

Sabbath School Lesson #9 – Developing a Winning Attitude – 22-28 August 2020

Christ would have us have the Lord God always sanctified in our hearts so that we may not only develop, but also have, a winning attitude. Peter says, “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Peter 3:15). It is a great mistake for people to suppose that the text means to be able to repeat a creed, or to quote Scripture texts to substantiate dogmas. A formula of doctrine is not a hope. Hope is living; it is a real thing, “Christ in you” is the only “hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27). Therefore to be able to give to every man a reason of the hope that is in us, is to be able to make plain to him the Divine presence in us. This is further evident from the fact that the ability to give a reason for the hope in us comes from having God sanctified, and enthroned, in the heart.

Sunday: Receptivity to the Gospel – It is a mistake for professed Adventists to think the gospel is for ‘them’ who are outside our Church. The gospel truth as it is in Jesus Christ is needed within our Church as much as the gospel is needed for all even for those outside. Many in Church are unconverted and unreceptive to the gospel. “Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles” (Acts 13:46). As Paul turned from unbelieving Jews to receptive Gentiles, the Lord’s servant may turn from unbelieving Adventists to respective unchurched.

Monday: An Attitude Adjustment – “A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother” (Proverbs 18:24). Our attitude need to be adjusted. Before we take the gospel to ‘them’ outside our homes, let us make it alive in our homes. Many homes are dark and unhappy because the brothers and sisters of the same family do not shed the sunshine of love around them. They act beautifully when in the home of a schoolmate or when with some other one’s brothers or sisters. They are polite, thoughtful of others’ comfort, and count nothing too hard to do, if they can but make friends of this other person’s brothers and sisters. They remember that “he that hath friends must show himself friendly.” But look at them as they rush up the stairs at *home*, with dirty shoes, and shut the door with a bang that wakes the baby and startles everyone in the house. Watch them as they toss their things on a sofa or in the corner, snatch a gadget from the hands of brother or sister, and with cross words and perhaps a slap say, ‘I do wish you ever could learn to leave my things alone.’ Ah, they do not stop to think what heartache they have brought into their house, or they could not do it so easily. If one would have friends he must show himself friendly, was all forgotten on the road home. In fact, the thought had never entered their heads that they needed to have friends, or could have friends, at home. They always have been in the habit of seeking for them somewhere else. What a sad mistake!

If they would only stop a moment and think, perhaps they would see that their very best friends on earth might be found right there in their own house, if they would but take the same pains to win them that they do to win other friends. But the bright, tender plants of friendship and love will not grow and blossom in their home unless they care for them there as faithfully as when in their neighbour’s home. They are plants that must be watered and tended every day. If they would be but as unselfish, self-forgetful, thoughtful, kind, tender, patient, helpful, if they would be but as friendly and loving to their own brothers and sisters as they are to some other person’s brothers and sisters, they would soon find that the friendliest, happiest, and best place in the whole world for them would be among their own dear ones at home. No longer would the rooms look bare and gloomy and lonely. Love would fill them with the brightest sunshine and populate them with the dearest friends.

Tuesday: Presenting the Truth in Love – Jesus Christ is the way and *the truth* and the life (John 14:6). The Spirit of Christ is “the Spirit of truth” (John 16:13). Not simply a truth, but the Spirit of it. We are sanctified by the truth. Only truth can sanctify; error cannot. “No lie is of the truth” (1 John 2:21). Christ, the truth, is the life. Truth therefore is life; a lie is death. And everything that deviates from the character of Christ is a lie. The truth sanctifies, and therefore saves. But the holding of no creed or articles of faith, however true, can ever save anybody. For no creed that men can formulate can possibly embrace all the truth. Therefore

no man can be sanctified and saved merely through the holding of certain truths. God does not save men as a reward for their acceptance of certain statements of truth; salvation is the inevitable result of receiving and being permeated and transformed by the truth, the whole truth; for that which is true is eternal. Not a few true things, but the Spirit of truth, received in the love of the truth, can save. God desires "truth in the inward parts." It is not necessary that one should know all the things that are true, that is, all facts, before he can be said to know the truth. If it were, none could be saved, for eternity will be spent in discovering new facts. But, on the contrary, it is by the knowledge of the truth that we are able to distinguish facts from fancies. Only he who really knows the truth, cannot be deceived. "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, *even* in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life" (1 John 5:20). "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" (John 17:3). This is real life. "The Spirit of truth" "is life because of righteousness." From all this we can see the importance of not simply having, but being, the truth. We must not only have the truth, but we must *have no lie*. "Speaking the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15), is the only way to make real growth in Christ. We must know that whatever we say is the truth. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11). On this basis it is easy to see how gossiping, and the repetition of tales which one hears, cannot possibly be in harmony with truth. Many people who would be shocked at the thought of telling a lie, will carelessly repeat things that they hear about others, and which they cannot know are true. Now whoever tells what he does not absolutely know to be true, thereby shows that he does not fear to tell a lie. It is not enough to say that we did not know a certain thing which we told was not true; we must know that it is true, or we must keep silent. Of course "speaking the truth in love" means refraining from repeating many things which we know to be true. "And now, little children, abide in Him; that when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming" (1 John 2:28). Let us have Christ in us to speak truth in love.

Wednesday: The Foundation of Acceptance – "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:20). This follows from the fact that He has purchased our sins, to deliver us from ourselves. Our sins are part of ourselves; nay, they are the whole of us, for our natural lives are nothing but sin. Therefore, Christ could not buy our sins without buying us also. Of this fact we have many plain statements. He "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity" (Titus 2:14). "Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price" (1 Corinthians 6:19). "Ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ" (1 Peter 1:18-19). The question of the foundation of acceptance is forever settled. Christ has bought us, together with all our sins, and has paid the price. There is no room for the question, 'will He accept us?' He has already accepted you. He knew what He was paying for when He bought you. No room for anyone to object, 'but I am so sinful.' That makes no difference. Christ "gave Himself for our sins" (Galatians 1:4). Nothing in the whole universe that God desires so much as us. We have only to praise "the glory of His grace, wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved" (Ephesians 1:6).

Thursday: Truth Lovingly Presented – To present the truth lovingly is a spiritual matter and no carnal mind can do so. Unless we are spiritually minded, we cannot present the truth let alone lovingly. "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God" (Romans 8:6-8). When we are sanctified by the truth, we will lovingly present the truth. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Peter 1:22). "For we ourselves were aforetime foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. But when the kindness of God our Saviour, and His love toward man appeared, not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He poured out upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Titus 1:3-6).