18, 1898.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. When we fail to maintain regular communion with God through prayer, what happens to us?
2. Why is prayer essential to developing a friendship with God?
3. Describe the experience of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, as He submitted to His Father’s will.
4. For whom was Jacob praying as he wrestled with the Angel?
5. Why do we so much need to pray when God knows everything about us already?

David's Prayer Life

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

“David’s prayer was continually directed to God. His trust was in God, and he walked before Him in a perfect way.”—*The Signs of the Times*, August 17, 1888.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 717–726.

Sunday

July 8

1. PRAYING WHEN PERSECUTED

a. How was David treated by Saul? 1 Samuel 19:9, 10; 23:7, 8.

“After the death of Samuel, David was left in peace for a few months. Again he repaired to the solitude of the Ziphites; but these enemies, hoping to secure the favor of the king, informed him of David’s hiding place. This intelligence aroused the demon of passion that had been slumbering in Saul’s breast. Once more he summoned his men of arms and led them out in pursuit of David. But friendly spies brought tidings to the son of Jesse that Saul was again pursuing him.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 668.

b. What did David pray when he was chased by Saul? How did David submit himself to God? Psalm 7:1–5, 17.

“It is only through Christ that Satan’s power is limited. This is a momentous truth that all should understand. Satan is busy every moment, going to and fro, walking up and down in the earth, seeking whom he may devour. But the earnest prayer of faith will baffle his strongest efforts. Then take ‘the shield of faith,’ brethren, ‘where-with ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.’”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 294.

2. THE FALL OF DAVID

- a. What does the Bible mention regarding the character of David? 1 Samuel 13:13, 14; 1 Kings 11:38.
-

“It was when [David] was walking in the counsel of God that he was called a man after God’s own heart. When he sinned, this ceased to be true of him until by repentance he had returned to the Lord.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 723.

“David was beloved of God, not because he was a perfect man, but because he did not cherish stubborn resistance to God’s expressed will. His spirit did not rise up in rebellion against reproof. . . .

“David erred greatly, but he was just as greatly humbled and his contrition was as profound as his guilt. There was never a person more humble than David under a sense of his sin. He showed himself a strong man, not in always resisting temptation, but in the contrition of soul and sincere penitence manifested. He never lost his confidence in God, who put the stern rebuke in the mouth of His prophet. He had no hatred for the prophet of God. He was beloved, also, because he relied upon the mercy of a God whom he had loved and served and honored.”—*Pamphlet 28*, 1890, p. 16.

- b. Which sins in David’s life did he attempt to hide? 2 Samuel 12:9.
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- c. What was David’s reaction when his sin was known? How did he acknowledge his guilt? 2 Samuel 12:13; Psalm 51:3, 4.
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“This passage in David’s history is full of significance to the repenting sinner. It is one of the most forcible illustrations given us of the struggles and temptations of humanity, and of genuine repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Through all the ages it has proved a source of encouragement to souls that, having fallen into sin, were struggling under the burden of their guilt. Thousands of the children of God, who have been betrayed into sin, when ready to give up to despair have remembered how David’s sincere repentance and confession were accepted by God, notwithstanding he suffered for his transgression; and they also have taken courage to repent and try again to walk in the way of God’s commandments.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 726.

3. PLEADING FOR FORGIVENESS

- a. What two things was David pleading for after confessing his sin? Psalm 51:1, 2; 1 John 1:9.
-

“All wrong done to others reaches back from the injured one to God. Therefore David seeks for pardon, not from a priest, but from the Creator of man. He prays: ‘Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving-kindness: according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.’”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 639.

- b. Where is the seat of impurity? Jeremiah 17:9; Mark 7:21–23.
-

“Many of you may retain a notion of religion in the head, an outside religion, when the heart is not cleansed. God looks at the heart; ‘all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.’ Will He be satisfied with anything but truth in the inward parts? Every truly converted soul will carry the unmistakable marks that the carnal mind is subdued.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 163.

- c. What prayer of David’s should we repeat on a daily basis? Psalm 51:10–12.
-

“Many are leaning upon a supposed hope without a true foundation. The fountain is not cleansed, therefore the streams proceeding from that fountain are not pure. Cleanse the fountain, and the streams will be pure. If the heart is right, your words, your dress, your acts, will all be right. True godliness is lacking. . . .

“I saw how this grace could be obtained. Go to your closet, and there alone plead with God: ‘Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.’ Be in earnest, be sincere. Fervent prayer availeth much. Jacoblike, wrestle in prayer. Agonize. Jesus, in the garden, sweat great drops of blood; you must make an effort. Do not leave your closet until you feel strong in God; then watch, and just as long as you watch and pray you can keep these evil besetments under, and the grace of God can and will appear in you.”—*Ibid.*, p. 158.

4. EXPRESSING GRATITUDE TOWARD GOD

- a. What did David acknowledge regarding God's blessings? 1 Chronicles 29:11–14.

“God scatters blessings all along our path. . . . We may weep and groan and mourn and stumble at every step if we choose, or we may gather up the precious, fragrant flowers and rejoice in the Lord for His goodness in making our path to heaven so pleasant.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 245.

“It is as we give ourselves to God for the service of humanity that He gives Himself to us.

“No one can give place in his own heart and life for the stream of God's blessings to flow to others without receiving in himself a rich reward.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 81.

- b. How did David express some of his feelings about God? Psalm 31:19–23; 57:10.

“The song of gratitude and praise is to be heard by those in darkness. For the good tidings of the gospel, for its promises and assurances, we are to express our gratitude by seeking to do others good. The doing of this work will bring rays of heavenly righteousness to wearied, perplexed, suffering souls. It is as a fountain opened for the wayworn, thirsty traveler. At every work of mercy, every work of love, angels of God are present.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 31.

- c. What else can we be thankful for today? Psalm 103:10–14; Jeremiah 31:34 (last part).

“We should be self-forgetful, ever looking out for opportunities, even in little things, to show gratitude for the favors we have received of others, and watching for opportunities to cheer others and lighten and relieve their sorrows and burdens by acts of tender kindness and little deeds of love. These thoughtful courtesies that, commencing in our families, extend outside the family circle help make up the sum of life's happiness; and the neglect of these little things makes up the sum of life's bitterness and sorrow.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 428.

5. PRAYING FOR DELIVERANCE

- a. With what words does David praise God for deliverance from his enemies? 2 Samuel 22:1–7, 18–20.

- b. How can we, like David, pray for deliverance from sin today? Psalm 6:4; 25:20; Matthew 6:13.

“Many receive the gospel as a way of escape from suffering, rather than as a deliverance from sin. They rejoice for a season, for they think that religion will free them from difficulty and trial. While life moves smoothly with them, they may appear to be consistent Christians. But they faint beneath the fiery test of temptation. They cannot bear reproach for Christ’s sake. When the word of God points out some cherished sin, or requires self-denial or sacrifice, they are offended. It would cost them too much effort to make a radical change in their life. They look at the present inconvenience and trial, and forget the eternal realities.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 47, 48.

“When we pray for earthly blessings, the answer to our prayer may be delayed, or God may give us something other than we ask, but not so when we ask for deliverance from sin. It is His will to cleanse us from sin, to make us His children, and to enable us to live a holy life.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 266.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What limits Satan’s power? When can Christ help us the most?
2. Why was David beloved of God?
3. How must we pray if we desire to have a clean, pure heart?
4. How can we show gratitude to God in a practical way, and what will be the result?
5. What should we be seeking beyond mere deliverance from difficulties?

Prayer in the Psalms

“As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God” (Psalm 42:1).

“I have been referred by the Spirit of God to the many encouragements given to us in the Psalms. . . . If our people would realize the possibilities that lie in increased faith and prayer, there would be a decided change in our churches. Those who are now downcast and worried, would be lifted up from their discouragements, and would rejoice in the Lord.”—*Australasian Union Conference Record*, April 29, 1907.

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies*, vol. 8, pp. 270–278.

Sunday

July 15

1. ACCESS TO THE THRONE OF GRACE

- a. What are some of the themes expressed by David in the Psalms regarding the Christian’s experience? Psalm 25:16–18; 28:2, 7, 8.

- b. What may a repentant sinner confidently expect when he sincerely asks for God’s forgiveness? Psalm 51:1–6.

“A repentance such as this [David’s], is beyond the reach of our own power to accomplish; it is obtained only from Christ, who ascended up on high and has given gifts unto men.

“Just here is a point on which many may err, and hence they fail of receiving the help that Christ desires to give them. They think that they cannot come to Christ unless they first repent, and that repentance prepares for the forgiveness of their sins. It is true that repentance does precede the forgiveness of sins; for it is only the broken and contrite heart that will feel the need of a Saviour. But must the sinner wait till he has repented before he can come to Jesus? Is repentance to be made an obstacle between the sinner and the Saviour?”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 25, 26.

2. WHEN GOD FORGIVES

- a. Under what conditions can a sinner obtain God's mercy? Psalm 32:5.
-

"The conditions of obtaining mercy of God are simple and just and reasonable. The Lord does not require us to do some grievous thing in order that we may have the forgiveness of sin. We need not make long and wearisome pilgrimages, or perform painful penances, to commend our souls to the God of heaven or to expiate our transgression; but he that confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall have mercy."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 37.

"When He permits trials and afflictions, it is 'for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness.' If received in faith, the trial that seems so bitter and hard to bear will prove a blessing. The cruel blow that blights the joys of earth will be the means of turning our eyes to heaven. How many there are who would never have known Jesus had not sorrow led them to seek comfort in Him! . . .

"The Lord will work for all who put their trust in Him. Precious victories will be gained by the faithful. Precious lessons will be learned. Precious experiences will be realized. . . .

"Christ lifts up the contrite heart, and refines the mourning soul, until it becomes His abode."—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 302.

- b. What did David do as He approached God, and what was God's response? Psalm 66:17–20.
-

"Our Saviour is always ready to hear and answer the prayer of the contrite heart, and grace and peace are multiplied to His faithful ones. Gladly He grants them the blessings they need in their struggle against the evils that beset them."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 532.

- c. To what degree does God forgive our sins? Psalm 103:3, 12–14.
-

"Let Christ, the divine Life, dwell in you and through you reveal the heaven-born love that will inspire hope in the hopeless and bring heaven's peace to the sin-stricken heart."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 114, 115.

3. THE RIGHT ATTITUDE

- a. With what spirit did David seek the Lord in prayer? How did his practical life reflect his heart condition? Psalm 26:2–5, 8; 119:58.
-

- b. What actions reveal an inward change of heart? Isaiah 1:16, 17; Ezekiel 33:15.
-

“Confession will not be acceptable to God without sincere repentance and reformation. There must be decided changes in the life; everything offensive to God must be put away. This will be the result of genuine sorrow for sin.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 39.

“A union with Christ by living faith is enduring; every other union must perish. . . . But this union costs us something. . . . There must be a painful work of detachment, as well as a work of attachment. Pride, selfishness, vanity, worldliness—sin in all its forms—must be overcome, if we would enter into a union with Christ. The reason why many find the Christian life so deplorably hard, why they are so fickle, so variable, is, they try to attach themselves to Christ without detaching themselves from these cherished idols.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 221.

- c. What attitude does God desire us to have as we come before Him? Psalm 95:2; 100:4.
-

“God desires His obedient children to claim His blessing and to come before Him with praise and thanksgiving. God is the Fountain of life and power. He can make the wilderness a fruitful field for the people that keep His commandments, for this is for the glory of His name. He has done for His chosen people that which should inspire every heart with thanksgiving, and it grieves Him that so little praise is offered. He desires to have a stronger expression from His people, showing that they know they have reason for joy and gladness.

“The dealings of God with His people should be often repeated. How frequently were the waymarks set up by the Lord in His dealings with ancient Israel! . . . We need often to recount God’s goodness and to praise Him for His wonderful works.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 364, 365.

4. FAITH AND CONFIDENCE

- a. With what words did David express his faith in the Lord? Psalm 27:1–5.

“Our God has heaven and earth at His command, and He knows just what we need. We can see only a little way before us; ‘but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do’ (Hebrews 4:13). Above the distractions of the earth He sits enthroned; all things are open to His divine survey; and from His great and calm eternity He orders that which His providence sees best.

“Not even a sparrow falls to the ground without the Father’s notice. Satan’s hatred against God leads him to delight in destroying even the dumb creatures. It is only through God’s protecting care that the birds are preserved to gladden us with their songs of joy. But He does not forget even the sparrows. ‘Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows’ (Matthew 10:31).”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, pp. 272, 273.

- b. How did David express his confidence in God when outnumbered by earthly foes? Psalm 56:2, 9, 11.

“Why do we not show that we have a living Saviour, one who can walk with us in the darkness as well as in the light, and that we can trust in Him? . . .

“We have seen clouds interpose between us and the sun, but we did not mourn and clothe ourselves in sackcloth for fear that we should never see the sun again. We manifested no anxiety about it, but waited as cheerfully as possible until the cloud passed away and revealed the sun. Just so in our trials and temptations. Clouds may seem to shut from us the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness; but we know that the face of our Redeemer is not forever hidden. He is looking upon us with love and tender compassion. Let us not cast away our confidence, which hath great recompense of reward, but when clouds hang over the soul, let us keep our eyes fixed where we can see the Sun of Righteousness, and rejoice that we have a living Saviour. Think how beautiful was the light which we enjoyed, keep the mind stayed on Jesus, and the light will again shine upon us, and dismal thoughts will flee. We shall have joy in Christ, and shall go singing on our way to Mount Zion.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 65.

5. GOD SATISFIES THE THIRSTING SOUL

- a. Describe the fervor that should accompany our prayers. Psalm 42:1-4.

“Let us put away the listless, sluggish habit into which we have fallen, and pray as though we meant it. ‘The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.’ [James 5:16.] Faith takes a firm hold of the promises of God, and urges her petitions with fervor; but when the life of the soul stagnates, the outward devotions become formal and powerless.”—*Gospel Workers* (1892), p. 426.

- b. As we approach God in the midst of our trials and struggles, what assurance do we have? Psalm 77:1, 14, 15.

“To all who are reaching out to feel the guiding hand of God, the moment of greatest discouragement is the time when divine help is nearest. They will look back with thankfulness upon the darkest part of their way. . . . From every temptation and every trial He will bring them forth with firmer faith and a richer experience.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 528.

“In every trial, if we seek Him, Christ will give us help. Our eyes will be opened to discern the healing promises recorded in His word. The Holy Spirit will teach us how to appropriate every blessing that will be an antidote to grief. For every bitter draft that is placed to our lips, we shall find a branch of healing.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 248.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. On what point do many err and fail to receive the promised blessing?
2. Instead of performing great acts of self-sacrifice in order to obtain forgiveness and mercy, what steps do we need to take?
3. What attitude will lead us to make a genuine confession?
4. What should we do when trials seem to hide the face of the Sun of Righteousness from our vision?
5. With what type of spirit should we approach God? What is the promise that we have when we do this?

The Silent Prayer

“When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly” (Matthew 6:6).

“There is no time or place in which it is inappropriate to offer up a petition to God. . . . In the crowds of the street, in the midst of a business engagement, we may . . . plead for divine guidance.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 99.

Suggested Reading: *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 628–634.

Sunday

July 22

1. PRAYING AT WORK

- a. What news concerned Nehemiah, and how did his employer discover this concern? Nehemiah 1:2–4; 2:1, 2.

- b. What did the king ask, and how did Nehemiah respond? Nehemiah 2:4. How was Nehemiah’s silent prayer heard? Verse 6.

“The man of God did not venture to reply till he had sought direction from One higher than Artaxerxes. . . . In that brief prayer Nehemiah pressed into the presence of the King of kings and won to his side a power that can turn hearts as the rivers of waters are turned.

“To pray as Nehemiah prayed in his hour of need is a resource at the command of the Christian under circumstances when other forms of prayer may be impossible. Toilers in the busy walks of life, crowded and almost overwhelmed with perplexity, can send up a petition to God for divine guidance. Travelers by sea and land, when threatened with some great danger, can thus commit themselves to Heaven’s protection. In times of sudden difficulty or peril the heart may send up its cry for help to One who has pledged Himself to come to the aid of His faithful, believing ones whenever they call upon Him.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 631, 632.

2. SEEKING TO PRAY BY OUR ACTIONS

- a. When the demoniac dwelling among the tombs by the countryside of Gadarenes saw Jesus for the first time, what did he try to do? Mark 5:5, 6.
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- b. As Satan did not allow this man to pray, what came out of his mouth instead? Mark 5:7. What did Jesus do for this coarse and abandoned man and his companion (Matthew 8:28)? Mark 5:8.
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“His words penetrated the darkened minds of the unfortunate men. They realized dimly that One was near who could save them from the tormenting demons. They fell at the Saviour’s feet to worship Him; but when their lips were opened to entreat His mercy, the demons spoke through them.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 337, 338.

- c. What was the result of the first, silent prayer of the two men? Luke 8:35. What can we learn from the demoniacs’ unuttered prayer?
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“None have fallen so low, none are so vile, but that they can find deliverance in Christ. The demoniac, in place of prayer, could utter only the words of Satan; yet the heart’s unspoken appeal was heard. No cry from a soul in need, though it fail of utterance in words, will be unheeded. Those who will consent to enter into covenant relation with the God of heaven are not left to the power of Satan or to the infirmity of their own nature. They are invited by the Saviour, ‘Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me’ (Isaiah 27:5). The spirits of darkness will battle for the soul once under their dominion, but angels of God will contend for that soul with prevailing power. The Lord says, ‘Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered? . . . Thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children’ (Isaiah 49:24, 25).”—*Ibid.*, pp. 258, 259.

3. THE UNSPOKEN DESIRE FOR FORGIVENESS

- a. Did the woman taken in adultery offer any excuse or self-justification? John 8:3–7.
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- b. Did Jesus hate her sin? Explain your answer. Psalm 45:7; Hebrews 1:8, 9.
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“While [Jesus] does not palliate sin, nor lessen the sense of guilt, He seeks not to condemn, but to save. The world had for this erring woman only contempt and scorn; but Jesus speaks words of comfort and hope. The Sinless One pities the weakness of the sinner, and reaches to her a helping hand. . . .

“Men hate the sinner, while they love the sin. Christ hates the sin, but loves the sinner. This will be the spirit of all who follow Him. Christian love is slow to censure, quick to discern penitence, ready to forgive, to encourage, to set the wanderer in the path of holiness, and to stay his feet therein.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 462.

- c. How did Jesus respond to this woman’s unspoken request for forgiveness? John 8:10, 11.
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“The woman had stood before Jesus, cowering with fear. His words, ‘He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone,’ had come to her as a death sentence. She dared not lift her eyes to the Saviour’s face, but silently awaited her doom. In astonishment she saw her accusers depart speechless and confounded; then those words of hope fell upon her ear, ‘Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.’ Her heart was melted, and she cast herself at the feet of Jesus, sobbing out her grateful love, and with bitter tears confessing her sins.

“This was to her the beginning of a new life, a life of purity and peace, devoted to the service of God. In the uplifting of this fallen soul, Jesus performed a greater miracle than in healing the most grievous physical disease; He cured the spiritual malady which is unto death everlasting. This penitent woman became one of His most steadfast followers. With self-sacrificing love and devotion she repaid His forgiving mercy.”—*Ibid.*

4. SPEAKING THROUGH ACTIONS OF DESPERATION

- a. How interested was a poor paralytic in seeing Jesus? Luke 5:18, 19.

"I will refer to the paralytic who had not used his limbs for many years. There he was. The priests, the rulers, and scribes examined his case and pronounced it hopeless. They told him that by his own sin he had brought himself into this condition, and there was no hope for him. But the word was brought to him that there was a man called Jesus who was doing mighty works. He was healing the sick, and He had even raised the dead. 'But how can I go to Him?' he said.

"We will carry you to Jesus,' his friends replied, 'right into His presence; we have heard He has come to such a place.'

"And so they took the hopeless man and bore him to where they knew Jesus was. But the multitude surrounded the building so closely where Jesus was that there was no chance for them, not so much as to come at the door. What were they going to do? The paralytic suggested that they open the roof and take off the tiling and let him down through the roof."—*Faith and Works*, p. 67.

- b. What unspoken desire of the paralytic did Jesus meet? Luke 5:20. How did Jesus reveal that He could read everyone's thoughts, not just those of this man? Verses 21–23.

"Jesus knew just what that sin-sick soul needed. He knew that he had been tortured on account of his own conscience, so He said, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee.' What a relief came to his mind! What hope filled his heart!"—*Ibid*.

- c. What did the actual healing of the man show about the power Jesus had? Luke 5:24–26.

"He who at the creation 'spake, and it was,' who 'commanded, and it stood fast' (Psalm 33:9), had spoken life to the soul dead in trespasses and sins. The healing of the body was an evidence of the power that had renewed the heart. Christ bade the paralytic arise and walk, 'that ye may know,' He said, 'that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins.'"—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 270.

5. PRAYING THROUGH TOUCHING

- a. How did a woman, after suffering with a serious disease for 12 years, choose to express to Jesus her timid request for healing? Mark 5:25–29.

“The golden opportunity had come, she was in the presence of the great Physician! But amid the confusion, she could not be heard by Him nor catch more than a passing glimpse of His figure. Fearful of losing the one chance of relief from her illness, she pressed forward, saying to herself, If I but touch His garment I shall be cured. She seized the opportunity as He was passing and reached forward, barely touching the hem of His garment. But in that moment she felt herself healed of her disease. Instantly health and strength took the place of feebleness and pain. She had concentrated all the faith of her life in that one touch that made her whole.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, p. 320.

- b. How did Jesus then publicly acknowledge her unspoken prayer of faith? Mark 5:30–34. What does this teach us about faith?

“Jesus does not fail to answer the silent prayer of faith. He who simply takes God at His word, and reaches out to connect himself with the Saviour, will receive His blessing in return.”—*Ibid.*, p. 322.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What privilege do we have when we are in need, even though we may not be able to kneel before God? How can we do this?
2. Does Jesus hear the secret, silent prayers coming from an honest heart?
3. Can our actions serve as a prayer? How?
4. What type of healing do we all need, and how willing is Jesus to help us?
5. Does Jesus act upon the words that come out of our mouths only or the silent thoughts of the heart as well?

First Sabbath Offering for Missionary Schools and Educational Projects

"Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do. The men in whom this power is developed are the men who bear responsibilities, who are leaders in enterprise, and who influence character. It is the work of true education to develop this power, to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought. . . . Instead of educated weaklings, institutions of learning may send forth men strong to think and to act, men who are masters and not slaves of circumstances, men who possess breadth of mind, clearness of thought, and the courage of their convictions."—*Education*, pp. 17, 18.



It is the purpose of the Education Department to support the establishment of such institutions. Schools for general education and missionary schools are needed now more than ever for the education of our children. Over a century ago, the Lord's messenger wrote, "Much more can be done to save and educate the children of those who at present cannot get away from the cities. This is a matter worthy of our best efforts. Church schools are to be established for the children in the cities, and in connection with these schools provision is to be made for the teaching of higher studies, where these are called for."—*Child Guidance*, p. 306.

"Wherever there are a few Sabbathkeepers, the parents should unite in providing a place for a day school where their children and youth can be instructed. They should employ a Christian teacher, who, as a consecrated missionary, shall educate the children in such a way as to lead them to become missionaries. . . .

"If parents will realize the importance of these small educating centers, cooperating to do the work that the Lord desires to be done at this time, the plans of the enemy for our children will be frustrated."—*Ibid.*, p. 307.

We appeal to you this Sabbath to give generously to support this work in all of our churches throughout the world.

Your brethren from the GC Education Department

Personal Prayer

“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (Philippians 4:6).

“Secret prayer sustains [the] inner life. The heart that loves God will desire to commune with Him, and will lean on Him in holy confidence.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 130.

Suggested Reading: *Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 139–149.

Sunday

July 29

1. ATTITUDE IN PRAYER

- a. What posture should we observe in prayer? Psalm 95:6; Ephesians 3:14.
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- b. Where and how should we pray our personal prayers? Matthew 6:6.
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“It is impossible for the soul to flourish while prayer is not a special exercise of the mind. Family or public prayer alone is not sufficient. Secret prayer is very important; in solitude the soul is laid bare to the inspecting eye of God, and every motive is scrutinized. Secret prayer! How precious! The soul communing with God! Secret prayer is to be heard only by the prayer-hearing God. No curious ear is to receive the burden of such petitions. In secret prayer the soul is free from surrounding influences, free from excitement. Calmly, yet fervently, will it reach out after God. Secret prayer is frequently perverted, and its sweet designs lost, by loud vocal prayer. Instead of the calm, quiet trust and faith in God, the soul drawn out in low, humble tones, the voice is raised to a loud pitch, and excitement is encouraged, and secret prayer loses its softening, sacred influence. There is a storm of feeling, a storm of words, making it impossible to discern the still, small voice that speaks to the soul while engaged in its secret, true, heartfelt devotion.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 189, 190.

2. INTERCESSORY PRAYER

- a. As Daniel considered that the prophecy of the 70 years of the desolation of Jerusalem was drawing to a close, what was he inspired to pray about? Daniel 9:3–19. Whom did Daniel see as guilty of sin? Whom did he blame?
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“With faith founded on the sure word of prophecy, Daniel pleaded with the Lord for the speedy fulfillment of these promises. He pleaded for the honor of God to be preserved. In his petition he identified himself fully with those who had fallen short of the divine purpose, confessing their sins as his own. . . .

“Though Daniel had long been in the service of God, and had been spoken of by heaven as ‘greatly beloved,’ yet he now appeared before God as a sinner, urging the great need of the people he loved. His prayer was eloquent in its simplicity, and intensely earnest.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 554, 555.

“The Lord who heard Daniel’s prayer will hear yours if you will approach Him as Daniel did.”—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 75.

- b. What was the answer to Daniel’s prayer? Daniel 9:20–23.
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- c. How does God, by His Spirit, intercede for us? Romans 8:26. What does God want us to do for others? James 5:16.
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“Christ, our Mediator, and the Holy Spirit are constantly interceding in man’s behalf, but the Spirit pleads not for us as does Christ who presents His blood, shed from the foundation of the world; the Spirit works upon our hearts, drawing out prayers and penitence, praise and thanksgiving. The gratitude which flows from our lips is the result of the Spirit striking the cords of the soul in holy memories, awakening the music of the heart.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, pp. 1077, 1078.

“Appeals, petitions, entreaties, between man and man, move men and act a part in controlling the affairs of nations. But prayer moves heaven. That power alone that comes in answer to prayer will make men wise in the wisdom of heaven and enable them to work in the unity of the Spirit, joined together by the bonds of peace. Prayer, faith, confidence in God, bring a divine power that sets human calculations at their real worth—nothingness.”—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 75.

3. PRAYER FOR HOLINESS

- a. How did Jesus teach us to pray when we recognize that we are sinners? Luke 18:13.

“God does not give us up because of our sins. We may make mistakes and grieve His Spirit, but when we repent and come to Him with contrite hearts, He will not turn us away.”—*Faith and Works*, p. 35.

“When we beseech the Lord to pity us in our distress, and to guide us by His Holy Spirit, He will never turn away our prayer.”—*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 207.

- b. What attitude must we reject as sinners? Luke 18:11, 12.

“Self-righteousness is the danger of this age; it separates the soul from Christ. Those who trust to their own righteousness cannot understand how salvation comes through Christ. They call sin righteousness and righteousness sin. They have no appreciation of the evil of transgression, no understanding of the terror of the law; for they do not respect God’s moral standard.”—*Faith and Works*, p. 96.

- c. What is the promise of God for every prayer of honest confession? Luke 18:14; 1 John 1:9.

“The enemy will come to you, and say, ‘It is of no use for you to pray. Did you not do that evil thing? Have you not transgressed against God? Have you not violated your conscience?’ Answer him, ‘Yes; but Christ has bidden me pray. He has said, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”’—*The Bible Echo*, February 15, 1893.

“Never is one repulsed who comes to Him with a contrite heart. Not one sincere prayer is lost. Amid the anthems of the celestial choir, God hears the cries of the weakest human being. We pour out our heart’s desire in our closets, we breathe a prayer as we walk by the way, and our words reach the throne of the Monarch of the universe. They may be inaudible to any human ear, but they cannot die away into silence, nor can they be lost through the activities of business that are going on. Nothing can drown the soul’s desire. It rises above the din of the street, above the confusion of the multitude, to the heavenly courts. It is God to whom we are speaking, and our prayer is heard.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 174.

4. PRAYING FOR WISDOM

- a. What does God offer to each of us if we will but ask? How are we to ask? James 1:5, 6.

“You need not go to the ends of the earth for wisdom, for God is near. It is not the capabilities you now possess or ever will have that will give you success. It is that which the Lord can do for you. We need to have far less confidence in what man can do and far more confidence in what God can do for every believing soul. He longs to have you reach after Him by faith. He longs to have you expect great things from Him. He longs to give you understanding in temporal as well as in spiritual matters. He can sharpen the intellect. He can give tact and skill. Put your talents into the work, ask God for wisdom, and it will be given you.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 146.

- b. How will God’s wisdom set us apart from those around us? Psalm 119:97–100; Deuteronomy 4:5–9.

“As in obedience to His natural laws the earth should produce its treasures, so in obedience to His moral law the hearts of the people were to reflect the attributes of His character. Even the heathen would recognize the superiority of those who served and worshiped the living God.”—*Ibid.*, p. 289.

- c. How should we search for wisdom? What two requirements does God place before us in order for us to receive His wisdom? Proverbs 2:1–6.

“It is impossible to study the Bible with a humble, teachable spirit, without developing and strengthening the intellect. Those who become best acquainted with the wisdom and purpose of God as revealed in His word, become men and women of mental strength; and they may become efficient workers with the great Educator, Jesus Christ.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 432.

5. PRAYING WITH THANKSGIVING

- a. What do we often forget in our personal prayers? Philippians 4:6.

“Our devotional exercises should not consist wholly in asking and receiving. Let us not be always thinking of our wants and never of the benefits we receive. We do not pray any too much, but we are too sparing of giving thanks. We are the constant recipients of God’s mercies, and yet how little gratitude we express, how little we praise Him for what He has done for us.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 102, 103.

- b. What can we be grateful to God for each day? Psalm 68:19; Lamentations 3:22–25.

“If our senses had not been blunted by sin and by contemplation of the dark pictures that Satan is constantly presenting before us, a fervent and continuous flow of gratitude would go out from our hearts toward Him who daily loads us with benefits of which we are wholly undeserving. The everlasting song of the redeemed will be praise to Him who hath loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood; and if we ever sing that song before the throne of God we must learn it here.”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 168.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why is it so important that our personal prayers be done in secret?
2. What power is given to us in answer to prayer, and how is this power to be used for others?
3. What prayer does God always answer—without delay?
4. When will those around us see the great benefits in serving and worshipping God?
5. What song do we need to learn here on earth, so that we can join in with the redeemed as they sing it in heaven?

Prayer Meetings

“Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 18:19).

“There is great need of secret prayer, but there is also need that several Christians meet together and unite with earnestness their petitions to God.”—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 91.

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 577–582;
In Heavenly Places, pp. 91–93.

Sunday

August 5

1. WHY GO TO PRAYER MEETING?

- a. What is the purpose of the prayer meeting? Why is it so important that we attend? 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 10:25.
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“Seek every opportunity to go where prayer is wont to be made. Those who are really seeking for communion with God will be seen in the prayer meeting, faithful to do their duty, and earnest and anxious to reap all the benefits they can gain. They will improve every opportunity of placing themselves where they can receive the rays of light from heaven.

“We meet together to edify one another by an interchange of thoughts and feelings, to gather strength, and light, and courage by becoming acquainted with one another’s hopes and aspirations; and by our earnest, heartfelt prayers, offered up in faith, we receive refreshment and vigor from the Source of our strength. These meetings should be most precious seasons.”—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 91.

“While we are exhorted not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, these assemblies are not to be merely for our own refreshing. We are to be inspired with greater zeal to impart the consolation we have received.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 365.

2. HOW TO RUN A PRAYER MEETING

- a. What principle should we observe regarding the time for prayer meeting? 1 Corinthians 14:40.
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“Meetings for conference and prayer should not be made tedious. If possible, all should be prompt to the hour appointed; and if there are dilatory ones, who are half an hour or even fifteen minutes behind the time, there should be no waiting. If there are but two present, they can claim the promise. The meeting should open at the appointed hour if possible, be there few or many present. Formality and cold stiffness should be laid aside, and all should be prompt to duty.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 577, 578.

“From the light which I have received, our meetings should be spiritual and social, and not too long.”—*Ibid.*, p. 579.

- b. How does God regard long-drawn-out public prayers? Matthew 6:5.
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“Upon common occasions there should not be prayer of more than ten minutes’ duration. After there has been a change of position, and the exercise of singing or exhortation has relieved the sameness, then, if any feel the burden of prayer, let them pray.”—*Ibid.*, p. 578.

“There are some, I fear, who do not take their troubles to God in private prayer, but reserve them for the prayer meeting, and there do up their praying for several days. Such may be named conference and prayer meeting killers. They emit no light; they edify no one. Their cold, frozen prayers and long, backslidden testimonies cast a shadow. All are glad when they get through, and it is almost impossible to throw off the chill and darkness which their prayers and exhortations bring into the meeting.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 578, 579.

- c. How did Jesus teach the disciples to pray in the meetings He held? Matthew 6:7.
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“When Christ taught the people, He did not devote the time to prayer. He did not enforce upon them, as did the Pharisees, long, tedious ceremonies and prayers.”—*Ibid.*, p. 580.

3. A TIME FOR SHARING

- a. **What should everyone be prepared to do at the prayer meeting?** Mark 5:19 (second part); Malachi 3:16.
-

“All who are pursuing the onward Christian course should have, and will have, an experience that is living, that is new and interesting. A living experience is made up of daily trials, conflicts, and temptations, strong efforts and victories, and great peace and joy gained through Jesus. A simple relation of such experiences gives light, strength, and knowledge that will aid others in their advancement in the divine life.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 579.

“We may be daily learning more of our heavenly Father, gaining a fresh experience of His grace; then we shall desire to speak of His love; and as we do this, our own hearts will be warmed and encouraged. If we thought and talked more of Jesus and less of self, we should have far more of His presence. . . .

“One person is not to do all the witnessing for Jesus, but every one who loves God is to testify of the preciousness of His grace and truth.”—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 92.

- b. **Besides sharing our experience, what else can we contribute to the prayer meeting?** Psalms 35:18; 107:31, 32.
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“When you are growing in grace you will love to attend religious meetings, and you will gladly bear testimony of the love of Christ before the congregation. . . . How much strength a word of hope, courage, and determination in a right course will give one who is inclined to slide into habits that are demoralizing! The firm purpose you may possess in carrying out good principles will have an influence to balance souls in the right direction. There is no limit to the good you may do.”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 161.

“God desires His obedient children to claim His blessing and to come before Him with praise and thanksgiving. God is the Fountain of life and power. . . . He has done for His chosen people that which should inspire every heart with thanksgiving, and it grieves Him that so little praise is offered. He desires to have a stronger expression from His people, showing that they know they have reason for joy and gladness.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 364.

4. MEETING TO PRAY IN SMALL GROUPS

- a. What example do we have of four young men praying at school? Daniel 2:13–18.

“Daniel and his companions were to perish with the false prophets; but, taking his life in his hand, Daniel ventures to enter the presence of the king, begging that time may be granted that he may show the dream and the interpretation.

“To this request the monarch accedes; and now Daniel gathers his three companions, and together they take the matter before God, seeking for wisdom from the Source of light and knowledge. Although they were in the king’s court, surrounded with temptation, they did not forget their responsibility to God. They were strong in the consciousness that His providence had placed them where they were; that they were doing His work, meeting the demands of truth and duty. They had confidence toward God. They had turned to Him for strength when in perplexity and danger, and He had been to them an ever-present help.”—*The Sanctified Life*, p. 35.

“On their bended knees they pleaded that God would give them the power and wisdom that would alone avail them in their great necessity.”—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 216.

- b. How was their prayer answered? Daniel 2:19, 46–49.

“The servants of God did not plead with Him in vain. They had honored Him, and in the hour of trial He honored them. The secret was revealed to Daniel, and he hastened to request an interview with the king.”—*The Sanctified Life*, p. 35.

- c. What can we learn from the prayer of Daniel and his friends? Matthew 18:20.

“There is great need of secret prayer, but there is also need that several Christians meet together, and unite with earnestness their petitions to God. In these small companies Jesus is present, the love of souls is deepened in the heart, and the Spirit puts forth its mighty energies, that human agents may be exercised in regard to saving those who are lost.”—*Lift Him Up*, p. 358.

5. WITHIN THE CAMP MEETING

- a. What condition for which Christ prayed should likewise be the subject of our prayers? Psalm 133:1; Ephesians 4:3.

- b. How can this condition be achieved especially at the camp meeting? Matthew 18:19; Proverbs 24:6 (last part). How does this affect those who attend?

“Those who labor at camp meetings should frequently engage together in prayer and counsel, that they may labor intelligently. At these meetings there are many things that demand attention. But the ministers should take time to meet together for prayer and counsel every day. You should know that all things are drawing in even lines, ‘that you are standing,’ as the words were spoken to me, ‘shoulder to shoulder, marching right ahead, and not drawing off.’ When the work is carried on in this way, there is unity of heart, and there will be harmony of action. This will be a wonderful means of bringing the blessing of God upon the people.

“Before giving a discourse, ministers should take time to seek God for wisdom and power. In earlier times the ministers would often go away and pray together, and they would not cease until the Spirit of God responded to their prayers. Then they would return from the place of prayer with their faces lighted up; and when they spoke to the congregation, their words were with power. They reached the hearts of the people because the Spirit that gave them the blessing prepared hearts to receive their message. There is far more being done by the heavenly universe than we realize in preparing the way that souls may be converted.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 50.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are some of the blessings gained from attending prayer meeting?
2. How much of the time should be devoted to prayer? Why?
3. Why should we share our experience at prayer meeting?
4. What can we learn from the prayer meeting held by Daniel and his three companions?
5. Why should the leaders at our camp meetings often make the time to pray and counsel together?

Public Prayer

“But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking” (Matthew 6:7).

“Let the long, tiresome petitions be left for the closet, if any have such to offer. Let the Spirit of God into your hearts, and it will sweep away all dry formality.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 71.

Suggested Reading: *Gospel Workers*, pp. 175–179.

Sunday

August 12

1. PRAYING IN WORSHIP AND MINISTRY

- a. What attitude should characterize our public worship of God, and the way we address Him? Psalm 96:9.

“Humility and reverence should characterize the deportment of all who come into the presence of God. In the name of Jesus we may come before Him with confidence, but we must not approach Him with the boldness of presumption, as though He were on a level with ourselves. There are those who address the great and all-powerful and holy God, who dwelleth in light unapproachable, as they would address an equal, or even an inferior.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 252.

- b. What position in public prayer properly reflects this attitude? Psalm 95:6; Acts 20:36; 21:5.

“I have received letters questioning me in regard to the proper attitude to be taken by a person offering prayer to the Sovereign of the universe. Where have our brethren obtained the idea that they should stand upon their feet when praying to God? One who has been educated for about five years in Battle Creek was asked to lead in prayer before Sister White should speak to the people. But as I beheld him standing upright upon his feet while his lips were about to open in prayer to God, my soul was stirred within me to give him an open rebuke. Calling him by name, I said, ‘Get down upon your knees.’ This is the proper position always.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 311.

2. SHORT AND TO THE POINT

- a. **What example did Jesus leave us of how we should pray in public? Matthew 6:9–13.**
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“The Lord’s Prayer was not intended to be repeated merely as a form, but it is an illustration of what our prayers should be—simple, earnest, and comprehensive. In a simple petition tell the Lord your needs and express gratitude for His mercies.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 357.

“Christ impressed upon His disciples the idea that their prayers should be short, expressing just what they wanted, and no more. He gives the length and substance of their prayers, expressing their desires for temporal and spiritual blessings, and their gratitude for the same. How comprehensive this sample prayer! It covers the actual need of all. One or two minutes is long enough for any ordinary prayer.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 581.

- b. **What principle of how we should speak can also apply to our public prayers? Proverbs 10:19. Why are some public prayers so long?**
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“Long, prosy talks and prayers are out of place anywhere, and especially in the social meeting. Those who are forward and ever ready to speak are allowed to crowd out the testimony of the timid and retiring. Those who are most superficial generally have the most to say. Their prayers are long and mechanical. They weary the angels and the people who listen to them. Our prayers should be short and right to the point. Let the long, tiresome petitions be left for the closet, if any have such to offer. Let the Spirit of God into your hearts, and it will sweep away all dry formality.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 4, pp. 70, 71.

“It is often because secret prayer is neglected that long, tedious prayers are offered in public. Let not ministers go over in their petitions a week of neglected duties, hoping to atone for their neglect and to pacify conscience. Such prayers frequently result in bringing others down to a low level of spirituality.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 176.

“Prosy, sermonizing prayers are uncalled for and out of place in public. A short prayer, offered in fervor and faith, will soften the hearts of the hearers; but during long prayers they wait impatiently, as if wishing that every word might end it.”—*Ibid.*, p. 179.

3. PRAYING WITH HUMILITY

- a. What attitude should we avoid in prayer? Matthew 6:5, 7, 8.
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“Many offer prayer in a dry, sermonizing manner. These pray to men, not to God. If they were praying to God, and really understood what they were doing, they would be alarmed at their audacity; for they deliver a discourse to the Lord in the mode of prayer, as though the Creator of the universe needed special information upon general questions in relation to things transpiring in the world. All such prayers are as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. They are made no account of in heaven. Angels of God are wearied with them, as well as mortals who are compelled to listen to them.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 581, 582.

“When you pray, be brief, come right to the point. Do not preach the Lord a sermon in your long prayers. Ask for the bread of life as a hungry child asks bread of his earthly father. God will bestow upon us every needed blessing if we ask Him in simplicity and faith.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 201.

- b. What is of value in God’s sight? 1 Peter 3:4; James 4:6. How then should we pray?
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“Prayer is the most holy exercise of the soul. It should be sincere, humble, earnest—the desires of a renewed heart breathed in the presence of a holy God. When the suppliant feels that he is in the divine presence, self will be forgotten. He will have no desire to display human talent; he will not seek to please the ear of men, but to obtain the blessing which the soul craves.”—*Ibid.*

- c. When will God not hear a prayer being offered in public? Psalm 66:18.
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“If we regard iniquity in our hearts, if we cling to any known sin, the Lord will not hear us; but the prayer of the penitent, contrite soul is always accepted. When all known wrongs are righted, we may believe that God will answer our petitions. Our own merit will never commend us to the favor of God; it is the worthiness of Jesus that will save us, His blood that will cleanse us; yet we have a work to do in complying with the conditions of acceptance.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 95.

4. GOD'S LEADERS PRAY

- a. **What example of public prayer did King Solomon give us at the dedication of the temple? 2 Chronicles 6:12, 13.**

“At the dedication of the Temple, Solomon stood facing the altar. In the court of the Temple was a brazen scaffold or platform, and after ascending this, he stood and lifted up his hands to heaven, and blessed the immense congregation of Israel, and all the congregation of Israel stood. . . .

“‘For Solomon had made a brazen scaffold . . . and had set it in the midst of the court: and upon it he stood, and kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven’ (2 Chronicles 6:13).”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, pp. 312, 313.

- b. **What can we learn from this prayer? 2 Chronicles 6:14–42.**

“The lengthy prayer which [Solomon] then offered was appropriate for the occasion. It was inspired of God, breathing the sentiments of the loftiest piety blended with the deepest humility.”—*Ibid.*, p. 313.

- c. **How did God answer the humble, public prayer of Jehoshaphat for deliverance (2 Chronicles 20:5–12), and what was Jehoshaphat's response? Verses 14–19.**

“Standing in the temple court before his people, Jehoshaphat poured out his soul in prayer, pleading God's promises, with confession of Israel's helplessness. . . .

“With confidence Jehoshaphat could say to the Lord, ‘Our eyes are upon thee’ (Verses 3–12). For years he had taught the people to trust in the One who in past ages had so often interposed to save His chosen ones from utter destruction; and now, when the kingdom was in peril, Jehoshaphat did not stand alone; ‘all Judah stood before the Lord, with their little ones, their wives, and their children’ (Verse 13). Unitedly they fasted and prayed; unitedly they besought the Lord to put their enemies to confusion, that the name of Jehovah might be glorified.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 199, 200.

5. JESUS' EXAMPLE IN PUBLIC PRAYER

- a. What was Jesus' purpose in one of the few public prayers of His on record? John 11:41–43.

“Lifting up his eyes, the Saviour prayed:—

“ ‘Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always; but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.’ The hush that followed this prayer was broken by Jesus crying out with a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come forth.’ ”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, p. 365.

- b. What was the result of this prayer of faith? John 11:44.

“This crowning miracle of Christ caused many to believe on him. But some who were in the crowd about the grave, and heard and saw the wonderful works performed by Jesus, were not converted, but steeled their hearts against the evidence of their own eyes and ears. This demonstration of the power of Christ was the crowning manifestation offered by God to man as a proof that he had sent his Son into the world for the salvation of the human race. If the Pharisees rejected this mighty evidence, no power in Heaven nor upon earth could wrest from them their Satanic unbelief.”—*Ibid.*, p. 366.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What should our posture be when praying publicly? How does this affect our voice in prayer?
2. What can we learn from the prayer Jesus taught His disciples?
3. How might our prayers end up as a sounding brass and as a tinkling cymbal?
4. Why was Jehoshaphat's prayer answered in such a wonderful way?
5. What was the purpose in Jesus' short public prayer in front of Lazarus' grave?

Praying for Others

“Pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16).

“Begin to pray for souls, come near to Christ, close to His bleeding side. Let a meek and quiet spirit adorn your lives, and let your earnest, broken, humble petitions ascend to Him for wisdom that you may have success in saving not only your own soul, but the souls of others.”—*Messages to Young People*, p. 207.

Suggested Reading: *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 119–137, 155–158.

Sunday

August 19

1. PRAYING FOR THOSE WHO HURT YOU

a. How much did Job suffer? Job 1:13–22; 2:7–10.

b. When did Job’s suffering end? Job 42:7–10.

“The Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed, not only for himself, but for those who were opposing him. When he felt earnestly desirous that the souls that had trespassed against him might be helped, he himself received help. Let us pray, not only for ourselves, but for those who have hurt us, and are continuing to hurt us. Pray, pray, especially in your mind. Give not the Lord rest; for His ears are open to hear sincere, importunate prayers, when the soul is humbled before Him.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 3, p. 1141.

c. How was Job rewarded for thinking of others in spite of his own intense suffering? Job 42:11–13.

2. PRAYING FOR AN ENTIRE CITY

- a. After delivering the town of Sodom, along with his nephew Lot, what was Abraham's reaction to the Lord's plans to destroy Sodom? Genesis 18:20–25.
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"God conferred great honor upon Abraham. Angels of heaven walked and talked with him as friend with friend. When judgments were about to be visited upon Sodom, the fact was not hidden from him, and he became an intercessor with God for sinners. . . .

" 'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him' (Psalm 25:14). Abraham had honored God, and the Lord honored him, taking him into His counsels, and revealing to him His purposes."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 138, 139.

- b. How did Abraham plead with God for Sodom, acknowledging his ignorance of the true condition of the city? Genesis 18:26–33.
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"Though Lot had become a dweller in Sodom, he did not partake in the iniquity of its inhabitants. Abraham thought that in that populous city there must be other worshipers of the true God. . . . Abraham asked not once merely, but many times. Waxing bolder as his requests were granted, he continued until he gained the assurance that if even ten righteous persons could be found in it, the city would be spared.

"Love for perishing souls inspired Abraham's prayer. While he loathed the sins of that corrupt city, he desired that the sinners might be saved. His deep interest for Sodom shows the anxiety that we should feel for the impenitent. We should cherish hatred of sin, but pity and love for the sinner. All around us are souls going down to ruin as hopeless, as terrible, as that which befell Sodom. . . . Where are those who with humility and persevering faith are pleading with God for him?"—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 139, 140.

- c. Ultimately, how many was God able to save out of Sodom? Genesis 19:30.
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3. PRAYING FOR THE IMPENITENT

- a. What was promised to Israel, as a discipline, if they disobeyed God continually? Deuteronomy 28:15, 16, 23, 24.
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- b. Based upon this promise, what was Elijah's prayer for Israel during a period of blatant disobedience toward God? James 5:17.
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"In anguish of soul [Elijah] besought God to arrest the once-favored people in their wicked course, to visit them with judgments, if need be, that they might be led to see in its true light their departure from Heaven. He longed to see them brought to repentance before they should go to such lengths in evil-doing as to provoke the Lord to destroy them utterly.

"Elijah's prayer was answered. Oft-repeated appeals, remonstrances, and warnings had failed to bring Israel to repentance. The time had come when God must speak to them by means of judgments. Inasmuch as the worshipers of Baal claimed that the treasures of heaven, the dew and the rain, came not from Jehovah, but from the ruling forces of nature, and that it was through the creative energy of the sun that the earth was enriched and made to bring forth abundantly, the curse of God was to rest heavily upon the polluted land. . . . Until [Israel] should turn to God with repentance, and acknowledge Him as the source of all blessing, there should fall upon the land neither dew nor rain."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 120.

- c. Once Israel acknowledged God as supreme, what was Elijah's prayer, and what was the result? James 5:18; 1 Kings 18:42–45.
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"When upon Mount Carmel [Elijah] offered the prayer for rain (1 Kings 18:41–45), his faith was tested, but he persevered in making known his request unto God. . . . God does not always answer our prayers the first time we call upon Him; for should He do this, we might take it for granted that we had a right to all the blessings and favors He bestowed upon us. Instead of searching our hearts to see if any evil was entertained by us, any sin indulged, we should become careless, and fail to recognize our dependence upon Him, and our need of His help."—*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 88.

4. PRAYING FOR THOSE IN DIRE CIRCUMSTANCES

- a. What happened to Peter, and how did the church respond? Acts 12:1–5.**
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“There was great grief and consternation at the death of James. When Peter was also imprisoned, the entire church engaged in fasting and prayer. . . .

“While the execution of Peter was being delayed, upon various pretexts, until after the passover, the church of Christ had time for deep searching of heart, and earnest prayer. Strong petitions, tears, and fasting were mingled together. They prayed without ceasing for Peter; they felt that he could not be spared from the Christian work; and they felt that they had arrived at a point, where, without the special help of God, the church of Christ would become extinct.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, pp. 335, 336.

- b. How did God answer the prayers of His faithful people? Acts 12:6–12.**
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- c. What are some promises that assure us that God will be with us in difficult times? Psalms 28:7; 91:14, 15.**
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“Often prayer is solicited for the afflicted, the sorrowful, the discouraged; and this is right. We should pray that God will shed light into the darkened mind and comfort the sorrowful heart. But God answers prayer for those who place themselves in the channel of His blessings. While we offer prayer for these sorrowful ones, we should encourage them to try to help those more needy than themselves. The darkness will be dispelled from their own hearts as they try to help others. As we seek to comfort others with the comfort wherewith we are comforted, the blessing comes back to us.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 256.

“Let us look to the monumental pillars, reminders of what the Lord has done to comfort us and to save us from the hand of the destroyer. Let us keep fresh in our memory all the tender mercies that God has shown us—the tears He has wiped away, the pains He has soothed, the anxieties removed, the fears dispelled, the wants supplied, the blessings bestowed—thus strengthening ourselves for all that is before us through the remainder of our pilgrimage.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 125.

5. GOD REMEMBERS WHEN OTHERS FAIL TO PRAY

- a. What happened to Paul while he was being protected by the Romans as they investigated his case? Acts 23:12–15.

- b. How did God intervene to save Paul? Acts 23:16–22.

“When Peter had been made a prisoner and condemned to death, the brethren had offered earnest prayer to God day and night for his deliverance. But no such interest was manifested in behalf of [Paul] who was looked upon as an apostate from Moses, a teacher of dangerous doctrines. It was not to the elders whose counsel had brought him into this dangerous position, but to the watchful sympathy of a relative, that Paul owed his escape from a violent death.”—*Sketches from the Life of Paul*, p. 226.

- c. How do we know that God will remember His faithful children today? Hebrews 13:5 (last part); Psalm 37:28.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What happened to Job when he prayed for those who were opposing him? What can we learn from this?
2. What inspired Abraham to pray for Sodom? How can we cherish this same spirit today?
3. Why did Elijah pray for God to visit His people with judgments?
4. What type of prayer was offered for Peter, and what was the result?
5. How did God remember Paul when he was forsaken by his brethren?

First Sabbath Offering for the headquarters in Madagascar

Madagascar is a large island nation off the southeast coast of Africa. It is home to over one thousand species of wildlife, 90% of which are found nowhere else in the world. It is an island of rain-forests, beautiful beaches and coral reefs. Near the busy capital, Antananarivo, is Ambohimanga, a hillside complex of royal palaces and burial grounds and graced with massive, centuries-old baobab trees.



The population of Madagascar is 24 million. According to a recent survey, 55 percent of the population abides by traditional beliefs, 40 percent are Christians and the remaining 5 percent of the population are Muslims. The Malagasy Christians are subdivided almost equally between Protestant and Roman Catholic. The official languages are French and Malagasy.

The message of reformation came to Madagascar in 2013 when Bro. John Bosco, a minister from Rwanda, decided to visit this country. One couple from a Protestant church received him and helped him find accommodation. Brother Bosco gave them some Bible studies and the couple became very interested in the message of Present Truth. On the Sabbaths this couple provided a place for worship, inviting their friends and children to attend these worship meetings. Afterwards, the message of reformation spread to other parts of the country through this family. One Bible worker was soon sent from Rwanda, with the help of two volunteers from Brazil. After 6 months of working hard, 49 souls were baptized for the first time. Now in Madagascar we have over 80 church members and over 200 Sabbath School members. Recently, the mission was officially organized.

Our members are scattered throughout the country. We now desire to establish our headquarters in Antananarivo, as it is located in the center of the island and is an ideal nucleus for our missionary work. We will also have a room for worship, and a place for printing pamphlets.

Now we are appealing to our brethren around the world to kindly help in this building project. It is our prayer that God will reward your kindness in his missionary work.

“The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself” (Proverbs 11:25).

—On behalf of your brothers and sisters of the Madagascar Mission

Limitations of Prayer

“And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us” (1 John 5:14).

“They that are abiding in Jesus have the assurance that God will hear them, because they love to do His will. They offer no formal, wordy prayer, but come to God in earnest, humble confidence as a child to a tender father, and pour out the story of their grief and fears and sins, and in the name of Jesus present their wants; they depart from His presence rejoicing in the assurance of pardoning love and sustaining grace.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 147.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 524–536.

Sunday

August 26

1. GOD WORKS THROUGH DELAY

- a. **What request did Mary and Martha bring to Jesus? John 11:1, 3. What faith was this expression meant to convey?**
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“When Lazarus became sick, [Mary and Martha] sent Jesus the word, ‘Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick.’ There was no further word, no urgent message for Him to come. They fully expected that their beloved Friend would at once come and heal their brother.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 21, p. 109.

- b. **Did Jesus answer the sisters’ prayer? John 11:6. What was the result of Jesus’ delay? Verses 11–14.**
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“As soon as the messenger had gone, [Mary and Martha] saw a decided change for the worse in the sick man. His fever rapidly increased, and soon they realized that in the fight between life and death, death had triumphed. With hearts full of anguish, they saw their brother die.”—*Ibid.*

2. GOD'S PURPOSE IN MAKING US WAIT

- a. Why did Jesus allow Lazarus to die? John 11:4, 15. What honor came to Lazarus as a result of Jesus' delay in coming to see him? Verses 38–44.
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"For [the disciples'] sake He permitted Lazarus to die. Had He restored him from illness to health, the miracle that is the most positive evidence of His divine character, would not have been performed."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 528.

- b. What can we learn from the experience of Jesus with Lazarus? Psalm 37:5, 7 (first part).
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"Nothing wounds the soul like the sharp darts of unbelief. When trial comes, as it will, do not worry or complain. Silence in the soul makes more distinct the voice of God. 'Then are they glad because they be quiet' (Psalm 107:30). Remember that underneath you are the everlasting arms. 'Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him' (Psalm 37:7). He is guiding you into a harbor of gracious experience."—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 269.

- c. Why does God sometimes delay answering our prayers? Hebrews 10:35, 36; Job 23:10.
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"We are sometimes tempted to think that the promise, 'Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you,' is not fulfilled unless the answer comes immediately when the request is made. It is our privilege to ask for special blessings, and to believe that they will be given us. But if the blessings asked for are not immediately granted, we are not to think that our prayers are not heard. We shall receive, even if the answer is delayed for a time. In carrying out the plan of redemption, Christ sees enough in humanity to discourage him. But he does not become discouraged. In mercy and love he continues to offer us opportunities and privileges. So we are to rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him. The answer to our prayers may not come as quickly as we desire, and it may not be just what we have asked; but he who knows what is for the highest good of his children will bestow a much greater good than we have asked, if we do not become faithless and discouraged."—*The Youth's Instructor*, April 6, 1899.

3. REFUSING TO PRAY FOR A WAY OUT

- a. **As Jesus was to become a sacrifice for our sins, how did His human nature respond to the conflict before Him? Matthew 26:39; Luke 22:42.**
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“A mysterious cloud seemed to enshroud the Son of God. Its gloom was felt by those near Him. He sat rapt in thought. At last the silence was broken by His mournful voice, ‘Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour?’ In anticipation Christ was already drinking the cup of bitterness. His humanity shrank from the hour of abandonment, when to all appearance He would be deserted even by God, when all would see Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. He shrank from public exposure, from being treated as the worst of criminals, from a shameful and dishonored death. A foreboding of His conflict with the powers of darkness, a sense of the awful burden of human transgression, and the Father’s wrath because of sin caused the spirit of Jesus to faint, and the pallor of death to overspread His countenance.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 624.

- b. **Even though His human nature shrank from the conflict before Him, how did Jesus express submission to His Father? Matthew 26:42; John 12:27.**
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“In the supreme crisis, when heart and soul are breaking under the load of sin, Gabriel is sent to strengthen the divine sufferer, and brace Him to tread His bloodstained path. And while the angel supports His fainting form, Christ takes the bitter cup, and consents to drink its contents.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1123.

- c. **What did Jesus refuse to pray for, thus revealing His full submission to His Father’s will? Matthew 26:52–54.**
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“Jesus bid [Peter] put up the sword, and said unto him, Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? . . . Jesus added, But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? The hearts of the disciples sunk again in despair and bitter disappointment, as Jesus suffered them to lead him away.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1, p. 48.

4. THE DIFFICULTY OF HELPING THE SELF-RIGHTEOUS

- a. How did Jeremiah rebuke the people of his day, and how did Jesus apply these words to those around Him? Jeremiah 7:3, 4; Matthew 21:13.

“The priests and rulers had hardened their hearts through selfishness and avarice. The very symbols pointing to the Lamb of God they had made a means of getting gain. Thus in the eyes of the people the sacredness of the sacrificial service had been in a great measure destroyed. The indignation of Jesus was stirred; He knew that His blood, so soon to be shed for the sins of the world, would be as little appreciated by the priests and elders as was the blood of beasts which they kept incessantly flowing.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 590.

- b. How does this same condition exist today? Revelation 3:14–20.

“God is true to His covenant with His people. His word is infallible. His people bring suffering on themselves by forsaking His counsel for their own human wisdom. It is impossible for their prayers to reach His throne, because the rebellion of disobedience is the substance of their petitions. Christ came from heaven to teach the word which His Father committed to Him for the fallen members of His family. Those who hear and obey walk in safe paths. . . . Through the power of Christ they are victorious over every foe.”—*The Review and Herald*, April 8, 1902.

- c. What harsh instruction was given to Jeremiah about praying for people who cover sin by pretended holiness? Jeremiah 7:16. What only can we pray for those in this condition? Acts 26:18.

“God will use the members of His church as His helping hand, if they will place themselves where they can be used. But He does not communicate through impure channels; for this would dishonor His holy name.”—*Ibid*.

“The line of demarcation between the church and the world has been well nigh obliterated; and unless there is reformation, unless the eyes of those who have been blinded by the enemy are opened, they will be lost.”—*The Signs of the Times*, July 25, 1892.

5. PRAYING ACCORDING TO GOD'S WILL

- a. What limitations are placed on all prayer? 1 John 5:14.
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"To pray in Christ's name means much. It means that we are to accept His character, manifest His spirit, and work His works. The Saviour's promise is given on condition. 'If ye love Me,' He says, 'keep My commandments.' He saves men, not in sin, but from sin; and those who love Him will show their love by obedience.

"All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 668.

"In the prayer of faith there is a divine science; it is a science that everyone who would make his lifework a success must understand. Christ says, 'What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them' (Mark 11:24). He makes it plain that our asking must be according to God's will; we must ask for the things that He has promised, and whatever we receive must be used in doing His will. The conditions met, the promise is unequivocal."—*Education*, pp. 257, 258.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What happened as Jesus was delayed in coming to see Lazarus when he was sick? How did his sisters react?
2. What should we do if our prayers are not answered in the way and in the time we expect? Why does this happen?
3. Describe Jesus' suffering before dying on the cross. What attitude did He have?
4. Why is God unable to help the self-righteous?
5. When will God give us the things we pray for?

Praying for the Holy Spirit

“Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field” (Zechariah 10:1).

“We should pray as earnestly for the descent of the Holy Spirit as the disciples prayed on the day of Pentecost. If they needed it at that time, we need it more today. Moral darkness, like a funeral pall, covers the earth. All manner of false doctrines, heresies, and satanic deceptions are misleading the minds of men. Without the Spirit and power of God it will be in vain that we labor to present the truth.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 158.

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 506–512.

Sunday

September 2

1. THE PROMISED POWER

- a. What power is promised to us if we commit ourselves fully to God? Acts 1:5, 8. For what purpose is this power promised? Luke 6:38 (first part)

“It is not because of any restriction on God’s part that the riches of His grace do not flow to men. His gift is godlike. He gave with a liberality that men do not appreciate because they do not love to receive. If all were willing to receive, all would be filled with the Spirit. . . . We are too easily satisfied with a ripple on the surface, when it is our privilege to expect the deep moving of the Spirit of God.

“With the reception of this gift, all other gifts would be ours; for we are to have this gift according to the plentitude of the riches of the grace of Christ, and He is ready to supply every soul according to the capacity to receive. Then let us not be satisfied with only a little of this blessing, only that amount which will keep us from the slumber of death, but let us diligently seek for the abundance of the grace of God.”—*My Life Today*, p. 57.

“That which we receive from Christ we must give to others. . . . None who receive the grace of Christ can keep it to themselves.”—*Medical Ministry*, p. 334.

2. PREPARING TO RECEIVE THE POWER

- a. How were the disciples to receive the promised blessing? Luke 24:49.
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“In obedience to Christ’s command, they waited in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father—the outpouring of the Spirit. They did not wait in idleness. The record says that they were ‘continually in the temple, praising and blessing God’ (Luke 24:53). They also met together to present their requests to the Father in the name of Jesus.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 35.

“When we have entire, wholehearted consecration to the service of Christ, God will recognize the fact by an outpouring of His Spirit without measure; but this will not be while the largest portion of the church are not laborers together with God. God cannot pour out His Spirit when selfishness and self-indulgence are so manifest; when a spirit prevails that, if put into words, would express that answer of Cain—‘Am I my brother’s keeper?’”—*My Life Today*, p. 59.

- b. What was the condition of the disciples before they received this power? Acts 2:1.
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“The disciples prayed with intense earnestness for a fitness to meet men and in their daily intercourse to speak words that would lead sinners to Christ. Putting away all differences, all desire for the supremacy, they came close together in Christian fellowship. . . .

“These days of preparation were days of deep heart searching. The disciples felt their spiritual need and cried to the Lord for the holy unction that was to fit them for the work of soul saving. They did not ask for a blessing for themselves merely. They were weighted with the burden of the salvation of souls.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 37.

- c. What do each of us need to do to prepare to receive this power? Acts 3:19.
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“Let there be a work of reformation and repentance. Let all seek for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. As with the disciples after the ascension of Christ, it may require several days of earnestly seeking God and putting away of sin.”—*My Life Today*, p. 58.

3. RECEIVING THE POWER

- a. What was the experience of the disciples as they received the power of the Holy Spirit? Acts 2:2–4. How will this experience compare to the experience of God's church in the last days?
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"The outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the apostles was the 'former rain,' and glorious was the result. But the latter rain will be more abundant."—*My Life Today*, p. 60.

- b. What did they do with the power they received? Acts 4:33.
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"The disciples . . . were weighted with the burden for the salvation of souls. The gospel was to be carried to the uttermost parts of the earth, and they claimed the endowment of the power that Christ had promised. Then it was that the Holy Spirit was poured out, and thousands were converted in a day.

"So may it be now. Instead of man's speculations, let the Word of God be preached. Let Christians put away their dissensions and give themselves to God for the saving of the lost. Let them ask in faith for the blessing, and it will come.

"Zeal for God moved the disciples to bear witness to the truth with mighty power. Should not this zeal fire our hearts with a determination to tell the story of redeeming love, of Christ, and Him crucified?"—*Ibid.*, p. 61.

- c. What is the condition upon which we receive this power? Joel 2:15–17.
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"Those only who are constantly receiving fresh supplies of grace will have power proportionate to their daily need and their ability to use that power. Instead of looking forward to some future time when, through a special endowment of spiritual power, they will receive a miraculous fitting up for soul winning, they are yielding themselves daily to God, that He may make them vessels meet for His use. Daily they are improving the opportunities for service that lie within their reach. Daily they are witnessing for the Master wherever they may be, whether in some humble sphere of labor in the home or in a public field of usefulness."—*Ibid.*, p. 60.

4. A PROMISE FOR US TODAY

- a. What promise is given to us today regarding the special power of the Holy Spirit? Joel 2:23.
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"It is true that in the time of the end, when God's work in the earth is closing, the earnest efforts put forth by consecrated believers under the guidance of the Holy Spirit are to be accompanied by special tokens of divine favor. Under the figure of the early and the latter rain, that falls in Eastern lands at seedtime and harvest, the Hebrew prophets foretold the bestowal of spiritual grace in extraordinary measure upon God's church. The outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the apostles was the beginning of the early, or former, rain, and glorious was the result. To the end of time the presence of the Spirit is to abide with the true church.

"But near the close of earth's harvest, a special bestowal of spiritual grace is promised to prepare the church for the coming of the Son of man. This outpouring of the Spirit is likened to the falling of the latter rain; and it is for this added power that Christians are to send their petitions to the Lord of the harvest 'in the time of the latter rain.' In response, 'the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain.' 'He will cause to come down . . . the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain' (Zechariah 10:1; Joel 2:23)."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 54, 55.

- b. What work has been prophesied by John? Revelation 18:1. How can we have a part in the work of the fourth angel today?
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"The Spirit of God is moving upon men's hearts, and those who respond to its influence will become lights in the world. Everywhere they are seen going forth to communicate to others the light they have received as they did after the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. And as they let their light shine, they receive more and more of the Spirit's power. The earth is lighted with the glory of God. . . .

"Hundreds and thousands were seen visiting families and opening before them the Word of God. Hearts were convicted by the power of the Holy Spirit, and a spirit of genuine conversion was manifest. On every side doors were thrown open to the proclamation of the truth. The world seemed to be lightened with the heavenly influence."—*My Life Today*, p. 63.

5. PRAYING FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT

- a. In view of the times in which we live, what is God's desire for us today? Zechariah 10:1.

"The latter rain, ripening earth's harvest, represents the spiritual grace that prepares the church for the coming of the Son of man. But unless the former rain has fallen, there will be no life; the green blade will not spring up. Unless the early showers have done their work, the latter rain can bring no seed to perfection. . . .

"There must be a constant development of Christian virtue, a constant advancement in Christian experience. . . .

"Only those who are living up to the light they have will receive greater light. Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, we shall not recognize the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 506, 507.

"Let us, with contrite hearts, pray most earnestly that now, in the time of the latter rain, the showers of grace may fall upon us. At every meeting we attend our prayers should ascend, that at this very time God will impart warmth and moisture to our souls. As we seek God for the Holy Spirit, it will work in us meekness, humbleness of mind, a conscious dependence upon God for the perfecting latter rain. If we pray for the blessing in faith, we shall receive it as God has promised."—*Ibid.*, p. 509.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why do we need the power of the Holy Spirit even more than the disciples did?
2. What can we learn from the disciples' experience in preparing for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit?
3. Instead of looking to a future time when, through a special gift of spiritual power, we will be miraculously fitted up for soul winning, what can we do today?
4. How do we become lights in the world? What happens as we let our light shine?
5. What is the work of the former rain? How does it relate to the latter rain?

Teach Us to Pray

“And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples” (Luke 11:1).

“Christ’s disciples were much impressed by His prayers and by His habit of communion with God. One day after a short absence from their Lord, they found Him absorbed in supplication. Seeming unconscious of their presence, He continued praying aloud. The hearts of the disciples were deeply moved. As He ceased praying, they exclaimed, ‘Lord, teach us to pray.’”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 140.

Suggested Reading: *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 102–122.

Sunday

September 9

1. LESSONS FROM THE LORD’S PRAYER

- a. When the disciples heard the difference between the prayer of Christ and the formal prayers of their priests, what did they ask Jesus? What model prayer did the Lord give? Luke 11:1–4.

- b. How does Jesus teach us to begin our prayers? To whom are we praying? Matthew 6:6, 9. What does it mean to pray in Jesus’ name?

“To pray in Christ’s name means much. It means that we are to accept His character, manifest His spirit, and work His works. The Saviour’s promise is given on condition. ‘If ye love Me,’ He says, ‘keep My commandments.’ He saves men, not in sin, but from sin; and those who love Him will show their love by obedience.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 668.

“To pray in the name of Jesus is something more than a mere mention of that name at the beginning and the ending of a prayer. It is to pray in the mind and spirit of Jesus, while we believe His promises, rely upon His grace, and work His works.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 100, 101.

2. CONDITIONS FOR ANSWERED PRAYER

- a. What are the conditions upon which God answers prayer? 1 John 3:22; Matthew 21:22.
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“God’s promises are all made upon conditions. If we do His will, if we walk in truth, then we may ask what we will, and it shall be done unto us. While we earnestly endeavor to be obedient, God will hear our petitions; but He will not bless us in disobedience. If we choose to disobey His commandments, we may cry, ‘Faith, faith, only have faith,’ and the response will come back from the sure Word of God, ‘Faith without works is dead’ (James 2:20). Such faith will only be as sounding brass and as a tinkling cymbal. In order to have the benefits of God’s grace we must do our part; we must faithfully work and bring forth fruits meet for repentance.”—*Faith and Works*, p. 47.

- b. What is our duty toward those in need around us? Proverbs 3:27, 28. How does our behavior toward the needy reflect back upon us?
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“God demands that you open your hand wide to the needy, and have the tenderest compassion for those who are afflicted, or who are suffering from want. If you turn carelessly from their cry, the Lord will just as surely turn away from your prayer, and he will not hear you in your distress.”—*The Review and Herald*, October 6, 1891.

- c. How does God want us to cooperate with Him in helping others? 1 Corinthians 3:9.
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“We are workers together with God. You are not to sit in idleness, waiting for some great occasion, in order to do a great work for the Master. You are not to neglect the duty that lies directly in your pathway, but you are to improve the little opportunities that open around you.”—*Faith and Works*, p. 47.

“We should encourage [the afflicted ones] to try to help those more needy than themselves. The darkness will be dispelled from their own hearts as they try to help others. As we seek to comfort others with the comfort wherewith we are comforted, the blessings comes back to us.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 256.

3. APPROPRIATE POSTURES IN PRAYER

- a. **What biblical examples of kneeling down to pray demonstrate this position as being both a duty and privilege? 1 Kings 8:54, 55; Ephesians 3:14.**
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“Both in public and private worship it is our duty to bow down upon our knees before God when we offer our petitions to Him. This act shows our dependence upon God.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 312.

“Jesus, our example, ‘kneeled down, and prayed’ (Luke 22:41). Of His disciples it is recorded that they, too, ‘kneeled down, and prayed’ (Acts 9:40). Paul declared, ‘I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ’ (Ephesians 3:14). In confessing before God the sins of Israel, Ezra knelt. See Ezra 9:5. Daniel ‘kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God’ (Daniel 6:10).”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 48.

- b. **What was the position of Elijah when he prayed for rain? 1 Kings 18:42. Who else prayed in a similar position, and why is this attitude not suitable for public worship? Matthew 26:39.**
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“Behold [Christ] contemplating the price to be paid for the human soul. In His agony He clings to the cold ground, as if to prevent Himself from being drawn farther from God. The chilling dew of night falls upon His prostrate form, but He heeds it not. From His pale lips comes the bitter cry, ‘O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me.’ Yet even now He adds, ‘Nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt.’”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 687.

“How much is lost in family worship when the one offering prayer bows the face down, and speaks in a low, feeble voice, as though just recovering from a long sickness. . . . Prayer that is thus uttered is appropriate for the closet, but not suitable for public worship; for unless those assembled with them can hear what is said, they cannot say Amen.”—*Christian Education*, p. 127.

- c. **What position did Jesus ask the multitude to take before He offered thanks for the forthcoming meal? John 6:10, 11.**
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4. PRAYING WITH A SUBMISSIVE SPIRIT

- a. How can we show submission to God in our prayers? 1 John 5:14, 15.
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“Jesus says, ‘What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them’ (Mark 11:24). There is a condition to this promise—that we pray according to the will of God. But it is the will of God to cleanse us from sin, to make us His children, and to enable us to live a holy life. So we may ask for these blessings, and believe that we receive them, and thank God that we have received them. It is our privilege to go to Jesus and be cleansed, and to stand before the law without shame or remorse.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 141.

“Whatever path God chooses for us, whatever way He ordains for our feet, that is the only path of safety. We are daily to cherish a spirit of childlike submission, and pray that our eyes may be anointed with the heavenly eyesalve in order that we may discern the indications of the divine will, lest we become confused in our ideas, because our will seems to be all-controlling.”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 249.

- b. How did Mary demonstrate submission to God? Luke 1:38. How can we have this same attitude?
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- c. What goes hand in hand with true submission? James 1:6.
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“As stewards of the grace of heaven, we are to ask in faith and then wait trustingly for the salvation of God. We are not to step in before Him, trying in our own strength to bring about that which we desire. In His name we are to ask, and then we are to act as if we believed in His efficiency.”—*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 467.

“Our languid, half-hearted prayers will not bring us returns from heaven. Oh, we need to press our petitions! Ask in faith, wait in faith, receive in faith, rejoice in hope, for everyone that seeketh findeth. Be in earnest in the matter. Seek God with all the heart.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 131.

“The fervent prayer of the righteous is never lost. The answer may not come according as we expected, but it will come, because God’s word is pledged.”—*Ibid.*, p. 134.

5. WHEN TO PRAY

a. What times during the day should we pray? Psalm 55:17.

b. Should we limit our prayers to these times? 1 Thessalonians 5:17.

“There is no time or place in which it is inappropriate to offer up a petition to God. . . . In the crowds of the street, in the midst of a business engagement, we may send up a petition to God and plead for divine guidance, as did Nehemiah when he made his request before King Artaxerxes.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 99.

“We may speak with Jesus as we walk by the way, and He says, I am at thy right hand.

“We may commune with God in our hearts; we may walk in companionship with Christ. When engaged in our daily labor, we may breathe out our heart’s desire, inaudible to any human ear; but that word cannot die away into silence, nor can it be lost. Nothing can drown the soul’s desire. It rises above the din of the street, above the noise of machinery. It is God to whom we are speaking, and our prayer is heard.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 258.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How are we to live if we pray in Jesus’ name?
2. When does God answer prayer?
3. Why should we bow upon our knees in our regular public and private prayers?
4. How can we pray with a submissive spirit? What answer will we be willing to accept?
5. How can we pray to God as we go about our duties of the day?

Learning to Pray

“O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works” (Psalm 71:17).

“In the church at home the children are to learn to pray and to trust in God. . . . Come in humility, with a heart full of tenderness, and with a sense of the temptations and dangers before yourselves and your children; by faith bind them to the altar, entreating for them the care of the Lord. Train the children to offer their simple words of prayer. Tell them that God delights to have them call upon Him.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 110.

Suggested Readings: *Child Guidance*, pp. 517–526;
Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 569–574.

Sunday

September 16

1. TIMOTHY LEARNS TO PRAY

a. Where and how did Timothy learn to pray? 2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14, 15.

“Timothy’s father was a Greek and his mother a Jewess. From a child he had known the Scriptures. The piety that he saw in his home life was sound and sensible. The faith of his mother and his grandmother in the sacred oracles was to him a constant reminder of the blessing in doing God’s will. The word of God was the rule by which these two godly women had guided Timothy. The spiritual power of the lessons that he had received from them kept him pure in speech and unsullied by the evil influences with which he was surrounded. Thus his home instructors had cooperated with God in preparing him to bear burdens.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 203.

“Timothy’s mother and grandmother were united in their efforts to train him for God. What was his lesson book?—the Bible. Paul, his father in the gospel, declares, ‘From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures.’”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 918.

2. SAMUEL LEARNS TO PRAY

- a. Did Samuel as a young child know how to recognize God's voice and identify answers to his own prayers? 1 Samuel 3:7. Was this ignorance common in his day? Verse 1.
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"Samuel was a child surrounded by the most corrupting influences. He saw and heard things that grieved his soul. The sons of Eli, who ministered in holy office, were controlled by Satan. . . . [Samuel] did not fellowship, or have the least delight in, the sins which filled all Israel with fearful reports. Samuel loved God; he kept his soul in such close connection with heaven that an angel was sent to talk with him in reference to the sins of Eli's sons, which were corrupting Israel."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 472, 473.

"Before receiving this message from God, 'Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him'; that is, he was not acquainted with such direct manifestations of God's presence as were granted to the prophets. It was the Lord's purpose to reveal Himself in an unexpected manner, that Eli might hear of it through the surprise and inquiry of the youth."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 582.

- b. How did Samuel confuse the voice of God with the voice of his earthly friend and mentor, Eli? What suggested to Eli that God was calling Samuel? 1 Samuel 3:2–6, 8.
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"Supposing the voice to be that of Eli, the child hastened to the bedside of the priest, saying, 'Here am I; for thou calledst me.' The answer was, 'I called not, my son; lie down again.' Three times Samuel was called, and thrice he responded in like manner. And then Eli was convinced that the mysterious call was the voice of God. The Lord had passed by His chosen servant, the man of hoary hairs, to commune with a child. This in itself was a bitter yet deserved rebuke to Eli and his house."—*Ibid.*, p. 581.

- c. Did God talk to Samuel when the boy realized God was calling? What did He say? 1 Samuel 3:11.
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3. DAVID LEARNS TO PRAY

- a. When David was a fugitive in his early life, running from an angry, mad king, what requests did he make, and how did God answer? 1 Samuel 23:1, 2, 4, 10–12.
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“Still hunted by the king, David found no place of rest or security. At Keilah his brave band saved the town from capture by the Philistines, but they were not safe, even among the people whom they had delivered. From Keilah they repaired to the wilderness of Ziph.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 660.

- b. After David became king and fell into temptation, what prayer did he make to God? Psalm 51:1–4, 7.
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“After his great sin, in the anguish of remorse and self-abhorrence he still turned to God as his best friend.”—*Education*, p. 165.

“The prayer of David after his fall, illustrates the nature of true sorrow for sin. His repentance was sincere and deep. There was no effort to palliate his guilt; no desire to escape the judgment threatened, inspired his prayer. David saw the enormity of his transgression; he saw the defilement of his soul; he loathed his sin. It was not for pardon only that he prayed, but for purity of heart.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 24, 25.

- c. What did David plead for, and for what purpose? Psalm 51:12, 13.
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“God intended the history of David’s fall to serve as a warning that even those whom He has greatly blessed and favored are not to feel secure and neglect watchfulness and prayer. . . . Thousands have thus been led to realize their own danger from the tempter’s power. The fall of David, one so greatly honored by the Lord, has awakened in them distrust of self. They have felt that God alone could keep them by His power through faith.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 724.

4. MANASSEH LEARNS TO PRAY

- a. **Who was Manasseh? Describe his character at the beginning of his reign. 2 Chronicles 32:33; 33:1–10.**

“The kingdom of Judah, prosperous throughout the times of Hezekiah, was once more brought low during the long years of Manasseh’s wicked reign, when paganism was revived, and many of the people were led into idolatry. ‘Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen’ (2 Chronicles 33:9). The glorious light of former generations was followed by the darkness of superstition and error. Gross evils sprang up and flourished—tyranny, oppression, hatred of all that is good. Justice was perverted; violence prevailed.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 381.

- b. **What experience did God bring upon this proud king to get his attention and to teach him to pray? 2 Chronicles 33:11. What was the consequence of his waiting so long to pray?**

“As an earnest of what would befall the people should they continue impenitent, the Lord permitted their king to be captured by a band of Assyrian soldiers, who ‘bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon,’ their temporary capital. This affliction brought the king to his senses; ‘he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto Him: and He was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord He was God’ (2 Chronicles 33:11–13). But this repentance, remarkable though it was, came too late to save the kingdom from the corrupting influence of years of idolatrous practices. Many had stumbled and fallen, never again to rise.”—*Ibid.*, p. 383.

- c. **What was the result of Manasseh’s new-found prayer life? 2 Chronicles 33:12, 13, 15, 16. What was he known for at the time of his death? Verses 18, 19.**

5. PAGANS LEARN TO PRAY

- a. What led the pagan Naaman to accept the Creator as his God? 2 Kings 5:1, 9–15.

“A slave, far from her home, this little maid was nevertheless one of God’s witnesses, unconsciously fulfilling the purpose for which God had chosen Israel as His people. As she ministered in that heathen home, her sympathies were aroused in behalf of her master. . . . She knew that the power of Heaven was with Elisha, and she believed that by this power Naaman could be healed.

“The conduct of the captive maid, the way that she bore herself in that heathen home, is a strong witness to the power of early home training.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 244, 245.

- b. What experience led the once pagan monarch, Nebuchadnezzar, to humbly trust in God? Daniel 4:28–36. What was his religious experience after his humiliation? Verses 2, 3, 37.

“King Nebuchadnezzar, before whom Daniel so often honored the name of God, was finally thoroughly converted, and learned to ‘praise and extol and honour the King of heaven.’

“The king upon the Babylonian throne became a witness for God, giving his testimony, warm and eloquent, from a grateful heart that was partaking of the mercy and grace, the righteousness and peace, of the divine nature.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1170.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How did Timothy’s mother and grandmother train him for God?
2. Why was it that God chose to communicate with the child Samuel?
3. What shows the sincerity of David’s prayer after his fall? Did David’s Friend fail him?
4. What does Manasseh’s prayer teach us about God?
5. How did God’s witnesses lead heathen rulers to pray to God?

Prayer as a Way of Life

“The Lord hath heard my supplication; the Lord will receive my prayer” (Psalm 6:9).

“Cultivate the habit of talking with the Saviour when you are alone, when you are walking, and when you are busy with your daily labor. Let the heart be continually uplifted in silent petition for help, for light, for strength, for knowledge. Let every breath be a prayer.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 510, 511.

Suggested Reading: *Steps to Christ*, pp. 115–126.

Sunday

September 23

1. CONTINUAL PRAYER

- a. **How can we maintain a devotional attitude throughout the day? 1 Thessalonians 5:17. Does this mean we do nothing but pray all day?**

“The life must be like Christ’s life—between the mountain and the multitude. He who does nothing but pray will soon cease to pray, or his prayers will become a formal routine. When men take themselves out of social life, away from the sphere of Christian duty and cross bearing; when they cease to work earnestly for the Master, who worked earnestly for them, they lose the subject matter of prayer and have no incentive to devotion. Their prayers become personal and selfish.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 101.

- b. **Where does this work begin? Proverbs 23:7 (first part); 2 Corinthians 10:5.**

“Unless a determined effort is made to keep the thoughts centered on Christ, grace cannot reveal itself in the life. The mind must engage in the spiritual warfare. Every thought must be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. All the habits must be brought under God’s control.”—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 164.

2. POWERFUL PRAYERS

- a. What is the subject of many of the Psalms, most of which were written by King David? Psalms 61:1; 69:13.
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- b. For what other purpose were the psalms intended? Psalms 144:9; 149:1.
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“There are few means more effective for fixing His words in the memory than repeating them in song. And such song has wonderful power. It has power to subdue rude and uncultivated natures; power to quicken thought and to awaken sympathy, to promote harmony of action, and to banish the gloom and foreboding that destroy courage and weaken effort. . . .

“As a part of religious service, singing is as much an act of worship as is prayer. Indeed, many a song is prayer. If the child is taught to realize this, he will think more of the meaning of the words he sings and will be more susceptible to their power.”—*Education*, pp. 167, 168.

- c. Tell of some powerful prayers made by other kings in the Old Testament. 1 Kings 3:6–9; 2 Kings 19:15–19; 2 Chronicles 20:5–12. How can we incorporate the scriptures into our prayers?
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“There is one blessing that all may have who seek for it in the right way. It is the Holy Spirit of God, and this is a blessing that brings all other blessings in its train. If we will come to God as little children, asking for His grace and power and salvation, not for our own uplifting, but that we may bring blessing to those around us, our petitions will not be denied. Then let us study the Word of God that we may know how to take hold of His promises and claim them as our own. Then we shall be happy.”—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 113.

“It is the glory of God to give His virtue to His children. He desires to see men and women reaching the highest standard; and when by faith they lay hold of the power of Christ, when they plead His unfailing promises, and claim them as their own, when with an importunity that will not be denied they seek for the power of the Holy Spirit, they will be made complete in Him.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 530.

3. MONUMENTS TO ANSWERED PRAYER

- a. After God worked a great miracle to bring the Israelites through the Jordan River, what did He ask them to do? Joshua 4:1–9.
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“But before the priests had come up out of the river, that this wonderful miracle might never be forgotten, the Lord bade Joshua select men of note from each tribe to take up stones from the spot in the river bed where the priests had stood, and bear them upon their shoulders to Gilgal, and there erect a monument in remembrance of the fact that God had caused Israel to pass over Jordan upon dry land. This would be a continual reminder of the miracle that the Lord had wrought for them. As years passed on, their children would inquire concerning the monument, and again and again they would recount to them this wonderful history, till it would be indelibly impressed upon their minds to the latest generation.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 158.

- b. What should we avoid focusing on in our life? Psalm 25:7; 79:8.
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“It is not wise to gather together all the unpleasant recollections of a past life—its iniquities and disappointments—to talk over them and mourn over them until we are overwhelmed with discouragement. A discouraged soul is filled with darkness, shutting out the light of God from his own soul and casting a shadow upon the pathway of others.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 117.

- c. What should we contemplate instead? Psalm 105:5; Hebrews 12:2, 3.
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“Thank God for the bright pictures which He has presented to us. Let us group together the blessed assurances of His love, that we may look upon them continually: The Son of God leaving His Father’s throne, clothing His divinity with humanity, that He might rescue man from the power of Satan; His triumph in our behalf, opening heaven to men, revealing to human vision the presence chamber where the Deity unveils His glory; the fallen race uplifted from the pit of ruin into which sin had plunged it, and brought again into connection with the infinite God, and having endured the divine test through faith in our Redeemer, clothed in the righteousness of Christ, and exalted to His throne—these are the pictures which God would have us contemplate.”—*Ibid.*, p. 118.

4. PRAYER WITH HOPE

- a. What had been the experience of the disciples in prayer? John 16:24 (first part).

“As yet the disciples were unacquainted with the Saviour’s unlimited resources and power. He said to them, ‘Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name’ (John 16:24). He explained that the secret of their success would be in asking for strength and grace in His name. . . . Every sincere prayer is heard in heaven. It may not be fluently expressed; but if the heart is in it, it will ascend to the sanctuary where Jesus ministers, and He will present it to the Father without one awkward, stammering word, beautiful and fragrant with the incense of His own perfection.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 667.

- b. How did Jesus encourage them to approach the Father in prayer? John 14:13, 14; 16:24 (second part). For whom else are these promises?

“ ‘All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive’ (Matthew 21:22). These words are the pledge that all that an omnipotent Saviour can bestow will be given to those who trust in Him. As stewards of the grace of heaven, we are to ask in faith and then wait trustingly for the salvation of God. We are not to step in before Him, trying in our own strength to bring about that which we desire. In His name we are to ask, and then we are to act as if we believed in His efficiency.”—*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 467.

“O, brethren and sisters, what we want is a living, striving, growing, faith in the promises of God, which are indeed for you and for me.”—*Pacific Union Recorder*, December 26, 1912.

- c. What part does hope play as we approach God in prayer? How should we come before Him? Romans 5:5; Hebrews 4:16.

“There is nothing that can make the soul so strong to resist the temptations of Satan in the great conflict of life, as to seek God in humility, laying before Him your soul in all its helplessness, expecting that He will be your helper and your defender.”—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 121.

5. PRAYER AS THERAPY

- a. What promises can we claim so that we may have strength in our conflict with the enemy? Isaiah 40:29; 41:10; Psalm 31:24.

“He who serves under the bloodstained banner of Immanuel will have that to do which will call for heroic effort and patient endurance. But the soldier of the cross stands unshrinkingly in the forefront of the battle. As the enemy presses the attack against him, he turns to the stronghold for aid, and as he brings to the Lord the promises of the word, he is strengthened for the duties of the hour. He realizes his need of strength from above. The victories that he gains do not lead to self exaltation, but cause him to lean more and more heavily on the Mighty One. Relying upon that Power, he is enabled to present the message of salvation so forcibly that it vibrates in other minds.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 362.

- b. What other promises can we claim in prayer in order to give us courage in the battle with sin? Joshua 1:9; Isaiah 49:25; 1 Corinthians 15:57.

“What a source to which we can look in all times of trouble; the heart can have no misgivings! Man is erring, stubborn, rebellious, and defiant even against God; but the Lord is kind and patient and of tender compassion. He has heaven and earth at His command, and He knows just what we need even before we present our necessities and desires before Him.”—*My Life Today*, p. 10.

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why don't we need to withdraw from society and devote our entire lives to prayer?
2. How can we include God's Word in our prayers? What will this do for us?
3. What can we learn from the Israelites' use of monuments to remember God's leading in their lives? How can we do the same?
4. How can we have victory against temptation?
5. Describe God's power in helping us in our struggles.

First Sabbath Offerings



JULY 7

for the Media Departments
in Moldova and the East-
European Unions

(See p. 4.)

AUGUST 4

for missionary schools
and educational projects

(See p. 25.)



SEPTEMBER 1

for the headquarters in
Madagascar

(See p. 46.)