

**February 27 – March 26**

*Comments on the Adult*

*Sabbath School*

*Bible Study Guide*

*The Fruit  
of the Spirit*

**Part 3**

# The Fruit of the Spirit

The January, February, and March 2010 issue of the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide (ASSBSG)* is entitled “The Fruit of the Spirit.” Elder Richard W. O’Ffill is the principal contributor for this series of studies. He is also the author for the series’ companion book, which is also entitled *The Fruit of the Spirit*. This comments booklet discusses lessons 10 through 13, which cover the dates February 27 through March 26.

## Lesson 10 — The Fruit of the Spirit Is Self-Control

This lesson discusses *temperance* under the title of *self-control*. The Greek word translated temperance (*egkrateia*) mean self-control. The greatest example of self-control found in the Bible is the life of Jesus, especially during his temptations in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11) where he denied “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (1 John 2:16). Also during his trial and crucifixion, Jesus maintained control of self during great insult and provocation (Matthew 26, 27).

As Christians, we are to be Christlike. Jesus set the example that we are to follow (John 13:15; 1 Peter 2:21). While we might be tempted to think that we cannot ascend to the measure of his life, Jesus has assured us that, by the power of his Spirit, we may live as he lived. Much of our problem is a lack of faith, for Jesus said: “If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth” (Mark 9:23). Faith is a key that enables us to realize that all of Jesus’ biddings are our enablings! Jesus is not asking us to do the impossible when he says “be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). Jesus tells us that if we love him, we will keep his commandments (John 14:15).

The Apostle Paul asks, “How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein” (Romans 6:2)? He plainly states that, as Christians, “sin shall not have dominion over you” (Romans 6:14). All of our actions and even all of our thoughts are to be under control — “bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5). We also have these positive utterances from the pen of inspiration.

You will doubtless meet with things that will ruffle your spirit and severely test you; *but self-control may be yours in the strength of Jesus.* (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 501; all emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted)

It is possible, through the grace of Christ, to have control over yourselves at all times. (*The Signs of the Times*, October 6, 1887)

Furthermore, we are told how we may have total self-control:

Self-control is a power which all may possess. It is gained by *placing the will wholly* on the side of God, taking the divine will for your will. (*The Youth's Instructor*, August 17, 1899)

Self-control is a power each person who names the name of Jesus is to have, and it is received by taking the divine will as our own.

Desires for goodness and holiness are right as far as they go; but if you stop here, they will avail nothing. Many will be lost while hoping and desiring to be Christians. They do not come to the point of yielding the will to God. They do not now choose to be Christians.

*Through the right exercise of the will, an entire change may be made in your life.* By yielding up your will to Christ, you ally yourself with the power that is above all principalities and powers. You will have strength from above to hold you steadfast, and thus through constant surrender to God you will be enabled to live the new life, even the life of faith. (*Steps to Christ*, pp. 47, 48)

Interestingly, we are told that “the highest evidence of nobility in a Christian is self-control” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 301). When we fail to maintain self-control, we show a distrustful spirit, and we rob from God the chance to reveal his perfection through us.

He would have us practice self-control, and be perfect in character, working that which is well pleasing in his sight. “By their fruits ye shall know them,” is his own standard of judging character. (*The Review & Herald*, June 10, 1884)

Self-control is certainly not only possible for the Christian but is what God expects, and he is glorified by his Spirit working in sinful man to bring his life away from disobedience and hate to one of loving obedience.

One important area of self-control or temperance that is not discussed in the lesson is that of appetite. Man first lost paradise over appetite and Christ's first great victory was upon appetite.

After His baptism the Son of God entered the dreary wilderness, there to be tempted by the devil. For nearly six weeks He endured the agonies of hunger. . . . He realized the power of appetite upon man; and in behalf of sinful man, He bore the closest test possible upon that point. Here a victory was gained which few can appreciate. The controlling power of depraved appetite and the grievous sin of indulging it can only be understood by the length of the fast which our Saviour endured that He might break its power. . . .

With man's nature, and the terrible weight of his sins pressing upon Him, our Redeemer withstood the power of Satan upon this great leading temptation, which imperils the souls of men. *If man should overcome this temptation, he could conquer on every other point.*

Intemperance lies at the foundation of all the moral evils known to man. Christ began the work of redemption just where the ruin began. The fall of our first parents was caused by the indulgence of appetite. In redemption, the denial of appetite is the first work of Christ. (*The Signs of the Times*, August 7, 1879)

Not only upon appetite was the starting point of sin and redemption, but we are told that if we can gain the victory over appetite, we may gain the victory over every sin. That is impressive and helps to focus our minds upon the fact of how important self-control is in this vital area.

It is fashionable to indulge the appetite with luxurious food and unnatural stimulants, strengthening by indulgence the animal propensities, and crippling the growth and development of the moral faculties.

There is no encouragement given to the sons and daughters of Adam that they may become victorious overcomers in the Christian warfare unless they decide to practice temperance in all things. If they do this, they will not fight as one that beateth the air.

If Christians will keep the body in subjection and bring all their appetites and passions under the control of enlightened conscience, feeling it a duty that they owe to God and to their neighbor to obey the laws which govern health and life, they will have the blessing of physical and mental vigor. They will have moral power to engage in the warfare against Satan; and in the name of Him who conquered appetite in their behalf, they may be more than conquerors on their own account. (*The Review and Herald*, November 21, 1882)

**Sunday, February 28:** Sunday's lesson covers the positive aspects of the Christian life that are to be done or maintained, as well as what one must not do.

The Apostle John writes about "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16). The popular idea in the world today is that "if it feels good, do it." There is clearly an aspect of sin that brings carnal pleasure. Paul speaks that Moses chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Hebrews 11:25). Yet these pleasures are for just a season or are "short lived" (Weymouth). These pleasures of the flesh pull upon the person.

In lesson 7 for February 11, there was a discussion on the man in Romans 7. Again in the lesson for Sunday, February 28, we have a discussion upon Romans 7. This lesson states:

There are obviously dos and don'ts in the Christian life. There is a constant struggle with self, with the flesh, with the ways of the world. Paul shares this dilemma in Romans 7:15-18, when he talks about the struggle between what he knows he should do and what he's tempted to do.

The lesson continues, “The answer to the dilemma of Romans 7 is not when can we overcome but how. And the how is found through faith in Jesus.”

As in lesson 7, the *ASSBSG* does not give a clear explanation of the situation being expressed. Paul is not saying that, as a converted Christian, he has no strength to overcome sin and the answer is to accept the imputed righteousness of Jesus to overcome the dilemma. As we look at Romans 7, we see Paul reveals the experience of a person under the conviction of the Spirit of God but not under its control or any control, including self-control. In other words, Paul is describing someone under conviction but not surrendered and converted to Christ. Such a person sees a better pathway, but because there is no power of self-control under sinful flesh they cannot do the good that they see the law of God teaches. When Jesus comes into our lives, however, his power also comes into our lives, and we are “more than conquerors through him that loved us” (Romans 8:37). The promise to you, believer, is that “sin shall not have dominion over you” (Romans 6:14). Paul describes your position when you surrender to the work of the Spirit instead of to the clamors of the flesh:

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. (Romans 8:14-16)

**Monday, March 1:** This lesson discusses the example of Joseph when confronted by Potiphar’s wife and placement in time of one’s reward for self-control. If a person is overweight and decides to carry out a strict fast for a week, there will be a decided result at the end of the week. The person might lose a few to several pounds. (Do not attempt this without proper medical counsel!) In Joseph’s case, there were no immediate positive results. There were immediate results, but they were not the kind he wanted! Instead of being rewarded by Potiphar, he was cast into prison! The character of a true Christian, however, is such that even if he knew he would go to jail for the rest of his life, he would do the right thing “because it ... [is] right, and leave [the] consequences with God” (*The Great Controversy*, p. 460). As Job said, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him” (Job 13:15). “From the depths of discouragement and despondency Job rose to the heights of implicit trust in the mercy and the saving power of God” (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 163).

**Tuesday, March 2:** As the lesson presents Joseph as an example of self-control, the life of Samson is set as an example of someone lacking self-control.

Physically, Samson was the strongest man upon the earth; but in self-control, integrity, and firmness, he was one of the weakest of men. Many mistake strong passions for a strong character, but the truth is that he who is mastered by his passions is a weak man. The real greatness of the man is measured by the power of the feelings that he controls, not by those that control him. (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 567)

Satan wants control of both mind and body, and he uses the lusts of the flesh to control the mind. Christ, on the other hand, also wants control of both the mind and the body, but he uses a sanctified mind to gain control of the body.

The lack of self-control by a youth paves the way for Satan to take over as the youth matures. Samson was born with the promise of a bright future, his parents had the blessing of God, and God's Spirit came upon him in a marked way early in his life. He failed, however, to see the working of God in his life for the blessing of God's people and for the glory of God, and Samson felt no need to be the master of his passions.

It seems that his parents, though desirous to do well, were inclined to give into his selfish ways. In allowing him to disrespect their wishes when he was young, Samson's parents prepared him to show little to no respect for their wishes or God's wishes when he was older. When Samson was looking for a wife, he completely disregarded the counsel of God which had been given through Moses: "Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son" (Deuteronomy 7:3, see also Exodus 34:15-17). When he was confronted by his father about his choice of a wife, Samson thoughtlessly said, "Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well" (Judges 14:3). It certainly was not this woman's upright character that pleased Samson. Satan was using Samson's flesh to control his mind.

Through the various trials of his life, Samson's lack of self-control became more evident. Finally his lack of self-control resulted in his imprisonment, torture, and humiliation. But in this, God was able to finally reach the heart of Samson, and he was a victor at last. God "is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). However, let us not be like Samson and make God bring us to the edge of ruin so that we will repent. The end of Samson's life is an exception, not the rule, for those who fail to control self when they are young.

**Wednesday, March 3:** Wednesday's lesson centers around Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 (NKJV):

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

Paul uses the analogy of running a race. When younger, I was a member of my high school's track team. At various times, I ran the mile, half-mile, two-mile, and two-mile relay races. (This was in the old days before the metric system took over track in the United States.) The training that I went through was rigorous and long. Many days I would run for hours to strengthen my body for competition. In the winter, when the weather was not conducive to outside exercise, I would run back and

forth and up and down through the rows of bleachers in the basketball gymnasium. I certainly exhibited a great degree of self-control to obtain the best body condition that I could.

Why did I work so hard? Only one person, or one team in the case of a relay, could win any given race. Many might train with great discipline, but only one could win. But not so in the Christian race. We may all obtain “the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14). This prize was the one that Paul pressed towards. He was not interested in a prize that faded but one that was eternal.

To Paul, the Christian life was likened also to a fight. He could say at the end of his life: “I have fought a good fight” (2 Timothy 4:7). In our text for today, Paul says in verse 26: “Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air.” He was not shadow boxing or striking out against the air, not knowing where to hit or what was there. Paul knew that one of the greatest opponents he must face was himself! He must keep his inner nature under control. As the NKJV says it, “But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified” (1 Corinthians 9:26). If Paul would become a castaway if he did not exhibit self-control, then God, who “is no respecter of persons” (Acts 10:34), will finally cast away all who fail to find self-control.

**Thursday, March 4:** This day’s lesson finds Paul again using the race analogy, with the key text from Hebrews 12:1:

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.

As I mentioned in the comments for yesterday’s lesson, I was on my school’s track team. I was not a Christian then, and my life was very different in many respects. Today, among some of my close friends, I am known as the *modesty police* because of how I view Bible standards for dress. (Yes, I do believe that God has high standards in this area, and I am not ashamed of this, but this is not the time or place for that discussion.) When I was younger, however, my views on dress for both men and women were vastly different. Our track team, like most sports teams, had uniforms. When you are running a race or when you are vaulting over a high pole, you cannot afford any extra weight. The weight of even a few pounds of clothing, as well as the extra drag on the wind, could not be afforded. They can make the difference between winning the race and being in last place. Our shirts, therefore, were thin mesh of the tank-top variety. Our shorts were skimpy and made of a light silk-type material. Even our shoes were light and narrow. Not an extra ounce could be afforded. Why? We were trying to win the race, and the weight would hold us back. Now as Paul noted in his letter to the Corinthians, the runners do this to obtain a corruptible crown, but we race for an incorruptible crown. We must, therefore, lay aside all the weights and sins that hold us back.

As Christians, it should be clear that no sin can be tolerated in heaven. All our sins that “so easily beset us” must be set aside. But what about these weights? What could they be? Ellen White gives us some insight:

Envy, malice, evil thinking, evilspeaking, covetousness—these are weights that the Christian must lay aside if he would run successfully the race for immortality. Every habit or practice that leads into sin and brings dishonor upon Christ must be put away, whatever the sacrifice. The blessing of heaven cannot attend any man in violating the eternal principles of right. One sin cherished is sufficient to work degradation of character and to mislead others. (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 312)

Ellen White includes “every habit or practice that leads into sin.” So, there may be things in my life that, of themselves, are not sin, but they are like weights that will hold me back and lead me to sin.

Commenting upon this Hebrews 12:1, Ellen White also noted:

In this text one of the public games so famous in Paul’s time is used to illustrate the Christian race. The competitors in the race submitted to a painful training process, practicing the most rigid self-denial that their physical powers might be in the most favorable condition, and then they taxed these powers to the utmost to win the honor of a perishable wreath. Some never recovered from the effects. In consequence of the terrible strain, men would sometimes fall by the race-course, bleeding at the mouth and nose; others breathed out their life, firmly grasping the poor bauble that had cost them so dear.

Paul compares the followers of Christ to the competitors in a race. “Now,” says the apostle, “they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we [mark the greater inducement] an incorruptible.” Here Paul makes a sharp contrast, to put to shame the feeble efforts of professed Christians who plead for their selfish indulgences, and refuse to place themselves, by self-denial and strictly temperate habits, in a position that they will make a success of overcoming. All who entered the list in the public games were animated and excited by the hope of a prize if they were successful. In like manner a prize is held out before the Christian, the reward of faithfulness to the end of the race. If the prize is won, his future welfare is assured; an exceeding and eternal weight of glory is in reserve for the overcomer. Shall, then, the followers of Christ, with the attractions of the heavenly world before them, grudge the self-denial and spare the effort, needful to secure the imperishable crown? (*The Review and Herald*, October 18, 1881)

The lesson then directs our attention to Colossians 3:1-10 where we are told to heed the following commands:

- “Seek those things which are above” (v. 1).
- “Set your affection on things above” (v. 2).
- “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth” (v. 5).
- “Lie not one to another” (v. 9).
- “Put off the old man with his deeds” (v.9).
- “Put on the new man” (v. 10).

Finally, we would like to commend the lesson for noting Romans 13:14 at the end of the lesson: “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.” The Weymouth translation gives the last part as “make no provision for gratifying your earthly cravings.” This is where faith plays a key role. If we believe that victory over sin is a gift from God and we accept that gift by faith, then we must begin to live that faith out. For example, I have talked to scores of people about the habit of using tobacco. Most of them want to quit, and some will, at times, give it a try but will say they want to keep a pack or pouch in the back closet “just in case it is needed.” This kind of effort is doomed for failure, for it does not incorporate faith. Faith says that the victory is a “done deal,” and since there is no need for the flesh to have something that can gratify its cravings, the tobacco goes into the trash. Now, there may be something else with which you need to deal. Perhaps jewelry or certain items of clothing cause vanity within you. If this is the case, then you must get rid of them. They are causing you to stumble, and you are to remove such provisions for the flesh.

**Friday, March 5:** Friday’s lesson has two points that should be considered. First is the quotation from page 562 of *Patriarchs and Prophets* where we read, concerning Samson that “association with idolaters corrupted him.” The Bible tells us not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:14). As we saw in Tuesday’s lesson, Samson disregarded the inspired counsel concerning marriage. It is not only in marriage, however, that God desires his people to be separate from the wicked but also from all corrupting influences, even those found among the children of Israel. The command was (and continues to be) “make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go” (Proverbs 22:24).

The first discussion question for Friday’s lesson notes that some non-Christian people have been known to demonstrate great self-control in some areas. This cannot be denied. An army sniper, at times, demonstrates great self-control in his actions, but the point that we need to remember is that these examples are examples of people who are under the control of sin and have been empowered by the master of sin to do his work. Their control does not come from God or for the cause of righteousness. True Christians have self-control so that sin does not reign in them.

Finally, we wish to note that a recent study by the University of Georgia finds that self-control is contagious! In five studies it was demonstrated that when people observe, or even think of people, who exhibit good self-control, the people in the study were more likely to have self-control! (See [http://www.brainmysteries.com/research/Self-control\\_is\\_contagious\\_study\\_finds.asp](http://www.brainmysteries.com/research/Self-control_is_contagious_study_finds.asp).) In this light, the admonition of inspiration to consider Jesus takes on new relevance. As we contemplate Christ’s life of self-control, we are more likely to be under self-control. We should note, though, that the studies also found the opposite to be equally true. When the test subjects viewed people with poor self-control or even thought of people with poor self-control, they were less likely to demonstrate self-control.

# Lesson 11 — The Fruit of the Spirit Is Righteousness

Lesson 11 is on righteousness. The lesson discusses the necessity of righteousness, our lack of having righteousness, and how Christ is our righteousness, but it strangely is void of a simple or detailed definition of righteousness. It is hard to discuss the need we have of something when we do not know what it is or how to find it; therefore, we believe it is best to begin with a basic understanding of righteousness.

The importance of righteousness is clearly laid out by Jesus, who commanded his follows to “seek...first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness” (Matthew 6:33). The context of Jesus’ statement in Matthew 6 is surrounding the cares of this life, food, clothing, and shelter, but Jesus says that the righteousness of God is the one thing to be sought in this life. All else is of minor consequences compared to it. Let us go to the Scriptures, now, that they may speak to us. Psalm 119:172 declares:

*My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness. (Psalm 119:172)*

Here David says that God’s commandments are his righteousness. In Isaiah 51:7, we read:

*Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law. (Isaiah 51:7)*

Notice what this says — those who know the righteousness of God are those in whose heart is his law! Therefore, the law of God is the righteousness of God.

In the New Testament we find another proof. 1 John 5:17 declares, “All unrighteousness is sin.” The biblical definition of sin is found earlier in John’s epistle, “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; *for sin is the transgression of the law*” (1 John 3:4). If we can state the matter as equations, we have the following:

**Unrighteousness = Sin**

**Sin = The transgression of the law**

Now, if we use the transitive law of mathematics, which says that if A is equal to B, and B is equal to C, then A is equal to C; we can say:

**Unrighteousness = The transgression of the law**

But this is a negative equation. If we take the inverse of the statement, we find it would be:

**Righteousness = Obedience to the commandments of God**

Lest there be any question what law is being discussed here, we turn to Romans 7:7, where we read:

*What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*

As the Ten Commandments contain the expression “Thou shalt not covet,” it is the Ten Commandments, then, that form the basis of righteousness. God’s law, his righteousness, is a transcript of his character, and to fear God and keep his commandments is the whole duty of man (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

This understanding perfectly matches the statement of Ellen White in *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 312, where we read: “Righteousness is right doing,” as well as with this thought: “Righteousness is obedience to the law” (*The Review and Herald*, November 4, 1890). Let it be remembered that, according to 1 Corinthians 1:30, God has made Christ our righteousness, and in the well-known verse of Jeremiah 23:6 we read that Jesus would be called “THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

Bible students generally break down righteousness into two areas: imputed and imparted. These concepts are to be like pure water in a clean stream, beautiful to see and wonderful to drink. When the pure water, however, is mixed with the dirt of men’s ideas, we only have unsightly mud that is not fit for consumption. Sadly, many have muddied the waters in their desire to present their ideas on the righteousness of Jesus. There are two statements from the servant of the Lord that, in a simple manner, lay down principles to help our understanding and safeguard our way. In discussing the coming of the Spirit of God, we read:

This is the danger to which the church is now exposed – that the inventions of finite men shall mark out the precise way for the Holy Spirit to come. Though they would not care to acknowledge it, some have already done this. And because the Spirit is to come, not to praise men or to build up their erroneous theories, but to reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment, many turn away from it. They are not willing to be deprived of the garments of their own self-righteousness. They are not willing to exchange their own righteousness, which is unrighteousness, for **the righteousness of Christ, which is pure, unadulterated truth.** (*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 64, 65)

The righteousness of Christ will contain truth, and if error is part of the so-called mixture, you know it is not the genuine item. The second statement says:

The righteousness by which we are *justified is imputed*; the righteousness by which we are *sanctified is imparted*. The first is our title to heaven, the second is our fitness for heaven. (*The Review and Herald*, June 4, 1895)

Here we see these two words — imputed and imparted. They relate to justification and sanctification, respectively. Imputed righteousness is our title to heaven, and imparted righteousness is our fitness for heaven. This concept is certainly not radical, nor was it new in Ellen White’s time. In a magazine from her era simply entitled *The Christian*, we find the following in the December 5, 1872 edition on page 9:

Imparted Righteousness — sanctifies.

Imputed Righteousness — justifies.

Imparted Righteousness — makes us shine before men.

Imputed Righteousness — makes us shine before God. ...

Imparted Righteousness — respects the law.

Imputed Righteousness — answers the law for us.

Imparted Righteousness — is the evidence of our salvation.

Imputed Righteousness — is the foundation of it. ...

Imparted Righteousness — is our qualification for heaven.

Imputed Righteousness — is our title to heaven.

If we notice the first and the last groups in this series, we see they mirror the thoughts of Ellen White clearly. How does the righteousness of Jesus become imputed to the believer? How can Jesus accept our sin, and how can we accept his righteousness? These questions would seem to hold more weight if we were detached from Christ or if he was held aloof from us and if he had not taken upon himself our sinful flesh, but, amazingly, the Bible says “but he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit” (1 Corinthians 6:17). In accepting our flesh, Jesus has made the way that we can be one, united with him. The righteousness of Christ is not given to the believer, as it were, at arm’s length, rather it is a reality because the believer and Jesus become one in the sight of God.

Concerning our union with Jesus in his life, death, and resurrection, Paul says:

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. (Romans 6:3-6)

Paul is saying, in effect, that we are not the same person as before, but now we are one, living with Christ. In Romans 7, Paul compares it to being married to Christ after the first husband, self, has died, and we are free to marry another. As it was declared in the beginning, “For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh” (Matthew 19:5). So we see that the imputed righteousness of Jesus is not so much the transfer of one to another as it is the bringing together of the sinner and Christ so that they have all things in common. Thus, Paul could say: “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20). Thus the individuality of each is retained, but the union or bond is solid and secure. The life of Christ becomes ours for our justification and ours for our sanctification. Just as we must choose to accept Jesus for our justification, we must, day-by-day and moment-by-moment, choose Jesus for our sanctification. Only as we surrender to him can his life be ours, and we can be empowered by his life for the living of righteousness, the keeping of God’s commandments.

The righteousness we receive from Jesus is the real thing, fully equal to the law, for the one who gives the righteousness is fully equal to the law. Paul states:

Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe. (Romans 3:20-22)

Commenting upon the transition that takes place, E. J. Waggoner noted:

Here stands the law as the swift witness against the sinner. It cannot change, and it will not call a sinner a righteous man. The convicted sinner tries again and again to obtain righteousness from the law, but it resists all his advances. It cannot be bribed by any amount of penance or professedly good deeds. But here stands Christ, “full of grace” as well as of truth, calling the sinner to Him. At last the sinner, weary of the vain struggle to get righteousness from the law, listens to the voice of Christ and flees to His outstretched arms. Hiding in Christ, he is covered with His righteousness, and now behold! he has obtained, through faith in Christ, that for which he has been vainly striving. He has the righteousness which the law requires, and it is the genuine article, because he obtained it from the Source of Righteousness, from the very place whence the law came. And the law witnesses to the genuineness of this righteousness. It says that so long as the man retains that, it will go into court and defend him against all accusers. It will witness to the fact that he is a righteous man. (*Christ and His Righteousness*, p. 62)

**Sunday, March 7:** This lesson is on the necessity of righteousness. As noted by Jesus, it is the first thing to be sought for in life. The holiness that we receive is necessary, for we are told that without holiness “no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14).

One great error that Satan has taught far and wide is that the imputed righteousness of Jesus is enough. He whispers in our ears, “You cannot keep the commandments no matter how hard you try, so relax and let Jesus save you.” In fact, one of the main points of one of Adventism’s most vocal personalities on righteousness by faith says that it is sin to try to keep from sinning! That’s right! If you try to keep from sinning, you are exhibiting works, and that is not faith, so you have actually sinned. Jan Paulsen, the General Conference president of Seventh-day Adventists, stated at Loma Linda University Church on January 23, 2010: “Don’t try to be perfect. You won’t make it. I speak from experience. Just try to be faithful.” How sad to hear such *contagious* words from a professed leader of the people, but let the word of God speak. Paul, the very same theologian who wrote “the just shall live by faith” (Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38), also wrote “for not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified” (Romans 2:13). God makes no provision or excuse for sin. The death of his Son upon the cross proves that. “Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him” (1 John 3:6). Inspiration asks:

When you truly repent of sin, you will not be satisfied to acknowledge simply that you are sinful, and let the matter rest there. *Do you intend to remain sinful while life shall last? Do you mean to violate your conscience? (The Youth's Instructor, February 15, 1894)*

**Monday, March 8:** This lesson is on “Do-It-Yourself Righteousness.” Paul had to deal with many different people, some of which plainly and boldly said that you had to obtain righteousness on your own by your own good works. We do not hear this much anymore, at least not directly. In my nearly thirty years of ministry, I have only met two individual who openly claimed that one had to obtain righteousness by their own works. Both seemed a bit insane, but I assure you that there is a breed of this doctrine that is very alive and well in Adventism and in other faiths, but it is more subtly taught. Some of the more common versions of righteousness by works are really righteousness by diet, righteousness by dress, and righteousness by knowledge and zeal (I will learn and witness my way to holiness).

Now there are many other ideas, but perhaps these strike a cord with some. It should be clear, beloved, that the way we eat or dress cannot save us. No works of any kind can save a sinner; he/she can only be saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8). Now it should be equally clear that just as no good work can save us, every and any bad work that is unrepented, unconfessed, and unforsaken will cause us to be lost. Galatians 5:19-21 is clear on that.

What we need to understand is that there is a cooperation between the divine and the human.

While God was working in Daniel and his companions “to will and to do of His good pleasure,” they were working out their own salvation. Philippians 2:13. Herein is revealed the outworking of the divine principle of co-operation, without which no true success can be attained. Human effort avails nothing without divine power; and without human endeavor, divine effort is with many of no avail. To make God’s grace our own, we must act our part. His grace is given to work in us to will and to do, but never as a substitute for our effort. (*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 486, 487)

Joshua had received the promise that God would surely overthrow these enemies of Israel, yet he put forth as earnest effort as though success depended upon the armies of Israel alone. He did all that human energy could do, and then he cried in faith for divine aid. The secret of success is the union of divine power with human effort. Those who achieve the greatest results are those who rely most implicitly upon the Almighty Arm. (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 509)

Through the right exercise of the will, an entire change may be made in your life. By yielding up your will to Christ, you ally yourself with the power that is above all principalities and powers. You will have strength from above to hold you steadfast, and thus through constant surrender to God you will be enabled to live the new life, even the life of faith. (*Steps to Christ*, pp. 47, 48)

Our will is to be yielded to Him, that we may receive it again, purified and refined, and so linked in sympathy with the Divine that He can pour through us the tides of His love and power. (*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings*, p. 62)

**Tuesday, March 9:** This lesson discusses Romans 5:17-19:

For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

Adam is a figure of Christ, but only by contrast (Romans 5:15). Everything that came through the fall of Adam is undone in Christ, or we might say that all that was lost in Adam is restored in Christ.

Some become confused with Paul's statement of "therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life" (v. 18). A parallel is clearly suggested by Paul, but, unfortunately, some try to draw the parallel where it is not supposed to be. Did all men receive justification to life or the opportunity to receive it? Paul goes on to say "so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (v.19). The *many* is not *every*. The Bible does not teach universal salvation. Salvation comes only to those who by faith accept what Christ has bought and paid for them" (John 3:16). Salvation is free and waiting on the sinner, but it will not be his unless he receives the free gift. E. J. Waggoner of 1888 stated:

Some one may ask, "Why are not all made righteous by the obedience of One?" The reason is that they do not wish to be. If men were counted righteous simply because One was righteous eighteen hundred years ago, then all would have to be righteous by the same obedience. There would be no justice in counting righteousness to one and not to all, if it were in that way. But we have seen that it is not so. People are not simply counted righteous, but actually made righteous, by the obedience of Christ, who is as righteous as he ever was, and who lives today in those who yield to him. His ability to live in any human being is shown in the fact that he took human flesh eighteen hundred years ago. What God did in the person of the Carpenter of Nazareth, he is willing and anxious to do for every man that believes. The free gift comes upon all, but all will not accept it, and therefore all are not made righteous by it. Nevertheless, "many" will be made righteous by his obedience. (*The Signs of the Times*, March 12, 1896)

The second part of Tuesday's lesson makes reference to Galatians 3:6, which quotes Genesis 15:6 where we read that Abraham "believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness." It should be noted that the Hebrew word translated "believed" is *aman*, from which we have our word amen. *Aman* has a wide variety of meanings and nuances, depending upon the form of the word. It can mean believe, support, foster, or be established. The hiphil form of the word is used in

Genesis 15:6, which means believe. The broadness of how this word is used is well-illustrated in 2 Chronicles 20:20:

Believe (*aman*, hiphil form) in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established (*aman*, naphil form).

As we believe in Christ, we are established and strengthened to be sons and daughters of God.

**Wednesday, March 10:** This lesson is on righteousness and obedience. Since we have covered this in the first section of this lesson, we will only remark here that obedience is the proof that we are God's. Paul and James both use Abraham as an illustration of man receiving righteousness. Paul says that we are justified by faith (Romans 5:1), but James says by works (James 2:21). What we need to understand is that Paul is speaking of Abraham's standing with God, while James is speaking of Abraham's standing before men. The proof that Abraham was really saved by faith was in his works.

**Thursday, March 11:** The key text for this day's lesson is 1 John 5:1-3. Verse 1 says: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him." Notice that the relationship between God (the one who begat) and Christ (the one begotten) is here expressed. John is teaching that as we see the great love of God, our hearts are drawn to the one who begat his Son for us, and when we truly love him, we will obey him and live the righteous life the law demands. John also writes:

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. . . . We love him, because he first loved us.(1 John 4:9, 10, 19)

We love God because of his love for us, and that love is shown by the great, matchless gift of his only begotten Son.

**Friday, March 12:** We encourage all to read the section in *Christ's Object Lessons* that is quoted in Friday's lesson from pages 312 and 313. We are glad to see this quotation; we only wish the author had quoted the part just preceding the printed quotation, which says:

*Righteousness is right doing, and it is by their deeds that all will be judged. Our characters are revealed by what we do. The works show whether the faith is genuine.*

It is not enough for us to believe that Jesus is not an impostor, and that the religion of the Bible is no cunningly devised fable. We may believe that the name of Jesus is the only name under heaven whereby man may be saved, and yet we may not through faith make Him our personal Saviour. (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 312)

## Lesson 12 — The Fruit of the Spirit Is Truth

The Bible is a book of truth about the God of truth whose Son is the way, the truth, and the life. Seventh-day Adventists have been entrusted with great truth. Over one hundred years ago, a crisis arose in Adventism over “the truth” when Dr. Kellogg began presenting new ideas about God, based on the trinity doctrine. In response to this, Ellen White wrote:

Who has authority to begin such a movement? We have our Bibles. We have our experience, attested to by the miraculous working of the Holy Spirit. *We have a truth that admits of no compromise.* Shall we not repudiate everything that is not in harmony with this truth? (*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 205)

**Sunday, March 14:** Sunday’s lesson deals with Jesus as the truth and knowing him. The two key texts are John 14:6 and John 17:3.

In John 14:6, it should be noted that Jesus says he is “the truth,” but he also says that no person can come to the Father except by him. This is because he is our advocate. Paul noted: “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5). The Father is the “one God” and Jesus is the “one mediator.” It is interesting to note that Jesus failed to say that anyone can come to the Holy Spirit by him.

Jesus, praying to his Father in John 17:3 states: “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” Here, again, we see the Father as the one God and Jesus his Son as the one sent. Jesus did not call the Father, the Holy Spirit, and himself the only true God. Furthermore, the doctrine of the trinity teaches the Holy Spirit is a co-equal member of the “God-head,” yet Jesus, who is our example, never prayed to the Holy Spirit as trinitarians teach should be done.

Sunday’s lesson speaks about having a personal relationship with God, and this is important; however, it is impossible to have a proper relationship with God or Christ if we are confused concerning their most basic identity.

**Monday, March 15:** Monday’s lesson is on the spirit and truth, “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13). God’s Spirit will not guide his people into errors like the natural immortality of the soul, Sunday sacredness, and the trinity doctrine. Since we are sanctified by the truth, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17), it is imperative that we have the Spirit of truth guide us into all truth.

**Tuesday, March 16:** This lesson on giving God all of our heart is commendable and worthy of consideration. The necessity of making a full surrender to God is vital. Jesus said that the greatest command was to “love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength” (Mark 12:30). If we are to love God, we must know him and know him aright. Then we can dedicate all of our heart and soul to him.

**Wednesday, March 17:** This lesson is on a seared conscience. A discussion of the Greek work translated *hypocrite* in the New Testament reveals that the word

means “actor.” False, make-believe religion was strongly condemned by Jesus, yet role-playing, or acting, is the very basis for the trinity. Instead of God really being a father, he is declared to be playing the role of a father, and instead of Jesus really being a son, he is said to only play the role of a son.

In the New Testament, Jesus used [the term] *Father* to bring us into a close and personal relationship with God (*Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .*, p. 20).

It may be inferred from the Scriptures that when the Godhead laid out the plan of salvation at some point in eternity past, They took certain *positions* or *roles* to carry out the provisions of the plan (*The Signs of the Times*, July 1985).

When truth is presented, it is vitally important that we do not reject that truth, for we are rejecting the Spirit of God, and if we continue in this process, we will finally be left in darkness.

**Thursday, March 18:** This lesson deals with walking in the truth and has some good thoughts. The point that should be kept in mind is that we should be sure to walk in truth and not in error.

**Friday, March 19:** The following statement printed in the lesson is worth repeating:

*It is not the length of time we labor but our willingness and fidelity in the work that makes it acceptable to God. In all our service a full surrender of self is demanded. The smallest duty done in sincerity and self-forgetfulness is more pleasing to God than the greatest work when marred with self-seeking. He looks to see how much of the spirit of Christ we cherish, and how much of the likeness of Christ our work reveals. He regards more the love and faithfulness with which we work than the amount we do. (Christ's Object Lessons, p. 402)*

In the final test, Laodicea is spewed out not because of the lack of volume of her works, but because the temperature of the works is not hot enough.

## **Lesson 13 — The Fruit of the Spirit: The Essence of Christian Character**

**Sunday, March 21:** Not only are we to seek God's righteousness first, but also his kingdom. In Luke 17:21, Jesus said: “The kingdom of God is within you.” We find the following insightful comments from the Spirit of Prophecy:

The kingdom of God comes not with outward show. The gospel of the grace of God, with its spirit of self-abnegation, can never be in harmony with the spirit of the world. The two principles are antagonistic. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” 1 Corinthians 2:14.

But today in the religious world there are multitudes who, as they believe, are working for the establishment of the kingdom of Christ as an earthly and temporal dominion. They desire to make our Lord the ruler of the kingdoms of this world, the ruler in its courts and camps, its legislative halls, its palaces and mar-

ket places. They expect Him to rule through legal enactments, enforced by human authority. Since Christ is not now here in person, they themselves will undertake to act in His stead, to execute the laws of His kingdom. The establishment of such a kingdom is what the Jews desired in the days of Christ. They would have received Jesus, had He been willing to establish a temporal dominion, to enforce what they regarded as the laws of God, and to make them the expositors of His will and the agents of His authority. But He said, "My kingdom is not of this world." John 18:36. He would not accept the earthly throne.

The government under which Jesus lived was corrupt and oppressive; on every hand were crying abuses,—extortion, intolerance, and grinding cruelty. Yet the Saviour attempted no civil reforms. He attacked no national abuses, nor condemned the national enemies. He did not interfere with the authority or administration of those in power. He who was our example kept aloof from earthly governments. Not because He was indifferent to the woes of men, but because the remedy did not lie in merely human and external measures. To be efficient, the cure must reach men individually, and must regenerate the heart.

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

When the apostle Paul began his ministry in Corinth, that populous, wealthy, and wicked city, polluted by the nameless vices of heathenism, he said, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." 1 Corinthians 2:2. Writing afterward to some of those who had been corrupted by the foulest sins, he could say, "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 6:11; 1:4.

Now, as in Christ's day, the work of God's kingdom lies not with those who are clamoring for recognition and support by earthly rulers and human laws, but with those who are declaring to the people in His name those spiritual truths that will work in the receivers the experience of Paul: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Galatians 2:20. Then they will labor as did Paul for the benefit of men. He said, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." 2 Corinthians 5:20. (*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 509, 510)

**Monday, March 22:** Beside having the fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22, 23, we also find more lists in 1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 3:10; and 2 Peter 1:5-7:

But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after *righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.* (1 Timothy 6:11)

But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, *long-suffering, charity, patience.* (2 Timothy 3:10)

And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith *virtue*; and to virtue *knowledge*; And to knowledge *temperance*; and to temperance *patience*; and to patience *godliness*; And to godliness *brotherly kindness*; and to brotherly kindness *charity.* (2 Peter 1:5-7)

These texts help to further open our thoughts concerning the filling of our lives with the Spirit of God. The scope of this booklet does not allow us to expand on these verses, but we encourage each to take their Bibles, concordances, and Spirit of Prophecy books and deeply dig for the treasure that is awaiting them as they study these texts and the fruit of the Spirit.

**Wednesday, March 24:** This lesson is entitled, “The Challenge of the Word.” Jesus taught in the parable of the sower that some of the seed “fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it” (Luke 8:7). Jesus went on to say, “And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection” (v. 14). In her book *Christ’s Object Lessons*, Ellen White devotes more space to the discussion of the seed sown among the thorns than to the seed sown on any of the other grounds. Notice some of these important thoughts:

The gospel seed often falls among thorns and noxious weeds; and if there is not a moral transformation in the human heart, if old habits and practices and the former life of sin are not left behind, if the attributes of Satan are not expelled from the soul, the wheat crop will be choked. The thorns will come to be the crop, and will kill out the wheat.

Grace can thrive only in the heart that is being constantly prepared for the precious seeds of truth. The thorns of sin will grow in any soil; they need no cultivation; but grace must be carefully cultivated. The briars and thorns are always ready to spring up, and the work of purification must advance continually. If the heart is not kept under the control of God, if the Holy Spirit does not work unceasingly to refine and ennoble the character, the old habits will reveal themselves in the life. Men may profess to believe the gospel; but unless they are sanctified by the gospel their profession is of no avail. If they do not gain the victory over sin, then sin is gaining the victory over them. The thorns that have been cut off but not uprooted grow apace, until the soul is overspread with them.

Christ specified the things that are dangerous to the soul. As recorded by Mark He mentions the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things. Luke specifies the cares, riches, and pleasures of this life. These are

what choke the word, the growing spiritual seed. The soul ceases to draw nourishment from Christ, and spirituality dies out of the heart.

“The cares of this world.” No class is free from the temptation to worldly care. To the poor, toil and deprivation and the fear of want bring perplexities and burdens. To the rich come fear of loss and a multitude of anxious cares. Many of Christ’s followers forget the lesson He has bidden us learn from the flowers of the field. They do not trust to His constant care. Christ cannot carry their burden, because they do not cast it upon Him. Therefore the cares of life, which should drive them to the Saviour for help and comfort, separate them from Him. (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 50, 51)

**Thursday, March 25:** This lesson concerns spiritual growth. A detailed plan of study, prayer, having the right kind of thoughts, and our Christian witness is given. These parallel a prescription for good health, with the study of God’s word equated to good food, prayer to the breath of the soul, thinking good thoughts to having a good attitude, and our witness to exercise. All these are important in our physical health, just as the others are needed for total spiritual health.

**Friday, March 26:** The first discussion question in the lesson asks about the possibility of the church becoming converted to the world. The author states, “History shows that more often than not, the church through the centuries ends up getting converted to the ways of the world, as opposed to the world getting converted to the ways of the church.” He then asks:

What about us, as Adventists? Do we fool ourselves in thinking that this isn’t happening to us, or that it can’t happen to us? Do we see evidence of this already happening? And, if so, what can we do?

When I read this, my mind went to the current state of affairs within Adventism with its celebration churches, and worldly customs of dress, music, worship. An example was clearly seen in the *Adventist Review* of January 21, 2010 with a picture of an Adventist singing group which looks just like any worldly singing group wearing laid-back dress, jewelry, and sunglasses. Not wishing to end this booklet negatively, we will stop here on the issue of worldliness in the church, for this worldliness is clear to anyone who has his or her spiritual eyes open.

As we close this study, it has been my sincere prayer that you have learned and grown this last quarter, not only in knowledge about the fruit of the Spirit, but in your depth of experience as well. I urge you to be a faithful Berean and study so that you might know the Truth who will set you free!