

Health and Healing ***The Tie That Binds***

Lesson #13 for June 26, 2010

Scriptures: Genesis 1:27; John 1:1-3; 13:34,35; Romans 14:7; 1 Corinthians 12:14-26; 1 Corinthians 13; Galatians 6:2; Ephesians 4:1-16.

1. The Bible suggests that human beings were created for friendships, relationships, and communities. (Genesis 2:18,23,24) The focus of this lesson is to find better ways to implement that and thus, to become more like God. (Genesis 1:26-28)
2. A great deal of scientific research demonstrates that human beings live better, healthier, and happier lives when they are part of a supportive and loving community. People who feel unloved, lonely, and isolated have two to five times more illnesses than those who feel connected. Even pregnant women have fewer complications in their pregnancies when they feel loved. Clearly, love and intimacy, connection, and community in the social, spiritual, and mental arenas lead to greater healing and health. We were created to be together in love and care for each other. Paul said that no one lives and dies for himself alone. (Romans 14:7) Unity within the church will prevent us from being tossed about by every wind of doctrine. (Ephesians 4:11-16) We are to carry one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2)
3. Paul discussed the metaphor of the human body. (1 Corinthians 12:25,26) The different parts are widely diverse in shape, size, and function, but all work together for the common good. What would happen if our Sabbath school classes, our church organizations, and our church congregations functioned together as smoothly as do the parts of the body? Does the General Conference demonstrate that we are working together smoothly?
4. Since the day we were born, we have lived our lives immersed in sin. The normal human condition is such that we come to love sin and fear God when we should love God and fear sin. Read Genesis 1:27. Were we created to be like Jesus even this far from Eden? How would Jesus behave in our modern situation? Jesus lived in a fairly homogeneous society. Is it more difficult to exhibit unselfish love in a diverse society such as ours today? He spent almost His entire life ministering to others. Could we do that? Is that possible given our current need to earn a living, etc.? What would a truly unselfish life look like in 2010? Are we prepared to limit our freedom in order to love others? (1 Corinthians 10:25-32; contrast Acts 15) Should I limit my freedom because of someone else's hang-ups? Satan was the first one to think primarily about his own "rights"!
5. Medical research has shown that having a wide diversity of interpersonal relationships promotes health even more than having a larger number of less diverse relationships. Why do you think this is? In our modern world, is it possible to develop loving relationships with those with whom we work, those for whom we work, or even others in the community such as our neighbors?
6. Paul seemed to be very generous in his relationship with others who had differences of opinion. (Romans 14:1-5) How is that related to his very strong statement in Galatians 1:8,9? When it came to the gospel, Paul seemed to allow for no difference of opinion at all! Is this allowing differences of opinion? Was Paul contradicting himself? Was Paul suggesting that the core of the gospel comes from God Himself and, therefore, is not negotiable?

7. In our ever shrinking world where virtually all societies are more and more interdependent economically, politically, socially, and culturally, is our church finding better and better ways to reach out even around the globe? If 90% of the diseases begin in the mind, is it any surprise that social relationships are so important for health?
8. John Dunn said, "No man is an Island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the main." —*The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, third edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 190.
9. In his book *Escape from Loneliness*, Paul Tournier quoted a patient as saying, "There are two things you cannot do alone: marry, and be a Christian."—John S. Gilmore (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Westminster Press, 1962), p. 25.
10. Jesus went far beyond that statement by saying that all men will know that we are His disciples if we love one another! (John 13:34,35) Is that really true? Are Christians so obviously more loving and kind and considerate of others that everyone knows who they are? Is that even possible? What does this say about the people of the world?
11. Ellen White said: "Human beings were a new and distinct order. They were made 'in the image of God,' and it was the Creator's design that they should populate the earth." (*RH* Feb. 11, 1902, par. 1; *1BC* 1081.3; *SD* 7.2; *TA* 48.1) We were made like God with the ability to procreate. The Devil wishes he could be like us! He cannot create anything! He cannot even procreate as animals do! Procreation implies a meaningful relationship. Do angels have special, even intimate relationships? If we are someday to be like the angels, (Matthew 22:30) will we lose some of our need for relationships? What kind of relationships are implied by Daniel 7:9,10 and Revelation 4 & 5?
12. How is love best expressed in marriage, in the family, in the church, in the community, and in our countries? How does God intend for love to be expressed? Why is it that the divorce rate in the members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is just about the same as the divorce rate in the world around us?
13. It is very natural for selfish human beings to feel that they are in some ways superior to others around them. Does being a Christian and recognizing our sinfulness break down the barriers between us and our friends? (Ephesians 2:14,15)
14. Read Ephesians 4:1-16. What would it take for us to be like that? Does loving people include letting them be themselves? Are we enabling sinners when we do that? Are Christians encouraging co-dependency? Should we be? Can the church really function as a body with its obvious differences between individuals, cultures, ideas, levels of education, etc.? Does the church promote a wider variety of relationships? How can we do that better? Does it require a great deal of death to self in order to promote such relationships?
15. **Where is love supposed to be learned? With the divorce rate in our church nearly as high as it is in the world, are our children learning the real meaning of love at home? The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother!** When we refer to other members of the church as our brothers and sisters, how far are we willing to carry that idea? Should the church become a comfortable club where we can all put our arms around each other? Or, is it more like a hospital for sinners? How well do the patients in the hospital get along with each other? They hardly see or meet each other?
16. In light of these questions, what should be the most effective way of conducting evangelism? Are we sensitive to differences in ideas and cultures? Do we respect people

who are different from what we are? Can we truly learn to love them despite our differences? Has God given us gifts and talents to make that possible? If our focus is on looking up to Jesus as our Guide in everything we do, would it become obvious soon? Is the difference between us and whoever is sitting next to us more than the difference between us and the God we worship? Never!

17. How well do we know God? If we really knew God, what difference would it make in our lives? In 2010, can we really live out the principles of 1 Corinthians 13? What would happen if an entire Sabbath school class or even an entire church actually did that? How long would it take for the world to recognize that something had happened? John 13:35 suggests that the world would immediately know!
18. Look at the many verses which talk about how we are supposed to relate to one another: We are to accept one another as Christ accepts us (Romans 15:7); We are to forgive one another (Ephesians 4:32); We are not only to forgive but to be tolerant of others (Colossians 3:13); We should also encourage one another in living the Christian life (1 Thessalonians 4:18); When we have wronged others, we should confess those sins to one another (James 5:16); Peter suggested we should love and be kind to one another even opening our homes to each other (1 Peter 3:8; 4:9); and John said that we should have fellowship with one another at all times (1 John 1:7).
19. How should we get experience in loving the unlovable? Does that mean someone who is not like us? Even the Pharisees and the taxpayers were nice to their friends! Since there will be no unlovable people in heaven, why do we need to learn to love them here? Would Jesus give money to the drunk standing on the corner with a sign? Who benefits the most when we go out of our way to love the unloving? Do they benefit more? Or, do we?
20. Is Jesus still serving us in heaven? What do we mean when we say that He is our faithful High Priest? (Hebrews 2:17,18) Through the angels and the work of the Holy Spirit, God is doing everything He possibly can for our salvation.
21. The Bible suggests that each one of us is given spiritual gifts which are for the building up of the body of Christ. Read Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-10; Ephesians 4:8-11. Some of the spiritual gifts that are mentioned in those verses include: prophecy, service, teaching, preaching, giving, leading, being merciful, wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, the working of miracles, distinguishing spirits, speaking in tongues, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, etc. What gifts has God given you which were meant to be used to build up the body of Christ? Were we made and designed to love others?
22. Why does it feel good to reach out and help someone when you know that they can do nothing for you in return? Have you found it to be true in your own experience that helping others makes you feel better, and when you feel better you are healthier? Read Galatians 5:13. What does it mean to serve one another in love? Can we learn to do that as a habit? Christianity has become almost synonymous with "love."
23. If Christians learned how to identify and reach out to the lonely, would it greatly increase our effectiveness in spreading the gospel?
24. It has been well documented as a sociological phenomenon that when people move they are much more open to change for a period of time. Should church members subscribe to organizations which produce lists of new residents in a given area so they can reach out to those new residents and help them to become church members? Are Adventists leading out in the "Welcome Wagon" program?

25. We have seen the terrible consequences of ignoring our youth, even those of middle age and the elderly in our society. The results have been gangs, suicides, murders, etc. Have you found it to be true that those who feel no need are very hard to reach spiritually? How should we identify those in our communities who are feeling a real need? One suggestion: If you have some spare time, volunteer at a hospital, clinic, or neighborhood center.

26. Many feel that it would be a great privilege to visit the scenes of Christ's life on earth, to walk where He trod, to look upon the lake beside which He loved to teach, and the hills and valleys on which His eyes so often rested. But we need not go to Nazareth, to Capernaum, or to Bethany, in order to walk in the steps of Jesus. We shall find His footprints beside the sickbed, in the hovels of poverty, in the crowded alleys of the great cities, and in every place where there are human hearts in need of consolation.

We are to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and comfort the suffering and afflicted. We are to minister to the despairing, and to inspire hope in the hopeless.

The love of Christ, manifested in unselfish ministry, will be more effective in reforming the evildoer than will the sword or the court of justice. These are necessary to strike terror to the lawbreaker, but the loving missionary can do more than this. Often the heart that hardens under reproof will melt under the love of Christ.—Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 105, 106.

27. Are our church and our Sabbath school truly designed to function as an evangelistic unit? Do we reach out and put our community arms around newcomers? Do they feel completely welcome? Do our theological discussions turn them off? Could the quality of our welcome be improved? Different people need different approaches?

28. What is the relationship between this reaching out to people and the larger-view, great-controversy, trust-healing model of the plan of salvation? Are those who claim to be God's friends the most loving and kind people in the world? Read *Great Controversy* page 555. Would we ever dare to say as Paul did, "Imitate me, as I imitate Christ." (1Corinthians 11:1)

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Info@theox.org

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