



June 14, 2025

Women's Ministries Emphasis Day

**GENERAL CONFERENCE
INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION**



Women's Ministries Emphasis Day

June 14, 2025

SERMON

Cravings of the Soul

Written by Nancy Cabrera

SEMINAR 1

Cravings of the Soul: Finding Fulfillment in Christ

Written by Nancy Cabrera

SEMINAR 2

Masterpiece in the Making

Written by Mary Ellen Winegardner



This sermon resource packet was prepared by the
Department of Women's Ministries
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
12501 Old Columbia Pike · Silver Spring, Maryland 20904-6600 · USA
women.adventist.org
womensministries@gc.adventist.org



WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

March 27, 2025

Dear Sisters,

The theme of this Women's Ministries Emphasis Day (WMED) packet is "Cravings of the Soul." The sermon and the first seminar, written by Nancy Cabrera, the General Conference payroll manager, point to a significant reality—we are God's beloved masterpieces. Still, we will not find rest for our souls unless we cling to Jesus and find our identity, purpose, and satisfaction in our relationship with Him. The second seminar, "Masterpiece in the Making," written by Mary Ellen Winegardner, the General Conference legal assistant in the Office of General Council, continues this topic and reminds us that God is still completing the process He has started on us. Both seminars provide practical applications relevant to every woman. The writers call us to spend quality time with God, deepen our relationship with Him, discover our purpose and God-given gifts, and find the satisfaction for which our souls long.

"Jesus answered and said to her, 'Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life'" (John 4:13, 14).

May this promise will be realized in your lives!

With love and prayers,

Galina Steele
Women's Ministries Director

Table of Contents

<u>Table of Contents</u>	4
<u>Program Notes</u>	4
<u>About the Author</u>	5
<u>Scripture References</u>	5
<u>Outline of Divine Service</u>	6
<u>Children's Story</u>	7
<u>Sermon</u>	8
<u>Seminar 1</u>	11
<u>Seminar 2</u>	13

Program Notes

Please feel free to translate, adjust, and edit the resource packet according to your division's needs, including the best Bible version for your use. You also are free to adapt the packet according to your cultural audience. When your division has translated the packet, please send us the digital files. We will share French, Portuguese, and Spanish with you when we receive the translations. Other languages will be uploaded directly to our website.

<https://women.adventist.org/women-s-ministries-emphasis-day>

About the Author

Nancy Cabrera is a cherished friend of Jesus.

At the age of eight, Nancy faced a life-changing diagnosis that threatened to leave her mute. However, through divine intervention, she was miraculously healed. In gratitude, Nancy vowed to use her voice and talents to glorify God. Since the age of fifteen, she has passionately shared the good news across the globe.

Nancy is an international speaker, author, and podcast host dedicated to empowering women. She holds degrees in education and business administration; certifications in executive leadership, health coaching, and plant-based nutrition; and she is currently pursuing an MBA in Leadership. Professionally, Nancy serves as the payroll manager for the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Nancy's mission is to inspire and empower women to become vessels of love, joy, healing, and hope for the glory of God.

Scripture References

All Scripture verses used by the author in this packet are quoted from NKJV, unless otherwise noted.

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Outline of Divine Service

Suggested Order of Service

Call to Worship

Opening Prayer

Scripture Reading

Ephesians 2:10, NKJV

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Hymn: 334

Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal

“Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing”

Pastoral Prayer

Children’s Offering and Story

“Lily’s Craving”

Call for the Offering

Special Music or Hymn

Sermon

“Cravings of the Soul”

Hymn: 567

Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal

“Have Thine Own Way, Lord”

Closing Prayer

—End—

Lily's Craving

OUR HEARTS CRAVE GOD

Written by Nancy Cabrera

Scripture:

Ephesians 2:10, NIV

We are God's creation. He created us to belong to Christ Jesus. Now we can do good works. Long ago God prepared these works for us to do.

One sunny day, Lily's grandmother, Grandma Grace, noticed that Lily seemed a bit sad. "What is wrong, my dear?" Grandma Grace asked gently.

"I do not know, Grandma," Lily replied. "I have everything I need, but my heart feels empty."

Grandma Grace smiled and said, "Let me tell you a story from the Bible that might help you understand."

"A long time ago, there was a man named Paul, who wrote a letter to the people of Ephesus. In his letter, he said, 'We are God's creation. He created us to belong to Christ Jesus. Now we can do good works. Long ago God prepared these works for us to do' (Ephesians 2:10, NIV). He wrote this letter in the Greek language and in this language, the word he used for 'God's creation' or 'God's masterpiece' meant that we are made in a very special way, like a beautiful piece of art, a nice painting, or a sculpture with a pretty design. This means that each of us is special and has a purpose given by God."

Lily's eyes widened with curiosity. "Does that mean I have a special purpose too?" she asked.

"Yes, my dear," Grandma Grace replied. "God made you unique and has wonderful plans for you. But to understand those plans, you need to get to know Him better."

"How can I do that?" Lily asked eagerly.

"By spending time with Him," Grandma Grace explained. "Just as you spend time with your friends to get to know them better, you can spend time with God through prayer, reading the Bible, and talking to Him about your day. Jesus said, 'I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit' (John 15:5, NIV). This means that when we stay close to Jesus, our hearts will be full and happy."

Lily thought about this and decided to try it. Every morning, she would read a Bible story, pray, and talk to God about her day. She even started a little journal where she wrote down her thoughts and prayers.

As the days went by, Lily noticed something amazing. The emptiness in her heart began to disappear. She felt happier, more peaceful, and full of joy. She also discovered that she loved helping others and sharing God's love with her friends.

One day, Lily told Grandma Grace, "I think I understand now. My heart was craving God and His love. Now that I spend time with Him, I feel so much better!"

Grandma Grace hugged Lily and said, "That is right, my dear. When we know who we are in Christ, spend time with Him, and live to follow Him, our hearts will be full and happy. Remember, you are God's creation, and He loves you very much."

And from that day on, Lily continued to grow in her relationship with God, she always remembered that she was His special creation with a wonderful purpose.

—End of Story—

Cravings of the Soul

Written by Nancy Cabrera

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. —Ephesians 2:10

All verses in the sermon are from New King James Version unless otherwise noted.

INTRODUCTION

Raise your hands if you have cravings sometimes. What about cravings for chocolate, ice cream, or pizza? In the nutrition world, cravings are not a bad thing; they are important messages telling us that our bodies need attention. It is part of the human experience to crave, to desire. Just as our bodies crave certain foods, our souls also have cravings that need attention. What is your soul craving in this season of your life?

Perhaps we are facing uncertainty about the future, stress, a health crisis, anxiety, financial distress, or issues in our relationships. We try to escape, hide, numb, or entertain away our feelings with different things, such as food, money, work, or busyness; but like junk food, those things leave us feeling exhausted, guilty, and empty.

We find in the Word of God *three precious lessons* to not only satisfy the cravings of our souls but also live purposeful lives for God's glory! We will call them the *three I's*. Each lesson starts with the letter *i*.

THREE I'S

1. IDENTITY:

Who Am I?

Some people believe that John Calvin said: "Without knowledge of self, there is no knowledge of God. Without knowledge of God, there is no knowledge of self." This means that understanding who we are is deeply connected to understanding who God is.

Who Are You?

Who are we? The apostle Paul responds: "We are *His workmanship*, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10, emphasis added).

In Greek, the word "workmanship" means "masterpiece or poem." You are God's masterpiece, created in Christ Jesus! In a culture with many voices, we often are encouraged to find our identity and value in achievements, status, fame, likes, relationships, productivity, clothing size, or a number on the scale. And while roles and categories allow some stability, when these things change, then an existential crisis occurs, and questions about our identity and value come to the surface again. Today, God invites you to build your identity and worth on the solid foundation of Christ Jesus, our Creator, Savior, and Best Friend.

2. INTIMACY

In our "connected" society, many people still suffer from depression and loneliness. Is your soul craving connection?

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

The Greek verb for the word "abides" means "to stay in place, to be continually present."

How can we abide in Jesus? Here is an acronym for **ABIDE**:

A: Always seek His presence (Matthew 6:33)—Make seeking God the priority in your daily life.

B: Believe in His promises (John 15:7)—Trust in the promises God has made to you.

I: Intimately walk with Him (John 15:4)—Develop a close, personal relationship with Jesus.

D: Depend on His strength (2 Corinthians 12:9)—Rely on God's strength in times of weakness.

E: Endure in faith (Hebrews 10:23)—Stay steadfast in your faith, even during difficult times.

As the branches, we need seasons of total emptiness to build a strong and deep connection to the Vine, to remember who God is, and to allow Him to be God in our lives. It is during our quiet time alone with Him, experiencing His presence through His Word, that we begin to feel safe enough to find healing, strength, hope, peace, and wisdom.

When Jesus decided to visit Martha and Mary, Martha was busy with preparations, but Mary chose to sit at Jesus' feet and listen to Him. Jesus said: "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:41, 42).

What was that "one thing" that Martha needed? Look what Ellen G. White shared in the book, *The Desire of Ages*: "The 'one thing' that Martha needed was a calm, devotional spirit, a deeper anxiety for knowledge concerning the future, immortal life, and the graces necessary for spiritual advancement. She needed less anxiety for the things which pass away, and more for those things which endure forever."¹

3. INTENTION

Once we experience intimacy with God, our souls find such satisfaction that we naturally begin to live intentionally and meaningfully. Ephesians 2:10 reminds us that we are God's workmanship, *created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand for us to walk in*. A Christian legacy is not about what we leave behind—it is about how we live today. *You are a missionary and ambassador of His eternal kingdom*.

What Is Your Legacy?

Nancy, the firstborn in her family, was raised in a home filled with abuse, violence, and hostility. At age four, she was beaten so severely by her father that she bled from her legs and back. Alongside her mother, as she grew up, Nancy witnessed and suffered her father's physical and verbal abuse and emotional inconsistency. The only time Nancy felt "loved and valued" was at the end of the school year when she graduated as an honor student.

At eight years old, Nancy was diagnosed with a terrible illness that could potentially leave her mute. With tears in her eyes, she cried out to the Lord for healing. After two years of treatment with natural remedies, the Lord restored her health. Nancy promised to dedicate her voice to serving God and sharing the good news. She started preaching at fifteen years old and has lived intentionally, sharing the good news ever since.

As an adult, Nancy struggled with trauma, insecurities, fear, and deep emotional wounds. Feelings of unworthiness and low self-esteem led her to constantly pursue success, belonging, achievements, shallow love, and external validation. But one day, Nancy discovered the life-changing truth of Ephesians 2:10, which became the compass for her journey.

As Jesus' masterpiece, Nancy finally experienced healing, true love, peace, joy, growth, renewal, and purpose in Jesus Christ, the Author and Finisher of her faith. By God's grace, Nancy is now an international speaker, author, and podcast host, and she works for the Lord at the world Church headquarters. Her journey is still progressing and not perfect, but she continues to trust the precious promise that He who began the good work in her will be faithful to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus (Philippians 1:6).

CONCLUSION

When we intentionally seek, surrender to, and love Jesus with our mind, body, and spirit, our souls will experience a deeper and more meaningful longing. Moses expressed just such longing for God: "Show me your glory" (Exodus 33:18, emphasis added). What a precious craving!

"Every prayer had been answered, but he thirsted for greater tokens of God's favor. He now made a request that no human being had ever made before: 'I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory.'"²

The Lord warmly replied: "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest" (Exodus 33:14, emphasis added). Ellen White stated that "no earthly power or skill or learning can supply the place of God's abiding presence."³ When we understand our identity in Christ, we seek intimacy with Him and live with intention. We quench the cravings of our souls and live a life that glorifies God.

Beloved, you were made for more than simply surviving and existing. You have a divine mission and calling. Before you were formed in the womb, He set you apart to testify to this suffering world about the good news of God's grace and salvation.

CALL TO ACTION

Raise your hand if you want to surrender all the cravings of your soul to God.

CLOSING PRAYER

¹ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898), 524, emphasis added.

² Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association), 328, emphasis added.

³ White, 328, emphasis added.

May Jesus be the true Source of eternal satisfaction for the cravings of our souls. May we find in Him *identity, intimacy, and intention* so that we become channels of His love and grace.

—End of Sermon—

Cravings of the Soul

FINDING FULFILLMENT IN CHRIST

Developed by Nancy Cabrera

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.—Ephesians 2:10

All verses in the workshop are from New King James Version.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE FACILITATOR OF THIS WORKSHOP

Before you begin, ask participants to form groups of three or more. It is best to sit in a circle or around a table. Project the questions on the screen; or print a separate document of questions and distribute one to each participant.

OBJECTIVE:

To help participants understand and apply the principles of *identity*, *intimacy*, and *intention* to their daily lives: This leads to a deeper relationship with God and a more purposeful life.

DURATION:

2–3 hours

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Bibles
- Notebooks and pens
- Projector and screen (for presentations)
- Handouts with key points and discussion questions
- Refreshments (optional)

OUTLINE:

1. Welcome and Introduction (15 minutes)

- **Opening Prayer:** Begin with a prayer asking for God's guidance and presence.
- **Icebreaker Activity:** Have participants introduce themselves and share one thing they crave (e.g., favorite food, hobby, etc.). This will help set the stage for discussing deeper cravings of the soul.

2. Session 1: *Identity* (30 minutes)

- **Presentation:** Explain the concept of identity in Christ using Ephesians 2:10: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." Highlight that we are God's masterpieces, created for good works.
- **Interactive Activity:**
 - **"Who Am I?" Exercise:** Provide participants with a worksheet to reflect on and write about their perceived identity and how they believe God sees them.
 - **GROUP DISCUSSION:** Break into small groups to share insights and discuss how understanding their identity in Christ can impact participants' lives.

3. Session 2: *Intimacy* (30 minutes)

- **Presentation:** Discuss the importance of intimacy with God using John 15:5: "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." Explain the concept of abiding in Christ and the benefits of a close relationship with Him.

- **Interactive Activity:**

- **ABIDE Acronym:** Introduce the ABIDE acronym (Always seek His presence, Believe in His promises, Intimately walk with Him, Depend on His strength, Endure in faith). Provide practical examples for each point.
- **Prayer Walk:** Organize a short prayer walk for participants to spend time in silent prayer, reflecting on their relationship with God.

Break (15 minutes)

- Provide refreshments and allow participants to mingle and relax.

4. Session 3: *Intention* (30 minutes)

- **Presentation:** Explain the concept of living intentionally for God using Ephesians 2:10: “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” Share Nancy’s story from the sermon as an example of living with purpose despite challenges.
- **Interactive Activity:**
 - **Legacy Reflection:** Ask participants to write down what they want their legacy to be and how they can live intentionally to achieve it.
 - **GROUP DISCUSSION:** Encourage participants to share their reflections and discuss practical steps they can take to live intentionally for God.

5. Conclusion and Call to Action (15 minutes)

- **Recap:** Summarize the three I’s—*identity*, *intimacy*, and *intention*.
- **Call to Action:** Invite participants to commit to apply these principles to their lives. Encourage them to raise their hands if they want to surrender the cravings of their souls to God.
- **Closing Prayer:** Pray for God’s guidance and strength as participants seek to live out their *identity*, *intimacy*, and *intention* in Christ.

6. Q & A and Fellowship (30 minutes)

- **Open Floor:** Allow time for participants to ask questions and share their thoughts.
- **Fellowship:** Encourage participants to connect with each other and build supportive relationships.

HANDOUTS:

- **Key Points Summary:** Provide a handout summarizing the main points of the seminar.
- **Discussion Questions:** Include questions for further reflection and group discussion.
- **ABIDE Acronym:** Provide a handout with the ABIDE acronym and practical examples.

FOLLOW-UP:

- **Support Groups:** Encourage participants to form small support groups to continue discussing and applying the principles learned.
- **Resources:** Provide additional resources, such as books, podcasts, and Bible-study guides to help participants grow in their faith.

—End of Seminar 1—

[Seminar 2 for this packet will be provided soon.]

