

1 **2026 Week of Prayer**

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4 **Title: Communion in Action**

5  
6  
7 **WRITERS:**

8 **Jim Howard**

9 **Ron Genebago**

10 **Micheal Sokupa**

11 **Joe Reeves**

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13 **Maria Manderson**

14 **James Tham**

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16  
17 **Official date for the Week of Prayer is:**

18 **March 21- 28 2026**

19  
20 **Global Youth Day: March 21, 2026**

21 **Homecoming Sabbath: March 28, 2026**

22  
23 **General Conference Youth Department**

1 **Translation Guidelines**

2 To meet the needs of our youth, youth leaders, and those needing to use our resources,  
3 we are offering opportunities to translate from English into other languages. Below are some  
4 guidelines to help you produce culturally appropriate translations.

- 5 1. Be objective.
- 6 2. Please be faithful and accurate to the source text.
- 7 3. Translate for meaning (rather than word-for-word), in a culturally sensitive way.  
8 Translation should preserve the content and meaning of the original text, with  
9 cultural and linguistic adaptations as needed, so that the translated text sounds  
10 natural and is easy for the intended readers to understand and use.
- 11 4. Do not do literal, word-for-word translation; this can be confusing or  
12 misleading. Consider the differences in linguistic structure and complex  
13 connections between culture and language.
- 14 5. Be culturally sensitive. Cultural adaptation may be needed where necessary.
- 15 6. Reproduce the precise contextual meaning of the text and message at all times  
16 without omission or distortion. Do not soften, strengthen or alter the messages  
17 being conveyed.
- 18 7. Do not alter, change, add, or omit texts. Only alter a text with the consent of the  
19 GC Youth Ministries Department.
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21 the author and finisher of our faith. He is the beginning, He is the ending.)
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23 comments, or make recommendations.
- 24 10. Do not show bias towards the intended readers of the translated document.
- 25 11. Do not do literal (word-for-word) translation of Bible verses. Use a Bible  
26 translation (version) that is closest to the one used in the original source

1 document, and make sure to cite (or reference) it.

2 12. Do not do literal (word-for-word) translation of Spirit of Prophecy quotations.  
3 Take the quote directly from the translated Spirit of Prophecy books referenced  
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5 change the page number to the one in the book (in the language you are  
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19

20 **Writers:** Jim Howard, Ron Genebago, Micheal Sokupa, Joe Reeves, Pako Mokgwane, Maria  
21 MandersonJames Tham

22 **Editor:** Maria Manderson

23 **Project Coordinator:** Mwenya Mpundu

- 1 **If you are using a copy editor** to copy edit the translated work, the person name and contact
- 2 information **MUST** also be listed.
- 3
- 4

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*The Theme Explained*

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The first four commandments in Exodus 20 emphasize obedience and connection with God. The last six commandments underscore the significance of human relationships. The high rate of conversions in the book of Acts also highlights the link between connection with God and human relationships. “Communion in Action” serves as a rallying cry to prioritize devotion to God by studying His Word and to allow the Holy Spirit to guide us into mission.

*About The Writers*

**Pr. Jim Howard**

Jim Howard is the Director of the General Conference Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department. Throughout Elder Howard’s ministry of preaching, teaching, training, and developing soul-winning resources, he has encouraged both leaders and lay people to accept the call of Christ to become actively involved in both personal and public outreach.

**Dr. Petronio M. Genebago**

Petronio M. Genebago, PhD, MPH, MMin, has completed his PhD in Old Testament from AIIAS Seminary. He has served as an instructor at the College of Theology of the Adventist University of the Philippines, a pastor, communication, and youth director in the Central Luzon Conference and North Philippine Union Conference. Currently, he is serving as the youth servant (director) and public campus ministry director of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division.

**Dr. Michael Sokupa**

Michael Sokupa PhD, DTh., Associate director of the Ellen G. White Estate has served in various capacities within the Seventh-day Adventist church. While serving as youth director at the conference level in South Africa his love for serving youth and young adults deepened. He and his wife Ntombizanele Sokupa are the parents of two young adults Siba and Dinga, and a teenager Sani.

**Pr. Joe Reeves**

Joe Reeves serves as assistant director of the Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department of the General Conference. His responsibilities include being the editor of the inVerse Sabbath School lesson for young adults ([www.inversebible.org](http://www.inversebible.org)) and the host for the inVerse program on Hope Channel ([www.hopetv.org/inverse](http://www.hopetv.org/inverse)).

**Dr. Pako Mokgwane**

Pako Edson Mokgwane, PhD, is the recently elected Communication Director of the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division. He has worked in ministry for over 20 years and encourages everyone to live a life of tenacity, courage, and faith. He grew up in Botswana and is a product of Adventist Education. Very sociable and outgoing, Pako is an endorsed Campus Chaplain and is dedicated to advancing academic research and youth evangelism through diverse media platforms. With expertise in leadership, social media strategy and corporate branding, he is committed to making a positive impact in the field. He holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Organizational Leadership.

**Ms. Maria Manderson**

Maria Manderson is an editorial assistant in the Youth Ministries Department at the General Conference. She has been with the General Conference since 1999, and in her current role for almost 25 years. A Jill of all trades, she loves the Lord and serves her local church and community in many roles

1 **Dr. James Tham**

2 Pastor James Tham, D.Min., serves as Youth Director for the Chinese Union Mission. With  
3 pastoral experience in the USA, Singapore, and Hong Kong, he is deeply committed to youth  
4 evangelism and discipleship, with a special focus on reaching Chinese young people for Christ.  
5

6 **Pr. Busi Khumalo**

7 Pastor Busi Khumalo has worked in ministry for over 31 years: 10 years in pastoral ministry and  
8 21 years in youth, chaplaincy, and public campus ministries. He served as a departmental  
9 director at the Southern Africa Union Conference from 2003-2010 and at the Southern African  
10 Indian-Ocean Division (SID) from 2010 to 2022. Busi’s passion for young people and youth  
11 ministries is inspired by the last part of the Pathfinder Pledge: “By the grace of God, I will be  
12 pure, kind, and true, I will keep the Pathfinder Law, I will be a servant of God and a Friend to  
13 man.”  
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1 *Read This First*

2 **Planning for the Week of Prayer**

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1. **Start Your Planning Now:** Start your planning, develop your target, get your team together, and make sure your pastor is a part of that team.
2. **Global Youth Day Information:** Get information on the Global Youth Day project. This day will be the launch of the Youth Week of Prayer. Please visit our website, [gcyouthministries.org](http://gcyouthministries.org), or contact your local youth director to find out how you can participate.
3. **Commit Your Prayer Warriors:** Get a team of adults together who will commit to praying for you and your ministry on a regular basis. Make sure this is a group with whom you can confidentially share both your personal and ministry prayer needs.
4. **Choose a Theme Song:** Involve your youth choir/praise team. Pick out songs that you all like and which fit the topic of each evening or choose a song for the entire week.
5. **Form a Week of Prayer Development:** Include on your team only interested and committed young adults and youth ministry leaders (Pathfinder, Sabbath School, etc., your pastor/s); this is important because it gives ownership to the entire group, rather than just you and your assistant. Ask the group to commit to meeting for at least three weeks—at least one week for four lessons, and an extra week to wrap things up. Be sure to identify the goal and direction you want to go, preferably at the first meeting, and choose a young person to speak for each day.
6. **Day of Fasting:** Pick a day during the week to dedicating to fasting. As a team identify the areas in which you will be petitioning to God for a breakthrough.

1 *How to Use This Book With A Small or Large Group*

- 2 1. **Journal Space.** This book is designed to be filled with your thoughts. Use the  
3 space provided to: record your reactions to the something you may hear in the  
4 sermon and the questions at the end of each day or to write a prayer request or  
5 praise to God. Encourage participants to use it anyway they want. It's their  
6 journal!
- 7
- 8 2. **Start a Prayer Journal.** Nothing is greater for your personal spiritual growth  
9 than time spent in prayer. Your youth group will grow as you grow. Prayer  
10 journaling will help you encounter God in new and exciting ways. You will be  
11 able to “track” your walk with God as you go back, and review answered  
12 prayers and see how He has led you step by step each day. New, fresh ideas  
13 will come to mind as you spend time in His presence journaling your prayers.  
14
- 15 3. **Daily Questions.** Included with each sermon are questions designed to get you  
16 thinking. Form small groups and discuss these questions. Take a moment to  
17 really think about the point the question is trying to get across. Listen to the  
18 Holy Spirit as He teaches you through Scripture. Encourage participants to  
19 record their thoughts in their journals.  
20

1 *Editorial*

2 Mwenya Mpundu

3 From Talk to Action

4 You cannot follow Jesus and stay still.

5 This year's Week of Prayer is a call to move from talk to action. Too many of us are living with a  
6 form of godliness but without power. Witnessing without devotion runs dry, prayer without  
7 obedience is empty. The answer is not doing more programs but spending more time with Him.  
8 The sermons this week remind us that discipleship is not theory—it is prayer, Bible study, and  
9 mission work every day. It's a lifestyle.

10 **What You'll Find:**

- 11 • Personal devotion as the foundation for authentic witness
- 12 • Prayer strategies that produce feasible results
- 13 • Bible study methods that transform daily life
- 14 • Digital ministry approaches for modern mission fields
- 15 • Spiritual gifts identification and activation
- 16 • Campus ministry tactics for secular environments

17 God acts when His people pray. Nehemiah rebuilt walls in 52 days. Esther saved her nation.  
18 Daniel preserved lives. Hezekiah saw an army destroyed. Jesus, the busiest man on earth, prayed  
19 before, during, and after ministry. These were prayers in action.

- 20 • Set a fixed time daily for prayer and Bible study
- 21 • Notice who is missing in your group and reach out
- 22 • Start or join a prayer network
- 23 • Share your faith in class, online, and in your dorm
- 24 • Support global and local mission projects

25 Statistics show most Adventist young people who stay committed have strong personal devotion  
26 and an active role in church life. Your presence and involvement matter.

27 This week is not about hearing inspiring stories and moving on. It is about acting. God is looking  
28 for witnesses, prayer warriors, and disciple-makers.

29 **Will your communion with God propel you to act?**

30 After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with  
31 the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. Acts 4:31

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*Making Global Youth Day a Lifestyle*

**Making Global Youth Day A Lifestyle**

**A Five Month Plan**

From its inception in 2013, Global Youth Day (GYD) had these core aspects: salvation, discipleship, and mission involvement. We are still committed to that vision and hope that all the youth and young adults who participate in this outreach will realize that Global Youth Day is not just about what they are doing but also why they do what they do. Yearly, we are bringing a fresh approach to make Global Youth Day a more mission-focused outreach initiative for young people.

**A Five-Month Plan for a Successful GYD**

**November** (Preparation: Prayer and Planning)

1. Unions and Conferences should help churches identify projects aligned with the year's GYD theme.
2. These projects should not be far from most of the youth.
3. The choice and nature of the project will determine a suitable approach.
4. Do area studies to appreciate the size and the scope of the projects.
5. Where possible, divide the youth into small groups of six for effectiveness. But, the nature of the project will determine the size of the group.
6. At the local church level, assign someone to create a list of all the young people who have been missing from church or are coming but are unengaged. Begin calling the missing/inactive young people and invite them to participate in your upcoming projects. Also, begin inviting them to Bible Studies. Visit our website for more tips on doing this.
7. Assign leaders for the small groups: group leader, secretary (to compile reports), spiritual coordinator, media coordinator (permission should be obtained before publishing or sharing any photos and videos), and project coordinator.
8. Youth leaders should share their vision with community authorities to seek permission to do service projects.
9. Churches are encouraged to designate the last Sabbath of November as the day of prayer for the service projects. Dedicate all community projects to the Lord in prayer.

**December** (Implementation)

- 1 1. Young people go out into their communities every Sabbath or Sunday (depending  
2 on the project) to participate in projects.
- 3 2. After conducting projects, the youth should share weekly testimonies or reports  
4 with the church.
- 5 3. The secretaries of the small groups should compile records of the people they serve  
6 (personal information, with their permission).
- 7 4. December to January is a long school break in some parts of the world. We suggest  
8 that the third week of December be dedicated to recruiting young people to  
9 participate in Caleb Mission<sup>1</sup> (a project where youth utilize their vacation time to  
10 do community projects and evangelistic programs).
- 11 5. The last part of December is usually the time when families spend time together<sup>2</sup>.  
12 We recommend that the youth give special consideration to the lonely, the  
13 bereaved, the depressed, the sick, the disabled, the homeless, and the needy<sup>3</sup>.

#### 14 **January** (Spiritual and Mission Focus)

- 15 1. The global church's Ten Days of Prayer occur every January.<sup>4</sup> Visit our website to  
16 download the 10-day Prayer and Devotional book.
- 17 2. We encourage the youth to pray for themselves and various projects they are  
18 doing.
- 19 3. Dedicate January to implement spiritual and evangelistic projects in preparation  
20 for Global Youth Day, Week of Prayer, and Homecoming Day. Evangelistic ideas  
21 for youth include Bible studies, outreach seminars, evangelistic campaigns (Voice  
22 of Youth),<sup>5</sup> and recruiting young people to participate in One Year in Mission  
23 (OYiM).<sup>6</sup>
- 24 4. By January 31 Conference and Union should receive GYD reports of the project  
25 process/work done.

#### 26 **February** (Follow-Up)

- 27 1. February is the month to revisit those we have been serving over the past months.
- 28 2. Those who delayed in doing their service projects can use this month to engage in  
29 intensive community work.
- 30 3. The unions and conferences should send their reports to the divisions.

---

<sup>1</sup> Visit this website for Caleb Mission resources: <https://www.gcyouthministries.org/initiatives/public-campus-ministries/>

<sup>2</sup> Visit the GC Family Ministries website for ideas on families: <https://family.adventist.org/>

<sup>3</sup> Visit the Possibility Ministries website: <https://www.possibilityministries.org/>

<sup>4</sup> Visit this website for the ten days of prayer resources: <https://www.tendaysofprayer.org/>

<sup>5</sup> Get VOY resources here: <https://www.gcyouthministries.org/wp-content/uploads/Voy-Proposal-v10.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Read more about OYiM and the resources you can use: <https://www.gcyouthministries.org/initiatives/one-year-in-mission/>

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**March** (Celebration month)

1. GYD is usually on the third Sabbath in March. Visit our website to see the GYD theme and resources.<sup>7</sup>
2. In the first two weeks of March, we encourage churches to celebrate with the youth what God has accomplished through them.
3. Invite those we have been visiting and providing services to come to church.
4. On GYD, churches may visit communities in the morning and come back to the church to give reports of their visits.
5. On GYD, the GC will be showcasing to the world what young people have been doing for Jesus.
6. GYD is the precursor to the global Youth Week of Prayer. Visit our website to get the resources for the week of prayer.<sup>8</sup>
7. Homecoming Sabbath: baptisms of young people who made this decision because of the direct efforts of their fellow youths.

**Conclusion**

Christ's method was about taking care of the needs of the people and calling them to follow Him. Let us not be ashamed to call people to follow Jesus!

---

<sup>7</sup> Visit: <https://www.gcyouthministries.org/events-and-projects/global-youth-day-gyd/> GYD promo materials were sent out to the divisions.

<sup>8</sup> Youth Week of Prayer Materials will be sent out to the divisions end of September 2023.



1 *Sermon 1*

2 **Discipleship in Action**

3 Jim Howard

4 **Main Text: Mark 1:16**

5 Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men

6  
7 Every believer knows that witnessing is supposed to be part of the Christian life. Jesus said,  
8 “Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men” (Mark 1:17).

9  
10 But it’s also no secret that we often struggle to witness. Why can witnessing sometimes feel like  
11 such a hard thing to do?

12  
13 Always remember the three essential components in the life of a disciple: prayer, Bible study,  
14 and witnessing. The one that brings us into direct contact with the people we are trying to reach  
15 is witnessing or working to seek and save the lost. The problem is, if we skip prayer and Bible  
16 study and go straight to witnessing, we will lose all our motivation!

17  
18 You see, we can never truly be a “fountain of life” (John 4:14)—sharing salvation with others—  
19 unless we are drinking from the *Water of Salvation* ourselves. We cannot give to the world  
20 something we do not have. When our devotional life is connected to the Source and we are  
21 commune with Jesus in prayer and Bible study, witnessing to others is oftentimes easier to do.

22  
23 It was because Jesus knew that witnessing requires a power we do not have that He made the  
24 promise He did in Acts 1:8: “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you;  
25 and you shall be witnesses to Me.”

26  
27 We need the Holy Spirit to witness! How often do we read books and take classes on witnessing,  
28 while we neglect personal time with Christ? Would we take a long drive without putting fuel in  
29 the tank? Would we take a final exam without reading or studying ahead of time? Witnessing is  
30 no different. It requires preparation, and it requires power. And that only comes from  
31 communion with God.

1 Yet the Bible warns that trying to be disciples without spiritual preparation is a unique and big  
2 problem for God’s people in the last days.

3

4 Form Without Power

5 Read 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

6

7 One of the greatest hindrances to our Christian witness occurs when we are too easily satisfied  
8 with a superficial religious experience. Paul calls this a “form” of godliness. We may go to  
9 church, and even participate in outreach, but the power that motivates and transforms the life can  
10 still be missing.

11

12 Ellen White strikes at the root of the problem for many end-time believers: “The love of the  
13 world, the love of some darling sin, has weaned the heart from the love of prayer and of  
14 meditation on sacred things. A formal round of religious services is kept up; but where is the  
15 love of Jesus? Spirituality is dying” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 538).

16

17 One of the greatest hindrances to effective witnessing is a dying spirituality. It is hard to be an  
18 effective witness if you are losing your interest in heavenly things. It is hard to be enthusiastic  
19 about your faith if you are not experiencing Jesus in your own life.

20

21 David understood this very well. After his great sins of adultery and murder (see 2 Samuel 11),  
22 he cried out to God to restore the joy of salvation in his heart again: “Create in me a clean heart,  
23 O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do  
24 not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by  
25 Your generous Spirit. Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted  
26 to You.” (Psalm 51:10-13).

27

28 David knew that until the “joy of salvation” was restored in his heart, he would never be able to  
29 “teach transgressors” in a way that would lead to their conversion. How can we persuade others  
30 of heaven’s peace and joy if our own hearts are full of guilt and anxiety over sins not forsaken?

31

32 Perhaps nothing will have a greater impact on the effectiveness of a Christian’s witness than to  
33 have the joy of salvation and a fervent love for Christ restored.

34

35 Truth Without Spirit

36

1 Like a form of religion without the power, the Bible also warns Christians to be wary of  
2 possessing the truth without the Spirit. Throughout His teachings, Jesus emphasized the need for  
3 more than an accurate set of beliefs. He said that those who worship God “must worship in spirit  
4 and truth” (John 4:24). Without the Spirit, the truth is powerless.

5

6 Jesus illustrated this in the parable of the 10 virgins.

7

8 Read Matthew 25:1-13.

9

10 The five foolish virgins in the parable failed to bring enough oil. This oil is symbolic of the Holy  
11 Spirit, who empowers us to trust and obey God. Notice how Ellen White describes these  
12 believers: “The class represented by the foolish virgins are not hypocrites. They have a regard for  
13 the truth, they have advocated the truth, they are attracted to those who believe the truth; but they  
14 have not yielded themselves to the Holy Spirit’s working. . . . the class represented by the foolish  
15 virgins have been content with a superficial work. They do not know God. They have not studied  
16 His character; they have not held communion with Him; therefore they do not know how to trust,  
17 how to look and live. Their service to God degenerates into a form” (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p.  
18 411).

19

20 How sad! The foolish virgins have even “advocated the truth,” but they “have not held  
21 communion” with God. Though they are “attracted to those who believe the truth,” their failure  
22 to yield to the Holy Spirit means that “they do not know God.” Their service has degenerated  
23 into a form.

24

25 This is a warning to us. If we fail to commune with God, our efforts to live the Christian life and  
26 to witness for Jesus can become a lifeless form.

27

28 The Lukewarm Christian

29 Read Revelation 3:14-22.

30

31 Here is one more end-time warning against a powerless religious experience. In this case, Jesus  
32 tells the church of Laodicea that they think they have “need of nothing” (Revelation 3:17), but  
33 they are actually “wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.” Looking good on the outside but  
34 destitute of spiritual life on the inside.

35

36 So, what does Jesus tell them to do? “I counsel you to buy from Me” (verse 18) gold, white  
37 garments, and eye salve. The key is not so much what they are told to buy, but where they must

1 go to get it! They won't find what they need by attending religious events, or by serving the  
2 poor, or passing out tracts—as important as these things are. “Buy from Me,” He says. The only  
3 remedy is to come to Jesus.

4

5 Notice in verse 20 that Jesus promises to “dine” with us if we will open the door to Him. But  
6 what does this mean? Notice the following description by Ellen White:

7

8 “The Lord draws out the soul in prayer and gives us to feel His precious love. We have a  
9 nearness to Him, and can hold sweet communion with Him. . . . The promises flow into the soul.  
10 Our peace is like a river, wave after wave of glory rolls into the heart, and indeed we sup with  
11 Jesus and He with us” (*Prayer*, p. 11).

12

13 Did you catch that last phrase, “we sup with Jesus and He with us”? The promise of Jesus to  
14 “dine” with us is a promise to bless our times of communion with Him. It’s a promise to fill us  
15 with joy and power that can motivate us to live and work for Him.

16

17 But it can be so easy to have a form of religion but lack the power, to have the truth but lack the  
18 Spirit, to be lukewarm Christians. And when we are lukewarm, witnessing is especially hard.

19

## 20 The Source of Life and Power

21 Jesus used a beautiful illustration to teach us how essential our communion with Him really is.  
22 He said in John 15:5: “I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him,  
23 bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” (NKJV)

24

25 In another place, John writes that “in Him was life, and the life was the light of men” (John 1:4).  
26 Jesus is the source of spiritual life for everyone, and as we draw life from Him, we will bear  
27 “much fruit.” This is a wonderful promise! Whether it is personal spiritual growth, or making  
28 disciples, we will bear fruit when we abide in Christ—the source of life and power for the  
29 Christian. Without Him, we “can do nothing.” This is why Ellen White offered some very  
30 pointed counsel to Christians, emphasizing the danger of neglecting alone time with God:

31

32 “Prayer is the breath of the soul. It is the secret of spiritual power. . . . Neglect the  
33 exercise of prayer, or engage in prayer spasmodically, now and then, as seems  
34 convenient, and you lose your hold on God” (*Prayer*, p. 12).

35

1 “Satan well knows that all whom he can lead to neglect prayer and the searching of  
2 the Scriptures will be overcome by his attacks. Therefore, he invents every possible  
3 device to engross the mind” (*The Great Controversy*, p. 519).

4  
5 God gives us these warnings to help us in our weakness. He knows that if we fail to commune  
6 with Him, we will be powerless to resist sin and selfishness. But if we prioritize time alone with  
7 Christ, it won’t be in vain. We will see results!

8  
9 “Nothing is more needed in our work than the practical results of communion with God.... This  
10 will impart to the worker a power that nothing else can give. Of this power he must not allow  
11 himself to be deprived” (*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 512).

12  
13 Do you see how communion with God not only provides for our own spiritual growth but brings  
14 “practical results” in our witness to others! Once again, we see that one of the greatest keys to  
15 making disciples is our personal communion with God.

16  
17 **Hearing God’s Voice**

18 It is important to remember that communion includes more than prayer, it also involves reading  
19 and meditating on His Word. The Scriptures are more than just an historical account of what  
20 happened in the past. When we read the Bible, God still speaks to us through His Spirit in direct  
21 and personal ways. But often we fail to recognize this.

22  
23 Kristin was a new Christian when she learned that Jesus’ followers are the ones who “know his  
24 voice” (John 10:4). She noticed how some Christians would say “God told me this” or “God told  
25 me that”. So when she prayed, she listened for His voice, but never seemed to hear it. She loved  
26 Jesus and had been impressed by the truth, but because she didn’t hear God’s voice she began to  
27 wonder if she was really a Christian.

28  
29 You can imagine how happy Kristin was when someone shared with her these encouraging  
30 messages from Ellen White:

31  
32 “The Bible is God’s voice speaking to us, just as surely as though we could hear it with  
33 our ears.” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 393).

34  
35 “Only he who receives the Scriptures as the voice of God speaking to himself is a true  
36 learner. He trembles at the Word; for to him it is a living reality” (*Christ’s Object  
37 Lessons*, p. 59).

1

2 Even if we never hear Jesus speak to us audibly, which in most cases we don't, we can still be  
3 familiar with His voice through His written Word! Communion with God is not a one-way  
4 communication, but a precious time through which Jesus communes with His people and  
5 impresses our hearts. The Holy Spirit speaks spiritual life into our souls and illuminates our  
6 minds with glimpses of the glory of God. In this way, every Christian can know Jesus as a  
7 personal Savior. And the motivation and power we need for witnessing is fueled by this time  
8 spent in communion with Christ.

9

## 10 Making Peace With God

11 Now, consider the experience of Rob, a young man who had been a believer for some time. The  
12 love of Christ and the truth of eternal realities had been clearly revealed to him through the  
13 Bible. But after some time, his devotional life began to slip. When he neglected time with God,  
14 he would feel guilty and recommit himself the next time he prayed. But gradually the neglect  
15 became more frequent. Worldly attractions became stronger, and his character weaknesses  
16 became more evident in his life.

17

18 Rob began to wonder if he could ever truly overcome his many faults. He felt insincere asking  
19 for forgiveness when he didn't seem able or willing to change. He was still going to Sabbath  
20 School and church, returning tithe, and even participating in church duties—but the joy and love  
21 were dying, and everything felt like an obligation. He was losing any motivation to share his  
22 faith. Rob's life had become a form of godliness without the power. His mind was preoccupied  
23 with earthly interests. He was losing his hold on God.

24

25 Feeling empty and uncertain about his salvation, Rob began to think about the joy and peace he  
26 once had with God. He turned to the Bible for encouragement and read Isaiah 27:5: "Let him  
27 take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me."  
28 He longed for that peace. He remembered the story of Jacob, who wrestled with God until he  
29 was assured of His blessing (see Genesis 32:24-28). He decided to get serious about seeking God  
30 (see Jeremiah 29:13). He started going to bed earlier so that he could get up in time to spend a  
31 thoughtful hour in prayer and devotion every day. He made his time with God the number one  
32 priority in his life. Each morning he made God his refuge and poured out all that was in his heart  
33 (see Psalm 62:8). He openly confessed his faults and failures and pleaded with God for a new  
34 heart (see Psalm 51:10).

35

36 Soon Rob felt impressed to set aside the worthless distractions that had been preoccupying his  
37 time. He became more careful in what he chose to read and watch. As he meditated on the Bible  
38 each morning, he became excited about the truth again. He started looking forward to Sabbath  
39 School and church. Throughout the day he felt stronger to resist temptation, and he experienced  
40 victory—where before he had felt helpless.

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Through the power of communion with God, the joy and peace of salvation was being restored. And here’s the thing—Rob COULD NOT KEEP THE TRUTH TO HIMSELF ANYMORE. He was on fire for God, and his passion for witnessing was rekindled.

Our Greatest Need

The revival that Rob experienced is the greatest need in the church today: “A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work.” (*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 121).

What should *you* do if you fear your Christian life and witness is more form than power? First, understand that the answer is not to put a stop to your witnessing efforts. If you wait until you are perfect to witness for Christ, you will never feel ready. Remember that there are three key components needed for your spiritual life to prosper—prayer, Bible study, and witnessing. Strengthening the first two while neglecting the third will only cause a different set of problems. It’s not witnessing that needs to stop, but any habits or practices that may be separating you from God. A revival of spiritual power can be ours only when we seek it in Christ and His Word.

No matter what condition you find yourself in, the promises of God are for you. Jesus invites you, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). He promises never to turn you away: “Jesus knows the circumstances of every soul. You may say, I am sinful, very sinful. You may be; but the worse you are, the more you need Jesus. He turns no weeping, contrite one away” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 568; see also John 6:37).

Whether you have wandered far from God or simply desire more spiritual power in your life and witness, the recipe is the same: *Come to Christ, just as you are, every morning. Kneel and pray and linger in His presence. Pour out your heart before Him. Read and meditate on His Word and claim His promises.* If you don’t feel in the mood, come by faith. If you don’t sense an immediate change, keep coming anyway. Trust God and His Word. Let nothing prevent you from pressing close to His side.

The hope you have in God will not disappoint (see Romans 5:5). Day by day, your heart will change. You will be infused with spiritual power. The love of Christ will thrill your soul and compel you to live for Him. You will rejoice over sins forgiven, victories gained, and “the love of the truth” (2 Thessalonians 2:10). The joy of salvation will be restored to you, the power of the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and you will be His witness. You will put your discipleship into action!

1 Do you feel the need to press close to Jesus and to recommit to spending time alone with Him  
2 each day? Will you tell Him just now?

3

4 **Prayer:**

5 Heavenly Father,

6 We come to You today, confessing our need for Your presence and Your power. Forgive us for  
7 the times we have tried to witness without first abiding in You. Teach us to seek You daily in  
8 prayer and in Your Word, so that our hearts may overflow with the joy of salvation. Fill us with  
9 the Holy Spirit, that our words and actions may lead others to Jesus. Keep us faithful, not in form  
10 only, but in the living power of a true relationship with You. And may our lives be a clear  
11 testimony that You are real, that You save, and that You are coming soon. In Jesus' name,  
12 Amen.

13

14 **Discussion Questions:**

- 15 1. Why is it important to spend time in prayer and Bible study before trying to witness? Can  
16 you think of a time when you tried to share your faith without first connecting to God?  
17 What happened?
- 18 2. In what ways can we have “a form of godliness” but lack the power? How can we tell the  
19 difference in our own lives?
- 20 3. The parable of the 10 virgins teaches us about the Holy Spirit’s role in our walk with  
21 God. What are some practical ways we can “fill our lamps” each day?
- 22 4. Rob’s story showed how personal revival leads to renewed passion for witnessing. What  
23 changes could you make this week to strengthen your connection with God and reignite  
24 your desire to share Him with others?

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*Sermon 2*

**Prayer in Action**

Dr. Ron Genebago

**Main Text : Mark 1:35**

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

When prayer is in action, great things are accomplished because, “When we work, we work. But when we pray, God works” (Jame Hudson Taylor). Prayer is the foundation of a great accomplishment in the work of God that heaven approves. Prayer aligns our thoughts and actions with the will of God. So, it is crucial to pray fervently in whatever we do. There are several men and women in the Bible who demonstrated prayer in action. Let’s consider some of them:

**1. Nehemiah’s Prayer in Action**

Nehemiah saw that the walls of Jerusalem were broken. He prayed, humbling himself before God, and moved under God’s guidance despite great challenges. As a result, the walls of Jerusalem were built in 52 days. Nehemiah 1:5-11 records the prayer of Nehemiah:

And I said, “O LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open, to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night for the people of Israel your servants, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against you. Even I and my father’s house have sinned. We have acted very corruptly against you and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, and the rules that you commanded your servant, Moses. Remember the word that you commanded your servant Moses, saying, ‘If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples, but if you return to me and keep my commandments and do them, though your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there I will gather them and bring them to the place that I have chosen, to make my name dwell there.’ They are your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your great power and by your strong hand. O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant, and to the prayer of your servants who delight to fear your name, and give success to your servant today, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man.”

*Prayer in Action Point:*

1 In Nehemiah 6:15, the outstanding result was recorded as response to Nehemiah’s fervent prayer:  
2 “So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty-two days.” Indeed, a  
3 testament of prayer in action.  
4

## 5 **2. Esther’s Prayer in Action**

6 Esther 4:15-17 tells us of Esther’s dedication and her request to fast and pray to save God’s  
7 people in response to the looming annihilation of the Jews as Haman commanded, and to the  
8 challenge to her to do something as Mordecai appealed.  
9

10 Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai, “Go, gather all the Jews to be found in  
11 Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I  
12 and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is  
13 against the law, and if I perish, I perish.”<sup>3</sup> Mordecai then went away and did everything  
14 as Esther had ordered him.  
15

16 God honored their humility and prayer. The plan to annihilate them reversed to their enemies.  
17 God acted on behalf of His people. Esther 9:1-2 states,  
18

19 Now in the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, on the thirteenth day of the  
20 same, when the king’s command and edict were about to be carried out, on the very day  
21 when the enemies of the Jews hoped to gain the mastery over them, the reverse  
22 occurred: the Jews gained mastery over those who hated them. <sup>2</sup> The Jews gathered in  
23 their cities throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus to lay hands on those who  
24 sought their harm. And no one could stand against them, for the fear of them had fallen  
25 on all peoples.  
26

### 27 *Prayer in Action Point:*

28  
29 Esther knew the plan to annihilate the Jews in Persia, instead of murmuring, she requested God’s  
30 people to pray and fast. She asked for God’s guidance. God worked. He saved His people from  
31 the hand of their enemies. Indeed, a prayer in action.  
32

## 33 **3. Daniel’s Prayer in Action**

34  
35 In response to the plan of King Nebuchadnezzar to annihilate the wise men because of the  
36 unforgotten dream, Daniel 2:17-19 records the prayer request of Daniel to seek mercy from God  
37 with his friends:  
38

39 Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and  
40 Azariah, his companions, and told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven  
41 concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with  
42 the rest of the wise men of Babylon. Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a  
43 vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.  
44

1 God acted on their behalf. Daniel 2:23 relates, “To you, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and  
2 praise, for you have given me wisdom and might, and have now made known to me what we  
3 asked of you, for you have made known to us the king’s matter.”  
4

5 *Prayer in Action Point:*  
6

7 Daniel and the wise men in Babylon did not know the dream of King Nebuchadnezzar about the  
8 future of the kingdoms of the world. The life of the wise persons, including them was at stake  
9 because no one could interpret the dream. Thus, Daniel gathered his three friends and they  
10 prayed. When they prayed, God worked. God revealed to Daniel, to King Nebuchadnezzar, and  
11 to us, the rise and fall of the kingdoms and the final kingdom of Jesus which will never be  
12 destroyed. Indeed, a prayer in action. (Daniel 2)  
13

#### 14 **4. Hezekiah’s Prayer in Action**

15 The prayer of Hezekiah demonstrates a prayer in action. It shows that when we pray God works.  
16 Here’s the prayer of King Hezekiah:  
17

18 Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it; and Hezekiah  
19 went up to the house of the LORD and spread it before the LORD. And Hezekiah  
20 prayed before the LORD and said: “O LORD, the God of Israel, enthroned above the  
21 cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made  
22 heaven and earth. 16Incline your ear, O LORD, and hear; Open your eyes, O LORD,  
23 and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to mock the living God.  
24 Truly, O LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands and  
25 have cast their gods into the fire, for they were not gods, but the work of men’s hands,  
26 wood and stone. Therefore, they were destroyed. So now, O LORD our God, save us,  
27 please, from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O LORD,  
28 are God alone.” 2 Kings 19:14-19  
29

30 As a result of his fervent prayer, God acted and defended His people. The remarkable prayer in  
31 action is recorded in 2 Kings 19:35-37:

32 And that night the angel of the LORD went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of  
33 the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead  
34 bodies. Then Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went home and lived at  
35 Nineveh. And as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, Adrammelech and  
36 Sharezer, his sons, struck him down with the sword and escaped into the land of Ararat.  
37 And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.  
38

39 *Prayer in Action Point:*  
40

41 Hezekiah received a letter from King Sennacherib who defied God and persuaded King  
42 Hezekiah to distrust God. But instead of surrendering, King Hezekiah spread the burden before  
43 the living God and prayed. As a result, God heard his prayer, and an Angel killed King  
44 Sennacherib’s 185,000 soldiers. Later, King Sennacherib was killed by his son also.

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## 5. Jesus’s Prayer in Action

Jesus is a man of prayer. His disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray. They noticed His prayer life. The Bible records that He prayed the whole night (Luke 6:12), he prayed early in the morning. Mark 1:35 describes, “Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.” He prayed when He was happy (Luke 10:21). He prayed after an event, “After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray” (Mark 6:45-46).

Jesus also prayed when He was suffering (Luke 22:41-44). He prayed when He was experiencing excruciating pain on the cross (Luke 23:34; Matthew 27:46). He prayed when He was happy (Luke 3:21). He prayed when he had a big decision to make (Luke 6:12). In Jesus’s life, prayer is like breathing. He couldn’t live without prayer. Ellen White commented on Jesus’s prayer life. She writes, “As a man He supplicated the throne of God till His humanity was charged with a heavenly current that should connect humanity with divinity.” (DA 362) She adds, “No other life was ever so crowded with labor and responsibility as was that of Jesus; yet how often He was found in prayer!” (DA 362)

Oswald Chambers rightly describes Jesus’s prayer life. He said, “In the life of Jesus, prayer was the WORK, and ministry was the prize.” He further added, “Prayer is not a preparation for a great work, it is the great work.” Thus, before implementing youth events like Global Youth Day, Pathfinder Day, PCM Day, Adventurer Day, and even this Week of Prayer, we must fervently pray because prayer is crucial and foundational to productive and fruitful ministry programs.

### *Prayer in Action Point:*

Jesus’s prayer life was a prayer in action indeed. This was the reason why His life was so productive and fruitful. He was connected to His Father. He remained with His Father and His Father remained in Him. Thus, His life was characterized with fruitful actions for God’s glory.

## 6. Prayer in Action in My Life

*(Preacher Note: Use an example from your own life where prayer was essential in making the next step in your life. If you can not think of one, use the example below.)*

In his testimony, Pastor Ron Genebago recounts a time in his life when prayer changed the trajectory of his life. He said, “When I learned much from the Word of God, after my conversion, I asked God to lead me to persons who would need Bible Studies. I fasted and prayed on Christmas and New Year for this special request. God heard my prayers that when the classes resumed, a lady named Arlene, approached me and asked, “Can you give us Bible Studies?” We started with three interested students until I was giving Bible studies to a classroom filled with students of different denominations and religious affiliations. Some were members of Iglesia ni Kristo, Born Again, Protestant, Roman Catholics, and others. When my

1 Physics teacher who was an Adventist learned of this, he suggested that I should enroll them in  
2 the Voice of Prophecy Lessons, which I did. More than 50 of them graduated and eight or nine  
3 were baptized, that started the Lumil Seventh-day Adventist Church, which is now a growing  
4 church. I became a youth elder later in that company, which later became a church. A strong  
5 desire to learn more engulfed me, so I decided to enroll in the Bachelor of Theology program at  
6 the Adventist University of the Philippines (AUP). I studied in AUP for 5 years and after  
7 graduation, I was called to serve at the Filipino Adventist Church, which conducted the  
8 evangelistic meetings that led to my conversion, as their pastor.

9  
10 While I was studying in AUP, the LORD had given me blessed opportunities to use my spiritual  
11 gifts both in church and in the college. I became a youth elder of a newly planted church, a youth  
12 leader of Filipino Church, a district youth president, area president of the province of Cavite,  
13 president of the Young Ministers Club in AUP, and later the church pastor of Filipino Church in  
14 Puting Kahoy, Silang, Cavite.

15  
16 After my almost two years of service as a pastor of Filipino Adventist Church, I received a call  
17 to serve as a district pastor in the province of Cavite, in the province of Bulacan, and in Metro  
18 Manila. I served as a district pastor for five years until the LORD has called me to become the  
19 Communication Director and Hope Channel Coordinator for the Central Luzon Conference  
20 (CLC) and later the Youth and AMiCUS Director of CLC and of the North Philippine Union  
21 Conference for five years. The LORD has also called me to teach in the College of Theology of  
22 AUP, while completing my PhD in Biblical Studies. However, when I was writing my  
23 dissertation, He called me to youth ministries again as the youth (servant) director of the  
24 Southern Asia-Pacific Division. I am still currently holding this assignment upon writing of this  
25 testimony how prayer is in action in my life.

26  
27 To end, prayer is not a lifeless inactivity. It is full of life. It is connecting yourself with the living  
28 God. It is a blessed meeting with the divine Council of God, the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit.  
29 It is the lifeline of being a Christian. Ellen White said, “Those who will devote sometime every  
30 day in meditation and prayer and to the study of the Scriptures will be connected with heaven  
31 and will have a saving influence around them.”

32  
33 Prayer is indeed in action, for “APART FROM CHRIST, OUR WORK IS FRUITLESS” (DA  
34 249).

35  
36 Here are some practical suggestions to prayerful actions:

- 37
- 38 1. Establish a prayer network. There are young people who are passionate about prayer. Tap  
39 and organize them to a prayer network ministry. It should be an integral part and a lifestyle of the  
40 young people.
  - 41
  - 42 2. Conduct a prayer marathon. The youth can be organized to conduct a prayer marathon to  
43 pray for the youth ministries initiatives and beyond. The prayer marathon can have the following  
44 outline:

- 1           A. Sermons on Prayer using Ellen White book on Prayer or series of Bible characters that  
2 demonstrate a prayerful life.
- 3           B. Prayer Focus can be divided into personal prayers, prayer for family, for the church,  
4 for the mission and conference, for the union, division and general conference. There should be  
5 time for praying for prayer requests.  
6
- 7 3.       Conduct a 100 Days of Prayer before a major event. Set a starting date that will culminate  
8 during the target event. For instance, before a pathfinder camporee or a youth leaders' summit,  
9 officially announce about the 100 days of Prayer. It can be done individually or set a time to pray  
10 together whether online or onsite depending on the situation.  
11
- 12 4.       Make every breath a prayer. This will lead you to an atmosphere of prayer making it your  
13 lifeline and lifestyle.  
14  
15

**God's Revelation in Action**

Micheal Sokupa

**Main Text: 2 Chronicles 20:20**

“So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, “Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper.”

**1. God's Self-revelation in Action**

When Adam and Eve sinned, they lost the privilege of open communion with God. The last open conversation with God reveals a loving God who did not let go of the human race. God's call to Adam: “Where are you?” (Gen. 3:9), reveals a yearning for communion from a loving God. Sin has changed the relationship between God and His human creatures. Notice their response to God after Adam and Eve sinned. “And they heard the sound of the Lord walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden” (Gen. 3:8). They hid themselves. Adam's response to the call out from God: “Where are you?” reveals the damaging impact of sin in the relationship between God and his human creatures. Adam responded: “I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself” (Gen. 3:10). God solves the immediate need Adam expressed: “Also for Adam and his wife the Lord God made tunics of skin, and clothed them” (Gen. 3:21). The clothing for Adam and Eve cost the lives of animals and implies the substitutionary death of Christ to solve the problem of human nakedness forever.

**2. General Revelation at work**

That yearning for communion with his human creatures, led God to open a communication channel through prophets. “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;” Hebrews 1:1,2). Jesus is presented as the climax of God's revelation. There are people who have had no access to the messages of the prophets. They only had to rely on God's general revelation through nature. Ellen White rivets this point when she states that “Nature and revelation alike testify of God's love” (SC, 9). She further elaborates concerning this general revelation of God through nature: “God is love” is written upon every opening bud, upon every spire of springing grass. The lovely birds making the air vocal with their happy songs, the delicately tinted flowers in their perfection perfuming the air, the lofty trees of the forest with their rich foliage of living green – all testify to the tender, fatherly care of our God and to His desire to make His children happy” (SC, 10). In nature we see God's revelation in action. Even though nature has been tainted by sin, God's revelation is still possible through the marvels of nature.

1 One of the amazing lessons from nature is how the honeybees find nectar. When one bee finds a  
2 flower that is a source of nectar, it comes to the hive. The bee comes to the center with all the  
3 bees surrounding it. It does a waggle dance while they watch every movement. The movement is  
4 a measurement of the distance to the source of nectar. What is most interesting is that the bee  
5 that does this performance to direct other bees does not go with them. It stays in the hive while  
6 they follow the directions that were demonstrated with the dance. This points out clearly that this  
7 cannot happen by chance. In nature there is an intentional design that can be traced to the Creator  
8 God.

9

### 10 **3. God’s Special Revelation: the prophetic voice**

11 God’s revelation in action is seen as he communicates his messages to us through special  
12 revelation to prophets. God communicates to men and women who have been given the gift of  
13 prophecy by God Himself through visions. In Numbers 12:6, God presents His communication  
14 plan: “Then He said, hear now My words: if there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, make  
15 Myself known to him in a vision.” The Bible records some supernatural phenomena that occur  
16 when prophets are in vision. Daniel experiences a supernatural touch; he sees a man that people  
17 around him did not see. He moves from a position of weakness to strength because of the touch  
18 from the heavenly being (Daniel 10:4-19). Can you imagine being around a prophet while they  
19 are in vision? Ellen White comments on the way God communicated to prophets in visions:  
20 “God Himself employed pictures and symbols to represent to His prophets lessons which He  
21 would have them give to the people, and which could thus be better understood than if given in  
22 any other way. He appealed to the understanding through the sense of sight. Prophetic history  
23 was presented to Daniel and John in symbols, and these were to be represented plainly upon  
24 tables, that he who reads might understand” (2SM 319, 20).

25

26 At times, God used dreams to communicate to prophets. “The prophet who has a dream, let him  
27 tell a dream; and he who has My word, let me speak My word faithfully” (Jeremiah 23:28).  
28 Jacob’s prophetic dream in Genesis 28 is significant for understanding how God communicated  
29 to prophets through dreams. Jacob saw a ladder in his dream that connected earth and heaven. On  
30 this ladder the angels of God were moving up and down. He heard a voice from God saying “I  
31 *am* the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will  
32 give to you and your descendants. Also, your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you  
33 shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your  
34 seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Behold, I *am* with you and will keep you  
35 wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done  
36 what I have spoken to you.” (Gen. 28:13-15). The prophetic dream was specifically about the  
37 very place where Jacob had decided to retire for the night. God was reminding him of the  
38 covenant he had made with Abraham, Isaac and now with him. In recognition to God’s promise  
39 about this place, Jacob created a marker using the very stone that he used as a pillow and poured  
40 oil on it. He also named the place Bethel. He made a vow: “If God will be with me, and keep me  
41 in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, so that I come back  
42 to my father’s house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God. And this stone which I have set as  
43 a pillar shall be God’s house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a <sup>[a]</sup>tenth to You.”  
44 (Gen. 28:20-22).

1  
2 Prophetic dreams continue into the future as God wills. Through the prophet Joel, God promises  
3 that he will continue to communicate His messages to the end of time. “And it shall come to pass  
4 afterward that I will pour out My spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
5 your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also on My  
6 menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days” (Joel 2:28, 29).

7  
8 As a prophet of God Ellen G. White helps us to see the continuity of God’s prophetic  
9 communication. She states: “In ancient times God spoke to men by the mouth of prophets and  
10 apostles. In these days He speaks to them by the testimonies of His Spirit. There was never a  
11 time when God instructed His people more earnestly than He instructs them now concerning His  
12 will and the course that He would have them pursue” (5T 661).

13 The role of Ellen White’s inspired messages is significantly expressed in the same section:  
14 “Warnings and reproofs are not given to the erring among Seventh-day Adventists because their  
15 lives are more blameworthy than are the lives of professed Christians of the nominal churches,  
16 nor because their example of their acts are worse than those of the Adventists who will not yield  
17 obedience to the claims of God’s law, but because they have great light, and have by their  
18 profession taken their position as God’s special, chosen people, having the law of God written in  
19 their hearts. They signify their loyalty to the God of heaven by yielding obedience to the laws of  
20 His government. They are God’s representatives upon the earth. Any sin in them separates them  
21 from God and, in a special manner, dishonors His name by giving the enemies of His law  
22 occasion to reproach His cause and His people, whom He has called ‘a chosen generation, a  
23 royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people,’ that they should show forth the praises of  
24 Him that hath called them out of darkness into His marvelous light (5T 661).

25  
26 Ellen White’s visionary revelations were “in the form of dynamic scenes or representations of  
27 people, places, and events either past, present or future. She was shown allegorical or symbolic  
28 portrayals or illustrative stories that were not usually actual events. At times, visions were  
29 repeated until she understood the real meaning of what she was seeing” (Merlin Burt,  
30 “Revelation and Inspiration...” in *Understanding Ellen White*, p. 39).

31  
32 Ellen White recalled, “I was trying to warn the brethren. I wrote day and night. In the visions of  
33 the night it was represented to me that a sword of fire was drawn over Battle Creek; and in the  
34 daytime, while my pen was in my hand, I lost consciousness, and it seemed as if this sword of  
35 flame were turning first in one direction and then in another. Disaster seemed to follow disaster,  
36 because God was dishonored in the devising of men to exalt and glorify themselves” (Lt 37,  
37 1903, par. 6). This illustrates the representations that were given to Ellen White. She received  
38 this vision before the *Review and Herald* at Battle Creek burned down. The sword was a warning  
39 of this disaster that was about to befall this institution. She was so exhausted after pouring out  
40 her heart to warn the leaders at Battle Creek. In this letter Ellen White connects all these events  
41 to that representative vision. Ellen White’s experience is similar to that of the apocalyptic  
42 prophets of the Bible who were given prophetic symbols of a macro scale.

#### 43 **4. Illumination as Revelation in Action**

1 Another form of revelation is illumination. The Holy Spirit also works on the believers to lead to  
2 the understanding of truth. Jesus said: “Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage  
3 that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will  
4 send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness,  
5 and of judgment; of sin because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness because I go to My  
6 Father and you see Me no more; of judgement because the ruler of this world is judged. I still  
7 have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of  
8 truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but  
9 whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come” (John 16:7-13).

10  
11 The Holy Spirit through general and special revelation connects people to God and His plan to  
12 save humanity. Through illumination the Holy Spirit also helps the readers of the Scriptures to  
13 understand God’s Word. As we spend time in the study of God’s Word, the Holy Spirit also  
14 brings conviction. Therefore, this is not just an intellectual exercise, it is a spiritual exercise as  
15 well. From sin to righteousness and finally judgment. It is important to invite the Holy Spirit  
16 before the study of Scripture.

17  
18 This work of the Holy Spirit is also expressed in 1 Corinthians 2:9-12: “But as it is written: Eye  
19 has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has  
20 prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them to us through His Holy Spirit. For  
21 the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a  
22 man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God  
23 except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is  
24 from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.”

25  
26 This is revelation in the form of illumination in action. This text has often been misapplied to  
27 refer to only things revealed about the future. Paul in this passage is discussing mysteries of  
28 God’s plan “the deep things of God”, which God has made accessible to us through the  
29 illumination of the Holy Spirit.

### 30 31 **Conclusion**

32 God’s revelation in action reaches the unbelievers through nature. It appeals to us through the  
33 messages of the prophet and God’s special revelation. We have the Holy Spirit at work in the  
34 heart of the believer as the Word of God is studied and applied. The Holy Spirit leads to truth  
35 and understanding. May we allow God to reach us and convict us with truths from His Word.

### 36 37 **Prayer**

38 Lord we thank you for revealing yourself in ways that will reach everyone. Thank you for the  
39 Holy Spirit who is our guide and teacher. Please teach us and help us to reach a deeper  
40 understanding of Your Word. Help us to appreciate the messages You have sent to your  
41 prophets. May we be attentive to Your messages and apply them in our daily lives. Illuminate  
42 our minds with truth from Your word. In the name of Jesus I pray, Amen.

43  
44

1 *Sermon 4*

2 Sabbath School in Action

3 Joe Reeves

4 **Main Text: Acts 2:41-42**

5 “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand  
6 souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and  
7 fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

8 **The Power of Sabbath School**

9 Kristen had not visited church for twenty years. She was drifting through life without an anchor  
10 of faith to hold her. As a young mother with a little toddler, life’s challenges felt overwhelming.  
11 But one day she remembered that when she was 11 years old, her grandma used to take her to  
12 Sabbath School at the Seventh-day Adventist Church. She remembered the Bible stories she  
13 learned from her teacher, Rose. She also remembered how much she loved going to Sabbath  
14 School. It seemed like so long ago, but the more she thought about it, the more she realized that  
15 Sabbath School had something she wanted back in her life.

16  
17 One day she decided to visit Sabbath School and church again. To her great surprise, Kristen  
18 discovered that Rose was still teaching Sabbath School twenty years later. Rose was delighted to  
19 learn that Kristen still remembered some of the lessons she learned when she was a child. Kristen  
20 requested personal Bible studies so she could find answers to life’s questions.

21  
22 Remembering her childhood Sabbath School and coming back to church became a turning point  
23 in her life. After completing Bible studies, Kirsten was baptized and became a member of the  
24 church. In reflecting on her spiritual journey, Kirsten said, “Life without God was difficult.”  
25 When she turned to God, she found what was missing in her life. Her new church family  
26 encouraged her commitment to God and made her feel welcome. “This is the right church, and  
27 this is where I need to be,” she said.

28  
29 Kirsten’s story reminds us of the power of Sabbath School. No matter how far she slipped away  
30 from God and church, she never forgot Sabbath School. The seeds that were sown in her heart  
31 twenty years before sprung to life when she was ready. Today, God is calling for youth and  
32 young adults who will help recapture the evangelistic purpose of Sabbath School. God wants to  
33 use you to help some searching person find answers. He wants your Sabbath School to be a place  
34 where people can connect with God.

35  
36 **Sabbath School is About People**

37 Imagine with me for a moment a Seventh-day Adventist Church without Sabbath School. You  
38 would go to church on Sabbath morning where you would hear a sermon, but there would be no  
39 interactive Bible study. You would sit in church where everybody faces the front, but you would

1 miss the circle where everybody faces each other. You would learn from the pastor, elders, and  
2 other leaders, but you would never hear from most people in church.

3  
4 It's easy to feel invisible and go unnoticed in church, but Sabbath School is the best place to be  
5 seen, heard, known, and remembered. This is because Sabbath School fosters personal  
6 connections with both peers and cross-generational relationships. While church accommodates  
7 social interaction before and after the program, Sabbath School is designed around personal  
8 interaction from beginning to end. It is common to only know a few names in church but to  
9 know everyone's name in your Sabbath School.

10  
11 The Sabbath School places supreme value on the individual person. While the church service is  
12 optimized to reach large crowds, Sabbath School is optimized for small groups. Jesus  
13 emphasized the power of personal contact by touching people when He healed them (read Matt.  
14 8:3, 15; 9:29; 17:7). Those who start a channel on Youtube or TikTok can quickly be seen and  
15 heard by millions, but touch is not about reaching large crowds. Touch is about giving personal  
16 attention to one person at a time. Sabbath School is all about touch. Sabbath School is not a  
17 program. Sabbath School is about people. It provides some of the best spaces to be personal with  
18 people and show that Jesus cares.

19  
20 Done right, Sabbath School promotes what many young people are looking for today: a place of  
21 belonging, community, and connection. With good leadership and strong support of the  
22 members, Sabbath School can be a place where young people develop the habits and culture of  
23 the early church. Let's examine our Bibles today and analyze the example of the early church.

## 24 **Recapturing the Culture of the Early Church**

25  
26  
27 The Bible reading, Acts chapter 2:41, 42, identifies three elements that were essential to the  
28 culture and practices of the early church: **(1) mission, (2) doctrine, and (3) fellowship.** Mission  
29 was always core. Acts 2:41 says, "Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and  
30 that day about three thousand souls were added to them." Doctrine and fellowship were also non-  
31 negotiable. Verse 42 says, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and  
32 fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers." If any one of these three elements had been  
33 neglected, the early church would have been unrecognizable. The purpose of Sabbath School is  
34 to blend the key ingredients of the early church—mission, doctrine, and fellowship. Sabbath  
35 Schools that are vibrant and alive are strong in all three areas, creating a place where lives are  
36 changed, people find belonging, and where people grow and mature in Christ.

37  
38 **1. Mission.** The early church was born for mission. It was born to grow! It is very  
39 important to understand that in the early church, every church member was called a  
40 disciple. For example, Acts 6:2 says, "Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the  
41 disciples and said, 'It is not desirable that we should leave the Word of God and serve  
42 tables.'" Notice carefully that the word disciples does not describe the twelve apostles  
43 but describes the whole multitude of believers in the church. This is important, because  
44 in the early church the members were not pew warmers. Every believer was an active

1 disciple and disciple-maker. The early church also considered every member a preacher.  
2 Let's look at Acts 8:1: "At that time a great persecution arose against the church which  
3 was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and  
4 Samaria, except the apostles." Don't miss it! The apostles stayed in Jerusalem, but  
5 everybody else was scattered. Then verse 4 says, "Therefore those who were scattered  
6 went everywhere preaching the Word." Who was preaching? It was not the twelve  
7 apostles who were back in Jerusalem still. It was all the other members of the church  
8 who went everywhere preaching! Did they always preach to large crowds? No! The  
9 Bible sometimes uses the word preaching to describe a Bible study with one person.  
10 Acts 8:35 uses the word preaching to describe Philip's Bible study with the Ethiopian  
11 eunuch: "Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus  
12 to him." Sermons do not require large crowds. Some of the best sermons are given to  
13 just one person. The early church multiplied through the total member involvement of  
14 believers who were active disciples and preachers. Today, God is looking for young  
15 people who are more than pew warmers, young people who will be active disciple-  
16 makers and powerful preachers. The church needs young people who will help Sabbath  
17 Schools recapture their evangelistic purpose. Every Sabbath School should be a place  
18 where people are trained and equipped for local outreach and invest in cross-cultural  
19 missions from around the world.  
20

21 **2. Doctrine.** The early church was defined by doctrine. Notice how our theme verse  
22 emphasizes that everybody who was baptized "continued steadfastly in the apostles'  
23 doctrine" (Acts 2:42). The apostles' doctrine was their system of teachings that they  
24 received from Christ and the Scriptures. People who are leery of doctrine would never  
25 have felt comfortable in the early church. The church today should place no less  
26 emphasis on the doctrines of Christ. We need to teach and preach the Jesus of the  
27 gospels, the Jesus of Revelation, and the Jesus of the whole Bible. The mission of our  
28 church is dead unless we are committed to reviving and restoring the Christ-centered  
29 doctrinal teachings of the apostles in every Sabbath School and in every church service  
30 every week. A Sabbath School without a strong culture of Bible study is just a social  
31 club. Our Sabbath Schools need young people who can clearly explain the doctrinal  
32 truths of the Bible. More than ever before, Sabbath Schools should be known for their  
33 in-depth study of the Scriptures.  
34

35 **3. Fellowship.** The early church was held together by fellowship. Remember, our theme  
36 verse from Acts 2:42 says, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and  
37 fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers." Fellowship defined the early  
38 church just as doctrine did. Those early churches ate together, spent time together, and  
39 wrote letters to each other when apart. Perhaps Adventists have too often considered  
40 fellowship optional. Just as it is the mission of God's end-time remnant to restore the  
41 doctrines of the apostles, so the mission of God's remnant must include reviving the  
42 rich, close fellowship of the early church. The interactive format of Sabbath School  
43 promotes fellowship. Sabbath School is a place where people look forward to  
44 connecting with friends and engaging with each other.

1  
2 Today, God is calling the next generation of leaders who will help Sabbath Schools and churches  
3 rediscover the apostolic model of (1) mission, (2) doctrine, and (3) fellowship. The pillars of  
4 Sabbath School are designed on the same model. Thriving Sabbath School classes are strong in  
5 Bible study and prayer, mission, and fellowship. Every Sabbath School participant can contribute  
6 to the success of Sabbath School by living the principles of Acts. You don't have to be a Sabbath  
7 School teacher or leader to help your Sabbath School reach more people for Jesus.

8  
9 **Make it Real!**

10 What role can you play in helping your Sabbath School realize its true potential? Let's consider  
11 practical ways that you can help your Sabbath School:

12  
13 **Spend Time with God.** You can help your Sabbath School be strong when you first spend time  
14 alone with God. You cannot give what you do not have. Do not go to Sabbath School to get a  
15 blessing; go to Sabbath School to be a blessing. You become a very valuable participant in  
16 Sabbath School when you study the Scriptures deeply and complete your weekly lesson.  
17 Everybody should share the burden of helping the Sabbath School be a place where people find  
18 substantive Bible answers. Sometimes, young people don't want to speak too much in Sabbath  
19 School, because they are afraid of saying something wrong or are self-conscious about how their  
20 peers might view them. But people are encouraged, and their faith grows when they see youth  
21 and young adults who read the Scriptures with interest and who can clearly explain the meaning.  
22 Young people should never underestimate the strong positive influence they can have on their  
23 peers. While it can be very difficult when your peers make jokes about you being too religious or  
24 exclude you because you are different, always remember that it is more important to consider  
25 what God thinks of you than what people think of you (John 12:43). Never allow peer pressure to  
26 silence you from being involved in Sabbath School. Study your Bible seriously and share what  
27 God lays on your heart. Let Jeremiah 15:16 be your experience: "Your words were found, and I  
28 ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." If you spend quality time  
29 in God's Word during the week, you will have something important to share in Sabbath School.

30  
31 **Notice Who's Missing.** One of the ways that you can help your Sabbath School be more  
32 missional is to notice who is missing. Every year children drown in public swimming pools with  
33 people nearby who could save them if they noticed. Sometimes people are shocked to find a  
34 lifeless body at the bottom of the pool with people swimming all around. In total disbelief,  
35 people ask what happened. Why did nobody notice? Why didn't the person splash or yell for  
36 help? But drowning people can't yell for help, can't splash, can't scream. They are under water  
37 and cannot get air. The Sabbath School is like a swimming pool. When people are drowning  
38 spiritually, they do not kick and scream and make noise. People drown silently. When people  
39 stop coming to church, they don't make some big announcement to tell people they are never  
40 coming back. People who are struggling slip away silently, oftentimes without making any cries  
41 for help. It happens every week. It happens in every church. If somebody is missing from  
42 Sabbath School that you were expecting to see, give them a call or send them a text message and  
43 check in with them. Make sure they are okay and let them know that you miss them. One call or  
44 text message can make all the difference in the world in bringing people back. And remember,

1 teachers need help noticing who is missing. Teachers need help letting people know how much  
2 people care for them. Every Sabbath School participant should get involved in noticing who is  
3 missing and reaching out to them. If somebody is sick or discouraged, offer to visit them, bring  
4 them a gift, or help them with a need. Your kindness lets them know they are not alone and have  
5 not been forgotten by their Sabbath School family. You can also think of people who have never  
6 been to Sabbath School that you want to see join. You can be the person to invite them for the  
7 first time.

8  
9 **Take an interest in cross-cultural missions.** Another way you can help your Sabbath School  
10 become more missional is to show interest in cross-cultural missions. Pay attention when your  
11 Sabbath School plays mission report videos, or somebody reads a mission story from another  
12 part of the world. The mission spotlight is not just a time-filler. The mission spotlight helps you  
13 connect with brothers and sisters in Christ from far away distant places. By understanding how  
14 God’s work is succeeding or struggling in other parts of the world, you learn to care about the  
15 global church family that you belong to. The Bible teaches the importance of all parts of the  
16 body working together, even if we are from opposite sides of the world. As the Bible says, “If  
17 one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the  
18 members rejoice with it” (1 Cor. 12:26). When you give to foreign mission offerings, you are  
19 sacrificing to help brothers and sisters who can never repay you. This is the kind of outward  
20 focused living that is so important for Christians.

21  
22 **Make Memories Together.** You can help your Sabbath School enjoy the blessings of  
23 fellowship.

- 24
- 25 • If your Sabbath School has a group chat on Whatsapp or some other social media  
26 platform, use that platform to celebrate people’s birthdays and other important milestones  
27 in their life such as graduations, passing a big test, moving, getting a new job, etc.  
28 Recognizing people in their important moments helps bond groups together.
- 29 • Help your Sabbath School do some social activities together outside of Sabbath morning.  
30 Do things together that help build positive memories with the group. Share a meal  
31 together, go on a hike, visit the beach or a mountain, do an outreach project together,  
32 have a game night, etc.
- 33
- 34 • At any event, always look for people who are alone or may feel uncomfortable. Help  
35 them feel welcome and feel like they belong in your group.
- 36

### 37 **Conclusion**

38 Today, God is calling for spiritually committed young people who will work for the salvation of  
39 their peers and bring a new spark to your Sabbath Schools. You may think of lots of reasons why  
40 God could find somebody better than you. But God has a work for you to do that nobody else  
41 can do. There are people that you can reach better than anybody else. God wants you! No matter  
42 what your age is, are you willing to respond to God’s call?

- 43 1. Are you ready to recapture the culture of the early church by giving strong emphasis to  
44 the three essentials of (1) mission, (2) doctrine, and (3) fellowship?

- 1        2. Are you committed to going to Sabbath School to be a blessing rather than to get a  
2        blessing?  
3        3. Will you pay attention to who is missing and send them encouragement?  
4

5        **Prayer**

6        Heavenly Father, thank you for refreshing us with your Word today. Help us to be deep in your  
7        Word and committed to the mission you have given us. Help us to pay attention to people around  
8        us who might be spiritually drowning. We pray for the people that you want to bring to our  
9        Sabbath Schools. Help us to be ready for them and welcome them. Help our Sabbath Schools to  
10       be places where lives are changed, and people are attracted to You. Help each one of us to take  
11       responsibility for our own spiritual health and for people around us. We pray, in Jesus' name,  
12       Amen  
13

**Public Campus Life in Action**

Pako Edson Mokgwane, PhD

**Main Text:** Romans 12:1–2

" I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

**Introduction**

A transformed life on campus begins with personal devotion and sacrificing everything for Christ, resulting in a purposeful mission.

Life on a public campus is vibrant, diverse, and often filled with both opportunity and distraction. As students and staff, we are constantly shaped by culture, expectations, social pressure, and ideology. In Romans 12:1–2, Paul calls believers to live *differently* – to be *transformed* rather than *conformed*.

Let's explore how campus life can become a platform for devotion and a launchpad for mission.

**1. Devotion and Surrender as the Starting Point (Romans 12:1)**

**Romans 12:1-2: A Sacrificial Living**

*"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice..."*

What is this week about? It is a week where we come together, not to find out what He will give us, but what we will give to Him - total commitment, "our reasonable service." A week to recommit to obedience, love, and devotion to God—worship to Jesus Christ, not what He gives to us, but what we will give back to Him. Today's scripture reading will help spell out what Paul means when he says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God..." He is urging us—you and me, to present our bodies to God. The act of intelligent worship is us giving ourselves to God. So, our Christian journey is not just about what we can receive from God but about giving back to God everything. Scripture reminds us that the Christian journey is about worship—we are priests bringing sacrifices (offerings) to God. So, here we have Paul using sacrificial language to encourage and remind us that our gift to God is our body, which is our LIVING sacrifice by the mercy of God. Not some dead sacrificial animal that we give on our own, but instead, we present our bodies to Christ as a living sacrifice, through the mercies of God. It is by the mercies of God that we are saved. Placing ourselves WILLINGLY on the Altar as a sacrifice to Him. *When you have time, I encourage you to read Romans 1-11, which is primarily doctrinal. It will give you a better understanding of why Paul says that presenting our*

1 *bodies as a living sacrifice is a very reasonable offering to God. It is our spiritual act of worship.*  
2 This is the foundation of the sanctification process, giving ourselves to God.

- 3 a) **Devotion is a daily surrender:** Not a one-time act but a living, ongoing offering. Daniel  
4 and his friends thrived in the University of Babylon not by blending in but by beginning  
5 each day with an unwavering commitment to God.
- 6 b) **Campus culture promotes self-expression,** but God calls for self-sacrifice – not in  
7 repression, but in dedication to Him.
- 8 c) **Practical application:** Prioritize personal devotion time—prayer, Bible study, fasting—  
9 even amidst academic pressure. In essence, *Back to the Altar!!* Live at the Altar!  
10 [www.backtothealtar.org](http://www.backtothealtar.org). *Back to the Altar* is a global call from the Seventh-day  
11 Adventist Church inviting everyone to return to daily personal worship with God. Many  
12 are missing the deep spiritual connection they truly need in a world overwhelmed by  
13 busyness and media distractions. Following Jesus’ example—who prioritized time alone  
14 with His Father—believers are urged to begin, live, and end each day in communion with  
15 God. Wherever we choose to meet with Him becomes our Altar. This appeal is for  
16 anyone seeking a closer walk with God, preparing for Christ’s return, and wanting to lead  
17 others to do the same.
- 18 d) **SOP Quotation for Bible Study:** “There is nothing more calculated to strengthen the  
19 intellect than studying the Scriptures. No other book is so potent to elevate the thoughts,  
20 to give vigor to the faculties, as the broad, ennobling truths of the Bible. If God’s Word  
21 were studied as it should be, people would have a breadth of mind, a nobility of  
22 character, and a stability of purpose rarely seen in these times.” (Ellen White, *Steps to*  
23 *Christ*, p. 90)
- 24 e) **SOP Quotation for Prayer:** “And if the Saviour of men, the Son of God, felt the need of  
25 prayer, how much more should feeble, sinful mortals feel the necessity of fervent,  
26 constant prayer.” Ellen White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 93.4)

## 27 **2. The Renewal of the Mind (Romans 12:2a)**

28 *"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind..."*

29 This is a continuation of verse 1. Here, Paul tells us not to masquerade as people of the world.  
30 We should not pattern ourselves after the world or become its victims. Instead, as an act of  
31 intelligent worship, we do not conform, but we are transformed. Do not let what’s happening on  
32 your college campus squeeze you into its world...be not conformed. But be TRANSFORMED.  
33 Think of a caterpillar and its transformation process... Think about the transformation of a  
34 caterpillar into a butterfly. Known as [metamorphosis](#), it is a fascinating biological process  
35 involving four distinct stages: egg, larva (caterpillar), pupa (chrysalis), and adult (butterfly). This  
36 is what we go through when we allow the Holy Spirit to transform us. Public campuses are fertile  
37 grounds for intellectual growth but also secular worldviews, hence the need to be rooted in Jesus  
38 lest wrong worldviews permeate our carnal nature.

- 39 a) We need the *Word of God* to anchor our thoughts – it’s the lens through which we filter  
40 everything else.

- 1        b) Allow the Holy Spirit to shape your thoughts, desires, and decisions through Scripture.
- 2        c) Meditate on the Word. Find a quiet place and meditate on what you have read. He studied  
 3        the Word of God, and His hours of greatest happiness were found when He could turn  
 4        aside from the scene of His labors to go into the fields, to meditate in the quiet valleys, to  
 5        hold communion with God on the mountainside, or amid the trees of the forest. The early  
 6        morning often found Him in some secluded place, meditating, searching the Scriptures,  
 7        or in prayer. With the voice of singing, He welcomed the morning light, with songs of  
 8        thanksgiving, He cheered His hours of labor and brought heaven's gladness to the toil-  
 9        worn and disheartened. Ellen White. *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 52.
- 10       d) Memorize Scripture. Memorizing Scripture helps us know God more deeply, live more  
 11       wisely, and love more fully. It places truth in our hearts so we can carry God's presence  
 12       wherever we go. "We must be better acquainted with our Bibles. We might close the door  
 13       to many temptations if we commit to memory passages of Scripture." [\*The Review and\*](#)  
 14       [\*Herald, May 13, 1884\*](#)

15       **Challenge:** What are you allowing to shape your worldview – God's truth or campus trends?  
 16       Are you getting squeezed in by the pressures on campus?

17       **3. Discernment that Leads to Mission (Romans 12:2b)**

18       *"...Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect*  
 19       *will."*

20       The first thing you should meditate on, first thing in the morning, is the WORD OF GOD. And  
 21       the last thing you should meditate on at night is the WORD OF GOD. This is how you will filter  
 22       everything God wants for your life. Filter it through the WORD OF GOD.

23       So, search your heart and meditate on this WORD that you are hearing, and ask God to show you  
 24       what part of your heart or your life you need to put on the Altar now. The Holy Spirit is here to  
 25       help you discern what you need to do. I wish we had time to explore that now, but we will look  
 26       at the Holy Spirit a little more when we delve into Spiritual Gifts. The Christian life is based on  
 27       thinking, not doing. Feelings will change, and feelings do not renew the mind. We flip from one  
 28       thing to the next, looking for a good feeling. A transformed life is not based on feelings or doing;  
 29       it is based on thinking. I am not saying God is against feelings or doing; actually, God is into  
 30       feeling and doing. He tells us to be doers of the Word. However, what I am saying is that  
 31       feelings and doing are insufficient foundations for the Christian life. The first question to ask is  
 32       not how do I feel or what do I do, but instead, it is, WHAT IS TRUE HERE? WHAT DOES  
 33       GOD'S WORD SAY? This comes about by the renewing of your mind. Think and test  
 34       everything and have it approved.

35       So, how do I get transformed? Paul, in 2 Corinthians 3:18, says, *"But we all, with unveiled face,*  
 36       *beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from*  
 37       *glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord."* How can I get this transformation? By  
 38       beholding the glory of the Lord, with personal communion with Him. The Word of God must  
 39       have a very high place in your personal communion with Jesus Christ. You cannot have personal  
 40       fellowship with Jesus and not be transformed by it. When that personal fellowship is based on

1 the Word of God, not your feelings, you will see the transformation we are talking about. The  
2 Holy Spirit does the changing.

3 What is stopping you from having a personal relationship with Him? It is simple but not easy.  
4 But if you do it, God will reward it. We read it at the end of verse 2: "...Then you will be able to  
5 test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will." You will be able to  
6 discern God's will for your life. You can know and live out God's will through a transformed life  
7 in Christ. You can live a life that will demonstrate what is the perfect and acceptable will of God.  
8 Just keep that fellowship with Christ going. God is asking for a decision. Will you make it  
9 today?

10

## 11 **BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSION**

- 12 a) A devoted and renewed student or staff member doesn't just survive campus life – they  
13 step into purpose. How can this be achievable?
- 14 b) The mission is not just preaching; it is living out God's will in the classroom, the dorm,  
15 and on social media. In what practical ways can we embody God's mission beyond  
16 preaching – specifically in everyday settings like the classroom, dorm, or on social  
17 media?
- 18 c) The Holy Spirit guides us into the mission, which involves finding those who need  
19 encouragement, organizing campus ministries, starting study groups, and serving in  
20 practical ways. How can we become more attentive to the Holy Spirit's guidance in  
21 recognizing the needs around us and taking action through ministry, study groups, or acts  
22 of service?
- 23 d) Read the following statements from the Spirit of Prophecy and respond to the question:
- 24 ○ All heaven is waiting for men and women through whom God can reveal the  
25 power of Christianity." Ellen White, *Acts of the Apostles*, 93.
- 26 ○ "A true, lovable Christian is the most powerful argument that can be advanced in  
27 favor of Bible truth. Such a man is Christ's representative. His life is the most  
28 convincing evidence that can be borne to the power of divine grace." Ellen White,  
29 *In Heavenly Places*, p. 318.
- 30 ○ The badge of *Christianity* is not an outward sign, not the wearing of a cross or a  
31 crown, but it is that which reveals the union of man with *God*. Ellen White,  
32 *Ministry of Healing*, p. 470.
- 33 ○ Question: People sometimes get tired of hearing sermons. They want to see  
34 sermons. Be the difference!! What you profess to be and what you do must be  
35 congruent. Your profession will have a significant influence on secular minds.  
36 You may be the only Bible someone ever reads. Someone is watching you.  
37 Someone may say in heaven, "I am here because of you." What does it mean to  
38 'be the sermon in today's world, and how can our daily actions reflect the true  
39 power of Christianity to those who may never enter a church?

1 **Conclusion:**

- 2 • The world needs students who are set apart – transformed, not conformed.
- 3 • On public campuses, your devotion is your protest, your mind/heart is the epicenter of the
- 4 great controversy, your campus is your mission field, and your life is your testimony.
- 5 • Let’s not blend in – let’s live boldly! We are chosen to stand out, to reflect a higher
- 6 standard, and to be a living contrast in a world that has lost its way.

7 **Appeal:**

8 In these two verses (Romans 12:1, 2), we see Paul begging us to make an intelligent decision to

9 follow Jesus. In light of everything he has said in the first eleven chapters of Romans, Paul is

10 saying, *I am making an appeal to your will. I beg you, I beseech you, I implore you brethren, in*

11 *light of everything God had done, all the mercies He has shown you, past, present, and future*

12 *mercies....PLEASE PRESENT YOURSELF AS A LIVING SACRIFICE. And this is your*

13 *reasonable service.* Present yourself as a living sacrifice now!

14 Will you present your life today as a living sacrifice?

15 Will you commit to daily devotion and study of the Word?

16 Will you allow the Holy Spirit to lead you into mission – right where you are?

17 If this is your commitment, please stand with me as we pray.

18

1 *Sermon 6*

2 **Spiritual Gifts in Action**

3 Maria Manderson

4 **Main Text: 1 Corinthians 12:4-7**

5 There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the  
6 same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all.

8 **NOTE TO SPEAKER:**

9 *Please read the following scriptures and Spirit of Prophecy readings to prepare for this reading:*

- 10 • *1 Corinthians 12;*  
11 • *Romans 12:1-8;*  
12 • [\*Spiritual Gifts, Volumes 1-4\*](#)

13 **SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

14 Today you are not here by chance or happenstance. You are here because God has either directed  
15 you here or he has allowed you, by decisions and choices you have made to be here. But here  
16 you are. And the great thing about this is that regardless of how you got here, it is important that  
17 we remember that God moves in and through us to accomplish His will of leading others to Him.  
18 Paul, in Philippians 2:13 and 14, explains that our Christian journey is a series of ins and outs.  
19 God working “in us” while we work “out”...in mission, service, fellowship, wherever God leads  
20 us, is where we will go. Yes, through obedience---steadfast obedience we become partners with  
21 God in growing His Kingdom. "For we are His creation - created in Christ Jesus for good works,  
22 which God prepared ahead of time so that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

23  
24 When we accept Christ and His forgiveness of our sins into our life, our life is changed, and our  
25 destiny is eternally altered. We become a new person with a new purpose. We receive the  
26 indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the presence of God. Exodus 33:13 talks about the promise of  
27 God’s presence, with God telling Moses that, “**My Presence will go with you, and I will give**  
28 **you rest.**”

29  
30 If we are serious about changing our lives, we have to live according to the Bible, we must read  
31 it, meditate on it, and apply it our lives. The Spirit of God (His Presence) provide the power and  
32 direction we need to change our lives. But what does this have to do with Spiritual Gifts you may  
33 ask.

34  
35 Paul, in Ephesians 2:10 reminds us that “We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for  
36 good works, **which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.**” God prepared

1 the “good works” for us ahead of time, and He also want us to be prepared to do the work He has  
2 prepared for us to do. So, discovering our spiritual gifts and walking in the purpose we were  
3 created for is important. All Christians should know and understand spiritual gifts because every  
4 Christian has been given gifts for the uplifting of each other.  
5 Today’s week of prayer reading will attempt to explain spiritual gifts.  
6

7 None of us are without spiritual gifts or purpose. In 1 Peter 4:10, 11 the apostle Peter reminds us  
8 that, “*As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the*  
9 *manifold grace of God.*” And in Romans 12: 6-8 we read, “*Having then gifts differing according*  
10 *to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our*  
11 *faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in*  
12 *exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy,*  
13 *with cheerfulness.*” Earlier you heard God telling Moses that His presence will go with Him, and  
14 here Peter is reminding you that when you accept the Lord, the Spirit of God now dwell inside of  
15 you. So, while you may have more than one type of spiritual gift, you know for sure that you at  
16 least have one spiritual gift—and that is God dwelling inside of you. Amen.  
17

### 18 **So, what are spiritual gifts?**

19

20 Spiritual gifts are special abilities or capacities given to Christians by the Holy Spirit, to be used  
21 for the betterment and upliftment of others. They are not natural talents. Yes, some gifts may  
22 align with natural talents, but spiritual gifts are supernatural empowerments from the Holy Spirit  
23 that are meant to edify, encourage, and strengthen the church and the world.  
24

25 In the beginning of 1 Corinthians 12 we see Paul telling the church in Corinth, and us,  
26 “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. You  
27 know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were  
28 led. Therefore, I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever  
29 says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit.”  
30

31 Paul is writing this letter to the Corinthians to help them properly understand and properly use  
32 their spiritual gifts. This is essential to the plan of salvation, yes, God wants to include us in His  
33 plan of salvation, and so He equips us through spiritual gifts. The primary way of knowing what  
34 spiritual gifts are is through the BIBLE.  
35

### 36 **Important things to remember about Spiritual Gifts:**

- 37 • A spiritual gift is given by the Holy Spirit and as He wills for the common good of  
38 the church.
- 39 • Spiritual Gifts are to be used lovingly. Without love for each other our spiritual gifts  
40 are empty and useless.
- 41 • Spiritual Gifts are for the benefit of others. We should never be prideful about our  
42 spiritual gifts because God gave them to us for us to serve others, not boast about  
43 ourselves.

1  
2 We see from what we have read so far that God supplies the spiritual gifts to be used by us for  
3 HIS GLORY, and HIS GLORY ONLY.

4  
5 So, you may be wondering, how can I discover my spiritual gift? How do I know that I am not  
6 just doing good work that everyone else is doing. Because of course we know that generally  
7 speaking, as human beings there are some good works that we all should be doing...like  
8 speaking the truth, offering hospitality, return our tithes, and sharing the Gospel. But how can  
9 you know the special gifts that God has equipped you with when you accepted His forgiveness  
10 and His offer of salvation?

11  
12 Here is a guide that can help you discover THEM.

13  
14 **Step 1:** Begin with prayer. Pray and ask God to you into identifying your spiritual gifts and/or  
15 special talents.

16  
17 **Step 2:** Do the spiritual gifts assessment on the General Conference Youth Ministries website:  
18 <https://www.gcyouthministries.org/resources/spiritual-gifts-assessment/>. You can do this test  
19 online or download the print copy. Share your assessment results with your pastor, youth leader,  
20 or someone you trust at your church.

21  
22 **Step 3:** Once you have identified your passions and strengths, look for ways to naturally help  
23 others using these gifts. Pay attention to things you do and areas of ministry in your local church  
24 that seem to resonate with you. Do not be afraid to step outside your comfort zone and try new  
25 things to see where God can use you and your gifts most effectively.

26  
27 **Step 4:** The more you use your gift, the more efficient you will become. Remember, God does  
28 not always call the qualified. He qualifies those He calls. Practice using your gifts and look for  
29 opportunities to develop them more effectively. Learn from others who have been using their  
30 gifts for a longer time than you.

31  
32 So now that you have discovered and developed your spiritual gifts and/or special talents, what  
33 do you do?

34  
35 **You should focus on building up the body of Christ.** The great commission in Matthews  
36 28:19, 20 instructs us to “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in  
37 the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things  
38 that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

39  
40 **How can I use my gifts to build up the local church and help others grow in their faith and**  
41 **maturity, and contribute to the overall growth of the church?**

1 I wish I could say that's as easy as 1, 2, 3, but it's not always easy. It takes prayer and faith in  
2 God. You have to pray and ask God to lead you so that you are not doing this on your own.....on  
3 your own you will get burnt-out and frustrated, with God you will serve with joy and gratitude.  
4 Sometimes God may reveal it directly to you or give you a sign, sometimes he may not give you  
5 a sign, and sometimes he may just use others to affirm your spiritual gifts.

6  
7 Remember, your spiritual gifts are not given just to be used in your local church, they are given  
8 by God to be used for His glory to benefit others, all people. Consider how your gifts can be used  
9 to bless and impact people outside the church community. Serving others with a heart of humility  
10 and love can win people who do not believe in God to Him. We must be faithful stewards of the  
11 gifts God has given us, so use them faithfully and diligently, remembering that you are  
12 accountable to God and the body of Christ for how you use them.

13

14 **Things to avoid:**

15 1. Abuse of Spiritual Gifts. The church in Corinth had many spiritual gifts but they did  
16 not use them for the glory of God. They were a very dysfunctional church and had  
17 distorted and pagan views of how they should be used. We must avoid misuse of our  
18 spiritual gifts.

19

20 2. DO NOT think too highly of yourself. Do not be arrogant or haughty, saying to  
21 yourself, "they are lucky to have me". Be humble.

22

23 3. Do not become busy with serving God that you neglect your relationship with Him.

24

25 4. Avoid saying yes to everything. Sometimes you can have difficulty saying no  
26 because you are very unselfish and focus on the needs of others. Even to the point  
27 where you neglect your own life and the needs of your family.

28

29 5. The tendency to feel inadequate and unqualified for spiritual leadership. People with  
30 the spiritual gift of service sometimes have a low self-esteem and view of themselves.

31

32 Pray and ask God to lead you to where you can use them in ways that will build up the church  
33 and glorify God.

34

35 **Spiritual Gifts and Spiritual Growth**

36

37 Using your spiritual gifts to serve God is crucial for your individual growth, as well as the  
38 growth of the local and global church, and for fulfilling God's purpose. Neglecting or misusing  
39 these gifts can hinder the church's effectiveness in the community and limit your spiritual  
40 fulfillment.

41

42 Romans 12:1-2

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living  
2 sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to  
3 this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that  
4 good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

5

6 Here are some steps you can take as you seek God’s will for your life:

7

8 Pray and ask God daily to renew your mind, through study of the Bible, daily quiet times, and  
9 worship. As you study and get closer to God, the Holy Spirit will do the work of renewing your  
10 mind. This will bring about transformation.

11

12 Through the Word of God and the Spirit of Prophecy, test and approve what God’s will for your  
13 life is. His will is good and perfect.

14 Below are some quotes from Ellen G. White that will be very helpful.

15

16 1. All men do not receive the same gifts, but to every servant of the Master some gift of  
17 the Spirit is promised. Christ's Object Lessons, 327.

18

19 2. The Lord has need of all kinds of skillful workmen. “He gave some, apostles; and  
20 some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the  
21 perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of  
22 Christ.” Ephesians 4:11, 12. Testimonies for the Church 6:291.

23

24 3. In immediate connection with the scenes of the great day of God, the Lord by the  
25 prophet Joel has promised a special manifestation of His Spirit. Joel 2:28. This  
26 prophecy received a partial fulfillment in the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of  
27 Pentecost; but it will reach its full accomplishment in the manifestation of divine grace  
28 which will attend the closing work of the gospel....

29

30 4. At this time the special endowment of divine grace and power is not less needful to  
31 the church than in apostolic days. The Great Controversy, ix, x.

32

33 5. God will today endow men and women with power from above, as He endowed  
34 those who on the day of Pentecost heard the word of salvation. At this very hour His  
35 Spirit and His grace are for all who need them and will take Him at His word.  
36 Testimonies for the Church 8:20.

37

38 6. The gifts are already ours in Christ, but their actual possession depends upon our  
39 reception of the Spirit of God....

40

41 7. If they are connected with Christ, if the gifts of the Spirit are theirs, the poorest and  
42 most ignorant of His disciples will have a power that will tell upon hearts. God makes

1 them the channel for the outworking of the highest influence in the universe. Christ's  
2 Object Lessons, 327, 328.

3  
4 8. God calls for talents of influence and of means. Shall we refuse to obey? Our  
5 heavenly Father bestows gifts and solicits a portion back, that He may test us whether  
6 we are worthy to have the gift of everlasting life. — Testimony Treasures, vol. 1, p. 389

7  
8 9. However large, however small, your talents, remember that what you have is yours  
9 only in trust. Thus, God is testing you, giving you opportunity to prove yourself true. To  
10 Him you are indebted for all your capabilities. To Him belong your powers of body,  
11 mind, and soul, and for Him these powers are to be used. Your time, your influence,  
12 your capabilities, your skill—all must be accounted for to Him who gives all. He uses  
13 his gifts best who seeks by earnest endeavor to carry out the Lord's great plan for the  
14 uplifting of humanity, remembering always that he must be a learner as well as a  
15 teacher.—Testimonies for the Church, vol. 7, p. 281

16  
17 Remember, God accomplished Salvation on the Cross and can do it without you. But even with  
18 that, He has invited us to be partners with Him in the work of salvation. Will you commit today  
19 to seek God's will for your life and discover what your spiritual gifting is?

20  
21 “But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all.” (1 Corinthians 12:7,  
22 New King James Version)

23  
24 “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace  
25 ...” (1 Peter 4:10).

2 **Digital Ministry in Action**

3 James Tham

4 **Main Text: 1 Timothy 4:12**

5 Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers  
6 in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.

7 Think about your day-to-day habits. When you wake up, what is the first thing you do? For  
8 many, the answer is: “I check my phone.” Our online devices have become a source of news,  
9 entertainment, social connection, and a myriad of other activities that we rely on. From ordering  
10 food to connecting with distant relatives, these digital tools fill so many roles in modern life. But  
11 at the heart of it all, we want to remain mindful that our true source of strength, wisdom, and  
12 sustenance comes from God. It is possible to use these tools as a reflection of the deeper well  
13 within us: the Holy Spirit anchoring our anxieties, pointing the direction toward Christ, and  
14 comforting us through community.

15 We can think of our phones as small altars of worship or idols of distraction, depending on how  
16 we use them. If your digital devices often lead you to anxiety, envy, or anger, they might be  
17 leaning toward the realm of “idol.” To keep your phone in a healthy position, consider mentally  
18 dedicating it to the Lord each morning. This might look like praying over your phone when you  
19 pick it up: “Lord, let all my interactions today honor You. Let me be a vessel of compassion in  
20 every digital place I visit.” This small daily habit can steadily recalibrate your heart and mind.

21 Let's be real for a moment—most of us have checked our phones at least once in the last hour.  
22 Perhaps we've glanced at a notification, scrolled through a friend's photos, or sent a quick  
23 message to a group chat. Many of us do this so frequently that we don't even notice we're doing  
24 it. It has become second nature, woven into the fabric of our daily routines, and it's not just  
25 young people—this is cross-generational and universal. Yet, even without realizing it, a simple  
26 “online check-in” can shape or alter our mood, our mindset, and sometimes even our sense of  
27 self-worth.

28 Now, let's push a bit deeper: if you've engaged with your phone today, there's a possibility  
29 you've also encountered something on social media that left you feeling uncertain, frustrated,  
30 anxious, or perhaps even jealous. It might have been a photo of someone on an extravagant  
31 vacation, an influencer's curated life, or a heated debate that sparked strong emotions. In these  
32 digital interactions, we often find a mixture of joy, envy, hope, anxiety, community, and  
33 isolation—all interwoven into the complex tapestry of social media.

34 Nevertheless, here's a perspective that might shift our focus: the very same device we often use  
35 for mindless scrolling and sharing memes can become our most significant tool for spiritual  
36 impact. What if your Instagram feed could be a platform for declaring truth and uplifting others?

1 What if your TikTok content could plant seeds of hope that flourish in someone else’s heart?  
2 How might your DMs become channels for authentic connection, prayer, and counsel?  
3 We are the first generation that carries both the entire Bible and the entire internet in our pockets.  
4 This is unprecedented in human history. God, the Creator of all creativity, is not threatened by  
5 technology—He’s the one who endowed human beings with the ingenuity to develop it in the  
6 first place. When Jesus instructed His followers to “go into all the world” (Matthew 28:19), our  
7 modern context extends that mandate into digital spaces as well. It’s not just about traveling  
8 across continents; it’s also about reaching across timelines, comments, and direct messages.  
9 Today, we’ll delve into how to live out what we could call #DigitalFaith—where every scroll,  
10 post, comment, and share can be transformed into an act of worship. You may not see a physical  
11 pulpit in front of you, but every time you tap “share” or “like,” you are making a statement, for  
12 better or for worse. Let’s explore how to ensure that every statement we make online aligns with  
13 the heart of God.

## 14 **God Cares About Your Digital Life**

### 15 **Social Media Is Your Modern Mission Field**

16 When we think of mission fields, it’s easy to conjure up images of distant lands where people  
17 face physical needs and spiritual thirst. We picture remote villages, language barriers, and  
18 experiences far from our normal surroundings. But the world is changing, and mission fields are  
19 no longer strictly overseas. Your mission field can be as close as the tiny screen in your hand.

20 Imagine your Instagram followers, your Facebook friends, or your TikTok audience. These are  
21 real people—classmates, family members, coworkers, online acquaintances, and sometimes  
22 strangers who found their way to your profile. They might live on the other side of the globe or  
23 just down the street. They struggle and rejoice, just like you. They may have questions about life,  
24 God, purpose, or hope. You don’t need a passport to reach them; you just need a willingness to  
25 post, to comment, and to engage with an authentic heart.

26 Jesus spoke in Acts 1:8 about witnessing to Jerusalem (those closest to you), Judea (your broader  
27 community), Samaria (people who might be very different from you), and to the ends of the  
28 earth. In our modern context, the “ends of the earth” is as close as our notifications. That  
29 classmate from high school who still watches your stories? A potential divine appointment. The  
30 cousin who likes all your photos but rarely speaks to you face-to-face? A heart waiting to  
31 connect. The friend who sends you a DM at 2 a.m. when they are in crisis? A precious soul who  
32 might be seeking hope, even if they cannot articulate it.

33 You might say, “But I don’t have many followers,” or “I’m not that interesting.” The truth is  
34 influence isn’t about large numbers, it’s about the depth of impact. Each person who views your  
35 story, checks your latest Tweet, or reads your posts is a potential life impacted by the message of  
36 Christ. Don’t underestimate the power of a single verse, a brief encouraging note, or a  
37 compassionate response. Just one post that points to Jesus can speak volumes to a person  
38 journeying through loneliness or doubt.

### 39 **How to Live Out #DigitalFaith**

1 So, how do we practically translate these insights into a life of faithful digital discipleship? We  
2 are called not just to avoid pitfalls but to actively shine as beacons of hope in a world that is  
3 overloaded with information yet often starving for genuine connection and truth.

#### 4 **Be Real, Not “Churchy”**

5 In an age of filters and curation, authenticity is refreshing. Many people assume that Christians  
6 only share Bible verses, worship songs, or “perfect” moral stances online, unable to empathize  
7 with everyday struggles. Break that assumption. Show glimpses of your actual life—your  
8 hobbies, interests, big wins, and small lessons learned. You can post about your basketball game,  
9 your favorite band, or your latest baking experiment. Then, alongside that reality, you can also  
10 share scriptures that have impacted you recently, or maybe a prayer request or a praise report.

11 Being “churchy” might feel like an artificial display of faith, using language that doesn’t  
12 resonate with everyday life. Being real, on the other hand, means you share how your faith  
13 intersects with your challenges and victories. Talk honestly about how God helped you overcome  
14 a personal struggle, or how you felt peace in the middle of a stressful deadline. When people see  
15 you’re genuine, they sense that the faith you talk about is deeply woven into your daily existence  
16 rather than confined to Sabbath mornings.

#### 17 **Engage—Don’t Just Scroll**

18 One major digital habit involves mindless scrolling. We flick through countless updates, watch  
19 short videos, and momentarily amuse ourselves. However, what if we shifted from passive  
20 consumption to active engagement for the sake of Christ?

21 When a friend posts a success—maybe they just landed a new internship or got accepted into  
22 their dream school—offer a comment that shows support: “So proud of you! God’s got even  
23 greater plans in store.” When you sense someone is hurting because they share a vulnerable story  
24 or a cryptic status, send them a DM saying, “I see you’re upset. I’m praying for you. If you need  
25 someone to talk to, I’m here.”

26 Small gestures of empathy or encouragement can profoundly touch someone’s heart. Even a  
27 quick, sincere reaction can open a door for a deeper conversation. In a digital world so often  
28 filled with negativity, cynicism, and trolling, your warmth and kindness can stand out as a  
29 powerful witness to Christ’s love.

#### 30 **Use Your Unique Gifts**

31 God’s Word is clear that each member of the body of Christ has distinct gifts (Romans 12:4–8).  
32 This diversity is by design. Some are natural communicators, while others are visually creative.  
33 Some excel at singing or playing instruments, while others are more inclined towards coding,  
34 gaming, or writing. You do not have to mimic someone else’s style or gifts; you simply need to  
35 ask God how to leverage what He has already given you.

36 If your skill set leans toward graphic design, consider creating motivational verse graphics or  
37 wallpapers. If you are a writer, tweet or blog short reflections that infuse everyday scenarios with  
38 spiritual insights. If you are musically inclined, record worship covers or original songs that  
39 guide listeners into God’s presence. Gamers can stream their gameplay while keeping the  
40 atmosphere clean, uplifting, and free of toxicity, offering a stark contrast to foul language or  
41 negativity that unfortunately sometimes pervades the gaming community.

1 Do not underestimate how God can multiply the effect of your unique talents when you dedicate  
2 them to His glory. Even a short, 30-second clip of you singing a worship chorus can spark  
3 interest or comfort someone far away. God knows how to perfectly position your gifts to reach  
4 the right people at the right time.

### 5 **Building Consistency in Online Testimony**

6 One of the secrets to effective digital ministry is consistency. Just as we don't expect to become  
7 spiritually mature after one sermon, people won't necessarily be transformed by one single post.  
8 However, over time, as you continually share aspects of God's goodness and your journey,  
9 people will begin to notice the genuineness behind your words. They will remember your  
10 kindness and honest reflections because authenticity stands out against the backdrop of  
11 superficial updates and self-focused content.

12 Think of someone following your story for a month, six months, or a year. They will see patterns  
13 of faithfulness in your life— how you handle disappointments, celebrate victories, and treat  
14 others with respect. These patterns can make them curious: “Why does this individual remain  
15 hopeful despite challenges? What sustains them?” That curiosity can open many doors to deeper  
16 kingdom conversations.

### 17 **Turning Negative Interactions into Ministry Opportunities**

18 Even negative experiences can be transformed into gateways for ministry. If someone leaves a  
19 nasty comment or a mocking reply to your post about faith, see it as a chance to speak grace into  
20 their confusion or pain. There is a story in the Book of Acts (7:54–60) where Stephen, full of the  
21 Holy Spirit, faced hatred from a crowd. Even as they stoned him, he prayed for them. While  
22 social media comments don't compare to the physical danger Stephen faced, the principle of  
23 responding with grace to hostility remains relevant.

24 Occasionally, you may be led to respectfully challenge falsehood or clarify misconceptions about  
25 faith. Do so with empathy and humility. Remember: the goal isn't to “win” an argument; the goal  
26 is to reflect Christ. It's less about saying, “I'm right, you're wrong,” and more about saying,  
27 “Here's a perspective from Scripture. I hear your concerns, and I believe God has answers for  
28 you.” If someone grows more hostile, you can politely bow out or block them. The Holy Spirit  
29 can still work in ways we don't see or comprehend, long after the conversation ends.

### 30 **Passing the Torch: Encouraging Others to Join In**

31 Digital ministry is not something you do alone. Consider inviting your friends or youth group to  
32 join in a social media challenge: for instance, committing to one post a week that shares an  
33 encouraging verse, a short prayer, or a reflection on God's goodness. When a handful of  
34 believers consistently post about faith, the collective ripple effect grows stronger. Each person  
35 has a unique circle of influence, so working together can expand the reach.

36 You might find creative themes: #TestimonyTuesday for sharing testimonies,  
37 #WorshipWednesday for posting a favorite worship song along with a brief personal reflection,  
38 or #FaithFriday where you summarize a lesson God taught you that week. By uniting and  
39 supporting one another, you help each other stay accountable and encouraged. Plus, seeing others  
40 share their faith can inspire you to keep moving forward, especially on days when you may not  
41 feel like it.

## 1 **Practical Examples of Digital Mission Work**

2 Sometimes, the best way to spark ideas is to look at tangible examples of digital mission at work:

- 3     ▪ **Zoom Bible Studies:** Invite friends from different cities or countries to gather  
4       weekly or monthly for an online Bible study. This combines technology and spiritual  
5       growth seamlessly.
- 6     ▪ **Hashtag Movements:** Create or join a faith-based hashtag that aims to unite  
7       believers across different platforms. A well-chosen hashtag can be a rallying point for  
8       shared testimonies, prayers, or scripture reflections.
- 9     ▪ **Storytelling Threads:** Start a Twitter or Facebook thread with a short devotional  
10       insight, encouraging others to add their own thoughts or testimonies. Over time, the  
11       thread becomes a tapestry of God’s work in many lives.
- 12    ▪ **Creative Media:** For those gifted in animation or film, consider short videos that  
13       illustrate biblical truths in relatable terms. Animation sequences, short skits, or video  
14       devotionals can capture the attention of visual learners.
- 15    ▪ **Silent Encouragement:** Sometimes it’s not about posting at all— it’s about quietly  
16       offering direct words of comfort and support to those who need them. This might look  
17       like a message saying, “Your post really resonated with me. I’m praying for you and  
18       here if you need a friend.”

## 19 **Overcoming Digital Weariness**

20 After a while, even digital missionaries can grow weary. You might wonder if your efforts make  
21 any difference at all, especially when engagement is low or criticism is high. Just remember,  
22 biblical heroes also faced seasons of discouragement. Elijah, at one point, felt entirely alone and  
23 wanted to give up (1 Kings 19). Yet God reminded him that even when His servant feels  
24 isolated, He still has a plan in motion.

25 Faithfulness matters in digital ministry. You might not see immediate results— and that’s okay.  
26 Sometimes seeds planted in someone’s feed lie dormant for years before sprouting. There’s a  
27 spiritual principle at work: God’s Word never returns void (Isaiah 55:11). If your posts and  
28 interactions consistently reflect God’s truth, trust Him to handle the growth. Your harvest might  
29 show up in ways or times you never anticipated.

## 30 **The Spiritual Discipline of Discernment**

31 As you continue to engage online, never neglect discernment. There’s a sea of information out  
32 there—some of it contradictory, manipulative, or misleading. Pray for wisdom to differentiate  
33 fruitful conversations from time-wasters, genuine needs from malicious attempts to divide, and  
34 instructive content from content designed to distort truth.

35 James 1:5 assures us that if we lack wisdom, we can ask God, who gives generously. A hearty  
36 dose of spiritual discernment can protect your heart and guide you toward the most effective,  
37 God-honoring uses of your time and energy online.

## 38 **Redefining Success on God’s Terms**

39 Finally, remember to measure success by eternal standards, not fleeting social media metrics.  
40 Even if your encouraging post received only ten likes, imagine that one of those ten people was

1 on the brink of despair and your words gave them the strength to keep going. That’s a victory in  
2 God’s eyes.

3 Heaven rejoices over a single soul drawn one step closer to Christ. You might never fully know  
4 how your online presence influenced someone. Perhaps a long-time friend reads every  
5 devotional post silently but never engages publicly, only to share years later how much your  
6 faithfulness impacted their life.

7

### 8 **Conclusion: Press On in #DigitalFaith**

9 As you continue your digital journey, keep your eyes on Jesus. Let Him shape your content, your  
10 interactions, and your mindset. Embrace rest when you need it, keep aiming to shine His light,  
11 and watch how He uses your online presence for extraordinary purposes.

12 Let’s hold onto those parting thoughts: You are Christ’s ambassador in the digital world. Your  
13 phone, your apps, and your posts can be instruments for a holy calling. Surrender them to God  
14 and remain open to His leading. As you do, expect miracles—hearts softened, lives changed,  
15 hope renewed—all through ordinary thumbs on modern devices, guided by the timeless Holy  
16 Spirit.

17 You are now fully equipped and charged: share truth, spark hope, and proclaim the good news in  
18 every digital corner you find. Remember, the “field” is vast, and workers willing to serve  
19 digitally are as needed as those on traditional mission frontiers. Step out with confidence and  
20 compassion, trusting that the One who calls you is faithful to complete the good work He has  
21 begun in you.

22 Now, truly go—scroll with purpose. Post with intention. And remain anchored in the never-  
23 changing Word of God. May your digital steps be illuminated by His presence, and may  
24 countless lives be touched by the echoes of your faithful witness.

### 25 **Closing Prayer**

26 Now, with hearts focused on the eternal, receive this benediction, inspired by Numbers 6:24–26,  
27 over your life and your devices:  
28 “May the Lord bless your digital life and use it for His glory; may the Lord make His face shine  
29 on every post you share; may the Lord look with favor on all your engagements, granting you the  
30 peace and wisdom to serve Him well. Go now—scroll with purpose!”

31

### 32 **Discussion Questions:**

33

#### 34 **1. Real Talk: Social Media Struggles & Wins**

35 *“What’s one-way social media has negatively impacted your faith or mental health—and one  
36 way you’ve seen God use it for good in your life or others?”*

37 (Scripture tie-in: Psalm 34:8 – “Taste and see that the Lord is good.”)

38

1 **2. Authenticity Check**

2 *"Have you ever felt pressured to present a 'perfect' version of your faith online? How can we*  
3 *balance being real about struggles while still pointing people to hope?"*

4 (Scripture tie-in: 2 Corinthians 12:9 – “My power is made perfect in weakness.”)

5

6 **3. Mission: Possible**

7 *"If you could use one social media feature (DMs, stories, comments, etc.) to intentionally*  
8 *encourage someone this week, what would you do—and who in your circle might need it most?"*

9 (Scripture tie-in: 1 Thessalonians 5:11 – “Encourage one another and build each other up.”)

10

11

12

1 *Sermon 8*

2 **Youth Movement in Action**

3 Busi Khumalo

4 **Main Text: 1 Timothy 4:12**

5 Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers  
6 in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.

7 **Introduction**

8  
9 God has always manifested a special interest in children and young people. When Ishmael and  
10 Hagar ran out of their water supply while they were in the wilderness of Bersheeba, Hagar put  
11 him under the tree expecting him to die of thirst. But "God heard the boy crying, and the angel of  
12 God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be  
13 afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there" (Genesis 21:17 NIV). Matthew 19:14  
14 forbids the disciples from stopping children from coming to Jesus. When the disciples showed  
15 disdain for children, Jesus gave them ample attention and used them to illustrate how a Christian  
16 must behave. We draw inspiration from biblical stories that depict how God used young people:  
17 the story of the slave girl who advised Naaman to go to Samaria, the spiritual revival that was  
18 occasioned by the rulership of Josiah in Judah, the boy whose bread and fish were blessed by  
19 Jesus to feed five thousand people, and the stories of Esther, Daniel and many more.

20 Why is God interested in the youth? In Genesis 21:18, God told Hagar that Ishmael would be a  
21 great nation. Sarah despised Ishmael, but God saw in him a great nation even before he achieved  
22 that status. Ishmael's circumstances were not favorable - born of a slave, Sarah didn't like him,  
23 and he was homeless because Sarah demanded that they leave her home. But God saw his  
24 vulnerability and capitalized on it to bring hope and an infusion of energy by supplying him with  
25 his immediate need – water and encouragement.

26 The words of Paul to young Timothy are relevant to all young people who, like Ishmael, are  
27 despised. In some cases, the youth suffer because of a low self-image. How should you, as a  
28 young person, navigate a situation of being overlooked? How do you serve the Lord when you or  
29 others think you are not gifted enough? Young people often despair and retreat into their cocoons  
30 when despised or undermined. Others become arrogant as a knee-jerk reaction to assert  
31 themselves when attacked or slighted. Paul offers a solution to this dilemma. This sermon will  
32 expound on 1 Timothy 4:12 to give you a biblical approach and practical ideas to respond to  
33 these matters. Instead of being arrogant or feeling bad about yourself when despised, Paul offers  
34 the youth an alternative response - "set an example for the believers..." He mentions the

1 following central tenets of Christianity as key principles every youth should consider when  
2 despised:

- 3 • Speech
- 4 • Conduct
- 5 • Love
- 6 • Faith
- 7 • Purity

### 8 **Speech**

9 It is often said that God gave us two ears to be good listeners and one mouth to think twice  
10 before we speak. James put it well, "With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it  
11 we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness." (James 3:9 NIV). The tongue  
12 enables us to speak., that is why James uses this analogy. All of us should learn to choose our  
13 words when we talk to other people. "Of all the gifts that God has bestowed upon men, none is  
14 more precious than the gift of speech. If sanctified by the Holy Spirit, it is a power for good. It is  
15 with the tongue that we convince and persuade; with it we offer prayer and praise to God; and  
16 with it we convey rich thoughts of the Redeemer's love" (*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 6, p.*  
17 *336*).

18 The General Conference Youth Department encourages church leaders to involve young people  
19 in all aspects of the church—assign specific roles to the youth and encourage them to participate  
20 in mission work. Unfortunately, this ideal is not always prevalent in the local church, and the  
21 lack thereof frustrates the youth. On the other hand, it is also true that some youths have failed to  
22 accept nominations and invitations to serve in the church; this too is regrettable. Sometimes,  
23 youths display arrogance towards the church leadership when they have no part to play in God's  
24 work. This approach doesn't usually yield good results; it polarizes the youth and the old folks.  
25 Even if their unhappiness is justified, there is a way of sharing your displeasure that won't create  
26 animosity between you and the leadership. The Bible is right: "A gentle answer turns away  
27 wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (Proverbs 15:1 NIV).

28 This approach will endear the youth to anyone who has wronged them and may bring a change  
29 of heart that will benefit young people in the church. We should not mistake candidness with  
30 rudeness. It is possible to express your wounded feelings without being abrasive. An exemplary  
31 youth in speech can be a good example to everyone at home, church, and society. This formula  
32 will make your peers, parents, schoolteachers, and church leaders respect you because you are  
33 mindful of what you say.

### 34 **Conduct**

35 Matthew 7:16 declares, "By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from  
36 thornbushes, or figs from thistles?" Our behavior is a public display of who we are. Which kind  
37 of conduct is Paul referring to? The Bible provides characteristics of a person who professes to  
38 be a Christian. We will consider a few of the biblical references that define who we should be:

- 1 • Found in Exodus 20, God's Ten Commandments serves as a compass to everyone who  
2 claims to love God. While obedience to the laws of God does not grant us pardon from  
3 sin, they serve as a mirror that screens our lives and exposes our character defects and  
4 propensities towards sin. God introduced the laws on Mount Sinai because He desired to  
5 detox the nation of Israel from the idolatrous life they had lived for over 400 years in  
6 Egypt. Embedded in the Ten Commandments are the two dimensions underpinning  
7 human relationships – the vertical connection with God and the horizontal connection  
8 with humanity. In the New Testament, Jesus said: "Love the Lord your God with all your  
9 heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest  
10 commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law  
11 and the Prophets hang on these two commandments" (Matthew 22:37-40). This profound  
12 definition and summary of the Ten Commandments flies in the face of legalism. Love is  
13 the foundation of the moral law of God. John 14:15 expresses the same thought: "If you  
14 love me, keep my commandments."
- 15 • Galatians 5:22-23 says, " But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance,  
16 kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is  
17 no law." God dispenses these virtues to all who call themselves Christians.
- 18 • In Ephesians 6:10-20, Paul prescribes the "full armor" of God to all of us. This narrative's  
19 context is spiritual warfare, or the great controversy. We can't expect to win in this war  
20 when we rely on our righteousness and ability to conquer the devil.
- 21 • Philippians 4:8 says, "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble,  
22 whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if  
23 anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things." This passage addresses a  
24 crucial matter – the mind. The Spirit of Prophecy lays bare the function of the mind:  
25 "Every organ of the body was made to be servant to the mind. The mind is the capital of  
26 the body" (*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 3, p.136*). When young people allow the Holy  
27 Spirit to tame their minds, their conduct will match what they profess. We should never  
28 forget this admonition from scripture, "For as he thinketh in his heart..." (Proverbs 23:7  
29 KJV).

### 30 **Love**

31 We have already said the Commandments of God are founded on the principle of love. We  
32 cannot claim to love God and hate our enemies. Satan offers us a counterfeit of the love God  
33 wants us to have. Gospel and secular songs have been written on love, and yet this is still a rare  
34 trait among God's people. Romantic movies and songs continue to captivate our minds because  
35 humanity admires those who seem to have the capacity to love. It also shows that love is as  
36 elusive as a mirage.

37 Jesus challenged all His disciples when He said: "By this everyone will know that you are my  
38 disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:35). Ellen White has written extensively on love.

39 Let me share some of her excerpts on love:

- 1 • “Love must be the principle of action. Love is the underlying principle of God's  
2 government in heaven and earth, and it must be the foundation of the Christian's  
3 character. This alone can make and keep him steadfast. This alone can enable him to  
4 withstand trial and temptation” (*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 197).
- 5 • I have found no sterner rebuke to those who trivialize love than this one Ellen White has  
6 issued to young people: “To trifle with hearts is a crime of no small magnitude in the  
7 sight of a holy God. And yet some will show preference for young ladies and call out  
8 their affections, and then go their way and forget all about the words they have spoken  
9 and their effect. A new face attracts them, and they repeat the same words, devote to  
10 another the same attentions” (*Letters to Young Lovers*, p. 74). If the youth want to be  
11 taken seriously by their parents and others, they should take this counsel to heart and do  
12 as admonished. We often weaken our case against any legitimate injustice or genuine  
13 concern if we default on matters of love relationships.
- 14 • “The badge of Christianity is not an outward sign, not the wearing of a cross or a crown,  
15 but it is that which reveals the union of man with God...The strongest argument in favor  
16 of the gospel is a loving and lovable Christian” (*Ministry of Healing*, p. 470). Beneath the  
17 Adventist Youth Ministries uniforms should be the uniform of love.

18  
19 Imagine a world where Adventist youth possess the Agape love from God. Indeed, like the early  
20 Christian church, many souls will be won into the Kingdom of God.

21 **Faith**

22 Hebrews 11 is known as the hall of fame for the men and women of faith. Martin Luther and  
23 fellow reformers based their theology on Romans 1:17, “For in the gospel the righteousness of  
24 God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last just as it is written: 'The  
25 righteous will live by faith.’” The Adventist faith was also founded on this same premise.

- 26 2. Paul’s counsel to the youth on faith is twofold: First, they should accept the righteousness of  
27 Jesus Christ by faith. As the Bible says, “And without faith it is impossible to please God,  
28 because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those  
29 who earnestly seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6 NIV). When the world denounces the biblical  
30 account of creation and the miracles in the Bible, the youth should affirm the Bible. When  
31 morality is at its all-time low, the youth should uphold biblical teachings on abstinence and  
32 temperance. In other words, the Adventist youth should believe and embrace these principles.

33 Secondly, the youth should not be ashamed to engage in apologetics to defend the Seventh-day  
34 Adventist Church's biblical principles and teachings. Like Paul, the youth should say, “For I am  
35 not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who  
36 believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile” (Romans 1:16 NIV). The Bible also says, “But in  
37 your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks  
38 you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect” (1  
39 Peter 3:15 NIV).

1 Faith is not a passive virtue. Seventh-day Adventists are known as the people of the *Book* – let us  
2 do more than distribute the Bible and our literature, let us be people who practice our faith based  
3 on the Bible. Isaac believed when he was told by his father, Abraham, that the Lord would  
4 provide a sacrificial lamb. He did not escape when his father raised the knife to kill him, as  
5 instructed by God. His faith kept him on the altar until the Lord provided the lamb the father had  
6 spoken about. Paul says Timothy and the youth should possess this kind of faith.

7 Ellen White says, “Isaac believed in God.... After affectionately embracing his father, he  
8 submitted to be bound and laid upon the wood. And as his father's hand was raised to slay his  
9 son, an angel of God, who had marked all the faithfulness of Abraham ..., called to him out of  
10 heaven, and said, ‘Abraham.... Lay not thine hand upon the lad ...: for now I know that thou  
11 fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.’”—[The Story of  
12 Redemption, 80-82](#)

### 13 Purity

14 What does Paul mean when he says Timothy should be an example to the believers in purity?  
15 What does it mean to be pure? We will look for answers from the Bible and the writings of Ellen  
16 White.

- 17 • 1 Corinthians 6:19 says, “Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy  
18 Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own.” When  
19 you rent a car, you are expected to return it in its condition you received it in. Failure to  
20 comply will make you financially liable for any damage to the company’s property. Our  
21 bodies belong to God, who created us (Genesis 1:26-27). Purity is about stewardship and  
22 temperance. It is a recognition that everything belongs to God and is given to us in trust.  
23 God expects us to keep what belongs to Him with care.
- 24 • Daniel 1:8 says, “But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine,  
25 and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way.” Daniel set  
26 the moral bar very high when he and his friends were offered the foods and beverages of  
27 Babylon. God honored the young Jewish men who had chosen to abstain from unclean  
28 foods for ten days. They were healthier and better in appearance than their peers because  
29 they were disciplined.
- 30 • Ellen White describes the conduct of Daniel and his friends, “At the very outset of their  
31 career there came to them a decisive test of character. It was provided that they should eat  
32 of the food and drink of the wine that came from the king's table. In this the king thought  
33 to give them an expression of his favor and of his solicitude for their welfare. But a  
34 portion having been offered to idols, the food from the king's table was consecrated to  
35 idolatry; and one partaking of it would be regarded as offering homage to the gods of  
36 Babylon. In such homage, loyalty to Jehovah forbade Daniel and his companions to join.  
37 Even a mere pretense of eating the food or drinking the wine would be a denial of their  
38 faith. To do this would be to array themselves with heathenism and to dishonor the  
39 principles of the law of God” (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 481). This story is a prime example  
40 of what young people should or should not do. Moral degeneration is rampant because of

1 popular culture. Daniel and his friends demonstrated that purity is possible even when  
2 surrounded by bad influences.

3 **Conclusion**

4 In 1 Timothy 4:12, Paul offers Timothy and all young people a blueprint to respond to people  
5 who undermine them because of age. The proper use of speech may earn the youth respect from  
6 those who do not think much about them. How we conduct ourselves says a lot about our  
7 integrity or lack thereof. Love is the litmus test for everyone who claims to be a Christian. When  
8 we exercise our faith following the Bible and do not shy away from sharing with others what we  
9 believe, our testimony will be a witness to many people. Striving to be pure is a testament that  
10 we owe everything to God, even our existence and bodies. God can't wait to make you 'a great  
11 nation' just like He did for Ishmael. When God makes you great, you should always honor Him  
12 by being an example to all believers. All who are faithful followers of Jesus are already great.  
13 God has declared you a "royal priesthood and a holy nation." There's no need to despise yourself  
14 and allow others to do so when you know your identity. Those who know their identity will share  
15 Christ's message of salvation with those without hope.

16 **Prayer**

17 Dear God! We come to you as the giver of life and grace. We recognize that we fall short of the  
18 standard outlined in 1 Timothy 4:12. We do not have the strength to obtain and practice the  
19 virtues Paul shares with us. Only you can give us the ability to practice what we preach. Our  
20 heavenly Father, we confess our sins and feel ashamed for disappointing you because we have  
21 been hypocrites in many ways. We need a meaningful connection with you so that we can be  
22 witnesses for you. Help us, Father, because without you we can do nothing. Teach us to spend  
23 time with you so that we can possess these qualities. We come to you by faith, believing you will  
24 answer our prayers. In the name of Jesus, we pray, amen!

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