

# ***Ephesians***

## ***Living Wisely***

Lesson #9 for August 26, 2023

Scriptures: Ephesians 5:1-20; 1 Corinthians 5:1-11; Revelation 16:1-16; Colossians 4:5; Proverbs 20:1; 23:29-35; Acts 16:25.

### 1. How does one determine the value of something?

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] Not long ago a crystal jug was placed on auction in the United Kingdom. The auctioneers described it as a “nineteenth-century French, claret jug,” estimating its worth at US\$200. Two perceptive bidders recognized the jug as an extremely rare, Islamic ewer. Its true, appraised worth? £5 million (about US\$6.5 million). What allowed that bidder to walk away with such a bargain? The bidder knew something that the auctioneer did not: the true value of the jug.

In Ephesians 5:1–20, Paul contrasts what pagans and believers valued. Pagans valued a racy story (*Eph. 5:4*), a drunken party (*Eph. 5:18*), and debauched sex (*Eph. 5:3, 5*) as the great treasures of life. Believers, though, know an ultimate day of appraisal is coming, when the true value of all things will become apparent (*Eph. 5:5, 6*). Instead of placing their bid on partying and drunkenness, they treasure, among other things, “all that is good and right and true” (*Eph. 5:9, ESV*) in Christ. Paul, thus, urges them to snap up the bargains found in Christ as they live (as we all do) on the threshold of eternity (*Eph. 5:15–17*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Sabbath Afternoon, August 19.<sup>‡§</sup>

**Ephesians 5:1-5: <sup>1</sup> Since you are God’s dear children, you must try to be like him. <sup>2</sup>Your life must be controlled by love, just as Christ loved us and gave his life for us as a sweet-smelling offering and sacrifice that pleases God.**

<sup>3</sup>Since you are God’s people, it is not right that any matters of sexual immorality or indecency or greed should even be mentioned among you.

<sup>4</sup>Nor is it fitting for you to use language which is obscene, profane, or vulgar. Rather you should give thanks to God. <sup>5</sup>You may be sure that no one who is immoral, indecent, or greedy (for greed is a form of idolatry) will ever receive a share in the Kingdom of Christ and of God.—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation\** (2nd ed., Ephesians 5:1-5). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].<sup>‡</sup> [Have any of us ever been even a little bit greedy?]<sup>‡</sup>

### 2. Our characters are molded by what we take in through our eyes and ears every day.

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] **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.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*\* 555.1.†† [What are we putting into our minds each day?]<sup>‡</sup>

### 3. **How do we become imitators of God?**

[EGW:] “The prince of this world cometh,” said Jesus, “and hath nothing in Me.” John 14:30. **There was in Him nothing that responded to Satan’s sophistry. He did not consent to sin. Not even by a thought did He yield to temptation. So it may be with us. Christ’s humanity was united with divinity; He was fitted for the conflict by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And He came to make us partakers of the divine nature. So long as we are united to Him by faith, sin has no more dominion over us. God reaches for the hand of faith in us to direct it to lay fast hold upon the divinity of Christ, that we may attain to perfection of character.**—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*\* 123.3.†† [Notice the phrase *partakers of the divine nature* which Mrs. White used. Would that be *imitating God*?]<sup>‡</sup>

4. Writing from prison in Rome during his first imprisonment there, Paul reminded the Ephesians that they were to be and were to act like children of God.

**Ephesians 5:8,15:** <sup>8</sup>You yourselves used to be in the darkness, but since you have become the Lord’s people, you are in the light. So you must live like people who belong to the light....

<sup>15</sup> **So be careful how you live. Don’t live like ignorant people, but like wise people.**—*Good News Bible*.\*†

5. Paul recognized the baleful effects that debauched living was having on the Ephesians.
6. Undoubtedly, the angels in heaven were embarrassed by what was happening in the temple of Artemis/Diana. However, at the same time, Paul recognized the enormous attraction that those sexual practices which were done in the temple had for young people. He was afraid that some who had become Christians might be drawn back into that evil world. He reminded them that the lives that they had lived as young Christians were like a sweet-smelling savor to the inhabitants of heaven.
7. Paul wasted no time in getting into his subject and talking very bluntly about what he had in mind. It is interesting to note that in 1 Corinthians 5:9, probably written from Ephesus to the Corinthians, he mentioned a letter that he had written to them “not to associate with immoral people.” We have no idea what has happened to that letter. If you found that letter somewhere, would you regard it as inspired because it was written by Paul? Notice these words from Paul.

**1 Corinthians 5:9-11:** <sup>9</sup>In the letter that I wrote you I told you not to associate with immoral people. <sup>10</sup>Now I did not mean pagans who are immoral or greedy or are thieves or who worship idols. To avoid them you would have to get out of the world completely. <sup>11</sup>What I meant was that **you should not associate with a person who calls himself a believer but is immoral or greedy or worships idols or is a slanderer or a drunkard or a thief. Don’t even sit down to eat with such a person.**—*Good News Bible*.\*†

8. **Was Paul being a bigot in this passage? In our world, people are being told that we should accept everybody, and love everybody, no matter what their practices are. Is it possible for a Christian to love a fellow Christian who is an open sinner but still hate the sin? Is that what Paul was suggesting in this passage?**

9. In 1 Corinthians 6, Paul brought up some very significant ideas.

**1 Corinthians 6:15-20:** <sup>15</sup>You know that your bodies are parts of the body of Christ. Shall I take a part of Christ's body and make it part of the body of a prostitute? Impossible! <sup>16</sup>Or perhaps you don't know that the man who joins his body to a prostitute becomes physically one with her? The scripture says quite plainly, "The two will become one body." <sup>17</sup>But he who joins himself to the Lord becomes spiritually one with him.

<sup>18</sup>Avoid immorality. Any other sin a man commits does not affect his body; but the man who is guilty of sexual immorality sins against his own body.

<sup>19</sup>Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and who was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourselves but to God; <sup>20</sup>he bought you for a price. So use your bodies for God's glory.—*Good News Bible*.\*

[BSG:] On the one hand, the Greco-Roman world of the first century exhibited the moral corruption and debauchery described elsewhere in the New Testament (see 1 Cor. 6:9, Gal. 5:19, Eph. 4:17–19, Col. 3:5). For example, banquets of the wealthy regularly featured the behaviors Paul decries in Ephesians 5:3–14: drunkenness, ribald speech, risqué entertainment, and immoral acts. In addition, urban centers provided anonymity and permissiveness that fostered immoral sexual practices.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* for Sunday, August 20.†§

10. The Ephesians claimed that the temple of Artemis/Diana was holy, and therefore, anything that was done there was holy. That included some of the most debauched sexual practices known to man.

**1 Corinthians 6:9-10:** <sup>9</sup>Surely you know that the wicked will not possess God's Kingdom. Do not fool yourselves; people who are immoral or who worship idols or are adulterers or homosexual perverts <sup>10</sup>or who steal or are greedy or are drunkards or who slander others or are thieves—none of these will possess God's Kingdom.—*Good News Bible*.\*

[From the *SDA Bible Commentary*:] **Effeminate.** Gr. *malakoi*, meaning basically "soft of nature," "delicate," or "tender." When used in connection with terms expressive of sensual vice as those found in v. 9 [1 Corinthians 6:9], it designates homosexuals, more particularly those who yield themselves to be used for such immoral purposes.

**Abusers of themselves among mankind.** Gr. *arsenokoitai*, another term describing homosexuals.—Nichol, F. D. (Ed.). (1980). Comment on 1 Corinthians 6:9. *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, 699. Review and Herald Publishing Association.†§ [Bold type is in the source.]‡

11. Paul was not ignorant of the fact that many of his Ephesian converts had been a part of all that had gone on in the temple of Artemis in the past. He was fully aware of the history of that kind of behavior in ancient Israel as well as what its effects were.

**2 Kings 17:7-18:** <sup>7</sup> **Samaria fell because the Israelites sinned against the LORD their God**, who had rescued them from the king of Egypt and had led them out of Egypt. They worshipped other gods, <sup>8</sup>followed the customs of the people whom the LORD had driven out as his people advanced, and adopted customs introduced by the kings of Israel. <sup>9</sup>The Israelites did things that the LORD their God disapproved of. They built pagan places of worship in all their towns, from the smallest village to the largest city. <sup>10</sup>**On all the hills and under every shady tree they put up stone pillars and images of the goddess Asherah**, <sup>11</sup>and they burnt incense on all the pagan altars, following the practice of the people whom the LORD had driven out of the land. **They aroused the LORD's anger with all their wicked deeds** <sup>12</sup>and disobeyed the LORD's command not to worship idols.

<sup>13</sup> The LORD had sent his messengers and prophets to warn Israel and Judah: "Abandon your evil ways and obey my commands, which are contained in the Law I gave to your ancestors and which I handed on to you through my servants the prophets." <sup>14</sup>But they would not obey; they were stubborn like their ancestors, who had not trusted in the LORD their God. <sup>15</sup>They refused to obey his instructions, they did not keep the covenant he had made with their ancestors, and they disregarded his warnings. **They worshipped worthless idols and became worthless themselves, and they followed the customs of the surrounding nations, disobeying the LORD's command not to imitate them.** <sup>16</sup>They broke all the laws of the LORD their God and made two metal bull calves to worship; they also made an image of the goddess Asherah, worshipped the stars, and served the god Baal. <sup>17</sup>They sacrificed their sons and daughters as burnt offerings to pagan gods; they consulted mediums and fortune tellers, and they devoted themselves completely to doing what is wrong in the LORD's sight, and so aroused his anger. <sup>18</sup>**The LORD was angry with the Israelites and banished them from his sight, leaving only the kingdom of Judah.**—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†</sup> [Do you think that Satan was rejoicing and was mocking God when this happened?]<sup>‡</sup>

12. Remember that both Asherah and Baal were fertility-cult gods, and people were doing many of the same things that later polluted Ephesus.

13. **In what ways are Paul's words about sexual behavior applicable to your culture, wherever you live?**

14. What would Paul say about our "woke society" or the LGBTIQA+ movement?

[From Google:] 'LGBTIQA+' is an evolving acronym that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, asexual. Many other terms (such as non-binary and pansexual) that people use to describe their experiences of their gender, sexuality and physiological sex characteristics.—Definition from Google search, retrieved June 24, 2023.<sup>‡</sup>

15. Paul recognized the influence that fellow Ephesians might have if the Christian Ephesians associated with them. They would be lured back into some of their formerly-practiced sins. So, he repeatedly warned the Christians that they should not have any association with people involved in those immoral behaviors.

16. Let us not conclude that everyone living in Ephesus was abandoned to evil.

[BSG:] On the other hand, many in that society lived virtuous lives and served as advocates for strict morality. When the New Testament provides vice-or-virtue lists and household codes (e.g., *Eph. 5:21–6:9*, *Col. 3:18–4:1*), its authors mirror themes in the wider Greco-Roman world. This world, at once debauched and virtuous, helps explain Paul's exhortations to avoid the immoral behavior practiced by the Gentiles while wishing for believers to be circumspect in their behavior and so to earn good standing among outsiders.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Sunday, August 20.†§ [Would you even dare to go near the temple of Artemis to try to warn people of the dangers of going there?]‡

17. Then, Paul turned to the Christians themselves and talked about how they should relate to each other: Husbands to wives, wives to husbands, parents to children, children to parents, even masters to slaves, and slaves to masters. (See Ephesians 5:21-6:9.)

18. Paul recognized that even a simple conversation with someone involved in those evil sexual practices might attract young people. That temple was the center of all their political and national identity as well as celebrations! He warned them not to even use empty words that were associated with those practices.

19. So, Paul essentially said: “When God’s end-time judgment approaches, the wrath of God will come upon people who practice those kinds of things.”

20. God’s wrath is simply His turning away in loving disappointment from those who do not want Him anyway, thus leaving them to the inevitable, deadly, and awful consequences of their own rebellious choices even though God continues to try to woo them back to Himself.

21. For a much more complete explanation of *God’s Wrath*, see the handout on Theox.org: [http://www.theox.org/images/uploads/bbk/KHart\\_BTGG\\_PDF\\_Gnrl\\_Gods\\_Wrath\\_or\\_Anger\\_16.pdf](http://www.theox.org/images/uploads/bbk/KHart_BTGG_PDF_Gnrl_Gods_Wrath_or_Anger_16.pdf) which is filed under General Topics in the section, “Teacher’s Guides.”

22. Why did Paul caution the believers not to be partners with sinners?

**Ephesians 5:7-10:** <sup>7</sup>So have nothing at all to do with such people. <sup>8</sup>You yourselves used to be in the darkness, but since you have become the Lord’s people, you are in the light. So you must live like people who belong to the light, <sup>9</sup>for it is the light that brings a rich harvest of every kind of goodness, righteousness, and truth. <sup>10</sup>Try to learn what pleases the Lord.—*Good News Bible.\** [How did Paul, who was a foreigner to them, have any impact on their thinking and behavior? Did Paul talk about raising people from the dead and healing them even from demon possession?]‡

23. Paul went to considerable effort to clarify how different the Christian lifestyle is from that which was commonly practiced in Ephesus. We know that eventually the entire world will

be divided into two camps. As we approach the end of time there will be: (1) Those who are following the practices of Satan himself and even worshiping him (Revelation 13); and (2) Those who are practicing God's plan. Those two camps will be very different from each other.

24. Read Ephesians 5:11-14. What powerful warning did Paul give? How does it apply to our situation?

**Ephesians 5:11-14:** <sup>11</sup>Have nothing to do with the worthless things that people do, things that belong to the darkness. Instead, bring them out to the light. <sup>12</sup>(It is really too shameful even to talk about the things they do in secret.) <sup>13</sup>And when all things are brought out to the light, then their true nature is clearly revealed; <sup>14</sup>for anything that is clearly revealed becomes light. That is why it is said:

“Wake up, sleeper,  
and rise from death,

and Christ will shine on you.”—*Good News Bible*.\* [Were the Ephesians impressed in any way to hear Paul quote from Scripture?]<sup>‡</sup>

[BSG:] To understand Ephesians 5:11–14, it is helpful to observe that Paul repeatedly offers two exhortations, alternating between them: (1) live a God-honoring lifestyle as “children of light” (*Eph. 5:8*; see also *Eph. 5:1, 2, 4, 8–10, 11, 13, 14*); and (2) don’t live a sexually immoral, God-opposing lifestyle, exhibiting the “unfruitful works of darkness” (*Eph. 5:11*; see also *Eph. 5:3–8, 12*)....

Believers are to expose the unfruitful works of darkness by exhibiting the righteous alternative for all to see.

Meanwhile, we may take the challenging, poetic language of verses 13 and 14 as Paul’s daring assertion that believers, by exhibiting “the fruit of the Spirit” (*Eph. 5:9*), may win worldlings to faith in Christ.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* for Tuesday, August 22.<sup>§</sup> [People were being healed merely by touching handkerchiefs that had come from Paul!]<sup>‡</sup>

25. In order to warn the Christians in Ephesus of the dangers of association with the evils going on in Ephesus, Paul quoted a passage from Isaiah.

**Isaiah 60:1-3:** <sup>1</sup> Arise, Jerusalem, and shine like the sun;

The glory of the LORD is shining on you!

<sup>2</sup> Other nations will be covered by darkness,

But on you the light of the LORD will shine;

The brightness of his presence will be with you.

<sup>3</sup> Nations will be drawn to your light,

And kings to the dawning of your new day.—*Good News Bible*.\*

26. How do we live the kind of lifestyles that can expose works of darkness for what they are?
27. Paul concluded his passages in Ephesians 5:1-20 by talking about two serious things of which he wanted the Christians to be aware: (1) They needed to realize how important it was for them to follow the example of Jesus Christ and not to wander into the behavior

typical in Ephesus. (2) He also told them that time must not be wasted. We have only short lives on this earth, and we need to use those lives for the best possible results.

[BSG:] In Ephesians, Paul has repeatedly used the common Old Testament metaphor of “walking” for how one lives (*Eph. 2:2, 10; Eph. 4:1, 17; Eph. 5:2, 8*). Here he uses the metaphor to encourage intentional discipleship. Just as you should “watch your step” when walking on a rough or darkened path, believers should “look carefully then how you walk” (*Eph. 5:15, ESV*). Because Ephesians 5:15 finds a parallel in Ephesians 5:17, we may look there for a definition of what it means to live as wise people. We do not look within for wisdom. To be wise is to reach beyond ourselves, to “understand what the will of the Lord is” (*Eph. 5:17, ESV*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Wednesday, August 23.<sup>†§</sup>

**28. Are we adequately aware of the subtle dangers of slipping into the wrong camp in the great controversy over God’s character and government? Do we clearly recognize the differences between the “narrow road” and the “broad road”?**

[BSG:] Paul also encourages intentional discipleship with a vivid image. In the phrase “making the best use of the time” (*Eph. 5:16, ESV*; compare “redeeming the time,” *NKJV*), Paul uses the verb *exagorazō* (compare *Col. 4:5*). Drawn from the marketplace, it is an intensive form of the verb “to buy” and means “to snap up the bargains” on offer as we await Christ’s return. “Time” here is the Greek word *kairos*, which describes a moment of opportunity. The “time” until the end is a promising period to be used to the full. It is also a challenging time because “the days are evil” (*Eph. 5:16, ESV*; compare *Eph. 6:13, Gal. 1:4*) and because “the course of this world” is dominated by “the prince of the power of the air” (*Eph. 2:2, ESV*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Wednesday, August 23.<sup>†§</sup>

29. Do we recognize the urgency of preparing for the second coming? Are we fully aware of Satan’s deceitful methods and how to counter them? Paul said that we need to be as wise as bargain hunters in a market so that when we see a really important thing which we need to do or say, we recognize it and take advantage of that moment? Could we put together a timeline of events leading up to the second coming of Jesus Christ?

30. Finally, Paul said we need to recognize that community worship with fellow believers is an essential part of our Christian lifestyle.

31. Remember that in Paul’s day, Christian churches were not separate buildings; they met in individual homes. There was wonderful fellowship. They often ate together, and they nourished each other with their Bible study together. Those were Spirit-inspired worship occasions. Paul encouraged them to take an opportunity to express their Christian beliefs in songs as well.

[BSG:] **There is a “horizontal” element to worship since, in singing, church members are in a sense “speaking to one another” (*Eph. 5:19, NKJV*). However, the specific object of the musical praise is the Lord, which, as indicated in Ephesians 5:20, identifies “the Lord Jesus Christ” (compare *Col. 3:16*). The thanksgiving of Ephesians 5:20, described in parallel to the musical praise of Ephesians 5:19, is to be offered**

“unto God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” In the phrase “spiritual songs,” the adjective “spiritual” (Greek, *pneumatikos*) highlights the role of the Holy Spirit in worship since the term describes songs that are inspired by or filled with the Holy Spirit. Paul’s sketch of early Christian worship, then, portrays all three members of the Godhead as active participants.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Wednesday, August 23.<sup>†‡§</sup>

32. It should be obvious from our lesson so far that Paul had taken a very strong stance against the sinful practices common in Ephesus in his day and also very common in our day. Shouldn’t we feel the same way that Paul did? He also spoke against crude speech.
33. ***Do we feel so attracted by our association with Jesus Christ that we cannot be drawn into Satan’s traps?***
34. Paul was inviting us to identify ourselves with Christianity, with commitment, and to enjoy the community and worship that is such an important part of our preparing for the final days of this world’s history.
35. If you are on occasion involved in what is now called social media, what do you see? There are so many evil and sinful messages or short movies that “go viral.” Have you ever seen a Christian message “go viral”? See these links for an example.  
<https://www.foxnews.com/us/south-carolina-valedictorian-goes-viral-speech-detailing-faith-hardship-following-mothers-death>  
<https://www.foxnews.com/lifestyle/high-school-valedictorian-gave-faith-filled-speech-motivation-jesus-told-me-write-that>
36. Sometimes, Paul and other Christians have been accused of ignoring issues involving sexual misbehavior, even sexual abuse. Isn’t it true that Christians must deal with evil wherever they are faced with it? We cannot ignore it. How many times per day are we exposed to some temptation from Satan?
37. Paul was facing a world that was caught up in Greco-Roman philosophy, philosophical ideas, pride, and striving for so-called virtue. However, Paul recognized that the Christian looks for his guidance only from God. The consequence of following Satan as demonstrated from the experience of the Ephesians was sexual debauchery, egocentric boasting, and drinking wine. But, the Christian’s guidance is completely separate from all of those things.
38. It is hard for us who have been so oriented to a Christian background to imagine worshiping the Greek gods: Zeus, Metis (Zeus’s first wife), Athena, etc.
39. There are famous aphorisms that came out of those worship practices that became quite popular such as “know thyself,” “nothing in excess,” and “certainty leads to ruin.”
40. The Greeks loved to suggest that they were lovers of wisdom.
41. While we could spend hours discussing the various philosophical and religious ideas that have grown up over the centuries, there are certain things which have become very clear.

[BSG:] Despite the rich diversity of philosophical schools, both in the West and in the East, they all share a common foundation: the principle of “know

thyselves.” This principle shows that these philosophies represent a human-centric effort to understand the ultimate reality of life and, thus, they infer a way of life, decision-making, and behavior based on human introspection and reason. By doing so, human wisdom, both in the West and in the East, rejected or departed from divine revelation.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* 120.‡ [Stop focusing in yourself, and look up to God for guidance.]‡

42. Some might think that Paul was being unkind in dealing with the “ancient wisdoms.”

[BSG:] But why does Paul characterize the wisdom of the world in such a somber way? Weren't the philosophers of the world also given [*sic*] good advice, teaching a way of life based on justice and mutual respect? Yes, many of them did. However, no matter how noble a way of life human philosophy would devise, it would always be deficient, partial, and based on the wrong motivation, rejecting the possibility of the revelation of God. The problem of worldly philosophies lies not in what they affirm but in what they reject or deny. A philosopher may get one aspect of life partially correct, but the rejection of the possibility of God's revelation and the power of His intervention in the world renders his or her philosophy useless for salvation and for life in God's kingdom. That is why, for instance, sexual impurity was not considered problematic in the ethics of most philosophies. And even if some philosophers promoted sexual abstinence, the reasons for doing so were wrong.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* 120-121.‡

[EGW:] **Many acts which pass for good works, even deeds of benevolence, will, when closely investigated, be found to be prompted by wrong motives.** Many receive applause for virtues which they do not possess. **The Searcher of hearts inspects motives,** and often the deeds which are highly applauded by men are recorded by Him as springing from selfish motives and base hypocrisy. **Every act of our lives, whether excellent and praiseworthy or deserving of censure, is judged by the Searcher of hearts according to the motives which prompted it.**—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*,\* vol. 2, 511.2-512.0.†‡

43. Ellen G. White described the importance of motivation and revelation in relation to truth and philosophy.

[EGW:] Faith in a lie will not have a sanctifying influence upon the life or character. No error is truth, or can be made truth by repetition, or by faith in it. Sincerity will never save a soul from the consequences of believing an error. **Without sincerity there is no true religion, but sincerity in a false religion will never save a man. I may be perfectly sincere in following a wrong road, but that will not make it the right road, or bring me to the place I wished to reach.** The Lord does not want us to have a blind credulity, and call that the faith that sanctifies. The truth is the principle that sanctifies, and therefore it becomes us to know what is truth. We must compare spiritual things with spiritual. We must prove all things, but hold fast only that which is good, that which bears the divine credentials, which

lays before us the true motives and principles which should prompt us to action.—Letter 12, 1890.—Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*,\* Book 2, 56.1.†‡

44. Only God who created us in the beginning can clearly guide us in the right way to the end. Adventism is quite different from other religions in its adoption of the Adventist theology of lifestyle.

[BSG:] As Adventists, we have included lifestyle in our list of doctrinal statements. Following Paul, lifestyle is not a marginal aspect of Christianity for us but rather the central part of Christianity, which is to say, living out the Christian life. Adventists especially articulate the biblical teaching on Christianity as a way of life in two fundamental beliefs: 19 (“The Law of God”) and 22 (“Christian Behavior”). In addition, the fact that, in Christ, we regard our transformed lifestyle as essential to Christian experience is also reflected in our church discipline and also in our repeated calls for revival and reformation.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* 122.‡

45. ***How would we be regarded by our neighbors if we lived out the kind of suggestions that Paul made in his writings referred to in this lesson? Would we be considered odd? Or, strange?***

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