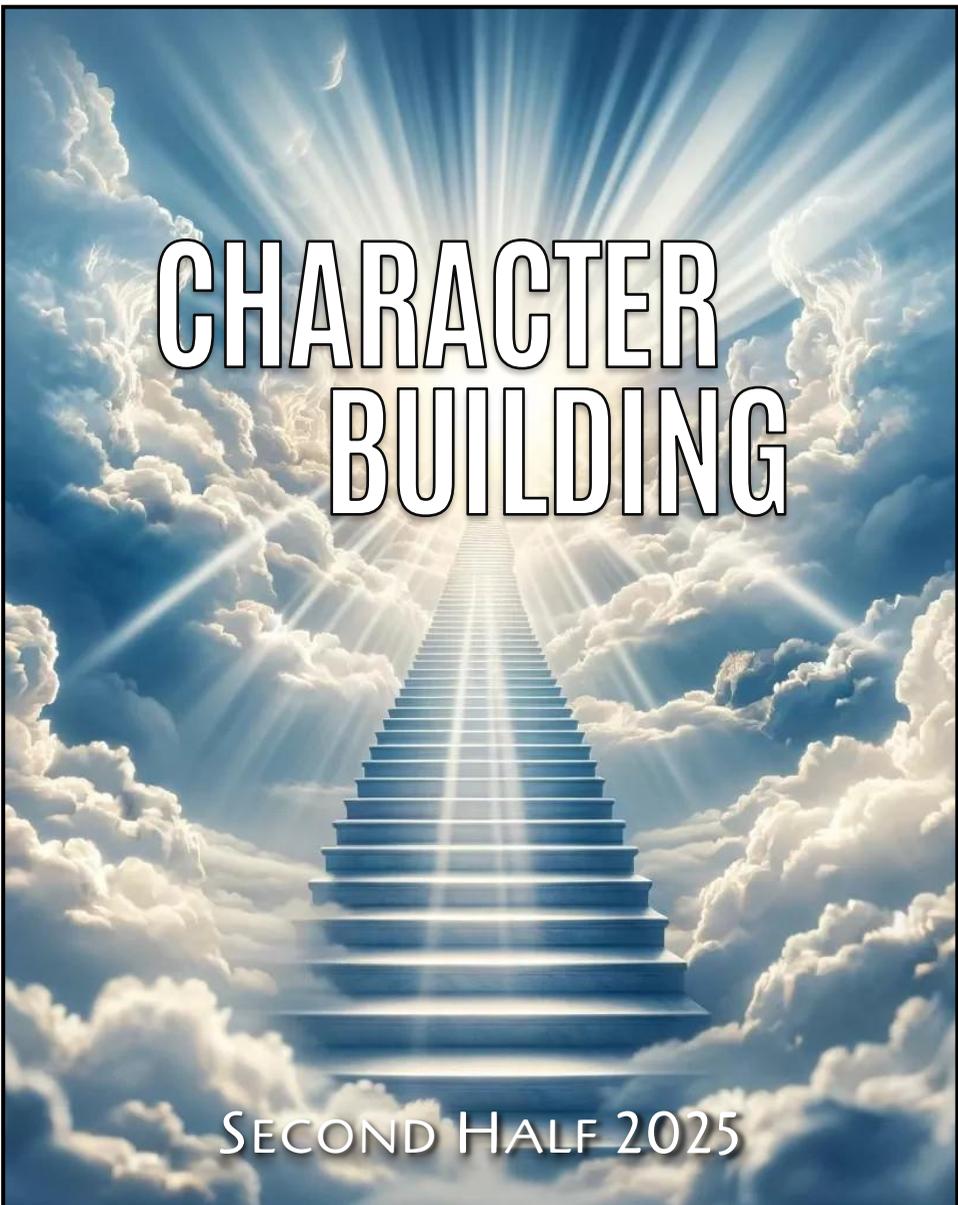


SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS



**CHARACTER
BUILDING**

SECOND HALF 2025

ADVENT PILGRIMS FELLOWSHIP

CHARACTER BUILDING

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SECTION 1

**CHARACTER
BUILDING
COUNSELS**

Introduction

TO ALL SABBATH SCHOOL STUDENTS ASSOCIATED WITH ADVENT PILGRIMS FELLOWSHIP, GREETINGS.

As we head more decidedly into the concluding events of human probation, it behoves us to apply ourselves more decidedly to the completion of our character development to be fitted for a place in the family of heaven. We are told that the only thing we take with us from this earth into the next world is our character, and if it is faulty it will not fit in with the characters of the angels and the heavenly trio.

For this reason it is well for us to study deeply into the truths which provide the information by which we may build a character that will live in harmony with all holy beings for eternity.

Note how the Spirit of Prophecy addresses the importance of what we are studying in this lesson:

“Character building is the most important work ever entrusted to human beings, and never before was its diligent study so important as now. Never was any previous generation called to meet issues so momentous; never before were young men and young women confronted by perils so great as confront them today”

“Every act of life, however unimportant, has its influence in forming the character. A good character is more precious than worldly possessions, and the work of forming it is the noblest in which men can engage.” —*Child Guidance*, pp. 169, 165.

To appreciate the content of this lesson in its account of the time required to build a character, we note the words of *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*:

“The great work of parents and teachers is character building—seeking to restore the image of Christ in those placed under their care. A knowledge of the sciences sinks into insignificance beside this great aim; but all true education may be made to help in the

development of a righteous character. The formation of character is the work of a lifetime, and it is for eternity. If all could realize this, and would awake to the fact that we are individually deciding our own destiny and the destinies of our children for eternal life or eternal ruin, what a change would take place! How differently would our probationary time be occupied, and with what noble characters would our world be filled!” —*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 61.

God bless our study of this lesson so that when Jesus returns, we will be ready for Him to take us with Him to the society of heaven.

Declarations of Inspiration

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. Philippians 2:12

OBJECTIVES

- To learn what character actually is in living experience.
- To be illuminated in reference to our sinful character.
- To gain an understanding of the plan of God in saving humanity from sin.

STRUCTURAL UNDERSTANDING OF CHARACTER

1. How does Scripture reveal the components of character?

- **The objectionable:** Eph. 2:2, 3; Gal. 5:19-21
- **The noble:** Ex. 34:6; Gal. 5:22, 23

2. Does Inspiration manifest how these character components become established? Jer. 13:23; 17:1

“Never forget that thoughts work out actions. Repeated actions form habits, and habits form character. Then in giving attention to the little things, there is no fear that the larger things will become stained and corrupted.”

—*The Upward Look*, p. 89.

OUR NATURAL CHARACTER

3. What has humanity been regularly submitted to, so that habit of thoughts and actions have developed into sinful characters?

Rom. 5:12; 3:10-12

“There is reason for deep solicitude on your part for your children, who have temptations to encounter at every advance step. It is impossible for them to avoid contact with evil associates. As they walk the streets of the city, they will see sights, hear sounds, and be subjected to influences, which are demoralizing, and which, unless they are thoroughly guarded, will imperceptibly but surely corrupt the heart and deform the character.”

—*The Health Reformer*, June 1, 1877.

“...sin is a tremendous evil. Through sin the whole human organism is deranged, the mind is perverted, the imagination corrupted. Sin has degraded the faculties of the soul. Temptations from without find an answering chord within the heart, and the feet turn imperceptibly toward evil.” —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 8*, p. 312.

4. How heavily imprinted is sinful character in the soul? Jer. 17:1; Rom. 7:19-21

“When held up before the light of God’s word, the character is found to be like the moth-eaten garment, which, when shaken out and examined, reveals the destructive work that has been going on secretly for years. While they have a form of godliness, sins small in their eyes have been eating into the warp and woof of their character...” —*The Youth’s Instructor*, Dec. 15, 1886.

“Once let them become influenced by the spirit of murmuring, pride, vanity, and impurity, and the taint may be as indelible as life itself.” —*The Adventist Home*, p. 469.

5. What is the cry of the soul who discovers the reality of his entrenched sinful character? Ezek. 33:10; Rom. 7:24

“It is not enough to perceive the loving-kindness of God, to see the benevolence, the fatherly tenderness, of His character. It is not enough to discern the wisdom and justice of His law, to see that it is founded upon the eternal principle of love. Paul the apostle saw all this when he exclaimed, “I consent unto the law that it is good.” “The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.” But he added, in the bitterness of his soul-anguish and despair, “I am carnal, sold under sin.” Romans 7:16, 12, 14. He longed for the purity, the righteousness, to which in himself he was powerless to attain, and cried out, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?” Romans 7:24, margin. Such is the cry that has gone up from burdened hearts in all lands and in all ages. To all, there is but one answer, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” John 1:29.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 19.

GOD’S ANSWER AND PLAN

6. Is there an answer of hope for our manifest state of hopelessness? Ezek. 33:11; 18:1-3, 31, 32

“God has done for us all that infinite love could suggest, and all he asks of us in return is obedience—conformity to his will. He has placed before us a

standard of righteousness, which he desires us to reach. He calls upon us to return to our loyalty to him, that we may be admitted into the Eden-home from which Adam was banished by his disobedience. A young man came to Christ, asking him what he should do to inherit eternal life. The Saviour answered, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." This is his answer to his followers for all time. Our duty is outlined in the commandments; and if we obey them, we shall gain eternal life. If we desire heaven and its joy, we must cease from transgression; for the law of God is the rule by which character is measured." —*The Youth's Instructor*, Oct. 3, 1901.

7. Do the words of the answer in question six not tantalise us as we try to do what God is saying, yet, because of our entrenched condition, we fail miserably? What does Apostle Paul reveal regarding this? Rom. 7:12-15, 24, 25 (first part)

8. What is God's plan so we can ultimately keep His commandments and have eternal life? Matt. 17:5; John 14:6, 12-15; Eph. 2:10

“It was possible for Adam, before the fall, to form a righteous character by obedience to God's law. But he failed to do this, and because of his sin our natures are fallen and we cannot make ourselves righteous. Since we are sinful, unholy, we cannot perfectly obey the holy law. We have no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as you

life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned.

“More than this, Christ changes the heart. He abides in your heart by faith. You are to maintain this connection with Christ by faith and the continual surrender of your will to Him; and so long as you do this, He will work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. So you may say, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Galatians 2:20. So Jesus said to His disciples, "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." Matthew 10:20. Then with Christ working in you, you will manifest the same spirit and do the same good works—works of righteousness, obedience.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 62.

MEDITATION

“The work of gaining salvation is one of copartnership, a joint operation. There is to be co-operation between God and the repentant sinner. This is necessary for the formation of right principles in the character. Man is to make earnest efforts to overcome that which hinders him from attaining to perfection. But he is wholly dependent upon God for success. Human effort of itself is not sufficient. Without the aid of divine power it avails nothing. God works and man works. Resistance of temptation must come from man, who must draw his power from God. On the one side there is infinite wisdom, compassion, and power; on the other, weakness, sinfulness, absolute helplessness

“God wishes us to have the mastery over ourselves. But He cannot help us without our consent and co-operation. The divine Spirit works through the powers and faculties given to man. Of ourselves, we are not able to bring the purposes and desires and inclinations into harmony with the will of God; but if we are "willing to be made willing," the Saviour will accomplish this for us, "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Corinthians 10:5

“He who would build up a strong, symmetrical character, he who would be a well-balanced Christian, must give all and do all for Christ; for the Redeemer will not accept divided service. Daily he must learn the meaning of self-surrender. He must study the word of God, learning its meaning and

obeying its precepts. Thus he may reach the standard of Christian excellence. Day by day God works with him, perfecting the character that is to stand in the time of final test. And day by day the believer is working out before men and angels a sublime experiment, showing what the gospel can do for fallen human beings.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 482, 483.

Blueprint to Copy

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 3:18

OBJECTIVES

- To explore the meaning of the words “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 7:25).
- To portray the character of Jesus as a blueprint to etch upon our mind to be reproduced in us.
- To show the practicality of the new covenant expression.

CHARACTER BUILDER’S BLUEPRINT

1. How does Jesus address the responsibility of those who wish to build something? Luke 14:28-30. What is needed to erect a building?

☞ Definition of a blueprint: “A copy of a building printed in white on blue paper; detailed plan which can be copied at a later date.” (*Macquarie Dictionary.*)

2. Is there a blueprint of character given us so we can copy it to build our own character effectively? 1 Pet. 2:21-24; Rom. 7:25 (first part)

“The Bible is full, clear, and explicit; the character of the true disciple of Christ is marked out with exactness. We must search the Scriptures with humble hearts, trembling at the word of the Lord, if we would not be in any way deceived in regard to our true character. There must be persevering effort to overcome selfishness and self-confidence. Self-examination must be thorough, that there be no danger of self-deception. A little catechizing of self on special occasions is not sufficient. Daily examine the foundation of your hope, and see whether you are indeed in the love of Christ. Deal truly with your own hearts, for you cannot afford to run any risk here. Count the cost of being a wholehearted Christian, and then gird on the armor. Study the Pattern; look to Jesus, and be like Him. Your peace of mind, your hope of eternal salvation, depend on faithfulness in this work. As Christians we are less thorough in self-examination than in anything else; it is no wonder, then, that we make such slow advancement in understanding self.”

—*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 5*, p. 332.

THE DOOR TO PERFECT CHARACTER

3. How else does Scripture express the process by which we may develop a perfect character? Isa. 35:8; Prov. 4:18

“You have watched the rising sun, and the gradual break of day over earth and sky. Little by little the dawn increases, till the sun appears; then the light grows constantly stronger and clearer until the full glory of noontide is reached. This is a beautiful illustration of what God desires to do for His children in perfecting their Christian experience. As we walk day by day in the light He sends us, in willing obedience to all His requirements, our experience grows and broadens until we reach the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 300.

4. How does Jesus reveal Himself as part of this process? John 10:9, 10; 14:6

“The example of Christ in childhood and youth was perfect. He shows the young the only course that they can take to perfect Christian character, and meet the approbation of God. Said Christ, “I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.””

—*The Youth’s Instructor*, Jan. 1, 1874.

“Jesus humbled himself to become man and to associate with sinful man and leave them a bright example to copy in his own perfection of character. He does not leave his people in darkness. He shows them the way. He travels the road himself, and invites us to follow. What condescension in the Majesty of Heaven! What amazing love for sinful man, that God’s dear Son should leave the heavenly courts and come to a world polluted with sin, to save from ruin the guilty sinner!” —*The Youth’s Instructor*, Feb. 1, 1874.

5. What are the ways by which Apostle Paul expounds on this?

Rom. 7:25 (first part); 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 4:11-13, 15

“Beholding Christ for the purpose of becoming like Him, the seeker after truth sees the perfection of the principles of God’s law, and he becomes dissatisfied with everything but perfection. Hiding his life in the life of Christ, he sees that the holiness of the divine law is revealed in the character of Christ, and more and more earnestly he strives to be like Him. A warfare may be expected at any time, for the tempter sees that he is losing one of his subjects. A battle must be fought with the attributes which Satan has been strengthening for his own use. The human agent sees what he has to contend with—a strange power opposed to the idea of attaining the perfection that Christ holds out. But with Christ there is saving power that will gain for him victory in the conflict. The Saviour will strengthen and help him as he comes pleading for grace and efficiency.” —*S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 6*, p. 1098.

THE PRODUCT OF THE NEW COVENANT

6. How does the new covenant relate to the previous five questions?

Jer. 31:31-33; 2 Cor. 3:3; 4:6, 7

“The same law that was engraved upon the tables of stone, is written by the Holy Spirit upon the tables of the heart. Instead of going about to establish our own righteousness, we accept the righteousness of Christ. His blood atones for our sins. His obedience is accepted for us. Then the heart renewed by the Holy Spirit will bring forth "the fruits of the Spirit." Through the grace of Christ we shall live in obedience to the law of God written upon our hearts. Having the Spirit of Christ, we shall walk even as he walked. Through the prophet he declared of himself, "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." Psalms 40:8. And when among men he said, "The Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him." John 8:29.” —*The Review and Herald*, Oct. 17, 1907.

7. In our effort to build a character after the blueprint of Jesus, how do we transfer the law in Him into our hearts? Heb. 12:1, 2; Rom. 8:3, 4

“Beholding Christ means studying His life as given in His Word. We are to dig for truth as for hidden treasure. We are to fix our eyes upon Christ. When we take Him as our personal Saviour, this gives us boldness to approach the throne of grace. By beholding we become changed, morally assimilated to the One who is perfect in character. By receiving His imputed righteousness, through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, we become like Him. The image of Christ is cherished, and it captivates the whole being.” —*S.D.A Bible Commentary Vol. 6*, p. 1098.

“It is a law of the mind that it gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is trained to dwell.” —*Mind, Character, and Personality Vol. 2*, p. 418.

8. What is the practical experience involved in the exercise of studying Jesus in the word? John 6:53, 56, 57, 63

“It is not enough for us to know and respect the words of the Scriptures. We must enter into the understanding of them, studying them earnestly, eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of God. Christians will reveal the degree to which they do this by the healthiness of their spiritual character. We must know the practical application of the Word to our own individual character-building.”

“As we eat and digest the bread of life, we shall reveal a symmetrical character.” —*S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 5*, p. 1135.

“Let the repenting sinner fix his eyes upon "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29); and by beholding, he becomes changed. His fear is turned to joy, his doubts to hope. Gratitude springs up. The stony heart is broken. A tide of love sweeps into the soul. Christ is in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. When we see Jesus, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, working to save the lost, slighted, scorned, derided, driven from city to city till His mission was accomplished; when we behold Him in Gethsemane, sweating great drops of blood, and on the cross dying in agony,—when we see this, self will no longer clamor to be recognized. Looking unto Jesus, we shall be ashamed of our coldness, our lethargy, our self-seeking. We shall be willing to be anything or nothing, so that we may do heart service for the Master. We shall rejoice to bear the cross after Jesus, to endure trial, shame, or persecution for His dear sake.”
—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 439.

Jacob's Ladder

But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. Ephesians 4:15

OBJECTIVES

- To gain an object lesson in character building from Jacob's dream of the ladder from earth to heaven.
- To appreciate that Jesus is that ladder, and that we are to grow in character by climbing the rungs of His character traits.
- To realise the closeness of Jesus to us as we attempt even the first step.

MEANING OF THE LADDER

- 1. How does Jesus reveal the interpretation of Jacob's dream?**
Gen. 28:12, 13, 15; John 1:51

“Look to the top of the ladder. God is above it. His glory shines on every soul ascending heavenward. Jesus is this ladder. Climb up by Him, cling to Him, and ere long you will step off the ladder into His everlasting kingdom.”
—*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 8, p. 130.*

- 2. In which way is the ladder similar in application to Jesus in the light of His words, “*I am the way... no man cometh to the Father but by Me*”? Heb. 7:25; John 10:9**

“Let us consider this ladder that was presented to Jacob. The human race was cut off from intercourse [communication] with God. They might look at a paradise lost but could see no means of entering it and holding communion with heaven. The sin of Adam cut off all intercourse between heaven and earth. Up to the moment Adam and Eve transgressed God’s law there had been free communion between earth and heaven. They were connected by a path Deity could traverse. But the transgression of God’s law broke up this path, and the human race was separated from God.

“As soon as Satan seduced our first parents to disobedience of God’s holy law, every link that bound earth to heaven and the human race to the infinite God seemed broken. Humans might look to heaven, but how could they attain it? But joy to the world! The Son of God, the Sinless One, the One perfect in obedience, becomes the channel through which the lost communion may be renewed, the way through which the lost paradise may be regained. Through Christ, our substitute and surety, we may keep the commandments of God. We may return to our allegiance, and God will accept us.

“Christ is the ladder. . . . This is the ladder, the base of it resting upon the earth, the top reaching to the highest heavens. The broken links have been repaired. A highway has been thrown up along which the weary and heavy laden may pass. They may enter heaven and find rest.” —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 87.

CLIMBING JACOB’S LADDER

3. What else in Scripture alludes to climbing up a ladder of progress? 2 Pet. 1:4-7

“These words are full of instruction, and strike the keynote of victory. The apostle presents before the believers the ladder of Christian progress, every step of which represents advancement in the knowledge of God, and in the climbing of which there is to be no standstill. Faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity are the rounds of the ladder. We are saved by climbing round after round, mounting

step after step, to the height of Christ's ideal for us. Thus He is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 530.

"Point the youth to Peter's ladder of eight rounds, and place their feet, not on the highest round, but on the lowest, and with earnest solicitation urge them to climb to the very top." —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 6*, p. 147.

4. Does our connection with Jesus amount to climbing this ladder of Christian progress? 1 Cor. 1:30

"Christ, who connects earth with heaven, is the ladder. The base is planted firmly on the earth in His humanity; the topmost round reaches to the throne of God in His divinity. The humanity of Christ embraces fallen humanity, while His divinity lays hold upon the throne of God. We are saved by climbing round after round of the ladder, looking to Christ, clinging to Christ, mounting step by step to the height of Christ, so that He is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. Faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity are the rounds of this ladder. All these graces are to be manifested in the Christian character; and "if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 1:10, 11." —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 6*, p. 147.

5. What is written in reference to our consistent effort to be exerted in order to reach the top of the ladder? 2 Pet. 1:10, 11. What animates us to be so diligent?

"The love of God in the soul will have a direct influence upon the life and will call the intellect and the affections into active, healthful exercise. The child of God will not rest satisfied until he is clothed with the righteousness

of Christ and sustained by His life-giving power. When he sees a weakness in his character, it is not enough to confess it again and again; he must go to work with determination and energy to overcome his defects by building up opposite traits of character. He will not shun this work because it is difficult. Untiring energy is required of the Christian; but he is not obliged to work in his own strength; divine power awaits his demand. Everyone who is sincerely striving for the victory over self will appropriate the promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee." —*My Life Today*, p. 99.

"When we see the length of the chain that was let down for us, when we understand something of the infinite sacrifice that Christ has made in our behalf, the heart is melted with tenderness and contrition." —*Steps to Christ*, p. 35.

CHRIST'S HUMAN CONNECTION

6. How does the human nature of Christ in the ladder even make it possible for us to start the arduous work of character building? Rom. 8:3, 4

"The base is planted firmly on the earth in His humanity. [...] The humanity of Christ embraces fallen humanity." —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 6*, p. 147.

"Many are losing the right way, in consequence of thinking that they must climb to heaven, that they must do something to merit the favor of God. They seek to make themselves better by their own unaided efforts. This they can never accomplish. Christ has made the way by dying our sacrifice, by living our example, by becoming our great high priest. He declares, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). If by an effort of our own we could advance one step toward the ladder, the words of Christ would not be true. But when we accept Christ, good works will appear as fruitful evidence that we are in the way of life, that Christ is our way, and that we are treading the true path that leads to heaven." —*Selected Messages Book 1*, p. 368.

7. Where do we begin together with Christ in our fallen human nature? Heb. 11: 1, 6; Gal. 2:20; Col. 2:12, 13

“Faith is the first round in the ladder of advancement. Without faith it is impossible to please God. But many stop on this round and never ascend higher. They seem to think that when they have professed Christ, when their names are on the church record, their work is completed. Faith is essential; but the Inspired Word says, "Add to your faith, virtue."” —*My Life Today*, p. 96.

8. Once we have and exercised the faith of Jesus, how does this serve to build our character to perfection? Gal. 5:6; James 1:3, 4

“The follower of Christ must have faith abiding in the heart; for without this it is impossible to please God. Faith is the hand that takes hold of infinite help; it is the medium by which the renewed heart is made to beat in unison with the heart of Christ.” —*Messages to Young People*, p. 102.

““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.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 123.

MEDITATION

“The darkness of the evil one encloses those who neglect to pray. The whispered temptations of the enemy entice them to sin; and it is all because they do not make use of the privileges that God has given them in the divine

appointment of prayer. Why should the sons and daughters of God be reluctant to pray, when prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven's storehouse, where are treasured the boundless resources of Omnipotence? Without unceasing prayer and diligent watching we are in danger of growing careless and of deviating from the right path. The adversary seeks continually to obstruct the way to the mercy seat, that we may not by earnest supplication and faith obtain grace and power to resist temptation." —*Steps to Christ*, p. 94.

The Foundation (Justification)

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Romans 3:23, 24

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the foundation upon which we are to build our character unto perfection.
- To collate faith with justification as indeed the first rung of the ladder of progress.
- To appreciate the meaning of justification, and thus find inspiration to build our character with enthusiasm.

FAITH AND JUSTIFICATION

- 1. Where are we in the poetical expression of Psalms, and where did Jesus, the ladder, touch down to contact with us? Ps. 7:14, 15; 69:14, 15, 21; 40:2, 3**

“It is impossible for us, of ourselves, to escape from the pit of sin in which we are sunken. Our hearts are evil, and we cannot change them. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Job 14:4; Romans 8:7. Education, culture, the exercise of the will, human

effort, all have their proper sphere, but here they are powerless. They may produce an outward correctness of behavior, but they cannot change the heart; they cannot purify the springs of life. There must be a power working from within, a new life from above, before men can be changed from sin to holiness. That power is Christ. His grace alone can quicken the lifeless faculties of the soul, and attract it to God, to holiness.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 18.

“Every soul that will submit to be ransomed, Jesus will bear from the pit of corruption or from the briars of sin. He bore our sins, he carried our sorrows. Jesus takes the soul, sinful and polluted, upon his shoulders, and joyfully bears it to the haven of safety.” —*The Youth’s Instructor*, Dec. 30, 1897.

2. What does the contemplation of this produce in the heart of those that believe in Jesus? Isa. 38:17; 1 Tim. 1:14; Heb. 12:2

“When we see the length of the chain that was let down for us, when we understand something of the infinite sacrifice that Christ has made in our behalf, the heart is melted with tenderness and contrition.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 35.

“Those who are truly Christians are bound with the chain of love which links earth to heaven, which binds finite man to the infinite God. The light that shines in the face of Jesus Christ shines in the hearts of His followers, to the glory of God.” —*Reflecting Christ*, p. 104.

“Faith is not an opiate, but a stimulant. Looking to Calvary will not quiet your soul into nonperformance of duty, but will create faith that will work, purifying the soul from all selfishness.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 93.

3. Believing and receiving this faith as Jesus exercised it, what is produced as the foundation for our character building? 1 Cor. 3:11; Gal. 2:16 i.e. Heb. 5:7; Rom. 4:23-25

“As the sinner looks to the law, his guilt is made plain to him and pressed home to his conscience, and he is condemned. His only comfort and hope is found in looking to the cross of Calvary. As he ventures upon the promises, taking God at His word, relief and peace come to his soul. He cries, "Lord, Thou hast promised to save all who come unto Thee in the name of Thy Son. I am a lost, helpless, hopeless soul. Lord, save, or I perish." His faith lays hold on Christ, and he is justified before God.” —*Faith and Works*, p. 99.

“Human nature is depraved, and is justly condemned by a holy God. But provision is made for the repenting sinner, so that by faith in the atonement of the only begotten Son of God, he may receive forgiveness of sin, find justification, receive adoption into the heavenly family, and become an inheritor of the kingdom of God. Transformation of character is wrought through the operation of the Holy Spirit, which works upon the human agent, implanting in him, according to his desire and consent to have it done, a new nature. The image of God is restored to the soul, and day by day he is strengthened and renewed by grace, and is enabled more and more perfectly to reflect the character of Christ in righteousness and true holiness.” —*The Review and Herald*, Sept. 17, 1895.

4. How does faith continue to function once it takes hold of justification? Gal. 5:6; James 2:17, 18

“The faith that works by love and purifies the soul produces the fruit of humility, patience, forbearance, long-suffering, peace, joy, and willing obedience.” —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 109.

INSPIRED BY JUSTIFICATION

5. What is the reality of justification? Rom. 8:1; John 5:24

“When God pardons the sinner, remits the punishment he deserves, and treats him as though he had not sinned, He receives him into divine favor, and justifies him through the merits of Christ’s righteousness. The sinner can be justified only through faith in the atonement made through God’s dear Son, who became a sacrifice for the sins of the guilty world. No one can be justified by any works of his own. He can be delivered from the guilt of sin, from the condemnation of the law, from the penalty of transgression, only by virtue of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ. Faith is the only condition upon which justification can be obtained, and faith includes not only belief but trust.” —*Selected Messages Book 1*, p. 389.

“If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ’s character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 62.

6. As the faith in the soul legalises the profound release from condemnation, fear, and death, how does it express itself and respond? Ps. 40:3; Titus 2:14

“All the philosophies of human nature have led to confusion and shame when God has not been recognized as all in all. But the precious faith inspired of God imparts strength and nobility of character. As His goodness, His mercy, and His love are dwelt upon, clearer and still clearer will be the perception of truth; higher, holier, the desire for purity of heart and clearness of thought. The soul dwelling in the pure atmosphere of holy thought is transformed by intercourse with God through the study of His Word. Truth is so large, so far-reaching, so deep, so broad, that self is lost sight of. The heart is softened and subdued into humility, kindness, and love.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 223.

HOPE THAT INSPIRES

7. What is the internal sense that conquers the dread of failure to reach perfection of character? Rom. 8:24, 25; Lam. 3:24-26

“There is no power in any man to remedy the defective character individually. Our hope and trust must be in One who is more than human. We need ever to remember that help has been laid on One who is mighty. The Lord has provided the needed help for every soul who will accept.”
—*This Day With God*, p. 285.

“If Christ is formed within, the hope of glory, He will be revealed in the character, it will be Christlike.” —*Welfare Ministry*, p. 38.

8. How does Inspiration present hope when the daunting task of paining a perfect character threatens to overwhelm us? Isa. 41:10

“All these successive steps are not to be kept before the mind’s eye, and counted as you start; but fixing the eye upon Jesus, with an eye single to the glory of God, you will make advancement. . . .

“By taking one step after another, the highest ascent may be climbed, and the summit of the mount may be reached at last. Do not become overwhelmed with the great amount of work you must do in your lifetime, for you are not required to do it all at once. Let every power of your being go to each day’s work, improve each precious opportunity, appreciate the helps that God gives you, and make advancement up the ladder of progress step by step. Remember that you are to live but one day at a time, that God has given you one day, and heavenly records will show how you have valued its privileges and opportunities. May you so improve every day given you

of God that at last you may hear the Master say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." —*My Life Today*, p. 95.

MEDITATION

“Sin-burdened, struggling souls, Jesus in his glorified humanity has ascended into the heavens to make intercession for us. "For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace." We should be continually looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; for by beholding him we shall be changed into his image, our character will be made like his. We should rejoice that all judgment is given to the Son, because in his humanity he has become acquainted with all the difficulties that beset humanity.

“To be sanctified is to become a partaker of the divine nature, catching the spirit and mind of Jesus, ever learning in the school of Christ. "But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as of the Lord the Spirit." It is impossible for any of us by our power or our own efforts to work this change in ourselves. It is the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, which Jesus said he would send into the world, that changes our character into the image of Christ; and when this is accomplished, we reflect, as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord. That is, the character of the one who thus beholds Christ is so like his, that one looking at his sees Christ's own character shining out as from a mirror. Imperceptibly to ourselves, we are changed day by day from our own ways and will into the ways and will of Christ, into the loveliness of his character. Thus we grow up into Christ, and unconsciously reflect his image.” —*The Review and Herald*, Apr. 28, 1891.

Appropriating Justification

These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Revelation 7:14

OBJECTIVES

- To gain more detail of what justification means.
- To learn how to bring justification into our personal living experience.
- To understand the need to repeat its appropriation every day along our journey of life.

THE MEANING OF JUSTIFICATION

1. How does Inspiration define justification? Rom. 5:8, 9; James 2:23

“Having made us righteous through the imputed righteousness of Christ, God pronounces us just, and treats us as just. He looks upon us as His dear children. Christ works against the power of sin, and where sin abounded, grace much more abounds. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Romans 5:1, 2.”

“The righteousness by which we are justified is imputed; [...] our title to heaven.”

“As the penitent sinner, contrite before God, discerns Christ’s atonement in his behalf, and accepts this atonement as his only hope in this life and the future life, his sins are pardoned. This is justification by faith.” —*The Faith I Live By*, pp. 112, 116.

2. How can God be just and yet justify a sinner who has violated His justice, His law? Rom. 3:20-26

“The plan by which alone man’s salvation could be secured involved all heaven in its infinite sacrifice. The angels could not rejoice as Christ opened before them the plan of redemption; for man’s salvation must cost their loved Commander unutterable woe. With what wonder and grief did they listen to His words as He told them how He must descend from heaven’s purity and peace, its joy and glory and immortal life, and come in contact with the degradation of earth, to endure its sorrow, shame, and death. He would appear upon earth and humble Himself as a man, and by his own experience become acquainted with the sorrows and temptations which man would have to endure. All this would be necessary in order that He might succor those who should be tempted. He must be delivered into the hands of wicked men, and be subjected to every insult and torture that Satan could inspire them to inflict. He must die the cruelest of deaths, lifted up between the heavens and the earth as a guilty sinner. He must endure anguish of soul, the hiding of His Father’s face, while the guilt of transgression—the weight of the sins of the whole world—should be upon Him.” —*The Signs of the Times*, Nov. 4, 1908.

“Is not this a true declaration of God? We must take it as such. We may not understand how it can all be, and theologians may try to explain it, but we can see it no better and can do no better than to believe God is true. He says it and it must be so. Take the gracious gift in the promises of God, believe all the Scripture tells us, although you cannot explain it and no one can explain it to you. Herein is faith put to the stretch. Christ died for the ungodly.” —*1888 Materials*, p. 282.

APPROPRIATION BY FAITH

3. For whom was the justifying sacrifice provided? John 3:17; 1 John 2:2; 4:10

“Christ’s life of humiliation and death of shame has paid the price of the salvation of every soul.” —*Spalding and Magan Collection*, p. 448.

“...Jesus, the world’s Redeemer, has pledged Himself to accomplish the full salvation of every son and daughter of Adam. [...] The sacrifice was ample, wholly consistent with the justice and honor of God’s holy law.” —*This Day With God*, p. 368.

4. If the whole world could be justified by the sacrifice of Christ, why do we not see the benefit of this in the history of this planet? Heb. 4:2; John 3:17-19

“They do not appropriate the righteousness of Christ...” —*Evangelism*, p. 697.

“The gift of God in His beloved Son was the expression of an incomprehensible love. It was the utmost that God could do to preserve the honor of His law, and still save the transgressor. [...] If men would contemplate the love of Christ, displayed in the cross, their faith would be strengthened to appropriate the merits of His shed blood, and they would be cleansed and saved from sin.” —*S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 5*, p. 1132.

5. What do we then discern to be our part to benefit from the justifying gift of Calvary? John 3:14-16; Heb. 11:6

“By faith we are to appropriate the promises of God, and to provide ourselves with the abundant blessings which have been secured for us through Christ Jesus. Hope has been set before us, even the hope of eternal life. Nothing short of this blessing for us will satisfy our Redeemer; but it is our part to lay hold upon this hope by faith in him who has promised. [...] He has purchased forgiveness and immortality for the sinful, perishing souls of men; but it is our part to receive these gifts by faith.” —*The Review and Herald*, June 9, 1896.

APPROPRIATING NOT ONLY AT THE BEGINNING

6. How does a sinner first discover justification and thus commence his path to perfection of character? Rom. 6:3-5, 8-11

“As the sinner looks to the law, his guilt is made plain to him and pressed home to his conscience, and he is condemned. His only comfort and hope is found in looking to the cross of Calvary. As he ventures upon the promises, taking God at His word, relief and peace come to his soul. He cries, "Lord, Thou hast promised to save all who come unto Thee in the name of Thy Son. I am a lost, helpless, hopeless soul. Lord, save, or I perish." His faith lays hold on Christ, and he is justified before God.” —*Faith and Works*, p. 99.

“Through the imputed righteousness of Christ, the sinner may feel that he is pardoned, and may know that the law no more condemns him, because he is in harmony with all its precepts. It is his privilege to count himself innocent when he reads and thinks of the retribution that will fall upon the unbelieving and sinful. By faith he lays hold of the righteousness of Christ. . . . Knowing himself to be a sinner, a transgressor of the holy law of God, he looks to the perfect obedience of Christ, to His death upon Calvary for the sins of the world; and he has the assurance that he is justified by faith in the merit and

sacrifice of Christ. He realizes that the law was obeyed in his behalf by the Son of God, and that the penalty of transgression cannot fall upon the believing sinner. The active obedience of Christ clothes the believing sinner with the righteousness that meets the demands of the law.” —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 240.

7. Making this kind of experience at the beginning of a believer’s conversion, is this to be repeated in the course of his life until he reaches perfection of character? Col. 2:6; 1 Cor. 15:31; Heb. 3:6,
14

“To follow Jesus requires wholehearted conversion at the start, and a repetition of this conversion every day.” —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 122.

“No outward observances can take the place of simple faith and entire renunciation of self. But no man can empty himself of self. We can only consent for Christ to accomplish the work. Then the language of the soul will be, Lord, take my heart; for I cannot give it. It is Thy property. Keep it pure, for I cannot keep it for Thee. Save me in spite of myself, my weak, unchristlike self. Mold me, fashion me, raise me into a pure and holy atmosphere, where the rich current of Thy love can flow through my soul.

“It is not only at the beginning of the Christian life that this renunciation of self is to be made. At every advance step heavenward it is to be renewed. All our good works are dependent on a power outside of ourselves. Therefore there needs to be a continual reaching out of the heart after God, a continual, earnest, heartbreaking confession of sin and humbling of the soul before Him. Only by constant renunciation of self and dependence on Christ can we walk safely.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 159.

MEDITATION

“It is true that men sometimes become ashamed of their sinful ways, and give up some of their evil habits, before they are conscious that they are being drawn to Christ. But whenever they make an effort to reform, from a sincere desire to do right, it is the power of Christ that is drawing them. An

influence of which they are unconscious works upon the soul, and the conscience is quickened, and the outward life is amended. And as Christ draws them to look upon His cross, to behold Him whom their sins have pierced, the commandment comes home to the conscience. The wickedness of their life, the deep-seated sin of the soul, is revealed to them. They begin to comprehend something of the righteousness of Christ, and exclaim, "What is sin, that it should require such a sacrifice for the redemption of its victim? Was all this love, all this suffering, all this humiliation, demanded, that we might not perish, but have everlasting life?"

“The sinner may resist this love, may refuse to be drawn to Christ; but if he does not resist he will be drawn to Jesus; a knowledge of the plan of salvation will lead him to the foot of the cross in repentance for his sins, which have caused the sufferings of God’s dear Son.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 27.

Inspiration to Build

And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. John 17:19

OBJECTIVES

- To recognise that Jesus built a perfect character while living on this earth.
- To gain inspiration in beholding Christ's building of character, to build our own.
- To appreciate that a perfect character can be gained although hampered by the fallen nature of our humanity.

CHRIST MADE PERFECT

- 1. Having seen that Christ's perfect obedience is imputed to us in justification, what else is included in the work of salvation?
Rom. 5:9, 10; 1 Thess. 4:3 (first part)**

“By the life we live through the grace of Christ the character is formed. The original loveliness begins to be restored to the soul. The attributes of the character of Christ are imparted, and the image of the Divine begins to shine forth. The faces of men and women who walk and work with God express the peace of heaven. They are surrounded with the atmosphere of heaven. For these souls the kingdom of God has begun. They have Christ's joy, the joy of being a blessing to humanity. They have the honor of being accepted for the Master's use; they are trusted to do His work in His name.”

—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 312.

“The righteousness by which we are justified is imputed; the righteousness by which we are sanctified is imparted. The first is our title to heaven, the second is our fitness for heaven.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 116.

2. What was the life of Christ by which we are to be saved and have His righteousness imparted to us? Heb. 5:7-9; John 17:19

“We are to copy no human being. There is no human being wise enough to be our criterion. We are to look to the man Christ Jesus, who is complete in the perfection of righteousness and holiness. He is the author and finisher of our faith. He is the pattern man. His experience is the measure of the experience that we are to gain. His character is our model. Let us, then, take our minds off the perplexities and the difficulties of this life, and fix them on Him, that by beholding we may be changed into His likeness. We may behold Christ to good purpose. We may safely look to Him; for He is all-wise. As we look to Him and think of Him, He will be formed within, the hope of glory.” —*S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 7*, p. 970.

3. How else is the impartation of Christ’s righteous character made a reality to the believer? Heb. 2:16-18

“For our sake Jesus emptied Himself of His glory; He clothed His divinity with humanity that He might touch humanity, that His personal presence might be among us, that we might know that He was acquainted with all our trials, and sympathized with our grief, that every son and daughter of Adam might understand that Jesus is the friend of sinners.”

“By His obedience to all the commandments of God, Christ wrought out a redemption for man. This was not done by going out of Himself to another,

but by taking humanity into Himself. Thus Christ gave to humanity an existence out of Himself. To bring humanity into Christ, to bring the fallen race into oneness with divinity, is the work of redemption. Christ took human nature that men might be one with Him as He is one with the Father, that God may love man as He loves His only-begotten Son, that men may be partakers of the divine nature, and be complete in Him.” —*S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 7, p. 927.*

CONTEMPLATION THAT INSPIRES

4. What is written regarding the struggle involved as we try to build a pure, righteous character? Acts 14:22; Phil. 2:12; Heb. 12:6-11

“But Christ has given us no assurance that to attain perfection of character is an easy matter. A noble, all-round character is not inherited. It does not come to us by accident. A noble character is earned by individual effort through the merits and grace of Christ. God gives the talents, the powers of the mind; we form the character. It is formed by hard, stern battles with self. Conflict after conflict must be waged against hereditary tendencies. We shall have to criticize ourselves closely, and allow not one unfavorable trait to remain uncorrected.” —*God’s Amazing Grace, p. 146.*

5. If the merits and grace of Christ are the means by which we are to obtain a noble character, to engage in hard, stern battles and conflicts, what application do we make of those merits and grace? Heb. 3:1; 12:3, 4; 5:8, 9

“Christ is the source of all light and efficiency, and all the honor, all the praise, and all the gratitude offerings belong to Jesus who is the giver of

every good gift. If you would be inspired with the most lofty ambition to secure the highest spiritual attainments, draw your inspiration from Jesus Christ. Glory not in self, or in success; but consecrate everything to him who has loved us, and washed us from our sin in His own most precious blood. Lift Him up, the Man of Calvary.” —*Manuscript Releases Vol. 6*, p. 203.

**6. What further detail of character in Jesus can inspire us to persevere in our struggles that threaten to overcome us?
Ps. 69:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:21-24**

“As one becomes acquainted with the history of the Redeemer, he discovers in himself defects of character; his unlikeness to Christ is so great that he sees he cannot be a follower without a very great change in his life. Still he studies, with a desire to be like his great Exemplar; he catches the looks, the spirit, of his beloved Master; by beholding he becomes changed.

“All the philosophies of human nature have led to confusion and shame when God has not been recognized as all in all. But the precious faith inspired of God imparts strength and nobility of character. As His goodness, His mercy, and His love are dwelt upon, clearer and still clearer will be the perception of truth; higher, holier, the desire for purity of heart and clearness of thought. The soul dwelling in the pure atmosphere of holy thought is transformed by intercourse with God through the study of His Word. Truth is so large, so far-reaching, so deep, so broad, that self is lost sight of. The heart is softened and subdued into humility, kindness, and love.”

—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 223.

TO CONQUER SINFUL FLESH

7. As we behold Christ sanctifying Himself for our example, what was His struggle, suffering, and conflict? Rom. 8:3, 4; 2 Cor. 5:21

“That He might by His own example condemn sin in the flesh, He took upon Himself the likeness of sinful flesh.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 322.

“Though He had no taint of sin upon His character, yet He condescended to connect our fallen human nature with His divinity.” —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 232.

“Jesus Himself, while He dwelt among men, was often in prayer. Our Saviour identified Himself with our needs and weakness, in that He became a suppliant, a petitioner, seeking from His Father fresh supplies of strength, that He might come forth braced for duty and trial. He is our example in all things. He is a brother in our infirmities, "in all points tempted like as we are;" but as the sinless one His nature recoiled from evil; He endured struggles and torture of soul in a world of sin. His humanity made prayer a necessity and a privilege. He found comfort and joy in communion with His Father. And if the Saviour of men, the Son of God, felt the need of prayer, how much more should feeble, sinful mortals feel the necessity of fervent, constant prayer.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 93.

8. As we contemplate the experience of Jesus building a perfect character, how does this inspire us in our struggles with sinful flesh? Lam. 1:12-14; 2 Pet. 1:2-4

““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.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 123.

MEDITATION

“How few have any conception of the anguish which rent the heart of the Son of God during His thirty years of life upon earth. The path from the manger to Calvary was shadowed by sorrow and grief. He was the Man of Sorrows, and endured such heartache as no human language can portray. He could have said in truth, "Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow" (Lamentations 1:12). His suffering was the deepest anguish of the soul; and what man could have sympathy with the soul anguish of the Son of the infinite God? Hating sin with a perfect hatred, He yet gathered to His soul the sins of the whole world, as He trod the path to Calvary, suffering the penalty of the transgressor. Guiltless, He bore the punishment of the guilty; innocent, yet offering Himself to bear the penalty of the transgression of the law of God. The punishment of the sins of every soul was borne by the Son of the infinite God. The guilt of every sin pressed its weight upon the divine soul of the world's Redeemer. He who knew no sin became sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. In assuming the nature of man, He placed Himself where He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, that by His stripes we might be healed.

“In His humanity Christ was tried with as much greater temptation, with as much more persevering energy than man is tried by the evil one, as His nature was greater than man's. This is a deep mysterious truth, that Christ is bound to humanity by the most sensitive sympathies. The evil works, the evil thoughts, the evil words of every son and daughter of Adam press upon His divine soul. The sins of men called for retribution upon Himself, for He had become man's substitute, and took upon Him the sins of the world. He bore the sins of every sinner, for all transgressions were imputed unto Him. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (Hebrews 2:3).”

—*That I May Know Him*, p. 66.

Co-partnership

For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. 1 Corinthians 3:9

OBJECTIVES

- To gain a clear understanding that in the work of character building the individual is not the sole builder.
- To learn the part that God takes, and where the activity of the individual fits in.
- To appreciate that when the character is finally perfected, all the glory belongs to God.

HUMAN DILIGENCE

1. Who is primarily responsible for the character produced in the human being? Gal. 6:7-9; Hos. 10:12

“Character building is the most important work ever entrusted to human beings...”

“Here is your work, parents, to develop the characters of your children in harmony with the precepts of the Word of God. This work should come first, for eternal interests are here involved. The character building of your children is of more importance than the cultivation of your farms, more essential than the building of houses to live in, or of prosecuting any manner of business or trade.” —*Child Guidance*, p. 169.

“One victory gained over yourself will be of great value and encouragement to your children. You may stand on vantage ground, saying, I am God’s husbandry; I am God’s building. I place myself under His hand to be fashioned after the divine similitude, that I may be a co-worker with God in fashioning the minds and characters of my children so that it will be easier for them to walk in the way of the Lord. . . . Fathers and mothers, when you can control yourselves, you will gain great victories in controlling your children.” —*Child Guidance*, p. 217.

2. How diligently is a soul to apply himself to the building of his own character? Prov. 4:13, 20-23; 2 Pet. 1:10, 11

“Therefore the word comes to us, "Giving all diligence," add to your character the graces that will make you strong to resist evil.” —*S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 7*, p. 943

“Brother A, you need to work with the utmost diligence to control self and develop a character in harmony with the principles of the word of God. You need to educate and train yourself in order to become a successful shepherd. You need to cultivate a good temper—kindly, cheerful, buoyant, generous, pitiful, courteous, compassionate traits of character. You should overcome a morose, bigoted, narrow, faultfinding, overbearing spirit. If you are connected with the work of God you need to battle with yourself vigorously and form your character after the divine Model.” —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 3*, p. 420.

GOD’S PART

3. While it is true that we are primarily responsible as to how our character turns out, who alone provides everything by which a perfect character can be attained? Phil. 2:13; 2 Cor. 5:17-19

“Man’s intellect, his understanding, his every valuable thought, the opportunities and privileges that are placed within his reach, all come from him who is the way, the truth, and the life. We have nothing of ourselves.”
—*The Review and Herald*, May 28, 1908.

4. In all reality, is there anything that we can bring to the building of our character from our own selves? Jer. 13:23; John 15:5; Eph. 2:8, 9

“If you see your sinfulness, do not wait to make yourself better. How many there are who think they are not good enough to come to Christ. Do you expect to become better through your own efforts? “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.” Jeremiah 13:23. There is help for us only in God. We must not wait for stronger persuasions, for better opportunities, or for holier tempers. We can do nothing of ourselves. We must come to Christ just as we are.

“But let none deceive themselves with the thought that God, in His great love and mercy, will yet save even the rejecters of His grace. The exceeding sinfulness of sin can be estimated only in the light of the cross. When men urge that God is too good to cast off the sinner, let them look to Calvary. It was because there was no other way in which man could be saved, because without this sacrifice it was impossible for the human race to escape from the defiling power of sin, and be restored to communion with holy beings,—impossible for them again to become partakers of spiritual life,—it was because of this that Christ took upon Himself the guilt of the disobedient and suffered in the sinner’s stead. The love and suffering and death of the Son of God all testify to the terrible enormity of sin and declare that there is no escape from its power, no hope of the higher life, but through the submission of the soul to Christ.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 31.

“We can do nothing of ourselves. It is only by relying on Christ for all our strength that we can overcome, and do His will on earth. We must have the

same simple, childlike trust in Him that He had in His Father. Christ said, "Without Me ye can do nothing." —*The Story of Jesus*, p. 101.

LABOURERS TOGETHER

5. What error must we guard against when we come to the realization that we can do nothing of ourselves? James 2:14, 17-19

“From the pulpits of today the words are uttered: "Believe, only believe. Have faith in Christ; you have nothing to do with the old law, only trust in Christ." How different is this from the words of the apostle who declares that faith without works is dead. He says, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:22). We must have that faith that works by love and purifies the soul. Many seek to substitute a superficial faith for uprightness of life and think through this to obtain salvation.” —*Faith and Works*, p. 89.

“But those who are waiting to behold a magical change in their characters without determined effort on their part to overcome sin, will be disappointed.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 302.

6. What then is the truth by which we are to gain a sinless, perfect character unto salvation? 1 Cor. 3:9

“The infinitely wise and all-powerful God proposes co-operation with his frail, erring creatures, whom he has placed on vantage-ground. On the one side there are infinite wisdom, goodness, compassion, power; on the other, weakness, sinfulness, absolute helplessness, poverty, dependence. We are dependent upon God, not only for life and all its blessings, but for our entrusted talents, and for all the resources required in the work we must do

if we accept the invitation to work with God. Man's intellect, his understanding, his every valuable thought, the opportunities and privileges that are placed within his reach, all come from him who is the way, the truth, and the life. We have nothing of ourselves. Our success in the Christian life depends upon our co-operation with Christ, and our submission to his will. It is not a sign of pure, consecrated service for a worker to follow his own way. Every worker is to willingly obey his Leader, to receive and practise every word of God."

"Man is given the privilege of working with God in the saving of his own soul. He is to receive Christ as his personal Saviour and believe in him. Receiving and believing is his part of the contract. This means abiding in Christ, showing in him at all times and under all circumstances a faith that works by love and purifies the soul from all defilement. Christ is the author of this faith, and he demands that it be constantly exercised." —*The Review and Herald*, May 28, 1908.

UNDERSTANDING THE CONNECTION

**7. If we can do nothing of ourselves, and yet we are to make the effort, how is our copartnership with God meant to operate?
John 15:1-5; Phil. 2:12, 13**

"Vital godliness is a principle to be cultivated. The power of God can accomplish for us that which all the systems in the world cannot effect. The perfection of Christian character depends wholly upon the grace and strength found alone in God. Without the power of grace upon the heart, assisting our efforts and sanctifying our labors, we shall fail of saving our own souls and of saving the souls of others. System and order are highly essential, but none should receive the impression that these will do the work without the grace and power of God operating upon the mind and heart. Heart and flesh would fail in the round of ceremonies, and in the carrying out of our plans, without the power of God to inspire and give courage to perform." —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 3*, p. 188.

“What Christ works within, will be worked out under the dictation of a converted intellect.” —*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 35.

**8. In the light of these things, with what measure of diligence will we work, and who will receive all the honour for a job well done?
Luke 17:10; 1 Cor. 1:29-31**

“Joshua had received the promise that God would surely overthrow these enemies of Israel, yet he put forth as earnest effort as though success depended upon the armies of Israel alone. He did all that human energy could do, and then he cried in faith for divine aid. The secret of success is the union of divine power with human effort. Those who achieve the greatest results are those who rely most implicitly upon the Almighty Arm.”
—*Colporteur Ministry*, p. 106.

“Our good works alone will not save any of us, but we cannot be saved without good works. And after we have done all that we can do, in the name and strength of Jesus we are to say: “We are unprofitable servants.” We are not to think that we have made great sacrifices and that we should receive great reward for our feeble services.” —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 4*, p. 228.

“Every soul may say: “By His perfect obedience He has satisfied the claims of the law, and my only hope is found in looking to Him as my substitute and surety, who obeyed the law perfectly for me. By faith in His merits I am free from the condemnation of the law. He clothes me with His righteousness, which answers all the demands of the law. I am complete in Him who brings in everlasting righteousness. He presents me to God in the spotless garment of which no thread was woven by any human agent. All is of Christ, and all the glory, honor, and majesty are to be given to the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.”” —*A New Life*, p. 27.

MEDITATION

“The work of gaining salvation is one of copartnership, a joint operation. There is to be co-operation between God and the repentant sinner. This is

necessary for the formation of right principles in the character. Man is to make earnest efforts to overcome that which hinders him from attaining to perfection. But he is wholly dependent upon God for success. Human effort of itself is not sufficient. Without the aid of divine power it avails nothing. God works and man works. Resistance of temptation must come from man, who must draw his power from God. On the one side there is infinite wisdom, compassion, and power; on the other, weakness, sinfulness, absolute helplessness.”

“He who would build up a strong, symmetrical character, he who would be a well-balanced Christian, must give all and do all for Christ; for the Redeemer will not accept divided service. Daily he must learn the meaning of self-surrender. He must study the word of God, learning its meaning and obeying its precepts. Thus he may reach the standard of Christian excellence. Day by day God works with him, perfecting the character that is to stand in the time of final test. And day by day the believer is working out before men and angels a sublime experiment, showing what the gospel can do for fallen human beings.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 482, 483.

Human Effort

Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily. Colossians 1:29

OBJECTIVES

- To expand on the human effort required to develop a righteous character.
- To clarify further the linkage of man's effort with God's workings.
- To explore the practical representations given in Scripture regarding this scenario.

GOD'S WORKINGS

1. What is written in reference to God's activities inside the human soul? Job 38:36; Prov. 20:27; Jer. 31:33

"Every soul that is sanctified by the Holy Spirit will look to God for himself. The human agent will not look to other human agents to be told his duty. The divine Guide will prepare his heart for divine light. The Holy Spirit's work is to write God's thoughts deeply in the heart of man. "After those days, saith the Lord, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts" [Jeremiah 31:33]. Such alone are Christ's living epistles, written, not with pen and ink, but by the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in the fleshy tables of the heart." —*Manuscript Releases Vol. 13*, p. 245.

2. How did men of God in the past reveal the workings of God within them? 2 Sam. 23:1, 2; 2 Pet. 1:21

“From the beginning, God has been working by His Holy Spirit through human instrumentalities for the accomplishment of His purpose in behalf of the fallen race. This was manifest in the lives of the patriarchs. To the church in the wilderness also, in the time of Moses, God gave His "good Spirit to instruct them" (Nehemiah 9:20). And in the days of the apostles He wrought mightily for His church through the agency of the Holy Spirit. The same power that sustained the patriarchs, and that made the work of the apostolic church effective, has upheld God's faithful children in every succeeding age. It was through the power of the Holy Spirit that during the Dark Ages the Waldensian Christians helped to prepare the way for the Reformation. It was the same power that made successful the efforts of the noble men and women who pioneered the way for the establishment of modern missions.” —*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 190.

HUMAN RESPONSE

3. When a soul senses the inward workings of God, what is meant to be his response? Rom. 2:13-15; John 1:9

“We should be ready to respond at once to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.” —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 322.

“The Holy Spirit has implanted the grace of Christ in the heart of the savage, quickening his sympathies contrary to his nature, contrary to his education. The "Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9),

is shining in his soul; and this light, if heeded, will guide his feet to the kingdom of God.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 385.

“Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly, those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish. Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things that the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 638.

4. Identify the degree of effort the soul needs to exert in response to the promptings of God within. Luke 13:24; Col. 1:29; Mark 12:30; Heb. 12:4

“Our efforts should be marked by intensity and perseverance, proportionate to the importance of the object which we seek—eternal life.” —*The Review and Herald*, June 15, 1886.

“There will be seen an intensity of earnest effort. There will be cherished a faith that works by love and purifies the soul.” —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 9*, p. 141.

“God designs that his people shall place a high estimate upon every provision for their salvation. He desires them to appreciate his great mercy and condescension, and to manifest gratitude and zeal proportionate to the value of the great gift of the Son of God.” —*The Signs of the Times*, July 28, 1881.

5. In which other ways does Scripture express the connection of the gospel of Jesus Christ and their human response and zeal? Titus 2:11-14; Rom. 2:6, 7

“The closer we keep to Christ, and the more meek and lowly and self-distrustful we are, the firmer will be our hold on Christ, and the greater will be our power, through Christ, to convert sinners; for it is not the human agent that moves the soul. Heavenly intelligences co-operate with the human agent and impress the truth upon the heart. Abiding in Christ we are able to exert an influence over others; but it is because of the presence of Him who says: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Matthew 28:20. The power we have to overcome Satan is the result of Christ working in us to will and to do of His good pleasure.” —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 6*, p. 399.

“Conformity to the world can be prevented by the truth, by feeding on the Word of God, by its principles circulating through the entire life current and working out that word in the character.” —*Mind, Character, and Personality Vol. 2*, p. 561.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLES

6. Who is given to us in these last days as the type for our experience of intensity of effort? Gen. 32:24-28; Jer. 30:5-7

“God often brings people to a crisis to show them their own weakness and to point them to the Source of strength. If they pray and watch unto prayer, fighting bravely, their weak points will become their strong points. Jacob’s experience contains many valuable lessons for us. God taught Jacob that in his own strength he could never gain the victory, that he must wrestle with God for strength from above.

“All night Jacob wrestled with the Angel. Finally the strong wrestler was weakened by a touch on his thigh. He was now disabled and suffering the keenest pain, but he would not loose his hold. All penitent and broken, he clung to the Angel, . . . pleading for a blessing. He must have the assurance that his sin was pardoned. His determination grew stronger, his faith more earnest and persevering, until the very last. The Angel tried to release

Himself; He urged, "Let me go, for the day breaketh," but Jacob answered, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me."

"Shall we obtain strength from God, and win victory after victory, or shall we try in our own strength, and at last fall back defeated, worn out by vain efforts? Let us, by unreserved surrender to God, obtain the power that everyone must have who conquers in the battle against evil." —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 89.

7. Who also is given as a demonstration of practical exercise of human effort in character building? Heb. 11:5

"Were Enoch upon the earth today, his heart would be in harmony with all God's requirements; he would walk with God, although surrounded with influences which are the most wicked and debasing. So may we remain pure and uncorrupted. He was a representative of the saints who live amid the perils and corruptions of the last days. For his faithful obedience to God, he was translated. So, also, the faithful, who are alive and remain, will be translated. They will be removed from a sinful and corrupt world to the pure joys of heaven.

"Enoch meditated and prayed, and put on the armor of watchfulness, and he came forth from his pleadings with God to plead with his fellow men. He did not mask the truth to find favor with unbelievers. His close connection with God gave him courage to work the works of God. He had the testimony that his ways pleased God. This is the privilege of every believer today. It is man dwelling with God, and God taking up his abode with man. "I in them, and thou in me," says Jesus. To walk with God and have the witness that their ways pleased him, is an experience not to be confined to Enoch, to Elijah, to patriarchs, to prophets, to apostles, to martyrs. It is the privilege of all the followers of Christ to have Jesus enshrined in their hearts, to carry him with them in their lives. This will make them fruit-bearing trees." —*The Review and Herald*, Apr. 15, 1909.

MEDITATION

“We read of the prophet Enoch, that he "walked with God . . . three hundred years." Enoch's walk with God was not in a trance or a vision, but in all the duties of his daily life. He did not become a hermit, shutting himself entirely from the world; for he had a work to do for God in the world. In the family and in his intercourse with men, as a husband and father, a friend, a citizen, he was the steadfast, unwavering servant.”

“Enoch was an active worker. He did not seek ease and comfort. Nor did he spend his time in idle meditation, or in striving to gain happiness for himself. He did not participate in the festivities and amusements that constantly engaged the attention of the pleasure-lovers of the antediluvian world. In his day the minds of many were absorbed in worldly pleasures,—pleasures that tempted them to go astray. But Enoch was terribly in earnest. With the sinful and with the workers of iniquity he mingled only as God's messenger, to warn them to turn with abhorrence from their evil ways, and to repent and seek God.” —*The Review and Herald*, Apr. 15, 1909.

Help of the Angels

Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? Hebrews 1:14

OBJECTIVES

- To come to appreciate the meaning of the angels walking up and down on Jacob's ladder.
- To learn how interested the angels are in man's salvation.
- To come to the knowledge of how the angels will co-operate with us in their effort to help us in our character building.

JESUS AND ANGELS

- 1. Having seen that Jesus is the ladder in Jacob's dream, what can we learn regarding the angels in conjunction with Jesus? John 1:51**

“The angels prostrated themselves at the feet of their Commander and offered to become a sacrifice for man. But an angel's life could not pay the debt; only He who created man had power to redeem him. Yet the angels were to have a part to act in the plan of redemption. Christ was to be made "a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death." Hebrews 2:9. As He should take human nature upon Him, His strength would not be equal to theirs, and they were to minister to Him, to strengthen and soothe Him under His sufferings. They were also to be ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who should be heirs of salvation. Hebrews 1:14. They would guard the subjects of grace from the power of evil angels and from the darkness constantly thrown around them by Satan.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 64.

2. Cite an occasion when an angel came to help Jesus in His work of saving the believers. Luke 22:41-44

“In the supreme crisis, when heart and soul are breaking under the load of sin, Gabriel is sent to strengthen the divine sufferer, and brace Him to tread His bloodstained path. And while the angel supports His fainting form, Christ takes the bitter cup, and consents to drink its contents. Before the suffering One comes up the wail of a lost and perishing world, and the words come from the blood-stained lips, "Nevertheless, if man must perish unless I drink this bitter cup, Thy will, not Mine, be done."” —*S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 5, p. 1123.*

JESUS, ANGELS, AND BELIEVERS

3. In clinging to Jesus the ladder, how is the help of the angels given to Jesus made available to such a believer? Eph. 1:7-10

“The strength given to Christ in the hour of bodily suffering and mental anguish in the Garden of Gethsemane, has been and will be given to those who suffer for His dear name’s sake. The same grace given to Jesus, the same comfort, the more than mortal steadfastness, will be given to every believing child of God...” —*S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 5, p. 1123.*

4. As in our intimacy with Christ we become intimate with the angels in their intimacy with Him, what further assurance of their help is chronicled for our comfort? Heb. 1:7, 14

“It is the work of the angels to come close to the tried, the suffering, the tempted. They labor untiringly in behalf of those for whom Christ died. When sinners are led to give themselves to the Saviour, angels bear the tidings heavenward, and there is great rejoicing among the heavenly host. "Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance." Luke 15:7. A report is borne to heaven of every successful effort on our part to dispel the darkness and to spread abroad the knowledge of Christ. As the deed is recounted before the Father, joy thrills through all the heavenly host.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 153.

ANGELIC INTEREST

5. With what interest are angels poised to help the helpless, frail, believing children of God? Matt. 18:2, 3, 10

“The little ones here referred to who believe in Christ, are not simply those who are young in years, but little children in Christ. There is a warning contained in these words lest we shall selfishly neglect or hold in contempt our weak brethren; lest we shall be unforgiving and exacting and judge and condemn others, and thus discourage them.” —*S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 5*, p. 1096.

“With intense interest the loyal angels and the inhabitants of the unfallen worlds are watching the controversy going on on this earth. Soon the conflict will be forever ended. Soon Christ will come to take to himself those who have fought the good fight of faith.” —*Bible Training School*, Oct. 1, 1902.

6. How is the interest of angels in our welfare represented in Scripture? Ps. 34:7; 91:11, 12

“Scarcely any of us realize that angels are about us; and these precious angels, who minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation, are saving us from many, many temptations and difficulties. The whole family of heaven is interested in the families here below; and how thankful we should be for this interest manifested for us day and night.” —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 99.

“His angels are appointed to watch over us, and if we put ourselves under their guardianship, then in every time of danger they will be at our right hand. When unconsciously we are in danger of exerting a wrong influence, the angels will be by our side, prompting us to a better course, choosing words for us, and influencing our actions. Thus our influence may be a silent, unconscious, but mighty power in drawing others to Christ and the heavenly world.” —*My Life Today*, p. 302.

CHARACTER BUILDING HELP

7. Do the angels have anything to do with the perfecting of our character? Rev. 7:2, 3

“Man is not left alone to conquer the power of evil by his own feeble efforts. Help is at hand and will be given to every soul who really desires it. Angels of God, that ascend and descend the ladder which Jacob saw in vision, will help every soul who will, to climb even to the highest heaven.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 568.

“We are saved by climbing round after round of the ladder, looking to Christ, clinging to Christ, mounting step by step to the height of Christ, so that He is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. Faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity are the rounds of this ladder.” —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 6*, p. 147.

8. Will our character building, therefore, be enhanced by co-operating with the angels? 1 Cor. 11:7-10

☞ Verse 10 (marginal reading): *For this reason ought the woman to have a covering signifying that she is under the power of her husband because of the angels.*

“They are to be taught that those who are to represent the high and holy God must keep their souls pure and clean, and that this purity must extend to their dress, and to everything in the home, so that the ministering angels will have evidence that the truth has wrought a change in the life, purifying the soul and refining the tastes.” —*Counsels on Health*, p. 101.

“Not because we first loved Him, does God love us; but "while we were yet sinners" (Romans 5:8) Christ died for us, making full and abundant provision for our redemption. Although by our disobedience we have merited God’s displeasure and condemnation, He has not forsaken us; He has not left us to grapple with the power of the enemy in our own finite strength. Heavenly angels fight our battles for us; and co-operating with them, we may be victorious over the powers of evil. Trusting in Christ as our personal Saviour, we may be "more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Romans 8:37).” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 10.

MEDITATION

☞ To help us understand angels’ assistance in our character development:

“It is the work of the angels to come close to the tried, the suffering, the tempted. They labor untiringly in behalf of those for whom Christ died.

“Angels are ever present where they are most needed. They are with those who have the hardest battles to fight, with those who must battle against inclination and hereditary tendencies, whose home surroundings are the most discouraging.

“Heavenly beings are appointed to do their work of ministry—to guide, guard, and control those who shall be heirs of salvation. . . . Faithful sentinels are on guard to direct souls in right paths.” —*My Life Today*, p. 303.

☞ To appreciate their co-operation:

“The Lord gives to every angel his work for this fallen world. Divine help is provided for men and women. They have the opportunity of cooperating with the heavenly intelligences, of being laborers together with God. There is placed before them the possibility of gaining a fitness for the presence of God, of being enabled to see His face. Heavenly angels are working to bring the human family into a close brotherhood, a oneness described by Christ as like that existing between the Father and the Son. How can men so highly favored by God fail to appreciate their opportunities and privileges? How can they refuse to accept the divine help proffered? How much it is possible for human beings to gain if they will keep eternity in view!” —*S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 7*, p. 923.

Function of Justification and Sanctification

*And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.
1 Corinthians 6:11*

OBJECTIVES

- To define justification in its connection with sanctification.
- To show that justification is inseparable from sanctification.
- To appreciate that both of these functions are a provision of grace to be engaged by faith.

ON-GOING NEED OF JUSTIFICATION

- 1. What in effect takes place in a believer when he is first justified at his initial conversion? 2 Cor. 5:17**

“As the sinner, drawn by the power of Christ, approaches the uplifted cross, and prostrates himself before it, there is a new creation. A new heart is given him. He becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus. Holiness finds that it has nothing more to require. God Himself is "the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Romans 3:26. [...] To human beings striving for conformity to the divine image there is imparted an outlay of heaven's treasure, an excellency of power, that will place them higher than even the angels who have never fallen.” —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 162.

2. Having received this new heart, this outlay of heaven's treasure, what is the potential for the believing soul? 1 John 3:9, 10; 5:18

““Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." He feels that he is the purchase of the blood of Christ and bound by the most solemn vows to glorify God in his body and in his spirit, which are God's. The love of sin and the love of self are subdued in him. He daily asks: "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?" "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" The true Christian will never complain that the yoke of Christ is galling to the neck. He accounts the service of Jesus as the truest freedom. The law of God is his delight. Instead of seeking to bring down the divine commands, to accord with his deficiencies, he is constantly striving to rise to the level of their perfection.” —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 5, p. 220.*

**3. Although this seed in the believer cannot sin, what does the Bible declare regarding the justified sinner? How does this manifest the children of God in contrast to the children of the devil?
Prov. 24:16; Ps. 37:23, 24; 1 John 1:8-10; 2:1**

““If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous." How careful is the Lord Jesus to give no occasion for a soul to despair. How He fences about the soul from Satan's fierce attacks. If through manifold temptations we are surprised or deceived into sin, He does not turn from us and leave us to perish. No, no, that is not our Saviour. Christ prayed for us. He was tempted in all points like as we are; and having been tempted, He knows how to succor those who are tempted.

“Our crucified Lord is pleading for us in the presence of the Father at the throne of grace. His atoning sacrifice we may plead for our pardon, our justification, and our sanctification.” —*S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 7*, p. 948.

4. As justification means pardon in consequence of true repentance, does its application then become needful throughout a believer’s life? Heb. 3:14; 1 Cor. 15:31; 2 Cor. 4:10

“To follow Jesus requires wholehearted conversion at the start, and a repetition of this conversion every day.” —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 122.

“No soul can take an advance step in the path cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in, without obtaining fresh supplies from the Fountain of grace and truth. Where enmity exists between man and Satan, it is an enmity that has been put there by the Lord Jesus Christ; for fallen men and fallen angels are naturally in harmony. Both stand on the same platform, and are nourished by the same atmosphere. Both are evil through apostasy from God. The enmity that exists in the natural heart is made manifest when a soul leaves the ranks of apostasy and joins the army of the Lord Jesus Christ. When a soul is truly converted to God, it will be made manifest that evil men are in league with evil angels, in a desperate companionship.” —*The Signs of the Times*, Nov. 26, 1894.

JUSTIFICATION LINKED TO SANCTIFICATION

**5. If justification is applied frequently throughout a believer’s life, is it therefore an integrated activity with sanctification?
1 Cor. 6:11; Rom. 8:29, 30**

“Justification means the saving of a soul from perdition, that he may obtain sanctification, and through sanctification, the life of heaven. Justification means that the conscience, purged from dead works, is placed where it can receive the blessings of sanctification.” —*S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 7*, p. 908.

6. Is it wise to present justification and sanctification as separated entities? Heb. 10:10, 14

“To be justified means to be pardoned. To those whom God justifies He imputes Christ’s righteousness, for the Saviour has taken away our sin. We stand before the throne of God justified and sanctified. We are emptied of self, and, through the sanctification of the truth, Christ abides in our hearts.” —*This Day With God*, p. 358.

“There is no such thing as instantaneous sanctification. True sanctification is a daily work, continuing as long as life shall last.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 116.

BOTH ENTITIES A GIFT

7. If justification and sanctification are the means by which a righteous character is built, what Biblical term are they part of? Gal. 5:5, 6

“Many commit the error of trying to define minutely the fine points of distinction between justification and sanctification. Into the definitions of these two terms they often bring their own ideas and speculations. Why try

to be more minute than is Inspiration on the vital question of righteousness by faith?" —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 116.

8. As we exercise our efforts to be justified and sanctified, where does this righteousness in all reality come from? Isa. 54:17; Rom. 5:16, 17; Jer. 33:14-16

“We have no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ’s character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned.

“More than this, Christ changes the heart. He abides in your heart by faith. You are to maintain this connection with Christ by faith and the continual surrender of your will to Him; and so long as you do this, He will work in you to will and to according to His good pleasure. So you may say, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Galatians 2:20. So Jesus said to His disciples, "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." Matthew 10:20. Then with Christ working in you, you will manifest the same spirit and do the same good works—works of righteousness, obedience.

“So we have nothing in ourselves of which to boast. We have no ground for self-exaltation. Our only ground of hope is in the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and in that wrought by His Spirit working in and through us.” —*Steps to Christ*, pp. 62, 63.

MEDITATION

☞ No thread of human devising:

“This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us. "All our righteousness are as filthy rags." Isaiah 64:6. Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God "was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin." Sin is defined to be "the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:5, 4. But Christ was obedient to every requirement of the law. He said of Himself, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8. When on earth, He said to His disciples, "I have kept My Father's commandments." John 15:10. By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 311.

Dealing with Foul Weather

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. Matthew 7:25.

OBJECTIVES

- To take into account that in our character building we will meet with adverse circumstances.
- To identify the difficulties that will work contrary to smooth progress in spiritual growth.
- To find Scriptural answers on how to meet and conquer these opposing elements.

MEETING CONFRONTATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

- 1. How does Apostle Peter let us know what we should expect?
1 Pet. 4:12, 13**

“We do not always consider that the sanctification we so earnestly desire and for which we pray so earnestly is brought about through the truth and, by the providence of God, in a manner we least expect. When we look for joy, behold there is sorrow. When we expect peace, we frequently have distrust and doubt, because we find ourselves plunged into trials we cannot avoid. In these trials we are having the answers to our prayers. In order for us to be purified, the fire of affliction must kindle upon us, and our will must be brought into conformity to the will of God. . . . God sees it best to put us

under a course of discipline which is essential for us before we are fit subjects for the blessing we crave.” —*Our High Calling*, p. 313.

**2. Why should we expect experiences contrary to character building?
Rev. 12:12; 1 Pet. 5:8, 9**

“Satan is upon our track. He is determined to overcome God’s commandment-keeping people with his temptations.” —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 3*, p. 570.

“The great enemy of our souls is vigilant and alert. He is especially active when he sees us putting forth efforts to do the work of the Lord. Do you think that the work of God will go forward smoothly, without any opposition from the enemy of the faith? Do you think there will be no opposition against those who seek to perfect their characters in harmony with the Word of God? This we can not expect. We must arm for conflict. But God will be with us. He has provided a complete gospel armor, and if we will put on *every piece* of this armor, we may be safe from defeat.” —*The Review and Herald*, Aug. 15, 1907.

STORMS OF LIFE

3. How does Jesus describe the opposing forces the believer will meet? Matt. 7:24-27. And how does He put it via the Spirit of Prophecy?

“In her endeavors to reach her home, the eagle is often beaten down by the tempest to the defiles of the mountains. The clouds, in black, angry masses sweep between her and the sunny heights where she secures her nest. For a while she seems bewildered, and dashes this way and that, beating her strong

wings as if to sweep back the dense clouds. She awakens the doves of the mountains with her wild cry in her vain endeavors to find a way out of her prison. At last she dashes upward into the blackness, and gives a shrill scream of triumph as she emerges, a moment later, in the calm sunshine above. The darkness and tempest are all below her, and the light of heaven is shining about her. She reaches her loved home in the lofty crag, and is satisfied. It was through darkness that she reached the light. It cost her an effort to do this, but she is rewarded in gaining the object which she sought.”

—*Messages to Young People*, p. 102.

4. What are these storms designed to achieve in reference to character building?

“If the time seems long to wait for our Deliverer to come, if, bowed by affliction and worn with toil, we feel impatient for our commission to close, and to receive an honorable release from the warfare, let us remember—and let the remembrance check every murmur—that God leaves us on earth to encounter storms and conflicts, to perfect Christian character, to become better acquainted with God our Father and Christ our Elder Brother, and to do work for the Master in winning many souls to Christ, that with glad heart we may hear the words "Well done, good and faithful servant; . . . enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matthew 25:23).” —*That I May Know Him*, p. 358.

“In summer, as we look upon the trees of the distant forest, all clothed with a beautiful mantle of green, we may not be able to distinguish between the evergreens and the other trees. But as winter approaches, and the frost king encloses them in his icy embrace, stripping the other trees of their beautiful foliage, the evergreens are readily discerned. Thus it will be with all who are walking in humility, distrustful of self, but clinging tremblingly to the hand of Christ. While those who are self-confident, and trust in their own perfection of character, lose their false robe of righteousness when subjected to the storms of trial, the truly righteous, who sincerely love and fear God, wear the robe of Christ’s righteousness in prosperity and adversity alike.”

—*The Sanctified Life*, p. 11.

DETAILS OF OPPOSING ELEMENTS

5. What are the difficulties we meet as we engage in character building? 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:2-7

“My soul is much burdened, for I know what is before us. Every conceivable deception will be brought to bear upon those who have not a daily, living connection with God. Satan’s angels are wise to do evil, and they will create that which some will claim to be advanced light and will proclaim it as new and wonderful; yet while in some respects the message may be truth, it will be mingled with human inventions and will teach for doctrine the commandments of men. . . . Many apparently good things will need to be carefully considered with much prayer, for they are specious devices of the enemy to lead souls in a path that lies so close to the path of truth that it will be scarcely distinguishable from it.” —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 362.

“Many are the ways by which Satan works through human influence to bind his captives. He secures multitudes to himself by attaching them by the silken cords of affection to those who are enemies of the cross of Christ. Whatever this attachment may be, parental, filial, conjugal, or social, the effect is the same; the opposers of truth exert their power to control the conscience, and the souls held under their sway have not sufficient courage or independence to obey their own convictions of duty.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 597.

6. Besides spiritual difficulties, what other discouraging circumstances will be met? Matt. 24:6-10

“I was shown the inhabitants of the earth in the utmost confusion. War, bloodshed, privation, want, famine, and pestilence were abroad in the land. As these things surrounded God’s people, they began to press together, and to cast aside their little difficulties. Self-dignity no longer controlled them; deep humility took its place. Suffering, perplexity, and privation caused reason to resume its throne, and the passionate and unreasonable man became sane, and acted with discretion and wisdom.” —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 1*, p. 268.

GAINING THE MASTERY

7. When the soul becomes overwhelmed by the multiplicity of negative influences, how can it conquer them? Isa. 59:19; Ps. 55:4, 5; 61:2-4

“So long as we are in the world, we shall meet with adverse influences. There will be provocations to test the temper; and it is by meeting these in a right spirit that the Christian graces are developed. If Christ dwells in us, we shall be patient, kind, and forbearing, cheerful amid frets and irritations. Day by day and year by year we shall conquer self, and grow into a noble heroism. This is our allotted task; but it cannot be accomplished without help from Jesus, resolute decision, unwavering purpose, continual watchfulness, and unceasing prayer. Each one has a personal battle to fight. Not even God can make our characters noble or our lives useful, unless we become co-workers with Him. Those who decline the struggle lose the strength and joy of victory.” —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 487.

8. How did Jesus in His parable indicate the way by which our character building will stand in the storm? Matt. 7:24

“Our salvation cost the life of the Son of God, and God demands of us that we build our characters upon a foundation that will stand the test of the judgment. Do you know that your foundation is deep and sure, so that the floods of trouble which are to come upon the earth shall not overthrow you? Do you know that you are not leading others astray by your example? If you waste the hours of your probation by building upon the sand, your life will be a failure. If you choose to ignore God’s word, you must be lost when the tempest sweeps down upon you; for only the doers of God’s word can build upon the rock.” —*The Signs of the Times*, Sept. 24, 1896.

“Jesus would have all who profess His name become earnest workers. It is necessary that every individual member build upon the rock Christ Jesus. A storm is arising that will wrench and test the spiritual foundation of every one to the utmost. Therefore avoid the sandbed; hunt for the rock. Dig deep; lay your foundation sure. Build, oh, build for eternity! Build with tears, with heartfelt prayers. Let every one of you, from henceforth, make your life beautiful by good works. Calebs are the men most needed in these last days.”
—*Christian Service*, p. 85.

Clamours of the Flesh

For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. Galatians 5:17

OBJECTIVES

- To identify another opposing reality we meet in our effort to build a righteous character.
- To clarify how the hereditary and cultivated tendencies of the flesh play a very serious part to interfere in our work of character building.
- To gain the skill to neutralize and conquer the power of the flesh.

MEETING INTERNAL OBSTACLES

- 1. As the Holy Spirit installs a new heart, the divine nature, into the soul at justification, what conflict is discovered by the believer?**
Rom. 7:21-23

“The word of God plainly presents before us this truth, that our physical natures will be brought into warfare with the spiritual.” —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 4*, p. 215.

- 2. How well does Scripture enunciate this truth so we can be intelligent in meeting it? Gal. 5:17; James 1:14, 15**

“The Christian will feel the promptings of sin, for the flesh lusteth against the Spirit; but the Spirit striveth against the flesh, keeping up a constant warfare.” —*The Sanctified Life*, p. 92.

“There are thoughts and feelings suggested and aroused by Satan that annoy even the best of men, but if they are not cherished, if they are repulsed as hateful, the soul is not contaminated with guilt, and no other is defiled by their influence.” —*That I May Know Him*, p. 140.

“Every Christian will be assailed by the allurements of the world, the clamors of the carnal nature, and the direct temptations of Satan. No one is safe. No matter what our experience has been, no matter how high our station, we need to watch and pray continually.” —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 5*, p. 102.

UNDERSTANDING THE FLESH

3. According to our physical nature, do we differ from the physical nature of the animal? Eccles. 3:18-20; Ps. 49:12-14

“The habits of the age are serious obstacles to the perfecting of Christian character. Physically we are composed of what we eat, and our minds are greatly influenced by our bodies. If we subsist largely upon the flesh of animals, the animal nature is increased in like proportion. Man is sufficiently animal in his nature without cultivating those propensities by the eating of food which stimulates and excites the animal organs to activity. As these propensities are strengthened the mental and moral powers are diminished.” —*The Signs of the Times*, Jan. 6, 1876.

4. As animals live by the impulse of instinct, is it also possible that the impulses of our animal organs can give us trouble with developing a character for heaven? 2 Pet. 2:10-12

“A gross diet will dull the comprehension and set the animal passions into activity. The animal nature will struggle for victory over the moral and spiritual nature.” —*Manuscript Releases Vol. 16*, p. 65.

“There is but little moral power in the professed Christian world. Wrong habits have been indulged, and physical and moral laws have been disregarded, until the general standard of virtue and piety is exceedingly low. Habits which lower the standard of physical health enfeeble mental and moral strength. The indulgence of unnatural appetites and passions has a controlling influence upon the nerves of the brain. The animal organs are strengthened, while the moral are depressed. It is impossible for an intemperate man to be a Christian, for his higher powers are brought into slavery to the passions.” —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 3*, p. 51.

MASTERING THE FLESH

5. How does the Bible direct us in regard to dealing with this animal nature in our bodies? 1 Cor. 9:25-27

“The apostle compared himself to a man running in a race, straining every nerve to win the prize. “I therefore so run,” he says, “not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” That he might not run uncertainly or at random in the Christian race, Paul subjected himself to severe training. The words, “I keep under my body,” literally mean to beat back by severe discipline the desires, impulses, and passions.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 314.

6. How also does the Spirit of Prophecy throw light on this reality? Rom. 6:12, 13

“The lower passions have their seat in the body and work through it. The words "flesh" or "fleshly" or "carnal lusts" embrace the lower, corrupt nature; the flesh of itself cannot act contrary to the will of God. We are commanded to crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts. How shall we do it? Shall we inflict pain on the body? No; but put to death the temptation to sin. The corrupt thought is to be expelled. Every thought is to be brought into captivity to Jesus Christ. All animal propensities are to be subjected to the higher powers of the soul. The love of God must reign supreme; Christ must occupy an undivided throne. Our bodies are to be regarded as His purchased possession. The members of the body are to become the instruments of righteousness.” —*The Adventist Home*, p. 127.

7. What are we to do with the thoughts and imaginations and feelings that arise from the flesh? 2 Cor. 10:3-5

“We should preserve the strictest chastity in thought, and word, and deportment. Let us remember that God sets our secret sins in the light of His countenance. There are thoughts and feelings suggested and aroused by Satan that annoy even the best of men, but if they are not cherished, if they are repulsed as hateful, the soul is not contaminated with guilt, and no other is defiled by their influence. O that we each might become a savor of life unto life to those around us!” —*That I May Know Him*, p. 140.

8. How does Jesus inspire us as we receive Him as our personal Saviour? Rom. 8:1-5

“Christ commenced the work of redemption just where the ruin began. He made provision to re-instate man in his God-like purity if he accepted the help brought him. Through faith in his all-powerful name—the only name given under Heaven whereby we may be saved—man could overcome

appetite and passion, and through his obedience to the law of God, health would take the place of infirmities and corrupting diseases. Those who overcome will follow the example of Christ by bringing bodily appetites and passion under the control of enlightened conscience and reason.”
—*The Review and Herald*, March 4, 1875.

The Final Victory

But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 15:57

OBJECTIVES

- To reflect on the challenge of character building as given in the previous twelve lessons.
- To discern the final product to be attained.
- To obtain reassurance that a perfect character is in reality achievable via the relationship of our atonement with Jesus.

THE BELIEVER'S CHALLENGE

- 1. What is the high calling placed before every believer in Jesus Christ? Matt. 5:48; 1 Pet. 2:21, 22; Rev. 3:21**

“None need fail of attaining, in his sphere, to perfection of Christian character. By the sacrifice of Christ, provision has been made for the believer to receive all things that pertain to life and godliness. God calls upon us to reach the standard of perfection and places before us the example of Christ’s character. In His humanity, perfected by a life of constant resistance of evil, the Saviour showed that through co-operation with Divinity, human beings may in this life attain to perfection of character. This is God’s assurance to us that we, too, may obtain complete victory.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 531.

2. With that perfect character before us to attain, with what determination are we to engage in the work? Phil. 3:13-15; Luke 12:23, 24

“We cannot be indolent in seeking this perfection of character. We cannot yield passively to our surroundings, and think that others will do the work for us, “Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.” We must be workers together with God. Life must become to us a humble, earnest working out of salvation with fear and trembling...”
—*Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists*, p. 135.

“The conflict is before us. The only safety for any one of us now is to be one with Christ in God. We are to strive to enter in at the strait gate. But this gate does not swing loosely on its hinges. It will not admit doubtful characters. We must now strive for eternal life with an intensity that is proportionate to the value of the prize before us. It is not money or lands or position, but the possession of a Christlike character, that will open to us the gates of Paradise. It is not dignity, it is not intellectual attainments, that will win for us the crown of immortality. Only the meek and lowly ones, who have made God their sufficiency, will receive this gift.” —*My Life Today*, p. 340.

3. Why does the development of a perfect character pose such a challenge? Jer. 17:9, 13:23; Acts 14:22

“A union with Christ by living faith is enduring; every other union must perish. Christ first chose us, paying an infinite price for our redemption; and the true believer chooses Christ as first and last and best in everything. But this union costs us something. It is a union of utter dependence, to be entered

into by a proud being. All who form this union must feel their need of the atoning blood of Christ. They must have a change of heart. They must submit their own will to the will of God. There will be a struggle with outward and internal obstacles. There must be a painful work of detachment as well as a work of attachment. Pride, selfishness, vanity, worldliness—sin in all its forms—must be overcome if we would enter into a union with Christ. The reason why many find the Christian life so deplorably hard, why they are so fickle, so variable, is that they try to attach themselves to Christ without first detaching themselves from these cherished idols.”

—*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 5, p. 231.*

THE WARFARE

4. In our task of dealing with the external and internal obstacles, how does Inspiration describe the ordeal of surmounting them?

1 Tim. 6:11, 12; Eph. 6:10-12

“...the child of God is to do service for God in ways that are not natural, or in harmony with inborn inclination. [...] they can make advancement only through conflict; for there is an enemy that ever contends against them, presenting temptations to cause the soul to doubt and sin. Besides this ever vigilant foe, there are hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil that must be overcome. [...] and in him who would be a partaker of the divine nature, appetite and passion must be brought under the control of the Holy Spirit. There is to be no end to this warfare this side of eternity, but while there are constant battles to fight, there are also precious victories to gain, and the triumph over self and sin is of more value than the mind can estimate.”

—*Christian Education, p. 122.*

5. Understanding the nature of the warfare, what then is the Biblical description of the believer? 2 Tim. 2:3-5

“This world is not a parade ground, but a battlefield. All are called to endure hardness, as good soldiers. They are to be strong and quit themselves like men. The true test of character is found in the willingness to bear burdens, to take the hard place, to do the work that needs to be done, though it bring no earthly recognition or reward.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 306.

VICTORY ASSURED

6. If character building includes a warfare against the flesh, the world, and the devil, how would we then express the attainment of a perfect character? 1 Cor. 15:57; 1 John 5:2-5

“If we will trust Him, and commit our ways to Him, He will direct our steps in the very path that will result in our obtaining the victory over every evil passion, and every trait of character that is unlike the character of our divine Pattern.” —*Our High Calling*, p. 316.

7. What comfort is found in the word of God for all who will make Jesus their personal Saviour? Ps. 98:1-4

“We can overcome. Yes; fully, entirely. Jesus died to make a way of escape for us, that we might overcome every fault, resist every temptation, and sit down at last with Him in His throne.” —*Our High Calling*, p. 353.

“Through personal effort joined with the prayer of faith the soul is trained. Day by day the character grows into the likeness of Christ. . . . It may cost a severe conflict to overcome habits which have been long indulged, but we may triumph through the grace of Christ.” —*My Life Today*, p. 99.

8. How is God's church finally revealed? Song 6:10

“If we are true to the promptings of the Spirit of God, we shall go on from grace to grace and from glory to glory until we shall receive the finishing touch of immortality.” —*My Life Today*, p. 99.

“The church must and will shine forth "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."” —*Our High Calling*, p. 353.

MEDITATION

“The love of God in the soul will have a direct influence upon the life and will call the intellect and the affections into active, healthful exercise. The child of God will not rest satisfied until he is clothed with the righteousness of Christ and sustained by His life-giving power. When he sees a weakness in his character, it is not enough to confess it again and again; he must go to work with determination and energy to overcome his defects by building up opposite traits of character. He will not shun this work because it is difficult. Untiring energy is required of the Christian; but he is not obliged to work in his own strength; divine power awaits his demand. Everyone who is sincerely striving for the victory over self will appropriate the promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee."” —*My Life Today*, p. 99.

SECTION 2

**TOOLS FOR
CHARACTER
BUILDING**

Introduction

HAVING gained an understanding of our effort and engagement in character building, we now continue our research into the tools we are to use to build characters to join the society of heaven.

Praise God we are not left to try and develop good characters without simple and practical information given by God Himself and demonstrated by the living example of Jesus Christ who was sent for us to watch closely, that by beholding we may be changed into the same image.

Here are the words of Inspiration:

“By beholding Christ, by talking of Him, by beholding the loveliness of His character we become changed. Changed from glory to glory. And what is glory? Character,—and he becomes changed from character to character. Thus we see that there is a work of purification that goes on by beholding Jesus.” —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 337.

So let us study diligently the spiritual tools and use them as did Jesus our Example.

The Armory of Ephesians Six

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Ephesians 6:13

OBJECTIVES

- To appreciate the character required both for a place in heaven and for the ability to stand in the evil days in which we live and which will deteriorate to the end.
- To recall the battle involved in gaining such a character.
- To receive the armory/tools by which this character can be won/built.

THE CONFLICT TO WIN

- 1. From the previous quarter's lessons, what is the conflict in which we are to conquer? James 4:1 (last part); Gal. 5:17; Rom. 7:23**

“Heaven’s resources are limitless, and they are all at our command. . . . Are there not presented before Christ’s followers the highest virtues to be cultivated, the greatest honors to be gained? God calls upon them to enter a race in which everyone may win. He calls upon them to enlist in a warfare in which everyone may be a conqueror. A robe of righteousness and a crown of everlasting life—this is the reward held out before the overcomer.”
—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 327.

- 2. As to conquer in this warfare is to gain a righteous character, how will this character benefit us in the future? Eph. 6:13; Zech. 3:3-7**

“Each one of us must look to God for divine enlightenment, that we may individually develop a character that will stand the test of the great day.”

—*The Bible Echo*, Oct. 15, 1892.

“In fullest confidence we must accept Jesus as our Saviour, and reveal him in our life and character. Thus may we stand amid the perils of the last days.”

—*The Review and Herald*, Sept. 22, 1896.

“It should be the aim of your life to fit yourself for association with the redeemed, with holy angels, and with Jesus, the world’s Redeemer.”

—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 72.

3. What details of character will we need to be able to stand faithfully during those days of final trouble? Zeph. 2:3; Dan. 12:3, 10

“Those who are unwilling to deny self, to agonize before God, to pray long and earnestly for His blessing, will not obtain it. Wrestling with God—how few know what it is! How few have ever had their souls drawn out after God with intensity of desire until every power is on the stretch. When waves of despair which no language can express sweep over the suppliant, how few cling with unyielding faith to the promises of God.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 621.

PROVISIONS TO CONQUER AND BUILD

4. What is the wise thing to do before venturing into war or commencing to build a structure? Luke 14:28-31; 2 Cor. 13:5

“To meet the claims of God, you will have to make personal effort; and in this work you will need the resources of an ever-growing Christian experience. Your faith must be strong, your consecration complete, your love pure and sincere, your zeal ardent, tireless, your courage unshaken, your patience unwearied, your hopes bright. Upon every one, old or young, rests a responsibility in this matter.” —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 184.

5. If we are in the faith, do we have all we need to win the warfare and build successfully? 2 Pet. 1:2-4; Phil. 4:19

“A noble all-round character is not inherited. It does not come to us by accident. A noble character is earned by individual effort through the merits and grace of Christ. God gives the talents, the powers of the mind; we form the character. It is formed by hard, stern battles with self. Conflict after conflict must be waged against hereditary tendencies. We shall have to criticize ourselves closely, and allow not one unfavorable trait to remain uncorrected.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 112.

“To be one with Christ, to build a character like his,—this is the high ideal set before us. Let us look earnestly at this ideal, and then strive to reach it. In the councils of love, provision was made to enable us to do this. We may be more than conquerors through him who has loved us. If at times we fail, let us not become discouraged, but try again, looking always to Jesus. Thus we shall become changed into his image.” —*The Youth’s Instructor*, May 16, 1901.

6. What are the resources provided for our character building to win the warfare? Eph. 6:14-17

“The Godhead was stirred with pity for the race, and the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit gave Themselves to the working out of the plan of redemption. In order fully to carry out this plan, it was decided that Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, should give Himself an offering for sin. What line can measure the depth of this love? God would make it impossible for man to say that He could have done more. With Christ He gave all the resources of heaven, that nothing might be wanting in the plan for man’s uplifting. Here is love—the contemplation of which should fill the soul with inexpressible gratitude! Oh, what love, what matchless love! The contemplation of this love will cleanse the soul from all selfishness. It will lead the disciple to deny self, take up the cross, and follow the Redeemer.”
—*Counsels on Health*, p. 222.

“Do you think there will be no opposition against those who seek to perfect their characters? [...] We must arm for conflict. But God will be with us. He has provided a complete gospel armor, and if we will put on every piece of this armor, we may be safe from defeat.” —*The Review and Herald*, Aug. 15, 1907.

7. How are the tools similar to the materials that will compose the character? 2 Pet. 1:5-7

“Look to your Redeemer in faith and loving trust, for power and wisdom to do the work of character building. He sits as a refiner, to purify the gold and silver from all dross. Then look continually unto Him, and no cheap or worthless material will be brought into the structure of your character building.” —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 19.

MEDITATION

“God gives us strength, reasoning power, time, in order that we may build characters on which He can place stamp of approval. He desires each child of His to build a noble character, by the doing of pure, noble deeds, that in the end he may present a symmetrical structure, a fair temple, honored by man and God.

“In our character building we must build on Christ. He is the sure foundation—a foundation which can never be moved. The tempest of temptation and trial cannot move the building which is riveted to the Eternal Rock.

“He who would grow into a beautiful building for the Lord must cultivate every power of the being. It is only by the right use of the talents that the character can develop harmoniously. Thus we bring to the foundation that which is represented in the Word as gold, silver, precious stones—material that will stand the test of God’s purifying fires. In our character building Christ is our example.” —*Child Guidance*, pp. 165, 166.

Truth

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. John 8:32

OBJECTIVES

- To learn how truth received into the mind will be effective in character building.
- To seek an understanding of the meaning of having the loins girt about with truth.
- To show that truth in the soul is a component of a holy character.

BUILDING CHARACTER AMIDST ERROR

- 1. As sin has been responsible for our deformed characters, what is necessary for us to gain a restoration of character? John 3:6, 7; Col. 3:9, 10**

“By nature the heart is evil, and "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." Job 14:4. No human invention can find a remedy for the sinning soul. . . . The fountain of the heart must be purified before the streams can become pure. He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law is attempting an impossibility. There is no safety for one who has merely a legal religion, a form of godliness. The Christian's life is not a modification or improvement of the old, but a transformation of nature. There is a death to self and sin, and a new life altogether. This change can be brought about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit.”

—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 55.

2. How does this transformation come into existence within the heart of one whose character is trapped in sin? John 8:31, 32; 1 Pet. 1:23

“The truth separates man from his sins, from his hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrongdoing. The soul that cherishes the love of Christ is full of freedom, light, and joy. In such a soul there are no divided thoughts. The whole man yearns after God.” —*Reflecting Christ*, p. 114.

3. Although imbued with hereditary and cultivated character defects, and that amidst abounding errors in doctrine, what does the truth make possible for the believer? 1 Pet. 2:9, 10; Phil. 2:13-15

“Let people receive the light as presented in the Word of God, in truth, and there will be a steadfastness of purpose that will enable them to stand erect in moral independence amid difficulties and danger. A character is formed, barricaded by truth—a character that will abide the day of trial and test before us, however dark may be the pressure, however severe the tribulation that the day of God’s preparation may bring forth. The principle of righteousness works outward from within and makes itself felt.” —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 241.

ONLY TRUTH CAN SAVE

4. Is it possible to gain a perfect character for heaven if we hold items of error? Prov. 16:6; Isa. 26:2; Prov. 14:12

“The human family is in need of a moral renovation, a preparation of character, that they may stand in God’s presence. There are souls ready to perish because of the theoretical errors which are prevailing, and which are calculated to counterwork the gospel message.” —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 6*, p. 21.

“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.” —*Selected Messages Book 2*, p. 56.

5. In the warfare against error and character defects, what counsel does Scripture therefore give? Eph. 6:14 (first part); Prov. 3:3-5

“The truth is to become a living, active principle in converting the soul.”
—*1888 Materials*, p. 50.

LOINS OF THE MIND

**6. What is meant with the words “loins girt about with truth”?
1 Pet. 1:13; 2 Cor. 10:3-5**

“Gird up the loins of your mind, says the apostle; then control your thoughts, not allowing them to have full scope. The thoughts may be guarded and controlled by your own determined efforts. Think right thoughts and you will perform right actions. You have, then, to guard the affections, not letting them go out and fasten upon improper objects. Jesus has purchased you with His own life; you belong to Him, therefore He is to be consulted in all things as to how the powers of your mind and the affections of your heart shall be employed.

“Every wrong tendency may be, through the grace of Christ, repressed, not in a languid, irresolute manner, but with firmness of purpose, with high resolves to make Christ the pattern. Let your love go out for those things that Jesus loved, and be withheld from those things that will give no strength to right impulses. With determined energy seek to learn, and to improve the character every day. You must have firmness of purpose to take yourself in hand and be what you know God would be pleased to have you.” —*That I May Know Him*, p. 135.

7. As thoughts and feelings can originate from either the flesh or the spirit, the animal or spiritual organs, can we identify the loins of the mind to develop a pure character? 1 Cor. 9:26, 27

TRUTH PART OF THE CHARACTER

8. With truth firmly girding the junction (loins) between the flesh and the spirit, how then is truth the material that also becomes part of the character? Ps. 15:1, 2; 51:6

“The truth must be stamped upon the soul, woven into the character, until the life is sanctified through the power of God.” —*The Review and Herald*, May 1, 1888.

Righteousness

The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way: but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness. Proverbs 11:5

OBJECTIVES

- To show how righteousness is a tool to build a righteous character.
- To understand how to use the tool to produce righteousness in the character.
- To demonstrate that righteousness is simultaneously the material that constitutes the character.

RIGHTEOUSNESS AS A TOOL

1. What has God given to the soul marred by sin to use in re-establishing his character? Rom. 5:17-19

“Jesus wants you to come. If you stumble once and again, do not give up in despair. If you are brought into trial, if you are overcome and do wrong, repent sincerely before God, but do not despair. Try again, laying hold more firmly of the merits and strength of Christ. When sinful man has no righteousness of his own to rely upon, Christ becomes his righteousness. When he feels that he has no strength, Jesus offers to put his arm beneath him. The sinner may then indeed say, Christ died for me, and his blood cleanseth me from all sin. I know in whom I have believed; from him I derive strength for the daily toils and trials of life and to resist the strong temptations of Satan.” —*The Review and Herald*, May 4, 1876.

2. How does Apostle Paul under inspiration identify this gift as an effective agency to keep us from failing in the warfare of gaining a righteous character? Eph. 6:14

“As you strive for the victory over your own inclinations, He will help you by His Holy Spirit to be circumspect in every action, that you may give no occasion for the enemy to speak evil of the truth. Put on as your breastplate that divinely protected righteousness which it is the privilege of all to wear. This will protect your spiritual life.” —*S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 6*, p. 1119.

3. As a breastplate protects a soldier’s heart from being pierced, how does the gift of Christ’s righteousness protect our spiritual heart from despair? Isa. 1:27; Rom. 3:23-25

“When you have Christ abiding in your hearts by faith, you will bring his righteousness into your life and experience. Satan will say to you, “You cannot be saved; you are a sinner.” Well, tell him that you know you are a sinner, but that Christ came to save sinners. He says, “I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” Tell the enemy, “I have laid hold of the righteousness of Christ, and he is my Saviour I have no righteousness of my own, but Christ is my righteousness.” Then you will be justified by faith.” —*The Review and Herald*, Aug. 5, 1890.

“Christ’s character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 62.

SKILLFUL EXERCISE OF CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

4. What does Scripture tell us regarding the application of Christ's righteousness as a breastplate for protection? Heb. 5:13, 14; 2 Pet. 1:2-4

“As you stand here today, and see the defects of your characters in the light of God's great moral standard, will you not say, "I will redeem the past; I will go to work in the Lord's vineyard"? By living faith will you not grasp the promises of God, and appropriate Christ's righteousness, and find the light of heaven shining in your life? You are to bring Christ into your every thought and action. A defective link in a chain makes it worthless, and a defect in your character will unfit you to enter the kingdom of heaven. You must set everything in order. But you cannot do this great work without divine aid. Are you ready to accept the promises of God, and to make them your own by living faith in his immutable word?” —*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 129.

5. As we are to exercise skill in this matter, how does Inspiration enlighten us in this exercise? Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:21-24

“We are to watch unto prayer, and our earnest efforts to overcome evil in our character, will make manifest the sincerity of our prayers. We are to look into the royal mirror, the law of God, that we may understand our moral standing, and detect the imperfections of our character; then we are to appropriate the righteousness of Christ, that we may keep the law of God. As we realize the worthlessness of our own righteousness, as we feel our dependence upon Christ, we fall upon the Rock and are broken, and then

Jesus moulds and fashions our characters after his own divine character. Let us all bear in mind that those whom God pardons are first made penitent. Some will say that we leave man with nothing to do, with no task to take up in the struggle. This is not so; all the powers with which God has endowed man must be employed in order that we may do the will of God.”
—*The Signs of the Times*, Aug. 11, 1890.

6. How do we renew our mind so we can exercise it skillfully to appropriate Christ’s righteousness? 2 Cor. 3:18

“It is a law of the mind that it gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is trained to dwell.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 596.

“It is growth in knowledge of the character of Christ that sanctifies the soul. To discern and appreciate the wonderful work of the atonement transforms him who contemplates the plan of salvation. By beholding Christ he becomes changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. The beholding of Jesus becomes an ennobling, refining process. . . . The perfection of Christ’s character is the Christian’s inspiration.”
—*That I May Know Him*, p. 166.

RIGHTEOUSNESS – COMPONENT OF CHARACTER

7. Having exercised the mind on Christ’s righteousness, how really does that righteousness then become part of the character of one being so exercised? Rev. 19:7, 8

“Christ was obedient to every requirement of the law. He said of Himself, “I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart.” Psalm 40:8. When on earth, He said to His disciples, “I have kept My Father’s commandments.” John 15:10. By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God’s commandments.

When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 311.

8. What is written of the believers who have so appropriated Christ’s righteousness? Prov. 11:5; 21:21

“In the judgment all who have truly repented of sin, and by faith claimed the blood of Christ as their atoning sacrifice, have had pardon entered against their names in the books of heaven; as they have become partakers of the righteousness of Christ, and their characters are found to be in harmony with the law of God, their sins will be blotted out, and they themselves will be accounted worthy of eternal life.... Jesus said, "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."” —*Reflecting Christ*, p. 62.

MEDITATION

“"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. The righteousness of Christ, as a pure white pearl, has no defect, no stain, no guilt. This righteousness may be ours. Salvation, with its blood-bought, inestimable treasures, is the pearl of great price. It may be searched for and found. But all who really find it will sell all they have to buy it. They give evidence that they are one with Christ, as He is one with the Father. In the parable the merchantman is represented as selling all that he had to gain possession of one pearl of great price. This is a beautiful representation of those who appreciate the truth so highly that they give up all they have to come into

possession of it. They lay hold by faith of the salvation provided for them at the sacrifice of the only-begotten Son of God.” —*Selected Messages Book 1*, p. 399.

The Gospel of Peace

*And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace...
Ephesians 6:15*

OBJECTIVES

- To appreciate that sharing the gospel with others proves to be a tool to build a heavenly character.
- To explore how the gospel of Jesus Christ actually integrates with the activity of building a good character.
- To show how peace is a contributing component in our character building.

SHARING THE GOSPEL

1. What is the meaning of our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace? Eph. 6:15

“Your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace,” you will be prepared to walk from house to house carrying the truth to the people. Sometimes you will find it very trying to do work of this kind; but if you go forth in faith, the Lord will go before you, and His light will shine upon your pathway. As you enter the homes of your neighbors to sell or to give away our literature, and in humility to teach them the truth, you will be accompanied by the light of heaven.” —*Welfare Ministry*, p. 100.

2. How will our labour for the souls we impart the gospel to affect us? Isa. 58:6-8, 10, 11

“The lesson that in helping others we ourselves receive help, must be urged upon young believers continually, by precept and example, that in their Christian experience they may gain the best results. Let the desponding ones, those disposed to think that the way to eternal life is trying and difficult, go to work to help others. Such efforts, united with prayer for divine light, will cause their own hearts to throb with the quickening influence of the grace of God, their own affections to glow with more divine fervor. Their whole Christian life will be more of a reality, more earnest, more prayerful.”
—*Gospel Workers*, p. 199.

- 3. When we are perplexed by our character defects, how will these perplexities melt away? Who provides us with answers for others which will prove answers to deal with our own perplexities?
Prov. 16:1; 11:25**

“Many are in obscurity. They have lost their bearings. They know not what course to pursue. Let the perplexed ones search out others who are in perplexity, and speak to them words of hope and encouragement. When they begin to do this work, the light of heaven will reveal to them the path that they should follow. By their words of consolation to the afflicted they themselves will be consoled. By helping others, they themselves will be helped out of their difficulties. Joy takes the place of sadness and gloom. The heart, filled with the Spirit of God, glows with warmth toward every fellow being. Every such an one is no longer in darkness; for his "darkness" is "as the noon day."” —*S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 4*, p. 1151.

THE GOSPEL TOOL

- 4. As God provides the answer of the tongue in sharing the gospel with others, what is written regarding this in the construction of righteousness in our characters? Prov. 22:17-21; Rom. 10:8-10; Deut. 30:14**

5. How well does Inspiration reveal that the gospel is verily a tool to build our characters with? Rev. 14:6; Gen. 17:7; Isa. 59:21; Jer. 32:40

“...the lives of professing Christians, a living witness to the power of the gospel to transform the character.” —*The Review and Herald*, Sept. 28, 1911.

6. Does the everlasting covenant, being equal to the everlasting gospel, alter the character of the believer? Jer. 31:33; Ezek. 36:25-27

“When a soul is truly converted, old habits and natural evil besetments are done away in Christ Jesus and all things become new.” —*That I May Know Him*, p. 247.

“While the wind is itself invisible, it produces effects that are seen and felt. So the work of the Spirit upon the soul will reveal itself in every act of him who has felt its saving power. When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the light of heaven. No one sees the hand that lifts the burden, or beholds the light descend from the courts above. The blessing comes when by faith the soul surrenders itself to God. Then that power which no human eye can see creates a new being in the image of God.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 173.

PEACE – A COMPONENT OF CHARACTER

7. How does Jesus express the instalment of peace into the human character? John 14:27; 16:33

“Those who take Christ at His word, and surrender their souls to His keeping, their lives to His ordering, will find peace and quietude. Nothing of the world can make them sad when Jesus makes them glad by His presence. In perfect acquiescence there is perfect rest. The Lord says, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee." Isaiah 26:3. Our lives may seem a tangle; but as we commit ourselves to the wise Master Worker, He will bring out the pattern of life and character that will be to His own glory. And that character which expresses the glory—character—of Christ will be received into the Paradise of God. A renovated race shall walk with Him in white, for they are worthy.”

—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 331.

8. With that kind of peace as a part of the human character, how will it manifest itself in the daily social relationships? Ps. 119:165; James 3:17, 18

“Christ never murmured, never uttered discontent, displeasure, or resentment. He was never disheartened, discouraged, ruffled, or fretted. He was patient, calm, and self-possessed under the most exciting and trying circumstances. All His works were performed with a quiet dignity and ease, whatever commotion was around Him. Applause did not elate Him. He feared not the threats of His enemies. He moved amid the world of excitement, of violence and crime, as the sun moves above the clouds. Human passions and commotions and trials were beneath Him. He sailed like the sun above them all. Yet He was not indifferent to the woes of men.

His heart was ever touched with the sufferings and necessities of His brethren, as though He Himself was the one afflicted. He had a calm inward joy, a peace which was serene. His will was ever swallowed up in the will of His Father. Not My will but Thine be done, was heard from His pale and quivering lips.” —*This Day With God*, p. 263.

MEDITATION

“Here is our sufficiency. Our defense is in the preparation of the gospel. The Lord will give wisdom to all who ask Him, but let those who are to work difficult and peculiar fields study Christ’s methods. Let not their own peculiar traits of character be brought into the work; for Satan knows upon just what traits of character to work, that objectionable features may be revealed. These traits of character, received by inheritance or cultivated, are to be cut away from the soul, and the Spirit of Christ is to take possession of the organs of speech, of the mental power, of the physical and moral powers, else when in the midst of important interests Satan shall work with his masterly power to create a condition of things that will call into active exercise these special traits of character, and will bring defeat just when there should be a victory, and so the cause of God will sustain a loss.”

—*The Southern Work*, p. 76.

Faith

*For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.
Galatians 5:5*

OBJECTIVES

- To portray faith as a tool to develop a righteous character.
- To explore the activity of faith to show how it works in producing such a character.
- To observe that in its action to build the character, faith consequently includes itself as a component of the character.

FAITH THAT WORKS

1. In our effort to build a righteous character, what is given us to use in this enterprise? Eph. 6:16; 2:8; Gal. 5:6

“While the sinner cannot save himself, he still has something to do to secure salvation. “Him that cometh to me,” says Christ, “I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37). But we must *come* to Him; and when we repent of our sins, we must believe that He accepts and pardons us. Faith is the gift of God, but the power to exercise it is ours. Faith is the hand by which the soul takes hold upon the divine offers of grace and mercy.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 315.

2. How clearly does Inspiration portray faith to be a tool or means to an end, namely righteousness in the character? Gal. 5:5

“Faith is the hand that takes hold of infinite help; it is the medium by which the renewed heart is made to beat in unison with the heart of Christ.”
—*Messages to Young People*, p. 102.

“Why should the sons and daughters of God be reluctant to pray, when prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven’s storehouse [...]? Without unceasing prayer and diligent watching we are in danger of growing careless and of deviating from the right path.” —*A Call to Stand Apart*, p. 27.

3. For emphasis, where does this tool come from as cited in question 1? 2 Tim. 3:15; Phil. 3:9; Rev. 14:12

““The faith of Jesus.” It is talked of, but not understood. What constitutes the faith of Jesus, that belongs to the third angel’s message? Jesus becoming our sin-bearer that He might become our sin-pardoning Saviour. He was treated as we deserve to be treated. He came to our world and took our sins that we might take His righteousness. And faith in the ability of Christ to save us amply and fully and entirely is the faith of Jesus.” —*Selected Messages Book 3*, p. 172.

THE ACTIVITY OF FAITH

4. What is the function of this hand of faith by which we are to gain a perfect character? Heb. 11:6; 12:2

“Genuine faith appropriates the righteousness of Christ, and the sinner is made an overcomer with Christ...” —*Faith and Works*, p. 93.

5. As we exercise faith in Christ, what transition will take place within our souls? Col. 2:5-7, 10-13

“Often the Christian life is beset with dangers, and duty seems hard to perform. The imagination pictures impending ruin before, and bondage and death behind. Yet the voice of God speaks clearly, Go forward. Faith looks beyond the difficulties, and lays hold of the unseen, even Omnipotence, therefore it cannot be baffled. Faith is the clasping of the hand of Christ in every emergency.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 100.

6. If you contemplate upon the activity of the faith Jesus exercised, what do you see? Heb. 5:7-9. What does the Holy Spirit effect within you? John 16:14; Phil. 2:13, 5

“There is such a thing as being partakers of the divine nature. We shall be tempted in a variety of ways, but when we are tempted we need to remember that a provision has been made whereby we may overcome. Those who truly believe in Christ are made partakers of the divine nature and have power that they can appropriate under every temptation. They will not fall under temptation and be left to defeat. In time of trial they will claim the promises and by these escape the corruptions that are in the world through lust.” —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 197.

7. When overcome by sin and having fallen into disgrace, how does faith function? Ps. 69:1-3, 5, 13; 40:1-4

“Jesus wants you to come. If you stumble once and again, do not give up in despair. If you are brought into trial, if you are overcome and do wrong, repent sincerely before God, but do not despair. Try again, laying hold more firmly of the merits and strength of Christ. When sinful man has no righteousness of his own to rely upon, Christ becomes his righteousness. When he feels that he has no strength, Jesus offers to put his arm beneath him. The sinner may then indeed say, Christ died for me, and his blood cleanseth me from all sin. I know in whom I have believed; from him I derive strength for the daily toils and trials of life and to resist the strong temptations of Satan.” —*The Review and Herald*, May 4, 1876.

“As you stand here today, and see the defects of your characters in the light of God’s great moral standard, will you not say, “I will redeem the past; I will go to work in the Lord’s vineyard”? By living faith will you not grasp the promises of God, and appropriate Christ’s righteousness, and find the light of heaven shining in your life? You are to bring Christ into your every thought and action. A defective link in a chain makes it worthless, and a defect in your character will unfit you to enter the kingdom of heaven. You must set everything in order. But you cannot do this great work without divine aid. Are you ready to accept the promises of God, and to make them your own by living faith in his immutable word?” —*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 129.

FAITH – THE SHIELD OF CHARACTER

8. When our faith in Jesus transfers into the faith of Jesus, what has happened to our character? Hab. 2:4; James 4:6-10; Rom. 3:27

“It has been repeatedly revealed to me that many professing Christians will, in the time of the final test, be greatly disappointed. Many, many will fail to provide themselves with that righteousness of Christ represented in the parable by the wedding-garment. They have trusted in their own righteousness, and have not manifested the humility of Jesus Christ. They may be seated at the supper table with others, but Christ will recognize them,

and will say to them, "How camest thou in hither not having on a wedding-garment?"” —*The Review and Herald*, Sept. 24, 1908.

9. In possession of the component of faith, of total dependence on God in utmost humility of character, how will this prove to be a shield against the fiery darts of Satan? Eph. 6:16; Rom. 1:16, 17

“Many today stand where Peter stood when in self-confidence he declared that he would not deny his Lord. And because of their self-sufficiency, they fall an easy prey to Satan’s devices. Those who realize their weakness trust in a power higher than self. And while they look to God, Satan has no power against them.” —*S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 5*, p. 1102.

“All who have put on the robe of Christ’s righteousness will stand before Him as chosen and faithful and true. Satan has no power to pluck them out of the hand of the Saviour.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 316.

“When Satan casts his hellish shadow athwart my pathway, I do not look at it or talk of it and glorify the devil by talking of him and his power and what a hard time I am having. No, I cleave right through the shadow, and by faith take hold of Jesus Christ. By beholding we "are changed into the same image from glory to glory." Talk faith. Every doubt you express is a seed sown, and that seed will take root in some heart. We do not want to speak one word of doubt and thus praise the devil for his wonderful power to keep you in subjection. No, Christ has purchased me and redeemed me. Satan has no power over me.” —*Mind, Character, and Personality Vol. 2*, p. 675.

Salvation

And take the helmet of salvation... Ephesians 6:17

OBJECTIVES

- To recognise that our character building requires our intelligent mind application.
- To explore the value of the knowledge that in Jesus we are assured of our salvation.
- To discern the link of this assurance as a protective agency for our mind in its character-building exercises.

THE INTELLIGENT MIND

- 1. Do intellectual exercises have anything to do with our diligence to build a character to God's glory? Rom. 2:13-15; Heb. 5: 13, 14**

“Every faculty, every attribute, with which the Creator has endowed the children of men is to be employed for His glory; and in this employment is found its purest, holiest, happiest exercise. While religious principle is held paramount, every advance step taken in the acquirement of knowledge or in the culture of the intellect is a step toward the assimilation of the human with the Divine, the finite with the Infinite.” —*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 52.

“The case of Daniel is an instructive one. Daniel was taught by God, and he cooperated with God. He exerted all his powers to work out his own salvation, and God worked in him to will and to do according to His good pleasure. Of Daniel and his companions it is written, "As for these four

children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams" [Daniel 1:17]. These youth were sincere, faithful Christians. True education must be all-sided, not one-sided. Such an education Daniel and his fellows were determined to have. They sought to acquire knowledge for a purpose, to honor and glorify God. They must perfect a Christian character and have a clear intellect in order to stand as the representatives of the true religion amid the false religions of heathenism." —*Manuscript Releases Vol. 19*, p. 116.

“As in the case of Daniel, in exact proportion as the spiritual character is developed, the intellectual capabilities are increased.” —*S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 4*, p. 1168.

2. What is meant by the words of Revelation 7:2-3 “sealed in their foreheads”? Col. 1:23

“Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads—it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved—just as soon as God’s people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come. Indeed, it has begun already; the judgments of God are now upon the land, to give us warning, that we may know what is coming.” —*S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 4*, p. 1161.

3. How are we to use our intellect? 2 Tim. 2:15

“The Word of God is to be the foundation of all study, and the words of revelation, carefully studied, appeal to and strengthen the intellect as well as the heart. The culture of the intellect is required, that we may understand the revelation of the will of God to us. It cannot be neglected by those who are obedient to His commandment. God has not given us the faculties of the

mind to be devoted to cheap and frivolous pursuits.” —*Mind, Character, and Personality Vol. 1*, p. 89.

INTELLECT AND SALVATION

4. What must we do with our intellect to assist us in our spiritual growth? Prov. 2:1-5, 11; Mark 12:30; Acts 17:11

“By faith we may look to the hereafter and grasp the pledge of God for a growth of intellect, the human faculties uniting with the divine, and every power of the soul being brought into direct contact with the Source of light. We may rejoice that all which has perplexed us in the providences of God will then be made plain, things hard to be understood will then find an explanation; and where our finite minds discovered only confusion and broken purposes, we shall see the most perfect and beautiful harmony. "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." 1 Corinthians 13:12.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 112.

5. How is salvation and intellect blended in the believer? Isa. 33:6

“It was the plan of redemption, which was to call forth the intellect, to thrill the soul, and prepare it for the great power of God, which is salvation to all who believe...” —*Manuscript Releases Vol. 16*, p. 95.

6. What assurance does the intellect discover in the story of salvation? 1 John 5:20; 2:26, 27

“The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means taking away our sins, and filling the vacuum with the graces of the Holy Spirit. It means divine illumination, rejoicing in God. It means a heart emptied of self, and blessed with the abiding presence of Christ. When Christ reigns in the soul, there is purity, freedom from sin. The glory, the fullness, the completeness of the gospel plan is fulfilled in the life. The acceptance of the Saviour brings a glow of perfect peace, perfect love, perfect assurance. The beauty and fragrance of the character of Christ revealed in the life testifies that God has indeed sent His Son into the world to be its Saviour.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 419.

“Christ saw the helpless condition of the race, and he came to redeem them by living the life of obedience the law requires, and by paying in his death the penalty of disobedience. He came to bring us the message and means of deliverance, an assurance of salvation, not through the abrogation of the law, but through obedience made possible by his merits.” —*The Review and Herald*, Apr. 29, 1902.

HELMET FOR THE MIND

7. As a helmet protects the head and the brain within, does salvation protect the intellect of the mind from destructive spiritual forces? Eph. 6:17 (first part); Isa. 32:17-19

“Doubts will rush into your mind, because Satan is trying to hold you in captivity to his cruel power; but face him in the strength that Jesus is willing to give you, and conquer the inclination to express unbelief in your Saviour.”

“It is your privilege to trust in the love of Jesus for salvation, in the fullest, surest, noblest manner; to say, He loves me, He receives me; I will trust Him, for He gave His life for me. Nothing so dispels doubt as coming in contact with the character of Christ. He declares, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out;" that is, there is no possibility of My casting him out, for I have pledged My word to receive him. Take Christ at His word, and let your lips declare that you have gained the victory.

“Is Jesus true? Does He mean what He says? Answer decidedly, Yes, every word. Then if you have settled this, by faith claim every promise that He has made, and receive the blessing; for this acceptance by faith gives life to the soul. You may believe that Jesus is true to you, even though you feel yourself to be the weakest and most unworthy of His children. And as you believe, all your dark, brooding doubts are thrown back upon the archdeceiver who originated them. You can be a great blessing if you will take God at His word. By living faith you are to trust Him, even though the impulse is strong within you to speak words of distrust.” —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 516, 517.

8. How are we to fortify our mind to protect it from Satan’s corroding influences?

“The prayer of Christ for His disciples was, “Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth.” If we are to be sanctified through a knowledge of the truth found in the word of God, we must have an intelligent knowledge of His will therein revealed. We must search the Scriptures, not merely rush through a chapter and repeat it, taking no pains to understand it, but we must dig for the jewel of truth which will enrich the mind, and fortify the soul against the wiles and temptations of the archdeceiver.” —*Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 19.

“Higher education is an experimental knowledge of the plan of salvation, and this knowledge is secured by earnest and diligent study of the Scriptures. Such an education will renew the mind and transform the character, restoring the image of God in the soul. It will fortify the mind against the deceptive whisperings of the adversary, and enable us to understand the voice of God. It will teach the learner to become a co-worker with Jesus Christ, to dispel the moral darkness about him, and bring light and knowledge to men. It is the simplicity of true godliness— our passport from the preparatory school of earth to the higher school above.” —*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 11.

“True education is the inculcation of those ideas that will impress the mind and heart with the knowledge of God the Creator and Jesus Christ the Redeemer. Such an education will renew the mind and transform the character. It will strengthen and fortify the mind against the deceptive

whisperings of the adversary of souls, and enable us to understand the voice of God. It will fit the learned to become a co-worker with Christ.”
—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 543.

The Word of God

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Hebrews 4:12

OBJECTIVES

- To appreciate fully that God's word is a primary tool to be used skillfully in character building.
- To explore the piercing qualities of God's word by which our faulty characters can be penetrated and removed.
- To embrace the power of the word by which new traits of character can be established.

BY EVERY WORD OF GOD

- 1. As food is given to build a healthy body, what is given to build a holy character? Deut. 8:3; John 6:48-50, 53, 63**

“The Word of God is to be our spiritual food. [...] As our physical life is sustained by food, so our spiritual life is sustained by the Word of God. And every soul is to receive life from God's Word for himself. As we eat for ourselves in order to receive nourishment, so we must receive the Word for ourselves. [...] The life thus imparted is in like manner sustained. "By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4) shall man live. The mind, the soul, is built up by that upon which it feeds; and it rests with us to determine upon what it shall be fed. It is within the power of every

one to choose the topics that shall occupy the thoughts and shape the character.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 20.

2. How did Jeremiah express this principle? Jer. 15:16

“A true believer shows that his character has been transformed by living a spiritual life, by living on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.” —*The Review and Herald*, Jan. 25, 1898.

“True faith takes the word of God and weaves it into the life and character. Faith lives by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” —*The Signs of the Times*, July 27, 1888.

3. In terms of character building, how did Jesus apply His word to this enterprise? Matt. 7:24, 25

“Like the builders of these houses on the rock, said Jesus, is he who shall receive the words that I have spoken to you, and make them the foundation of his character and life. Centuries before, the prophet Isaiah had written, “The word of our God shall stand for ever” (Isaiah 40:8); and Peter, long after the Sermon on the Mount was given, quoting these words of Isaiah, added, “This is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you” (1 Peter 1:25). The Word of God is the only steadfast thing our world knows. It is the sure foundation. “Heaven and earth shall pass away,” said Jesus, “but my words shall not pass away” (Matthew 24:35).”

“As you give heed to the light you have, greater light will come. You are building on God’s Word, and your character will be builded after the similitude of the character of Christ. Christ, the true foundation, is a living stone; His life is imparted to all that are built upon Him. “Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house” (1 Peter 2:5, ASV).” —*Lift Him Up*, p. 195.

THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

4. What is the word of God inspired by His Spirit compared with? Eph. 6:17 (last half); Heb. 4:12

“The truths of the Bible, treasured in the heart and mind and obeyed in the life, convince and convert the soul, transform the character, and comfort and uplift the heart. . . . The Word makes the proud humble, the perverse meek and contrite, the disobedient obedient. The sinful habits natural to man are interwoven with the daily practice. But the Word cuts away the fleshly lusts. It is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the mind. It divides the joints and marrow, cutting away the lusts of the flesh, making men willing to suffer for their Lord.” —*That I May Know Him*, p. 199.

5. In which way can we miss the intended action of the word? Isa. 29:13

“The highest qualification of the mind will not, cannot, supply the place of true simplicity, of genuine piety. The Bible may be studied as a branch of human science would be; but its beauty, the evidence of its power to save the soul that believes, is a lesson that is never thus learned. If the practice of the Word is not brought into the life, then the sword of the Spirit has not wounded the natural heart. It has been shielded in poetic fancy. Sentimentalism has so wrapped it about that the heart has not sufficiently felt the keenness of its edge, piercing and cutting away the sinful shrines where self is worshipped.” —*Our High Calling*, p. 203.

“I feel deeply in regard to the fact that our people talk the truth, but do not live the truth, thus carrying its principles in their life practices. Every church that has been organized needs a work done for them that God alone can do.

They talk consecration, mention consecration in their prayers, and say over and over again, "We give ourselves wholly to Christ," when they hold tenaciously to their own ideas and will and are not consecrated to Christ.

"Saying consecration, praying consecration, are not enough. We must practice consecration. We feel deeply pained to see the absence of consecration in the individual members of the church. These reach too high. When they bring their consecration down into their very words and actions, into their associations with one another, they will bring consecration into their practical life. It is present religion we need, not an imaginary religion. It is a Saviour today to help us. It is to reveal Christ in our words today; it is to be kind, tender, and affectionate today; it is to esteem others better than ourselves today. Each separate word and action is to show consecration not to ourselves, but to God. We are fitting up for heaven. The Spirit of Jesus dwells in us richly by faith." —*Manuscript Releases Vol. 21*, p. 306.

THE CREATIVE WORD

6. What is the power of the word that proceeds from the mouth of God? Gen. 1:3, 24; Ps. 33:6-9

"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.

"And how this is accomplished, Christ has shown us. By what means did He overcome in the conflict with Satan? By the word of God. Only by the word could He resist temptation. "It is written," He said. And unto us are given "exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." 2 Peter 1:4. Every promise in God's word is ours. "By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" are we to live. When assailed by temptation, look not to circumstances or to the weakness of self, but to the power of the word. All its strength is yours. "Thy word," says the psalmist, "have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee." "By the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." Psalm 119:11; 17:4." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 123.

7. In the knowledge that there is power in the word of God, how shall we pray and do our part in answering that prayer? Ps. 51:10; 1 Pet. 1:23

“Shall we not include in our prayers the words, "Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done," and then understandingly answer our own petitions by keeping the human will in subjection to God's will, in order that the unsanctified desires and ambitious devisings of the human mind may not become a controlling power? Shall we not receive the Holy Spirit as a welcome Guest into the soul-temple, that the will and the purposes of Christ may be worked out in and through us to God's glory? Shall we not, in word and deed, carry out the expressed will of the One who cannot err or make a mistake?" —*Manuscript Releases Vol. 18*, p. 103.

8. How clearly does it become evident that the word of God is the most powerful tool in building a righteous character? 2 Cor. 3:15-18

“The converting power of Christ is to have a telling influence in all our institutions, and this power is the agency that will overcome our individual defects of character and make us laborers together with God. By the truth held in its purity, souls will be reached who could not otherwise be influenced to obey. The Holy Spirit is to be our counselor and guide in every branch of the work. The will of God made manifest in the life reveals the power of the word to overcome every natural trait of character, and to conduct the believer "from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”” —*Loma Linda Messages*, p. 390.

MEDITATION

“God can and will do a great work for every human being who will open the heart to the word of God, and let it enter the soul-temple and expel every

idol. Summoned to the effort, mind and heart take in the wonderful disclosures of the revealed will of God. The soul that is converted will be made stronger to resist evil. In the study of the Bible the converted soul eats the flesh and drinks the blood of the Son of God, which He himself interprets as the receiving and doing of His words that are spirit and life. The Word is made flesh, and dwells among us, in those who receive the holy precepts of the word of God. The Saviour of the world has left a holy, pure example for all men. It illuminates, uplifts, and brings immortality to all who obey the divine requirements.” —*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 378.

Prayer

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. Philippians 4:6

OBJECTIVES

- To research the science of prayer, and its true meaning.
- To establish that prayer is verily a tool to exercise in the task of building a righteous character.
- To come to realise that communication skills are part of a good character, and prayer is just such a skill.

CO-OPERATING WITH GOD

1. Who is involved in the work of our personal character building? 1 Cor. 3:9

“In your work of character building be sure that Christ is your director. It makes a great difference whether you are laborers together with God or whether you are laborers together against God; whether it is your highest ambition to magnify God or to magnify yourself and your plans. Christ declares, "Without me ye can do nothing"—nothing that will be approved by God. Study your motives carefully, and make sure that you are not working in your own wisdom, apart from Christ.” —*S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 6, p. 1087.*

2. What is needed to be able to work together effectively? Eph. 6:18

“It is the privilege of every one to say, "I will carry out my Captain’s orders to the very letter, feeling or no feeling. I will not wait for a happy sensation, for a mysterious impulse. I will say, "What are my orders? What is the line of my duty? What says the Master to me? Is the line of communication open between God and my soul? What is my position before God?" Just as soon as we come into right relations to God, we shall understand our duty and do it; and we shall not think the good things we do, entitle us to salvation.”

—*The Review and Herald*, Apr. 9, 1889.

“Pray in faith, and trust your Saviour. Make every effort necessary to keep the channel of communication open between Christ and your soul.”

—*The Youth’s Instructor*, July 19, 1894.

THE SCIENCE OF PRAYER

3. Being engaged with the director of our character building enterprise, how are we to understand the activity of prayer? Matt. 26:41; Eph. 6:18 (last half)

“If men would only listen to the word of the Lord, if they would only pray and hear and believe, God would work with them.” —*Manuscript Releases Vol. 13*, p. 103.

“As I looked on every side, and saw the evidences of fulfilling prophecies, I felt more determined than ever to watch and pray, and to listen more carefully for the voice of Christ, our leader.” —*The Review and Herald*, July 30, 1889.

4. Where are we to learn this science of prayer, so that we will be successful in the formation of a holy character? Mark 1:35; Isa. 50:4-6; John 5:19, 30

“Christ’s lessons in regard to prayer should be carefully considered. There is a divine science in prayer, and His illustration brings to view principles that all need to understand. He shows what is the true spirit of prayer, He teaches the necessity of perseverance in presenting our requests to God, and assures us of His willingness to hear and answer prayer.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 142.

5. As Jesus listened in prayer, and thus provided for us a representative character (Heb. 5:7-9), how then are we to secure such a perfect character? 1 Pet. 2:21

“In prayer we enter the audience chamber of the Most High...” —*My Life Today*, p. 282.

“The Lord is waiting to do great things for His people; but they must be pure in heart before they can see God or know Him as a pure and holy God. Jesus led His disciples into the audience chamber of the Most High. He impressed upon their minds what was to be the burden of their prayer. They were to pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit, which would supply every need of the soul, for it would work by love and purify the soul. The Spirit taking its abode in the heart, will transform the entire being, conforming it to the likeness of Christ.” —*Bible Training School*, June 1, 1917.

PRAYER AND CHARACTER

**6. If we follow the example of Jesus and engage in the widest sense in the science of prayer, what will be the outcome for us?
Prov. 2:1-7**

“Communion with and love for God, the practice of holiness, the destruction of sin, are all pleasant. The leading of God’s Word will not fascinate the imagination and inflame the passions, like a fictitious storybook, but softens,

soothes, elevates, and sanctifies the heart. When in trouble, when assailed by fierce temptations, they have the privilege of prayer. What an exalted privilege! Finite beings, of dust and ashes, admitted through the mediation of Christ, into the audience chamber of the Most High. In such exercises the soul is brought into a sacred nearness with God and is renewed in knowledge and true holiness and fortified against the assaults of the enemy.” —*Child Guidance*, p. 467.

7. How does Scripture describe the character of Jesus which we may have? Isa. 11:1-3

“Prayer is heaven’s ordained means of success in the conflict with sin and the development of Christian character. The divine influences that come in answer to the prayer of faith will accomplish in the soul of the suppliant all for which he pleads. For the pardon of sin, for the Holy Spirit, for a Christlike temper, for wisdom and strength to do His work, for any gift He has promised, we may ask; and the promise is, “Ye shall receive.”” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 239.

8. Is prayerfulness a trait of character? Was Daniel an example for God’s people in the last days? Dan. 12:13

“Labor in perseverance, in tenderness, compassion, prayerfulness, and love will do more than sermons. The Lord Jesus, in giving His life for the saving of the world from the curse of sin, intended greater things than our eyes have yet witnessed. The Holy Spirit is waiting for channels through whom to work. Satan will not always triumph. The Spirit of God will be poured out upon the church just as soon as the vessels are prepared to receive it.” —*That I May Know Him*, p. 330.

“Daniel was sorely tried; but he overcame because he was of a humble and prayerful spirit. Although he was surrounded with distrust and suspicion,

and his enemies laid a snare for his life, yet he maintained a serene and cheerful trust in God, never once deviating from principle. Although Daniel was a man of like passions with ourselves, the pen of inspiration presents him as a faultless character. His life is given us as a bright example of what man may become, even in this life, if he will make God his strength, and wisely improve the privileges and opportunities within his reach.”

—*The Signs of the Times*, Nov. 4, 1886.

Watching

Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching. Luke 12:37

OBJECTIVES

- To discern the importance of watching while occupied in character building.
- To identify what we are to be watching for.
- To recognise that watchfulness is a trait of character to obtain.

BUILDING WATCHFULLY

1. What is necessary in developing a righteous character with the enemy of our souls out to trap us? 1 Pet. 5:8, 9

“Purity of life and a character molded after the divine Pattern are not obtained without earnest effort and fixed principles. A vacillating person will not succeed in attaining Christian perfection. Such will be weighed in the balances and found wanting. Like a roaring lion, Satan is seeking for his prey. He tries his wiles upon every unsuspecting youth Satan tells the young that there is time enough yet, that they may indulge in sin and vice this once and never again; but that one indulgence will poison their whole life. Do not once venture on forbidden ground. In this perilous day of evil, when allurements to vice and corruption are on every hand, let the earnest, heartfelt cry of the young be raised to heaven: "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" And may his ears be open and his heart inclined to

obey the instruction given in the answer, "By taking heed thereto, according to thy word." —*Child Guidance*, p. 466.

“In this age of corruption when our adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour, I see the necessity of lifting my voice in warning. "Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."” —*Counsels for the Church*, p. 107.

2. How important is it to watch ourselves as character is developing? Prov. 8:32-35

“Christian character is developed, not by a life of meditative abstraction, but by a life of earnest, unselfish effort. The time in which we are living calls for solid work—for work that is right to the point. We must meet the foe on the right hand and on the left. The lives of the combatants for the truth are not to be filled with bustle and excitement and display, to the neglect of personal piety. Vigilant watching is to be combined with earnest working. Every Christian grace is to be incorporated into the character. We are to be diligent "in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord."” —*Manuscript Releases Vol. 8*, p. 310.

3. With what is watching to be combined? Eph. 6:18

“In view of the fact that we are living so near the close of this earth’s history, there should be greater thoroughness in labor, more vigilant waiting, watching, praying, and working. The human agent should strive to attain perfection, that he may be an ideal Christian, complete in Christ Jesus.” —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 7*, p. 248.

“This combination of waiting, watching, praying, and working constitutes us true Christians.” —*The Review and Herald*, Feb. 2, 1897.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- 4. As we are to be co-workers with God in developing our character, where are we to focus our spiritual eye? 2 Cor. 3:18; Ps. 130:5-8; Hab. 2:1**

“Jesus, the world’s Redeemer, knows all His children by name, and on those who believe shall come the glory of God. Those who behold Jesus become changed to His image, become assimilated to His nature, and the glory of God that shines in the face of Jesus, is reflected in the lives of His followers. More and more the Christian is changed from glory to glory The more he looks on Christ, the more he loves and longs to look again, and the more light and love and glory he sees in Christ, the more his light increases.”

—*That I May Know Him*, p. 61.

““We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory [from character to character] even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:18). The human character is changed into the divine. It is the spiritual eye that discerns this glory. It is veiled, shrouded in mystery, until the Holy Spirit imparts this discernment to the soul.” —*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 100.

- 5. What else does Jesus identify for us to watch out for carefully?
Luke 21:34-36**

“It is a time now when we cannot for a moment take the spiritual eye from Christ Jesus. His admonition to us is, "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." Is there one professed Christian who needs not the warning, and whose heart will not bear watching? The heart must be kept with all diligence, under constant watchfulness. . . .

“Watch the stealthy approach of the enemy, watch against old habits and natural inclinations lest they exert themselves; force them back, and watch; force them back if need be a hundred times. Watch the thoughts, watch the plans, lest they become selfish and self-centered. Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. Watch over the souls whom Christ has purchased with His own blood. Watch for opportunities to do them good.” —*That I May Know Him*, p. 351.

6. In these times of doctrinal confusion, what further do we need a watchful spiritual eye for? Matt. 24:24

“Without the enlightenment of the Spirit of God we shall not be able to discern truth from error and shall fall under the masterful temptations and deceptions that Satan will bring upon the world. We are near the close of the controversy between the Prince of light and the prince of darkness, and soon the delusions of the enemy will try our faith, of what sort it is.

“If ever there was a time when we needed faith and spiritual enlightenment, it is now. Those who are watching unto prayer and are searching the Scriptures daily with an earnest desire to know and do the will of God, will not be led astray by any of the deceptions of Satan. . . . We want the truth on every point. We want it unadulterated with error and unpolluted by the maxims, customs, and opinions of the world. We want the truth with all its inconvenience. The acceptance of truth ever involves a cross. But Jesus gave His life as a sacrifice for us, and shall we not give Him our best affections, our holiest aspirations, our fullest service?” —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 350.

THE TRAIT OF WATCHFULNESS

7. If we practice consistently a watchful mindedness, will this ultimately become a trait of our character? Rev. 3:2

“Vigilant watching is to be combined with earnest working. Every Christian grace is to be incorporated into the character.” —*Manuscript Releases Vol. 8*, p. 310.

“I am instructed to speak words to our people that will give them courage to do diligently the work that shall come to them in this their day of opportunity. I am instructed to urge the necessity of personal consecration, and the sanctification of the whole being to God. Let each one inquire, Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do, that the vigilance of Christ may be seen in my life, that his example may be followed by me, that I may speak sincere words, which will help souls in darkness? O how I long to see church-members clothed with their beautiful garments, and prepared to go forth to meet the Bridegroom! Many are expecting to sit down to the marriage supper of the Lamb, who are unprepared for the coming of the King. They are like the blind; they do not seem to discern their danger.” —*The Review and Herald*, Nov. 17, 1910.

Human Instrumentalities

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-12

OBJECTIVES

- To show that in God's plan to perfect His character in His people, He has chosen human beings as His helpers.
- To make a search as to who these human instrumentalities are whom He wants to use.
- To learn how we are to value, respect, and co-operate with these persons as tools in God's hands to build our characters.

HUMANS IN GOD'S PLAN

1. How did apostle Paul complete the list of armoury or tools in the work of character formation? Eph. 6:18, 19

“Before entering the desk, the minister should seek God in his closet, and come into close connection with Him. There he may lift his thirsty soul to God, and be refreshed with the dew of grace. Then with an unction from the Holy Spirit upon him, giving him a burden for souls, he will not dismiss a congregation without presenting before them Jesus Christ, the sinner's only refuge. Feeling that he many never again meet these hearers, he will make appeals that will reach their hearts. And the Master, who knows the hearts of men, will give him utterance, helping him to speak the words he ought to speak at the right time and with power.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 176.

**2. In answer to such prayers, how will God use such human beings?
Eph. 4:11-13; Col. 1:25-28**

“What is Christianity? God’s instrumentality for the conversion of the sinner. Jesus will call to account everyone who is not brought under His control, who does not demonstrate in his life the influence of the cross of Calvary. Christ should be uplifted by those whom He has redeemed by dying on the cross a death of shame. He who has felt the power of the grace of Christ has a story to tell. He seeks to put in operation methods of work which will diffuse the gospel of Christ. Humanity, drawing its efficiency from the great source of wisdom, is made the instrumentality, the working agency, through which the gospel exercises its transforming power on mind and heart.” —*Lift Him Up*, p. 230.

SPECIFICS OF HUMAN INSTRUMENTALITY

3. Whom did God use to convey that which is declared “the word of God” to affect our life? 2 Pet. 1:21; Jer. 1:9, 10; 2 Sam. 23:1, 2

““Be not afraid of man, for My shield shall protect you. It is not you that speaketh: it is the Lord that giveth the messages of warning and reproof. Never deviate from the truth *under any circumstances*. Give the light I shall give you. The messages for these last days shall be written in books, and shall stand immortalized, to testify against those who have once rejoiced in the light, but who have been led to give it up because of the seductive influences of evil.”” —*Selected Messages Book 1*, p. 32.

4. Even though some of these human instruments were faulty and had sinned, did that diminish the impact of God’s word through them? Ps. 51:11-13, 17; Isa. 55:3, 4

“Had our good Bible been written by uninspired persons, it would have presented quite a different appearance and would have been a discouraging study to erring mortals, who are contending with natural frailties and the temptations of a wily foe. But as it is, we have a correct record of the religious experience of marked characters in Bible history. Men whom God favored, and to whom He entrusted great responsibilities, were sometimes overcome by temptation and committed sins, even as we of the present day strive, waver, and frequently fall into error. But it is encouraging to desponding hearts to know that through God’s grace they could gain fresh vigor to again rise above their evil natures; and, remembering this, we are ready to renew the conflict ourselves.” —*Conflict and Courage*, p. 7.

**5. Whom has God placed as His instrument at the head of the family?
1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:22-24**

“Let those who stand as husbands study the words of Christ, not to find out how complete must be the subjection of the wife, but how he may have the mind of Christ, and become purified, refined, and fit to be the lord of his household. All wicked passions must be overcome, and the love which Christ has exercised toward His church must be symbolized in the family circle. Husbands who are husbands in deed and in truth will do those things which make for peace. The fruit of Christian love will be seen in the courtesy, in the holy, tender affection that is manifested in the home.”
—*Manuscript Releases Vol. 21*, p. 216.

“The father represents the divine Lawgiver in his family. He is a laborer together with God, carrying out the gracious designs of God and establishing in his children upright principles, enabling them to form pure and virtuous characters, because he has preoccupied the soul with that which will enable his children to render obedience not only to their earthly parent but also to their heavenly Father.” —*The Adventist Home*, p. 212.

**6. What role in character building does a mother and wife have?
Prov. 31:10-12, 26-28**

“God made from the man a woman, to be a companion and helpmeet for him, to be one with him, to cheer, encourage, and bless him, and he in his turn to be her strong helper. All who enter into matrimonial relations with a holy purpose—the husband to obtain the pure affections of a woman’s heart, the wife to soften and improve her husband’s character and give it completeness—fulfill God’s purpose for them.” —*Manuscript Releases Vol. 10*, p. 203.

“There is a God above, and the light and glory from His throne rests upon the faithful mother as she tries to educate her children to resist the influence of evil. No other work can equal hers in importance. She has not, like the artist, to paint a form of beauty upon canvas, nor, like the sculptor, to chisel it from marble. She has not, like the author, to embody a noble thought in words of power, nor, like the musician, to express a beautiful sentiment in melody. It is hers, with the help of God, to develop in a human soul the likeness of the divine.” —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 377.

VALUE THE INSTRUMENT

7. While as believers we value the instrumentality of the human Jesus, what is written of humans who unite with Him? John 17:18; Matt. 5:14-16

“Christ’s followers are to be more than a light in the midst of men. They are the light of the world. Jesus says to all who have named His name, You have given yourselves to Me, and I have given you to the world as My representatives. As the Father had sent Him into the world, so, He declares, “have I also sent them into the world.” John 17:18. As Christ is the channel for the revelation of the Father, so we are to be the channel for the revelation of Christ. While our Saviour is the great source of illumination, forget not, O Christian, that He is revealed through humanity. God’s blessings are bestowed through human instrumentality. Christ Himself came to the world as the Son of man. Humanity, united to the divine nature, must touch humanity. The church of Christ, every individual disciple of the Master, is heaven’s appointed channel for the revelation of God to men. Angels of glory wait to communicate through you heaven’s light and power to souls that are ready to perish. Shall the human agent fail of accomplishing his appointed work? Oh, then to that degree is the world robbed of the promised influence of the Holy Spirit!” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 40.

8. With what respect and honour should we then regard those human instrumentalities sent to help us? 1 Thess. 5:12, 13; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 3:7

“The ministers who are laborers together with God are to be respected, honored, and beloved. [...] We are not to criticise them, to question every movement that does not coincide with our ideas and practices.” —*The Review and Herald*, July 25, 1893.

“Such workers are to be encouraged. Their work is done, not to be seen of men, but to glorify God; and it will bear His inspection. The Lord brings these workers into connection with those of more marked ability to fill up the gaps they leave. He is well pleased when they are recognized and appreciated, for they are links in His chain of service. And it is God’s desire that every human instrumentality who works for Him shall be recognized, however small may be the work he does. . . .

“In the heavenly courts, when the redeemed are gathered home, this class will stand nearest the Son of God. They will shine brightly in the courts of the Lord, honored by Him because they have felt it an honor to minister to those for whom Christ gave His life.” —*The Upward Look*, p. 186.

9. What is written of those who fail to value the ministry of those whom God has sent? Prov. 5:11-14

“The people should not regard their ministers as mere public speakers and orators, but as Christ’s ambassadors, receiving their wisdom and power from the great Head of the church. To slight and disregard the word spoken by Christ’s representative is not only showing disrespect to the man, but also to the Master who has sent him. He is in Christ’s stead; and the voice of the Saviour should be heard in His representative.” —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 4*, p. 393.

Sufferings of Christ

Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. James 1:3, 4

OBJECTIVES

- To understand fully that trials, temptations, and sufferings are important tools to build perfect characters.
- To see the connection of Christ's sufferings with those of His disciples to find the assurance and comfort in the midst of them.
- To behold the final product of the process of suffering the trials.

HAMMER AND CHISEL

- 1. In our efforts to build characters unto perfection, how are we to regard the trials and perplexities that we encounter? James 1:2-4**

“The Lord Jesus gave Himself a sacrifice for us. He knows us and He knows just what we need. Trial lasts only for a season. Encourage your heart in faith. We must not look on trial as punishment. Christ is the sin bearer. He is our Redeemer, and He desires to purify us from all dross. He means to make us partakers of the divine nature, developing in us the peaceable fruits of righteousness. The very fact that we are called upon to endure trials proves that the Lord Jesus sees in us something very precious that He would have developed. If He saw nothing in us whereby we might glorify His name He would not spend time refining us. We do not take special pains to prune brambles. Christ does not cast valueless stones into His furnace. It is

precious ore that He tests. He sees that the refining process will bring out the reflection of His own image. Be trustful, be hopeful, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. He loves you. Hear His words: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten" (Revelation 3:19). He has not passed you by as unworthy of a trial." —*That I May Know Him*, p. 277.

2. Whereas we are to use the tools already studied in this lesson, who is the one who uses these tools in building our character? Mal. 3:1-3; Jer. 23:29

“It may be that much work needs to be done in your character building, that you are a rough stone which must be squared and polished before it is fit to fill a place in God’s temple. You need not be surprised if with hammer and chisel God cuts away your defects of character, until you are prepared to fill the place He has ready for you. No human being can accomplish this work. Only by God can it be done. And be assured that He will not strike one useless blow. His every blow is struck in love, for your eternal good and happiness. He knows your infirmities, and works to restore, not to destroy.”
—*This Day With God*, p. 23.

3. As God is the one who works with these tools, what is our part in being worked upon by them? James 4:6-10

“God has shown me that he gives his people a bitter cup to drink to purify and cleanse them. They can make it still more bitter by murmuring, complaining, and repining. But those who receive it thus, must have another draught, for the first does not have its designed effect upon the heart. And if the second does not effect the work, then they must have another, and another, until it does have its designed effect, or they will be left impure in

heart. I saw that this bitter cup can be sweetened by patience, endurance and prayer, and that it will have its designed effect upon the hearts of those who thus received it, and God will be honored and glorified.” —*Spiritual Gifts Vol. 2*, p. 290.

JESUS PERFECTED

4. Because we must endure this process of suffering to reach perfection of character, what has God done to provide us with a visible template? Rom. 8:31, 32; Heb. 5:7-9; 1 Pet. 2:21

“And Christ was not to exercise divine power for His own benefit. He had come to bear trial as we must do, leaving us an example of faith and submission.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 119.

5. If we choose to follow Christ’s example, what will be our utterance together with His when confronted by multitudinous trials and afflictions? Matt. 26:38-42

“The human nature of Christ was like unto ours. And suffering was really more keenly felt by Him, for His spiritual nature was free from every taint of sin. The aversion to suffering was in proportion to its severity. His desire for the removal of suffering was just as strong as human beings experience.” —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 268.

“If Jesus, the world’s Redeemer, prayed, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me,” and added, “nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matthew 26:39), how very appropriate it is for finite mortals to make the same surrender to the wisdom and will of God.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 171.

6. If we will do the same as Jesus did in His sufferings with us, how will we relate and co-operate with these sufferings? 1 Pet. 4:12, 13

“Let those who are perplexed with temptation go to God in prayer. Persevere in prayer and watch thereunto without doubting, and the Holy Spirit will work in the human agent, bringing heart and mind into subjection to right principles.” —*That I May Know Him*, p. 276.

REACHING A PERFECT CHARACTER

7. What will be the outcome for those who unite with Jesus in His sufferings? 1 Pet. 4:1, 2; 2 Cor. 13:4; James 1:12

“The followers of Christ know little of the plots which Satan and his hosts are forming against them. But He who sitteth in the heavens will overrule all these devices for the accomplishment of His deep designs. The Lord permits His people to be subjected to the fiery ordeal of temptation, not because He takes pleasure in their distress and affliction, but because this process is essential to their final victory.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 317.

8. Contemplate the product of suffering and trial. Job 23:10; Dan. 12:10, 3; Zech. 13:9

“To His church, Christ has given ample facilities, that He may receive a large revenue of glory from His redeemed, purchased possession. The

church, being endowed with the righteousness of Christ, is His depository, in which the wealth of His mercy, His love, His grace, is to appear in full and final display. The declaration in His intercessory prayer, that the Father's love is as great toward us as toward Himself, the only-begotten Son, and that we shall be with Him where He is, forever one with Christ and the Father, is a marvel to the heavenly host, and it is their great joy. The gift of His Holy Spirit, rich, full, and abundant, is to be to His church as an encompassing wall of fire, which the powers of hell shall not prevail against. In their untainted purity and spotless perfection, Christ looks upon His people as the reward of all His suffering, His humiliation, and His love, and the supplement of His glory,—Christ, the great center from which radiates all glory. "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 356.

Skilful Use of Tools

And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully. 2 Timothy 2:5

OBJECTIVES

- To understand that a character fit for heaven does not come without diligent skill.
- To explore the skills required in building a perfect character.
- To learn how to apply those skills in their connection with the tools we have studied in this lesson.

DILIGENT SKILL

1. What did God give to the men who were to build the sanctuary of the Hebrews? Ex. 31:1-6; 2 Chron. 2:11-14

“In ancient times, the Lord instructed Moses to build Him a sanctuary. The people were to provide the material, and skillful men must be found to handle the precious material. Among the multitude were Egyptians, who had acted as overseers for such work, and thoroughly understood how it should be done. But the work was not dependent upon them. The Lord united with human agencies, giving them wisdom to work skillfully.” —*S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 1*, p. 1108.

2. How does the skill required in building the sanctuary equate with the building of our characters? 1 Cor. 3:9-14

“Skill in the common arts is a gift from God. He provides both the gift and the wisdom to use the gift aright.

“In order that the earthly tabernacle might represent the heavenly, it must be perfect in all its parts, and it must be, in every smallest detail, like the pattern in the heavens. So it is with the characters of those who are finally accepted in the sight of heaven.” —*Courage and Conflict*, p. 96.

“In all our work, even in mechanical lines, God desires that the perfection of His character shall appear. The exactness, skill, tact, wisdom, and perfection which He required in the building of the earthly tabernacle, He desires to have brought into everything that shall be done in His service. Every transaction entered into by His servants is to be as pure and as precious in His sight as were the gold and frankincense and myrrh which in sincere, uncorrupted faith the Wise Men from the East brought to the infant Saviour.” —*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 7*, p. 142.

3. In our striving to master our passions and impulses in order to develop a righteous character, does wisdom, understanding, and skill play a role? 2 Tim. 2:5; 1 Cor. 9:25-27

“But Christ has given us no assurance that to attain perfection of character is an easy matter. A noble, all-around character is not inherited. It does not come to us by accident. A noble character is earned by individual effort through the merits and grace of Christ. God gives the talents, the powers of the mind; we form the character. It is formed by hard, stern battles with self.

Conflict after conflict must be waged against hereditary tendencies. We shall have to criticize ourselves closely, and allow not one unfavorable trait to remain uncorrected.” —*My Life Today*, p. 271.

THE MEANING OF SKILL

4. How did God express the meaning of skill in Ex. 31:1-6? Hence, what are we to ask for in our building of character? Ex. 36:1; Prov. 2:3-6, 11; 4:5-9

5. Where do we behold an illustration of the bestowal of the qualities of wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and skill? Dan. 1:3, 4, 17; 9:21-23

“These youth gave to God all the glory of their secular, scientific, and religious endowments. Their learning did not come by chance; they obtained knowledge by the faithful use of their powers; and God gave them skill and understanding.” —*S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 4*, p. 1167.

APPLYING THE SKILLS

6. When God gives us the skills embodied in wisdom and understanding, what then is to be our work as illustrated in the lives of Daniel and his three friends ? Phil. 2:12, 13; Eph. 2:10

“When the four Hebrew youth were receiving an education for the king’s court in Babylon, they did not feel that the blessing of the Lord was a substitute for the taxing effort required of them. They were diligent in study; for they discerned that through the grace of God their destiny depended upon their own will and action. They were to bring all their ability to the work; and by close, severe taxation of their powers, they were to make the most of their opportunities for study and labor.

“While these youth were working out their own salvation, God was working in them to will and to do of His good pleasure. Here are revealed the conditions of success. To make God’s grace our own, we must act our part. The Lord does not propose to perform for us either the willing or the doing. His grace is given to work in us to will and to do, but never as a substitute for our effort. Our souls are to be aroused to cooperate. The Holy Spirit works in us, that we may work out our own salvation. This is the practical lesson the Holy Spirit is striving to teach us.” —*S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 4*, p. 1167.

**7. Having studied in detail the tools to be used in our character building, what shall we then do with that information?
Prov. 22:17-21; 2 Pet. 1:10**

“We are to watch unto prayer, and our earnest efforts to overcome evil in our character, will make manifest the sincerity of our prayers. We are to look into the royal mirror, the law of God, that we may understand our moral standing, and detect the imperfections of our character; then we are to appropriate the righteousness of Christ, that we may keep the law of God. As we realize the worthlessness of our own righteousness, as we feel our dependence upon Christ, we fall upon the Rock and are broken, and then Jesus moulds and fashions our characters after his own divine character. Let us all bear in mind that those whom God pardons are first made penitent. Some will say that we leave man with nothing to do, with no task to take up in the struggle. This is not so; all the powers with which God has endowed

man must be employed in order that we may do the will of God.” —*The Signs of the Times*, Aug. 11, 1890.

“The Lord Jesus came to strengthen every earnest seeker for truth, He came to reveal the Father. He allowed nothing to divert His mind from the great work of restoring the moral image of God in man. And we must see that the great and important work for us is to receive the divine likeness, to prepare a character for the future life. We must appropriate the heavenly truths to our special use in practical life. And we may carry with us all the treasure of knowledge that gives us a fitness for the life that measures with the life of God.” —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 125.

The Finished Product

Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. Revelation 14:12

OBJECTIVES

- To show that the life-long labour of building a perfect character will produce its desired end.
- To evidence the reality of a perfected people at the coming of Jesus.
- To find Scriptural and Spirit of Prophecy descriptions of the perfect character which will be seen in God's people.

PERSEVERING EFFORT REWARDED

1. What admonition is given for the believer that he may attain to Christian perfection? Gal. 6:9; Heb. 10:35-39

“As the sacrifice in our behalf was complete, so our restoration from the defilement of sin is to be complete. No act of wickedness will the law of God excuse, no unrighteousness can escape its condemnation. The ethics of the gospel acknowledge no standard but the perfection of the divine character.”

“Wrongs cannot be righted, nor can reformations in conduct be made by a few feeble, intermittent efforts. Character building is the work, not of a day, nor of a year, but of a lifetime. The struggle for conquest over self, for holiness and heaven, is a lifelong struggle. Without continual effort and

constant activity, there can be no advancement in the divine life, no attainment of the victor's crown." —*A New Life*, p. 59.

**2. Are we assured that a perfect Christian character is attainable?
Jude 1:24; James 1:4**

“As an earthly parent encourages his child to come to him at all times, so the Lord encourages us to lay before Him our wants and perplexities, our gratitude and love. Every promise is sure. Jesus is our Surety and Mediator, and has placed at our command every resource, that we may have a perfect character.” —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 18.

“Do not speak of trials and discouragements. Look away from these things to Christ. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). You are the purchase of His blood. Do not disappoint the One who gave His life that you might be an overcomer. He was tempted on every point that you and I can be tempted on, and in order to resist He spent whole nights in prayer and communion with His Father. Christ did not leave this world until He had made it possible for every soul to live a life of perfect faith and obedience, to have a perfect character.” —*This Day With God*, p. 204.

A PERFECTED PEOPLE

3. Does Scripture show that there will be a people on earth without a flaw in their character? Rev. 14:5, 12 i.e. 7:13, 14

“But here is the company. John sees it and wonders what means the scene. The account goes back in the chapter previous. I will not read it, but it shows where Heaven sends a message to the children of men, and they begin to embrace it, and follow the Lamb step by step until they enter into the

sanctuary, and on till they are redeemed and stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion. And then it is explained why their song was so different from any other song. It was a new song. And he goes on to state that "in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.""
—*Sermons and Talks Vol. 1*, p. 74.

4. By the time Jesus comes, what condition will His waiting saints have reached? 1 John 3:2, 3; 2:28

"When the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come." Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 69.

PERFECT CHARACTER

**5. In the process of conversion, what will be the final product?
Eph. 5:26, 27**

"None are living Christians unless they have a daily experience in the things of God and daily practice self-denial, cheerfully bearing the cross and following Christ. Every living Christian will advance daily in the divine life. As he advances toward perfection, he experiences a conversion to God every day; and this conversion is not completed until he attains to perfection of Christian character, a full preparation for the finishing touch of immortality." —*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 291.

6. How does a character that is without spot, wrinkle or blemish present itself? Gal. 5:22, 23; Matt. 5:44, 45, 48

“But not alone for His earthborn children was this revelation given. Our little world is the lesson book of the universe. God’s wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which, "angels desire to look," and it will be their study throughout endless ages. Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which "seeketh not her own" has its source in the heart of God; and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto.” —*Reflecting Christ*, p. 15.

“Christ is our model, but unless we behold Him, unless we contemplate His character, we shall not reflect His character in our practical life. He was meek and lowly in heart. He never did a rude action, never spoke a discourteous word. The Lord is not pleased with our blunt, hard, unsympathetic ways toward others. All this selfishness must be purged away from our characters, and we must wear the yoke of Christ. Then we shall be fitting up for the society of heavenly angels. We are to be in the world but not of the world. We are to be a representation of Jesus Christ. As the Lord of life and glory came to our world to represent the Father, so we are to go to the world to represent Jesus.” —*That I May Know Him*, p. 306.

7. What further descriptions can we find to portray in living reality a perfect character? 1 Cor. 13:4-7

“The badge of Christianity is not an outward sign, not the wearing of a cross or a crown, but it is that which reveals the union of man with God. By the power of His grace manifested in the transformation of character the world is to be convinced that God has sent His Son as its Redeemer. No other influence that can surround the human soul has such power as the influence of an unselfish life. The strongest argument in favor of the gospel is a loving and lovable Christian.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 276.

“God wants you to let Him manage you, that you may be a lovable Christian. The Lord would have the natural and hereditary traits of character come under the pruning knife. Look steadfastly unto Jesus, that you may catch His spirit and cherish the qualities of Christlike character. Then it will be recognized by all who have any connection with you, that you have learned of Christ His meekness, His affection, His tenderness, His sympathy. Never rest satisfied until you possess a loving and lovable spirit. Your words may come from the good treasure of the heart to strengthen, help, bless, and win all around you.... Others catch your spirit. The seeds we sow will bear a harvest in goodness, patience, kindness, and love, or exactly the opposite.” —*That I May Know Him*, p. 218.

8. In which way will Jesus be satisfied that His great sacrifice for the redemption of the human race has been all worth it? Isa. 53:10, 11; 26:1, 2

“Christ designs that heaven’s order, heaven’s plan of government, heaven’s divine harmony, shall be represented in His church on earth. Thus in His people He is glorified. Through them the Sun of Righteousness will shine in undimmed luster to the world. Christ has given to His church ample facilities, that He may receive a large revenue of glory from His redeemed, purchased possession. He has bestowed upon His people capabilities and blessings that they may represent His own sufficiency. The church, endowed with the righteousness of Christ, is His depository, in which the riches of His mercy, His grace, and His love, are to appear in full and final display. Christ looks upon His people in their purity and perfection, as the reward of His

humiliation, and the supplement of His glory,—Christ, the great Center, from whom radiates all glory.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 680.

“Before the universe has been clearly presented the great sacrifice made by the Father and the Son in man’s behalf. The hour has come when Christ occupies His rightful position and is glorified above principalities and powers and every name that is named. It was for the joy that was set before Him—that He might bring many sons unto glory—that He endured the cross and despised the shame. And inconceivably great as was the sorrow and the shame, yet greater is the joy and the glory. He looks upon the redeemed, renewed in His own image, every heart bearing the perfect impress of the divine, every face reflecting the likeness of their King. He beholds in them the result of the travail of His soul, and He is satisfied. Then, in a voice that reaches the assembled multitudes of the righteous and the wicked, He declares: “Behold the purchase of My blood! For these I suffered, for these I died, that they might dwell in My presence throughout eternal ages.” And the song of praise ascends from the white-robed ones about the throne: “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.” Revelation 5:12.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 671.

“Here they stand, and the finishing touch of immortality is put upon them, and they go up to meet their Lord in the air. The gates of the city of God swing back upon their hinges, and the nations that have kept the truth enter in. There are the columns of angels on either side, and the ransomed of God walk in through the cherubims and seraphims. Christ bids them welcome and puts upon them His benediction. “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” What is that joy? He sees of the travail of His soul, and is satisfied.” —*S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 6*, p. 1093.

MEDITATION

☞ Considering all that has been done for us, shall we make the heart of Jesus happy by engaging in the life mapped out in this lesson?

“In the intercessory prayer of Jesus with His Father, He claimed that He had fulfilled the conditions which made it obligatory upon the Father to fulfill His part of the contract made in heaven, with regard to fallen man. He prayed: “I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. [That is, He had wrought out a righteous character on earth as an example for men to

follow.] And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." In this prayer He further goes on to state what is comprehended by the work which He has accomplished, and which has given Him all those who believe on His name. He values this recompense so highly that He forgets the anguish it has cost Him to redeem fallen man. He declares Himself glorified in those who believe on Him. The church, in His name, is to carry to glorious perfection the work which He has commenced; and when that church shall be finally ransomed in the Paradise of God, He will look upon the travail of His soul and be satisfied. Through all eternity the ransomed host will be His chief glory." —*S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 5*, p. 1146.