

Thy Word Is a Lamp Unto My Feet: The Bible for Today
The Word in Our Lives

Lesson #7 for May 19, 2007

Scriptures: Psalms 19:7-11; 119:105; Romans 10:17; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:24; 2 Timothy 3:16,17; Hebrews 4:12; 1 Peter 2:24.

1. What does God need to do to win the great controversy? What is he doing right now in the great controversy? Where are the major battles in the great controversy taking place? What kind of “battles” are taking place? What are the issues in the great controversy? Could God win the great controversy without any human participation?
2. What difference should the great controversy make in your life? Why do, or why should, we read the account of God’s work in human history as recorded in scripture? We believe that we are somewhere near the final end of human history. What is delaying the final events from taking place?
3. Is God waiting for the church to do something? What would the church need to do? Is God waiting for individual church members to do something? In order to be ready for the second coming, what is our greatest need? “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.”--*Review and Herald*, March 22, 1887; *ChS* 41.4; *GW92* 370.1; *1SM* 121; *LDE* 189.1
4. Why did Ellen White suggest that Seventh-day Adventist ministers should move away from their churches? (*1SM* 127.2)
5. There are many examples that we could discuss of criminals, outcasts, and others discovering the Bible—or even a small portion of the Bible—and they were changed by reading it. What do you think actually happened in their thinking to cause this? Why does the Bible seem to have that kind of impact on some people? Do the writings of Confucius, Buddha, or Mohammed affect their followers in a similar way? Has the theory of evolution ever made such a dramatic change in the life of a thief, a criminal, or even a scientist? What difference does/should God’s word make in our lives?
6. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17. Shortly after writing those words to the Corinthians, Paul wrote his letter to the Romans. In Romans 1:18-3:20, he repeatedly pointed out that no matter what our profession or our daily activities, we are all sinners. What does it take to change a sinner into a saint? What does it mean to be “joined to Christ”? Could you identify those who have experienced that transformation in their lives? How would you do so?
7. Read Psalms 19:7; John 17:17; Romans 6:4; Ephesians 4:24; Hebrews 4:12; and 1 Peter 2:24. The scriptures clearly suggest that the study of God’s word and the implementation of it in our lives could make a dramatic difference. Have you experienced that in your own life? What differences could you point out in your life as a result of the reading or study of scriptures?

When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own. It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, (2 Peter 3:12, margin). {*COL* 69.1}

8. Does that seem like an impossible goal? Are God’s goals completely unreachable? Has

God provided the means and a way [??mechanism instead of way]to accomplish that lofty goal?

9. **It is a law both of the intellectual and the spiritual nature that by beholding we become changed. The mind gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is allowed to dwell. It becomes assimilated to that which it is accustomed to love and reverence.** Man will never rise higher than his standard of purity or goodness or truth. If self is his loftiest ideal, he will never attain to anything more exalted. Rather, he will constantly sink lower and lower. The grace of God alone has power to exalt man. Left to himself, his course must inevitably be downward. {GC 555.1}
10. **None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great [594] conflict. To every soul will come the searching test: Shall I obey God rather than men?** The decisive hour is even now at hand. Are our feet planted on the rock of God's immutable word? Are we prepared to stand firm in defense of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus? {GC 593.2}
11. The multitudes do not want Bible truth, because it interferes with the desires of the sinful, world-loving heart; and Satan supplies the deceptions which they love. {GC 594.2}
12. **There are today thousands of professors of religion who can give no other reason for points of faith which they hold than that they were so instructed by their religious leaders.** {GC 596.4}
13. The truth and the glory of God are inseparable; it is impossible for us, with the Bible within our reach, to honor God by erroneous opinions. Many claim that it matters not what one believes, if his life is only right. But the life is molded by the faith. **If light and truth is within our reach, and we neglect to improve the privilege of hearing and seeing it, we virtually reject it; we are choosing darkness rather than light.** {GC 597.2}
14. What are the steps in the transformation that God would like to see in our lives? 1) We must feel a need for something better. The Holy Spirit is constantly wooing people toward Christ. This is a work which, to a large extent, only he can do. 2) We can inquire and learn about Jesus. We cannot make educated choices about God until we get to know him. 3) As we get to know him and as we spend more time in prayer and Bible study, the Holy Spirit works in our lives to transform us. (2 Corinthians 3:18) 4) When God becomes the focus of our attention and the delight of our minds, the Holy Spirit can help us make the necessary changes. (Romans 10:17)
15. But there is another problem! A mere knowledge of the truth and even of the character of God will not suffice to change us. We must want to know him and to be like him. We must be willing to listen to his counsel with a humble heart; we must be willing to change. Satan knows more about God on an intellectual level than we will ever know in this life. But it does not have a transforming effect on his character!
16. Why do some doubt and others believe when they hear the word of God? (John 5:39,40; James 1:22) Often we cannot understand or explain why one person responds to truth and

another rejects it. But even those who reject “truth” as presented by one messenger may accept it as presented by another.

17. Look at some examples from the scriptures such as **Rahab**. Read Joshua 2:1-21 and 6:22,23. What did God see in Rahab, the former cult prostitute? Were the spies sent specifically to reach out to that pagan woman? Why was her story recorded for us in scripture? If you were recording your family history for posterity to read—and she were an ancestor—would you include her story? Why?
18. Review again the story of **Ruth**. This young woman was a pagan and a descendant of Lot through his incestuous relationship with his daughters. Should God have been reaching out to people like that? Should God have used precious space in scripture to let us know about people like Rahab and Ruth and even identify them as ancestors of Jesus? What was it about these two pagan women that made them savable?
19. In the days of Jesus, there were whole classes of people who claimed to be God’s special followers. **The Pharisees** memorized huge portions of scripture. They tried to do everything possible on a daily basis to prove their righteousness. But Jesus repeatedly rejected their attitudes and their approaches and stated that they would not be saved based on those things. Why not? What was different about them?
20. We have some remarkable examples of faithfulness recorded in scripture. **Joseph** remained faithful to God despite being abused by his brothers, accused by his master’s wife, and spending years in prison. **Daniel** risked his life and those of his friends by asking for a diet which he knew was better for his health and more in line with God’s instructions. Later, he opened his window toward Jerusalem and prayed at the risk of his life. But the Bible also records the stories of others—such as the adulteress (John 8:1-11) and Manasseh (2 Chronicles 33:1-20)—who seem to have found God in the depths of their sin!
21. *The Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, p. 82, says:

We must see the Bible as more than a compilation of historical or even spiritual facts. We need to see it as the will of God, who desires the best for our lives. For that reason the Bible can educate our ethics and tell us what God expects us to do. God has shown us in His Word how to live. When we follow divine guidance for our happiness, our lives will be changed by His divine power.
22. But all that faces us as Christians is not simple. Sometimes, ethical situations seem to pit one truth against another, one principle against another, one good against another. How should we as Christians respond in situations like the following mentioned in our lesson:
 - a. A fellow worker, in a desperate financial predicament, is stealing money from the place where you both work. What should you do? Ignore it? Turn the person in? What saith the word of God?
 - b. A young woman, unmarried, gets pregnant. She and her boyfriend are unable to take care of the child even if they were to marry—which she wants to do. He wants her to get an abortion. What saith the word of God?
 - c. A beggar stands on the sidewalk and holds out his hand for money. What saith the word of God?
 - d. A person you are witnessing to invites you over for a meal and places pork on the table before you. What saith the word of God?

- e. An elderly parent is comatose, kept alive only through very expensive medical procedures that are draining the financial resources of the family. Should she be kept alive as long as possible, or should family decide to “pull the plug”? What saith the word of God?

Each of these ethical dilemmas has produced many books full of reasoned answers. While there are some clear guidelines in scripture, there are no simple black-and-white rules!

23. **So what are the real challenges of being a Christian? How much time do you spend each week working to support your lifestyle? How much of that lifestyle is essential and how much of it is only desirable? How much time do you spend each week for God and his word? Does God get the leftovers in your life? Do you ever give him “prime” time? How many hours per week do you watch television? What is on television that you really believe is more important to your life than a better understanding of God and his word? How much time do you find each week to spend in serious communion with Jesus or with the Father?**

It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones. As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit. If we would be saved at last, we must learn the lesson of penitence and humiliation at the foot of the cross. {DA 83.4}

24. There are some very interesting examples in scripture of the effects of Bible study. The stories of Josiah (2 Kings 22&23) and Ezra (Nehemiah 8&9) come to mind. The entire nation was inspired and turned to a better way of life because the king or leader emphasized scripture and an understanding of scripture.
25. By contrast, the Pharisees in the days of Jesus knew the scriptures “like the back of their hands.” However, when God himself appeared to them, they rejected him “out of hand!” Why that difference?
26. We have sometimes suggested that the road to salvation has ditches on both sides. On the one side, there is the “ditch” of heathenism, wickedness, and sin. On the other side is the “ditch” of legalism, spiritual pride, and Phariseeism. Which of those “ditches” is easier for God to deal with? In light of our previous examples, did God get a better response from the heathen and the wicked or from the Pharisees? Which group are we more like?
27. God is waiting for revival and reformation among his people. There is nothing he wants more than for a significant group of people to come back to him, to get to know him better, to be transformed in their lives, to represent him correctly, to be strong enough in their faith and in their beliefs to withstand the onslaught of the devil and to stand through the final events of this earth’s history. Could we do that? Why should we make God go on waiting?

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Last modified: March 29, 2007

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