

Health and Healing

Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow!

Lesson #1 for April 3, 2010

Scriptures: Matthew 22:37,38; Romans 12:1; Ephesians 2:8,9; 5:2; Colossians 3:13; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 John 4:10.

1. Jesus told us that we are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, and mind. (Matthew 22:37,38) But what about our bodies? Paul said that our bodies are supposed to be a living sacrifice! (Romans 12:1) Our bodies are not to be a dead sacrifice but a living sacrifice for God. This series of lessons focuses on the subject of health and healing. What are our responsibilities to God in the physical realm?
2. The Bible makes it abundantly clear that God is our Creator and our Redeemer. God has gone to extraordinary lengths to reach out to us. What are our responsibilities to respond to Him? He not only created us perfect in the beginning but also has come and dealt with our sins as well. (Romans 8:3)
3. So, what is the rational, spiritual worship Paul was talking about in Romans 12:1? What aspects of a person's life are covered by loving the Lord with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind? (Matthew 22:37,38) Are we required to love the Lord our God in all these ways and our neighbors as ourselves? The Greek word here is *agape*, unconditional love.
4. Considering all that God has done for us, is He worthy of our praise and worship? Why does He love us? Why is freedom so important to God? What are the implications of the fact that "God is love?" (1 John 4:8,16)
5. How early did God develop the plan for our salvation? (Revelation 14:6) Was our salvation—the plan we call the Gospel—an emergency intervention first thought of when Adam and Eve sinned in the garden? Or was the plan already in place and just activated for us in Eden? The Gospel plan was developed by God before this world was created. When was the plan for the salvation for angels developed? Was there one?
6. Read 2 Timothy 1:9; Romans 16:25; Ephesians 1:4; Titus 1:2. What are the implications of having an "everlasting gospel," one developed "before the beginning of time"? What is the relationship between Christ's death on the cross and my salvation? **Did God the Father demand that someone die before He would forgive us? What do we mean when we say that Christ died to pay the penalty for our sins? Who imposed that penalty? Is it demanded by God's law? Is God Himself demanding it? Is the life and death of Jesus the only way in which God could accomplish our salvation? If so, why?**
7. Our *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* states:

The only way we could be redeemed from our fallen condition was through the Cross, the place where God Himself, in our humanity, **bore the punishment for our sins. Nothing else would have sufficed; nothing else could have. No matter how steep the price, Jesus was willing to pay it in our behalf.**
(Sunday, March 28)

Who demanded that this price be paid? To whom was it paid? What do these words mean to you? Does God demand that we respond in a certain way to such a sacrifice? Did "justice" demand it? We know what Jesus went through—coming to this earth, living as a human being, being misunderstood, rejected, and subject to the worst kind of death that the Roman government could think of—with the possibility that He could actually fail. But, why was all that

necessary? Why couldn't God just say, "I love you, and I will forgive you; and if you will agree to stop sinning, through the processes of "justification" and "sanctification," I will welcome you to heaven?"

8. Read Romans 3:25-27 in the *King James Version*. Compare 1 John 4:10. Notice carefully that Paul said three times that God's righteousness (justice) must be demonstrated before he mentioned anything about what God is going to do for us? Why is that? What is a *propitiation*? Who is it that needs to be appeased before we can be saved? What does the word *propitiation* mean to you? The Greek word is *hilasterion* which actually means a "place or means of reconciliation." Do we believe that Jesus had to propitiate or appease God's wrath before the Father was willing to forgive us? So, what is required for us to be reconciled to God? How did the life and death of Jesus demonstrate God's righteousness? Doesn't everyone agree that God is righteous? Who has accused God of not being righteous? (See Genesis 3:1-4)
9. The life and death of Jesus were required to demonstrate the truth about God's character and government in answer to Satan's accusations. The great controversy here on planet earth is all about who is telling us the truth—God or the Devil! Is sin deadly? Imagine that a father needed to buy some rat poison to eliminate the rats in his house. But he knew that he had a very curious son who got into everything. So, he placed the rat poison far up on a shelf in the garage. A few days later he heard a crash in the garage, and he ran out to discover that his son had found the poison and had eaten some of it. Should the father grab the poison and say to the dying son, "Let me take some of this poison so you can see how it kills people"? Then both of them would be dying? Is someone demanding that God take the poison? What if the father had taken some of the poison in advance and demonstrated to the son what it does to people? But, of course, in God's case, He came back to life. Do we need more than just God's word to show the results of sin? Jesus is the only person in all of history who has died the second death. It was so awful that God covered it over so we would not have to look. But the universe got the message, and later, some of us did. Remember that God never asks us to believe anything for which He does not provide adequate evidence. (SC 105) By rising from death in His own power, Jesus proved His divinity. (John 10:18)
10. Why is our world so determined not to recognize God's existence or anything that He has done for us and certainly not willing to recognize any responsibility of their part toward God?
11. Think over the history of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. What statements or stories or events inspire the greatest love in your heart? Are there stories which inspire you to praise God?
12. When the angels look down on our lives, do they see us demonstrating true praise for God? Do they recognized by our thoughts, our words, and our actions how much we appreciate what He has done for us? If someone had risked his life or even been willing to die for you, how would you respond? How should you respond?
13. But the real issue for us, the true test of the reality of our faith, is our works—works that arise not from trying to earn salvation (we can't) but from a heart filled with gratitude and praise for what we have been given and promised in Jesus. (*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, Monday, March 29)
14. While many Christians do not recognize this, in the times of the Old Testament after giving the Ten Commandments, Moses recorded that there was a death penalty for breaking every one of the Ten Commandments except the tenth! The people of Israel rapidly came to the conclusion that almost any open sin should be punished by death! (Joshua 1:16-18; Leviticus 24:10-23; Numbers 15:30-36; Exodus 21:12-17; 22:19,20; 31:14,15; 35:2; Leviticus 20:2-5,9-16,27; Numbers 1:51; 3:10,38; 18:7; 25:5; 35:16-21; Deuteronomy 13:5-18; 17:2-5,12; 18:20; 21:18-21;

22:20-25) Does that scare you? Take a careful look at your life. Do you deserve to die? Does using foul language, not keeping the Sabbath correctly, not honoring your parents, stealing, or lying deserve death?

In a youth class where the plan of salvation was being explained, a boy raised his hand and said, "I have not done anything to deserve dying." Well, the fact of the matter is we all deserve death. Or, perhaps, one could phrase this question another way. What have we done that we deserve living? What have we done that we deserve eternal life? What is it about us that God would go through so much to save us? (*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, Monday, March 29)

15. Think of the things that you do to show your respect for God and your worship for Him. Why do you do those things? Do you do them out of unconditional love and respect as a way of saying thank you? Or does your human nature quietly think that doing those things is a way of earning some favor in God's sight that might eventually lead to salvation?
16. Someone has described two kinds of Christians: radish Christians and beet Christians. Radish Christians are those who are only Christians in an outward sense. Their behavior looks good on the outside; but when you look inside, a completely different color shows up. On the other hand, beet Christians are genuine, and the color is the same all the way through. Which kind of Christian are you?
17. Read 1 John 4:18. What is the relationship between fear and love? If "love has not been made perfect in anyone who is afraid, because fear has to do with punishment," (*GNB*) what does that imply about the idea that Christ bore the punishment for our sins? Is that written only for the benefit of those who believe God is out to punish them?
18. The love which God requires of us (John 13:34,35) is *agape* love. This unconditional love (*agape*) is apparently required of Christians. Is it even possible for naturally selfish human beings to love unconditionally? Where do we learn to love like that? Should that be the natural response to all that God has done for us?
19. Read Matthew 22:37-40; John 15:17; John 13:34,35. Each of these passages suggests that God is commanding us to love both Him and our neighbors. Matthew 5:43 suggests that we are expected to love even our enemies! How does that fit with Ellen White's passage in *Desire of Ages* p. 22 that says:

The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan.

Is this a contradiction in God's revelation? Does this perhaps explain John 13:35? Why is it that if we truly love one another, everyone will know that we are His disciples? Is it true that every truly loving person is a Christian? Do loving people need to act like doormats?
20. Is it possible that the command to love God is more important than the command to keep the Sabbath or to avoid adultery or stealing or killing? Why did Jesus say that loving God is the first commandment? The tenth commandment suggests that sin begins in the heart. Is that why the most important commandments involve the heart? Would it be correct to say that all true commandment keeping is based on a relationship?
21. If we could truly develop unconditional love for God and our fellow human beings, would we naturally keep all of the Ten Commandments? Is that what Matthew 22:37,38 means?
22. Do you think that Adam and Eve had any trouble doing what God asked them to do before they sinned?

23. Read Genesis 1:26,27; 2:7. Were human beings created in a qualitatively different way than plants and animals? Does God expect something very different from us than He does from them? What is implied by the fact that we are made in God's image?

All heaven took a deep and joyful interest in the creation of the world and of man. 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, February 11, 1902 par. 1}

24. Why is that diametrically opposed to the ideas of evolution?
25. Which inspires more love and reverence in your mind: the fact that God created you? Or the fact that He redeemed you?
26. Does fear form any part of your service to God? Can you think of any reason to be afraid of God? How are we supposed to understand Revelation 14:6, KJV? Be honest now. Which is more important in your thinking: 1) Escaping the fires of hell? Or, 2) Enjoying fellowship with God in heaven?
27. What does fear do to us physically? What does love do to us physically? If we truly love God, how will that impact us physically? Mentally? Spiritually? Socially?
28. What kind of service and worship is God actually asking from us in Romans 12:1? Is God asking us to sacrifice our lives as Abraham was asked to sacrifice the life of his son? (Genesis 22) Is there any sense in which our giving up self and starting a Christian life by being buried in the waters of baptism and rising to a new life represents a real sacrifice? What do we really give up when we sacrifice the habits and practices of the world to follow God?
29. Do we have sufficient reason for praising God because of what is happening to us, in us, and for us right here and now in this world? Or, is the main reason for praising God what we hope He will do for us in the future? Do people who know us recognize that our lives are intended to praise God? Have we completely died to self?
30. Does this impact us in the way we live our lives physically? Does the way we eat, the way we exercise, and the way we spend our spare time demonstrate that we are worshiping God with our bodies? If we abuse our bodies, are we damaging God's property?
31. Yet, there is an important point that many folk forget. True praise for God involves the whole being. That is, we praise God not only on spiritual, emotional, and mental levels but with our physical bodies too. Application of healthful habits in life gives us clarity of mind, the balance to the whole. (*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, Thursday, April 1)
32. Why do so many professing Seventh-day Adventists believe that the guidelines God has given us for healthful living are not that important? Do God's guidelines really promote health? Does God care about how healthy we are? Does the level of our physical health and our physical fitness impact the way our minds function? Do your eating habits impact your thinking? Would it be correct to say that our degree of health might impact our spirituality? Could it even impact our thinking about God? Could we actually praise God with our bodies? Can we say that we love God and at the same time ignore His advice about health?

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