

2-1-2016

Spiritual Disciplines of Early Adventists

Heather Ripley Crews

George Fox University, hcrews04@georgefox.edu

This research is a product of the Doctor of Ministry (DMin) program at George Fox University. [Find out more](#) about the program.

Recommended Citation

Crews, Heather Ripley, "Spiritual Disciplines of Early Adventists" (2016). *Doctor of Ministry*. Paper 139.
<http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/dmin/139>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctor of Ministry by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact arolfe@georgefox.edu.

GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES OF EARLY ADVENTISTS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF GEORGE FOX EVANGELICAL SEMINARY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

LEADERSHIP AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION

BY
HEATHER RIPLEY CREWS

PORTLAND, OREGON

FEBRUARY 2016

Copyright © 2016 by Heather Ripley Crews

All rights reserved.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation is to explore the Biblical spirituality of the early Adventist Church in order to apply the spiritual principles learned to the contemporary church. Though it is God who changes people, the early Adventists employed specific spiritual practices to place themselves in His presence. Research revealed five main spiritual disciplines that shaped the Advent leaders and by extension the church. The first is Bible study: placing the Holy Scriptures as the foundation for all beliefs. The second is prayer: communication and communion with God. The third is healthful living: treating the body well so God's work can be accomplished. The fourth is stewardship: recognizing God as the source of wealth and using it to further His kingdom. And the fifth is worship: dedicating the Sabbath to God from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. These practices are best viewed through the lives of the church leaders. The church leaders presented are William Miller and his method of Bible study; Ellen White and her methods and prescriptions for prayer; Joseph Bates and his quiet example of healthful living; James White and his financial choices to grow a worldwide movement; and John Nevin Andrews and his passionate belief in a need for worship of the holy.

The book included at the end of the dissertation is provided as a tool for the study and employment of spiritual disciplines in the Adventist church. The goal in creating this artifact is to make Biblical spirituality accessible to today's Adventist. This book provides a platform for discussion and study on Biblical spirituality by combining the Biblical basis for five spiritual disciplines along with an example of an Adventist pioneer

who exhibited that discipline in their life. The book also presents practical examples of how to get to know God better through the practice of each discipline and a form to record and evaluate the experiment.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	x
LIST OF TABLES	xi
SECTION 1 PRESENTATION OF THE PROBLEM	1
The Problem in Real Life	1
Evaluation	5
SECTION 2 OTHER PROPOSED SOLUTIONS	8
SECTION 3 HISTORY OF SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES IN ADVENTISM	20
Adventist Beginnings and Beyond	27
Methods of Teaching Spiritual Disciplines	46
Family Worship	46
Sabbath School	49
Social Meetings	51
Publications	53
Camp Meetings	56
Preaching	59
Conclusions	61
Specific Disciplines	63
Bible Study	63
Prayer	69
Healthful Living	71

Stewardship	77
Worship	79
Historical Disciplines Not Currently Practiced.....	81
Conclusions	85
SECTION 4 BIBLICAL BASIS FOR SPIRITUAL FORMATION.....	87
Biblical Basis of Spiritual Formation	88
Biblical Basis of Spiritual Disciplines.....	91
Bible Study	93
Prayer.....	96
Healthful Living	98
Stewardship	100
Worship	103
SECTION 5 EARLY ADVENTIST LEADERS	107
An Historical Snapshot.....	107
Selected Leaders	112
SECTION 6 CURRENT ADVENTIST SPIRITUAL PRACTICES.....	117
Current Instructions in Spiritual Disciplines	118
Sabbath School.....	120
Family and Personal Worship	123
Small Group Meetings	125
Publications	127
Television and Radio Broadcasts	128
Internet Sources.....	130
Currently Practiced Spiritual Disciplines	131
Bible Study.....	132

Prayer	134
Service.....	137
Healthful Living.....	139
Stewardship.....	142
Worship.....	143
Conclusions	144
SECTION 7 THE RESOURCE BOOK.....	145
My Experience in Biblical Spirituality.....	145
William Miller and Bible Study	149
Experiments in Bible Study.....	155
Key Word Study.....	157
Verse Comparison.....	162
Topical Study	165
Memorize a Bible Text.....	168
Clarification of Beliefs.....	171
Report on Experiments with Bible Study	172
Experiment Evaluation Tool	174
Ellen White and Prayer.....	175
A Formal Introduction to Ellen White	175
Her Impact.....	177
Her Prescriptions.....	178
Experiments in Prayer	182
Pray the Scriptures	184
Focus on God's Presence	187
Pray on Another's Behalf.....	188

Picture Christ on the Cross.....	190
Pray Your Heart	191
Report on Experiments with Prayer	193
Experiment Evaluation Tool	195
Joseph Bates and Healthful Living.....	196
Experiments in Healthful Living	201
Fasting	202
Give Up Refined Sugar	204
Rest.....	206
Take a Walk	208
Get Enough Water.....	209
Report on Experiments with Healthful Living	210
Experiment Evaluation Tool	212
James White on Stewardship.....	212
Experiments in Stewardship	217
Donate Five Items	219
Return to God First	220
Volunteer at a Homeless Shelter	221
Host a Birthday Party	223
Use Your Talent	224
Report on Experiments with Stewardship.....	225
Experiment Evaluation Tool	226
John N. Andrews on Worship	227
An Introduction to John Nevin Andrews	227
Experiments in Worship.....	230

Prepare for Worship	232
Welcome the Sabbath.....	234
Take a Hike	236
Research the Sabbath	237
Worship Through Service	238
Report on Experiments with Worship	240
Experiment Evaluation Tool	241
Invitation to a Continued Journey	242
SECTION 8 THE RESOURCE BOOK AT WORK	245
SECTION 9 REFLECTIONS	247
WORKS CITED	250

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1 William Miller (1782- 1849)	149
Fig. 2 Ellen G. White (1827-1915)	175
Fig. 3 Joseph Bates (1792-1872)	196
Fig. 4 James White (1821-1881).....	212
Fig. 5 John Nevin Andrews (1829-1883)	227

LIST OF TABLES

HISTORY OF THE SDA CHURCH.....	27
IMPORTANT DATES	108
SDA CHURCH STATISTICS.....	117

SECTION 1

PRESENTATION OF THE PROBLEM

The problem addressed by this dissertation is the lack of a resource that focuses on spiritual disciplines from the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Specifically, no resource is available from the Adventist tradition that connects spiritual disciplines to the early church leaders that founded the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Because of this lack of Adventist resource materials, Seventh-day Adventists are unaware that these practices are present in the tradition from its earliest roots. In order to make it easier for Seventh-day Adventists to explore this topic, a resource is needed that shows where these practices originate as an important part of Adventist history.

The Problem in Real Life

Jim and Maggie are talking together about an upcoming class. They are members of a local Seventh-day Adventist Church where a challenge exists: The members of their church have spent so much time being “doers” that they haven’t focused on learning the skill of just “being” in God’s presence. Their church has Life Improvement classes. Each class is an opportunity to study a spiritual topic to enrich their lives. Jim and Maggie agreed to teach a class on spiritual disciplines so their fellow members can learn more

about these tools to get to know God. They are on a trip to their local Adventist Book Center,¹ looking for a textbook to use.

Jim: Alright, Maggie, where should we start?

Maggie: Let's try the Christian Living section.

Jim: Hmm, it's over, over, hmm—there it is!

They walk together toward the shelf prominently marked “Christian Living” and begin reading book titles to each other.

Jim: *The ABCs of Bible Prayer*.² That would be a good place to begin. After all, prayer and the Bible are the foundation of spiritual formation.

Maggie: Yeah, and here is one on *Christ's Way of Reaching People*.³ That ought to have something in it about social justice.

They pile books until their stack begins to rival the tower of Babel.

Jim: Isn't there a book that summarizes all of these?

Maggie: What do you mean? Like Renovare's *Spiritual Formation Handbook*⁴ that we used in our class?

Jim: Exactly like that.

Maggie: Why didn't you mention that sooner?! I bet if we go up to Mardel's⁵ we can get a copy of it.

They abandon their tower of books for the talented clerks to re-shelve. The two hop into their vehicle and head out. After dodging between cars and around potholes they arrive at

¹ The Adventist Book Center will in the future be referred to in the colloquial designator the ABC.

² Glenn and Ethel Coon, *The ABC's of Bible Prayer* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1972).

³ Philip G. Samaan, *Christ's Way of Reaching People* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1990).

⁴ James Bryan Smith and Lynda Graybeal, *A Spiritual Formation Workbook* (San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 1999).

⁵ Mardel's is a local Christian book and education tools center. Their mission, according to their website, www.mardel.com, accessed on February 12, 2005, is to be a resource center that provides spiritual and intellectual needs.

Mardel's Christian book center. Inside they quickly locate a wall of books dedicated to Spiritual Formation.

Jim: Here it is!

He holds up a copy of Renovare's *Spiritual Formation Handbook*.

Maggie: Look! Here's Dallas Willard's *Divine Conspiracy*⁶

Maggie squeals with childish delight.

Maggie: Can we use this one too?

Jim flips through the pages of his selected book.

Jim: Maggs, we've got a problem. I think the people in our class will be shocked when we get to the Charismatic Tradition.

Maggie: You're right. They won't get past the word "Charismatic" before they put up the mental filters.

Maggie does an Oscar-worthy impression of a deflated balloon.

Jim: Well, what do we do? Here they have what we need in one simple book, but if we use those from the Adventist tradition it will cost oodles to get all the disciplines in. What do we do?

Maggie: We're in trouble. Even if we used this one, it doesn't include Adventist church history as a context for the use of the spiritual disciplines.

Jim: Let's take our questions to the pastor. After all, she got us into this mess in the first place.

Maggie nods in agreement.

Jim and Maggie make an appointment with Pastor Ripley. They are so passionate about Spiritual Formation and its importance to their church family that they show up at the appointment half an hour early to find an answer to their problem.

Pastor Ripley shows Jim and Maggie into her office and then slides into her own chair.

Pastor Ripley: So, what seems to be the problem?

⁶ Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God* (New York: HarperOne, March 24, 1998).

Maggie and Jim in unison: We need help!

Jim (looking at Maggie): You go ahead and explain it.

Maggie: We've been visiting bookstores.

Jim: Well, two actually.

Maggie: And we can't find a textbook to use for our spiritual formation class on Wednesday nights.

Pastor Ripley: Challenging, uh?

Pastor Ripley smiles.

Jim: Yes! What are we supposed to do? We don't want to turn people off before they even give the idea a chance. Neither do we want them to take out a second mortgage to buy all the books they would need from the ABC.

Maggie: What is a leader to do?

Pastor Ripley: What topics do you want to cover in your class?

Maggie: The set that Foster has in his workbook—those are good—but then I liked Gary Thomas's⁷ ideas too.

Jim: But those aren't from the Adventist tradition, and I don't like the glazed and guarded look people get when I start speaking from other traditions.

Maggie: We found a book on Bible study, and we found a book on friendship evangelism, but not one on both.

Jim: And I can't quite make photocopies of those pages for people. They need their own books!

Pastor Ripley: You've got a problem... Any ideas on a solution?

Jim: No! Why do you think we're here?

Maggie nods in emphatic agreement.

Pastor Ripley: Have you thought about writing your own curriculum?

⁷ Gary Thomas, *Seeking the Face of God* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1999).

Evaluation

It is hard to believe that a world-wide denomination like the Seventh-day Adventist Church lacks a spiritual formation resource to meet the need described in the above narrative. As a denomination, the Seventh-day Adventist church operates many publishing houses around the world. These publishing houses produce a broad spectrum of books, magazines, and journals, yet they do not provide for the need of a holistic spiritual formation resource: one that presents the spiritual disciplines through the lens of the church's history.

Many Seventh-day Adventists are unaware of the benefits available from engaging in an active life of spiritual formation. They are unaware that through the exercise of spiritual disciplines the relationship with Christ can be deepened and strengthened, and some go a step beyond lack of knowledge and are hostile toward spiritual formation itself.⁸ Bill Knott the editor of the flagship Adventist church publication, the *Adventist Review* describes the situation with these words: “Few topics in Adventism have aroused more interest—and passion—in the past twelve months than that of “spiritual formation.” Books, seminars and sermons have warned that the concept and practice of teaching contemplative spirituality can open minds to Eastern religions and non-Christian philosophies; others have urged that learning how to deepen a relationship with Christ is a foundational premise of the Word of God.”⁹

⁸ In a search of the *Adventist Review*, the term “spiritual formation” itself no longer is employed after 2010, instead the term “Biblical spirituality” appears. Even the class in the Adventist Theological Seminary was renamed and a 12-page document defending its inclusion in the pastoral curriculum was articulated. It can be viewed at www.andrews.edu/sem/sdats_bibspir.pdf, accessed on November 12, 2011.

⁹ Bill Knott, “Formed in Christ: What’s Behind the Debate about Spiritual Formation,” *Adventist Review* (August 11 2011): 18-21.

This problem shows up in shouting articles and impassioned treatises calling Adventists to toe the line and avoid the evil. Because of these negative impressions, the topic as a whole is shunned. The harder work is to sort through and separate the acceptable from the unacceptable. The goal of the attached book is to lay the groundwork for this task of introduction and discovery to begin: to provide a platform for understanding whereby the conversation can be engaged.

Books, seminars, and sermons warn that the concept and practice of teaching contemplative spirituality can open minds to Eastern religions and non-Christian philosophies; others have urged that learning how to deepen a relationship with Christ is a foundational premise of the Word of God.¹⁰ On one side there are speakers like Steve Wohlberg director of White Horse Ministries and Doug Bachelor director of Amazing Facts who spend hours walking through books published by the evangelical Christian world on spiritual formation decrying the errors. On the other side voices like Jon Dybdahl and Joe Kidder invite Adventist Christians into a deeper walk with God through an understanding and employment of Biblical spirituality.

As a Christian denomination the Seventh-day Adventist church places an emphasis on following Christ. And as a result of following Christ, the goal is to become more like Him. Becoming more like Him naturally creates Christ-like actions. Bible study, prayer, rest, healthful living, and stewardship allow Christ to change the inner fibers of our being. This is a description of what Ellen White is talking about in *Selected Messages* book one,

¹⁰ Ibid., 18.

By beholding we are to become changed; and as we meditate upon the perfections of the divine Model, we shall desire to become wholly transformed, and renewed in the image of His purity. It is by faith in the Son of God that transformation takes place in the character, and the child of wrath becomes the child of God.¹¹

The identified problem is an absence of an Adventist resource that connects church history with spiritual formation. The attached book will not serve as an automatic solution, but will open a new vocabulary for conversation. For the average church member to be receptive to this conversation, a resource is needed to show spiritual formation in the halls of Seventh-day Adventist church history. In essence, to shine a light on what is already there. Towards this goal, this dissertation presents its rationale and the accompanying resource book. The first part of the dissertation will explore the rationale behind the resource book, the presence of spiritual disciplines in the Seventh-day Adventist Church's history and how they shaped the movement. The rationale will be accompanied by a look at the church's history and the presence of spiritual disciplines throughout that history. Then the artifact will present the reader with the resource created to address the presented problem.

¹¹ Ellen White, *Selected Messages*, vol. 1 (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1980), 338.

SECTION 2

OTHER PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

This section will present a review of current solutions proposed to address the problem of the lack of a resource that presents spiritual disciplines through the lens of Seventh-day Adventist Church history. This resource is designed to enter the caustic conversation revolving around spiritual formation. The atmosphere surrounding this conversation comes into focus through the treatment of spiritual formation classics like Richard Foster in conservative Adventist circles. It can be seen when a respected Adventist seminary professor writes a book on spiritual formation and is attacked and labeled lost in mysticism.¹

In the absence of this type of resource, many Seventh-day Adventists remain unaware that spiritual disciplines are present in the tradition from its earliest beginnings. This makes Adventists resistant to the study of spiritual disciplines, especially spiritual disciplines as a tool to further spiritual growth. Seventh-day Adventists are hesitant to study spiritual formation through available materials on the subject, because they are written by non-Seventh-day Adventists authors and their language is not easily translated into the Adventist world.

¹ This comment refers to an article written by Dr. Eric Anderson, “What is a Mystic” printed in the Review and Herald on January 10, 2013. A copy of the article can be found here: <http://archives.adventistreview.org/article/5959/archives/issue-2013-1501/what-is-a-mystic>.

This section will summarize other Adventist authors who address this problem and share a critique of the solutions described by these authors. An examination of other proposed solutions will provide not only a greater understanding of the problem, but also a sharper focus on how the solution presented in this dissertation answers the problem.

This chapter will focus mainly on Adventist authors. But before they are addressed, it will look briefly at how non-Adventist authors address the challenge of instruction on spiritual formation. A number of excellent resources exist in the field that comprehensively and practically address the topic of spiritual formation. The challenge of using these tools to educate an Adventist audience is they come from outside the tradition and many of their illustrations and their language usage will raise barriers to the Adventist reader rather than opening an avenue to understanding spiritual disciplines.

The working definition for spiritual formation for this dissertation is drawn from *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation* by Robert Mulholland. Mulholland's definition is: "The process of being conformed to the nature of Christ for the sake of others."² In his book Mulholland expands this definition and then touches on the set of practices used on the spiritual journey. This approach is deeply valuable as it not only gives a clear and concise definition to the term Spiritual Formation, but also beckons the reader to join the journey. While Mulholland has the philosophical and theological platform for spiritual formation, there are concepts in his theories which raise concerns for Seventh-day Adventists. For example, when explaining the four classical steps of spiritual formation Mulholland loses many Adventist readers when he begins to

² M. Robert Mulholland, Jr., *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 15.

address the topic “Union with God.” The specific challenge is with the classical step called the dark night of the soul.³ Mulholland describes the walk through the dark night of the soul with these words, “In the dark night of the senses the last remaining dependencies upon intellectual and emotional feedback are painfully surrendered.”⁴ While his language is deeply descriptive, emotive and captivating, it is also polarizing. Adventists are resistant to such deeply mystical language. The mysticism and its ephemeral qualities are too nebulous for concrete, sola scriptura Adventists. With a group of people who depend so deeply on the book that the words of the Scriptures come out as proof texts, key texts, and concrete time lines. Mystical terms create fear for their spiritual safety. An example of an Adventist responding to similar language is respected speaker and author Mark A. Finley cautioning against mystical spirituality. His voice carries weight within Adventist circles because of his years of service to the organization. He says, “With our minds we enter into relationship with God.”⁵ Adventist readers and leaders are concerned when emotions become a part of the connection because of statements like these. Adventists are cautious about practices that address and employ the emotions. Due to the barriers foreign terminology creates in Adventist circles, an alternative way to address the problem is needed. If the emotions can be engaged through concrete stories and examples of Adventist pioneers embarking on the journey of transformation into a Christ-like character through spiritual disciplines, the concrete

³ Ibid., 81.

⁴ Ibid., 99.

⁵ Mark A. Finley, “Seeking a Deeper Spiritual Experience,” *Adventist Review* (August 2011): 22.

Adventist mind can be engaged. Then the emotions can be allowed to be part of the journey. Toward this goal, the book included at the end of this dissertation presents spiritual disciplines as they are found and practiced in Adventist history thus making it possible for Adventists to hear and explore them.

Another book to offer an invitation to spiritual formation is *Celebration of Discipline* by Robert Foster.⁶ This book begs consideration because of its status as a classic spiritual formation textbook. This respect was gained through more than twenty-five years as a major resource among spiritual formation voices. In it Foster presents three divisions for spiritual disciplines: inward disciplines, outward disciplines, and corporate disciplines. Through these divisions Foster creates a structure for the disciplines. This structure is approachable to readers because it helps them understand spiritual formation by conceptualizing it through concrete categories. This organization makes it possible to remember specific disciplines, as well as providing a window into the specifics of “how to” go on a spiritual formation journey.

Foster presents spiritual disciplines that existed through history: disciplines that stand the test of time and benefit people in their quest to draw closer to God in order to become more like Him. *Celebration of Discipline* is an excellent primer for the concepts and practices that comprise spiritual formation. Yet, again it falls short of solving the previously stated problem. While the topic and theology are sound, it carries the flavor and vocabulary of a different faith tradition. This is especially evident in some of Foster’s choice of illustrations. When discussing the topic of guidance, for example, Foster uses

⁶ Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, 3rd ed. (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1988).

the example of St. Frances of Assisi.⁷ The challenge for Seventh-day Adventists is the title of saint: a title the denomination does not attribute to individuals in the Bible or history. For an Adventist, the term “saint” is defined as someone or something that “belongs to God.” Sainthood is not an achievement of a human individual. The story here continues to relate how St. Frances requested guidance on the particulars of pursuing his call to ministry. He writes to two trusted individuals and asks them to pray, when the messenger returns with their response Frances bows down and asks, “What does my Lord Jesus Christ order me to do?” While the practice of asking for guidance from respected Christian friends is something an Adventist could learn from and accept, the manner in which this illustration presents the practice of guidance is troubling for an Adventist. The practice here describes a person speaking in God’s place. St. Francis addresses the individual as a prophet sharing a message straight from God. To an Adventist this places the letter’s authority on a level with God Himself. Because of the guarded Adventist understanding of spiritual authority the value of the illustration is eclipsed.⁸

The value of spiritual discipline training is also recognized by other groups, yet again they are not Seventh-day Adventist.⁹ The Renovare Group was established over twenty-five years ago to “seek to resource, fuel, model, and advocate more intentional living and spiritual formation among Christians and those wanting a deeper connection

⁷ Ibid., 180.

⁸ This is an odd dichotomy. While recognizing letters from Ellen G. White as a prophet speaking God’s work, the denomination rules out all others from this task.

⁹ While the term “Adventist” can be used to describe any group that is looking for the Advent of the coming of Christ, the term Adventist in this dissertation will be used to refer to the Seventh-day Adventist Church specifically.

with God.”¹⁰ This group seeks to reach this goal through video and print resources, conferences and events, community groups and training opportunities. The typical Adventist reader puts up walls of skepticism and critique when reading materials from outside sources. The Renovare organization falters because it is the voice of an outsider using a different vocabulary and biblical understanding, often employing words that polarize an Adventist audience. Some of this critique is warranted, as the reader prayerfully examines the use of authority and content. This careful, prayerful reading is advocated whatever the denomination of the source. But this evaluation becomes a wall, walls prevent constituents from learning and employing the suggested spiritual practices.

Adventists as a denomination are often resistant to outside sources for several reasons. Their unique identity as an end-time people, called by God to present a special message, creates a separatist attitude. This attitude is especially evident when connected with the call in Revelation to come out of Babylon. This identity suggests the Adventist message is superior to all others and outside sources are labeled Babylon and thus suspect. Because there is a difference of theology contained in sources outside the circle of Adventist authors, there is a sense of us versus them and this attitude breeds fear. Adventists listen to the critical voice toward these outside authors and see avoidance as a necessity. The best response is to do the work of prayerful, Biblical study to evaluate what is correct and applicable, and what is false and needs to be avoided. But instead of doing the work themselves, many merely depend on what they can label as “kosher”

¹⁰ Renovare, *What Is Renovare?* Renovare, 2010, accessed January 13 2010, <http://www.renovare.us/WHOWEARE/WhatisRenovaré/tabid/2475/Default.aspx>.

authors. This attitude narrows the resources available to them to understand spiritual formation.

When moving to the Adventist side of addressing the problem, a lack of resources to review becomes apparent. In an attempt to evaluate Adventist resources that may address the problem a search was conducted for seminar materials and books produced through Adventist publishing houses. The two major publishing houses are the Review and Herald and the Pacific Press Publishing Association, but neither offered any practical resources on the topic of spiritual formation.¹¹

While a section at the Adventist Book Center called Spiritual Growth does exist, it is not complete in its approach to our time with God. Instead of providing a wholistic scope that incorporates different ways to enter into God's presence, the books focus only on specific practices instead of a comprehensive, balanced, relational approach. The following section will deal with literature which is relevant to the topic under discussion and explain why each fails to address the problem.

First to be reviewed is a selection of books on Spiritual Growth that propose a broad experience with God. An example of this is the book *Christ's Way to Spiritual Growth*.¹² While close in context to the previously mentioned definition of spiritual formation, the concept of spiritual growth falls short of the complete system. Namely, it places a lesser emphasis on the process of the Christian journey, and by extension the

¹¹ Verified by calling the Adventist Book Center at 1-800-765-6955; catalog can also be viewed at www.adventistbookcenter.com, accessed May 17, 2008.

¹² Philip G. Samaan, *Christ's Way to Spiritual Growth* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1995).

specific practical actions and practices that can be employed. The author of the book under discussion, Philip G. Samaan, defines spirituality as “Christlikeness, having Jesus fill our lives that when others look at us, they see Jesus instead.”¹³ While Samaan is strong in presenting his philosophy and theology of spiritual growth, he falls short when it comes to his definition of specific practices involved in this growth. The focus in this book is on the direct personal interaction with God through Bible study, prayer and healthful living. Samaan cautions against labeling worship or service as a path to spiritual growth because it is an outlet of discipleship, not an element of discipleship. Samaan’s definition is too narrow because it excludes spiritual practices that further the process of becoming like Christ. The practices which Samaan labels as spiritual growth practices are primarily inwardly and solitarily focused. This omits the outward and corporate ways in which Christians grow spiritually which Richard Foster includes in his book *Celebration of Discipline*. If the definition is limited to only personal experiences, the accountability and Christian community needed for spiritual growth is labeled as unimportant.

This same narrow definition is reflected in other books written on the subject by Adventist authors. For example, *Follow Me: How to Walk with Jesus Every Day*, by Miroslav M. Kis.¹⁴ He, as the previous author, defines service and other action oriented spiritual disciplines as results of discipleship, not a part of the process. When these practices are labeled an outlet rather than a part of the relationship, Adventists fail to understand how many different and diverse ways Christ invites us to meet Him. This

¹³ This premise is included on the back cover of the book.

¹⁴ Miroslav Kis, *Follow Me: How to Walk with Jesus Every Day* (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2001).

restriction on how time with God is to be spent denigrates the spiritual maturity of those who feel closest to God when in action. One may draw close to God in contemplation and in motion, God is present in both. And even more than that, a balance is needed between inward and outward spiritual disciplines in order to grow up into the fullness of Christ.

S. Joseph Kidder expands the definition of spiritual growth into worship when he writes his book *Majesty: Experiencing Authentic Worship*.¹⁵ While Kidder does not give a clear list of spiritual disciplines which can be employed, his philosophy and call to experience true worship of God is inspirational. Yet it falls short of addressing the problem presented in this dissertation because there is no link to Adventist history and the practical spiritual practices evidenced in the lives of early Adventists. Kidder calls the reader philosophically and spiritually to a commitment to their God, but falls short of giving practical examples of how to continue on in the commitment once it is made.

The search for a solution extended to AdventSource,¹⁶ a clearing house for seminars, books and other teaching resources for use by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In their arsenal of resources one item appeared which comes close to fitting the need. The resource is called *Steps to Discipleship*.¹⁷ *Steps to Discipleship* is a series of sermon outlines accompanied by individual study guides. The goal is for the preaching of the Word to be accompanied by small group interaction and application. On first glance, it sounded promising, but fell short upon closer examination of the methods for meeting

¹⁵ S. Joseph Kidder, *Worship: Experiencing Authentic Worship* (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2009).

¹⁶ Verified by calling AdventSource at 1-800-328-0525; the catalog can also be viewed at <http://www.adventsource.org/as30/store.aspx>, accessed October 21, 2006.

¹⁷ Ben C. Maxson, *Steps to Discipleship* (Lincoln, NE: Master's Workshop Disciples, 2009).

God. Only two practical methods are given: Bible study and prayer. This limits the fullness of a relationship with God that is available when employing the full scope of spiritual disciplines.

In search of a tool that addressed the problem another avenue researched was self-publications. Not all authors go through the denominationally organized publication houses, and authors may choose to produce a tool at their own expense. Although, self-publication doesn't carry with it the denominational stamp of approval, if the right author produced a work it might possibly be used to address the need for spiritual disciplines from Adventist history. In looking at this possible source for materials nothing was found, but self-publications can be harder to find therefore resources may still exist.

One other Adventist author who does address the topic of spiritual disciplines through Adventist eyes is Dr. Jon Dybdahl. Dybdahl published two articles addressing spiritual formation for *Ministry Magazine*¹⁸. This is a Seventh-day Adventist publication sent to ministers as a tool to assist them in leading and caring for their churches. While these articles gave a taste of spiritual formation to the pastors, this publication isn't accessible to the average church member. And again, the articles do not show the existence of spiritual disciplines in the history of the Adventist church, even though they are comprehensive in their definition of spiritual formation and theology.

Dr. Jon Dybdahl continued his work on the subject of spiritual formation when he authored the book, *Hungry: Satisfying the Longings of Your Soul*.¹⁹ This book distills his

¹⁸ Jon L. Dybdahl, "Doing Theology in Mission," *Ministry* 79, no. 1 (2006).

¹⁹ Jon L. Dybdahl, *Hunger: Satisfying the Longing of Your Soul*, 1st ed. (Hagerstown, MD: Autumn House Publishing, 2007).

years of experience and research on the topic of spiritual formation into an excellent resource aimed at capturing the hunger in the heart to know God. It introduces the topic of spiritual formation through Adventist eyes. Yet, it fails to utilize the lens of Adventist history to keep readers open-minded enough to hear what he is saying. While the curriculum is well structured and provides an overview of spiritual disciplines, the fact that it doesn't bring to light how these practices are evident historically in the Adventist circle leaves a gap to be crossed on the reader's part. An awareness of the spiritual practices in Adventist history, and their continuous part of the church's identity, will make it easier for those who are meeting this topic for the first time to be open to its possibilities. Adventists still need a wider range of resources presenting spiritual formation and the tools involved in a growing relationship with Christ. In recognition of this fact the attached resource is presented.

This analysis demonstrates that a few tools do exist, but each falls short of addressing how spiritual formation flourished in the history of the Adventist church. What is needed is a more comprehensive and denominationally-sensitive resource that looks at the classic spiritual disciplines and their existence in Adventist history. Dr. Jon Dybdahl acknowledged the need for such a tool when he shared how Adventists are resistant to reading outsiders' work on the subject of spiritual formation.²⁰ There is need for a resource that brings many of the spiritual formation tools together in one place and presents them in the light of historical Adventist tradition. Addressing this topic through a lens of history, adds a new dimension to the current conversation. By using an Adventist

²⁰ Jon L. Dybdahl, "The Messenger," in *Texas Conference Workers' Meeting* (Camp Allen, Allen, TX: August 11, 2009).

vocabulary this tool provides the opportunity to circumvent the barriers put in place by the separatist attitude present in the conversation surrounding spiritual formation.²¹

The rational in the dissertation will address the need to open the door for Adventists to take spiritual formation seriously. This artifact, the answer to the identified problem, will be a book that combines the Biblical basis for a spiritual discipline, linking that practice to our history by focusing on a specific church pioneer, and then include the opportunity to engage in an experiment to try out that discipline. There are examples in the Adventist church of spiritual disciplines and their practice. A focus on the “doing” side to the detriment of the “being” side is harmful. In order to reassert balance between the two elements of this tradition of Christianity, the book will give Adventists the opportunity to delve into history for the purpose of bringing spiritual formation to importance again in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The prayed for result is that instead of building walls against outsiders the Adventist can hear the voices of their forefathers sharing with them about spiritual formation and enter the conversation with an open mind and risk a life changing encounter with God.

²¹ This atmosphere is difficult to quantify; it is easier to feel. It comes across in articles like Angel Rodriguez’s article “God’s End-Time Remnant and Charges of Exclusivism and Triumphalism” and its invitation to build bridges. Other examples exist, and this article can be accessed at <https://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/sites/default/files/pdf/God%27s%20End-time%20Remnant.pdf>

SECTION 3

HISTORY OF SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES IN ADVENTISM

The following chapter will explore the history of spiritual disciplines in Seventh-day Adventist Church history. Despite the lack of publications covering spiritual formation, evidence shows the practices existed as regular devotional events. The contribution of this author is their collection into categories and assigned labels. This chapter will explore the main spiritual disciplines the early Adventists employed in their endeavor to be shaped and conformed to the image of God. It is important to recognize their place in Adventist history before a proper understanding and application to contemporary society can take place.

This chapter will explore five spiritual disciplines that shaped Adventism's leaders, and through them the movement that became the church of today. The spiritual disciplines highlighted within the pages of this chapter are Bible study, prayer, healthful living, stewardship, and worship. These five disciplines are addressed because they are expressions of the fundamental doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Other spiritual disciplines did exist, and a brief acknowledgment of that is included, but those with the greatest influence on the Adventist church will be the focus. Because these five spiritual practices are reflected so strongly in the fundamental beliefs of the church, these five disciplines present the best opportunity for educating the skeptical on their presence and importance.

The spiritual discipline with the greatest impact on the Seventh-day Adventist Church is Bible study. Early Adventists, in keeping with their Christian Connection Church heritage, considered themselves “people of The Book.”¹ They spent hours immersed in the Scriptures. Reading letters and journals of the time it becomes clear that these Adventists spoke boldly about their faith, and derived their authority from the countless hours of Bible study and the resulting conviction it brought them.² William Miller was a short, balding farmer with slight palsy, yet he held audiences spell bound for hours. In writing letters of guidance Ellen White seamlessly incorporates Bible references and their principles. Joseph Bates rides into Battle Creek and boldly asks for the most honest man in town. When the community members send him to David Hewitt’s farm, an intense debate on the ten commandments ensues. So convicting is Bates presentation David Hewitt is persuaded. Each of these experiences is the result of time in the Word, and the impassioned presentation of its topics.

These leaders sought to bring people back to the Bible as a rule of faith. Bible study was the foundation for all other beliefs, the ruler for all other practices and theologies. It was the ruler employed to evaluate choices. It is due to this emphasis that Bible study as a spiritual discipline is to be viewed first.

While the label spiritual discipline was not employed to describe the type of Bible study, the practice matches the definition. Bible study was a specific practice used to

¹ “People of the Book” is a phrase that Adventist traditionally claims as their own descriptor. However, this phrase “originally came from the Qur’an, referring to three monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam” according to followthebiblesda.com. The Adventist Review raises the question “Are We Still People of the Book?” in an article of the same name written by Mark A. Kellner.

² Official Adventist church website, “History,” accessed November 12, 2015, http://www.adventist.org/world_church/facts_and_figures/history/index.html.en.

draw closer to God. These Christians fervently committed to time with God through study of the pages of the Holy Scriptures, pages that they believed most clearly expressed their Savior's character. For an early Adventist, Bible study was a time of deep immersion in the Word of God for the purpose of intellectually understanding and absorbing the prophecies.³ The intellectual emphasis almost precludes the change rendered in the practitioner. But examples in journals and letters show the change is a result of the hours of study. Early Adventists began to understand the power of the Scripture was not just to convince another person, but to also recreate the Christian. William Miller, a Baptist preacher credited with deeply influencing the emergence of Adventism, provides an example of this in depth study time (1782-1849). The pages of Miller's old sheriff's notebook contain twenty articles of belief, or as he calls it "Regular System of Divinity." Miller's journals and letters describe his study of the prophecies. The study notes in his Bible also reflect this deep study. Miller said, "This is where our salvation lies—it rests upon the belief that the testimony of God contains the creative power to change our hearts and make us like Christ."⁴ An amazing statement coming from Miller, a farmer known for his intellect and sharp tongue, for his ability to produce facts and details, and for fearlessly convincing others of his opinion. Here are precious, relational words that describe why he found himself being compelled to his time of study. His goal was to be made over to be like Christ. Bible study started with the goal to so

³ Richard W. Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1979), 32. This passages also contains a description of Miller's methodology during Bible study.

⁴ David C. Jarnes, *We Have This Hope*, vol. 1 (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2008), 40.

saturate himself with the Word of God that his very character changed. Miller wished above all else to let the Bible affect him deeply. He believed study and absorption of the Scriptures, resulted in a tuning of his impulses, thoughts, and desires. This is an apt description of the goal of spiritual formation, the process of being conformed to the nature of Christ for the sake of others.

Early Adventists endeavored to so know the Scriptures as to be prepared for any Biblical debate. During this time the second Great Awakening burned around the globe, and with it, fervor to know the Word of God. An early form of evangelism included riding into town and challenging the local preacher to a public debate. This debate, conducted in the local meeting hall, drew crowds and provided an audience for the Adventist's presentation. These evangelists turned to the Bible as evidence and basis for their beliefs. They confidently entered the debates with a well-worn Bible and easily flipped through its pages to find relevant passages. As they talked, and lectured, and rebutted, people's hearts were convinced of their line of reasoning. The Bible also served as the foundation for the appeals for change issued at these meetings. These appeals came from the positive changes the evangelists found in their own lives. The easy manner in which early Adventist quoted the Scriptures evidenced familiarity and comfort with the Bible. With the Scriptures as a constant point of reference for life, it became the source for all other disciplines. All else flows from Bible study. Bible study was the method to learn how to live, how to understand events, and how to move into the future. In fact, the statement of doctrinal beliefs for the Seventh-day Adventist Church first addresses the church's view of the importance of the Holy Scriptures. This topic is the foundation for all beliefs that follow.

The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration through holy men of God who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. In this Word, God has committed to man the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative revealer of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God's acts in history.⁵

This belief shows the heritage of placing a high standard on Bible study, and it is this emphasis on study that continues today. Because of the view that Scripture explains Scripture, early Adventists sought to understand the Bible as a whole. By comparing verse to verse, through word studies, and themes, they found that the Bible came alive and directed their lives. They believed that one adapted to the dictates of the Bible, not the other way around. Such a thorough study of the Bible was conducted, that most of the denomination's doctrinal beliefs can be traced to the study culminated in the 1860s. Yet the attitude toward the Bible was one of continued learning, and this can be seen in recent edits to the world church's doctrines.

This chapter also includes how prayer saturated the Adventist movement. When viewing the doctrinal beliefs of the Adventist church, four beliefs are directed at the Trinity. The *Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs* include three sections on the Trinity: number two is "The Godhead," number three is "God the Father," number four is "God the Son" and number five is "God the Holy Spirit." Each of these is an expression of how the denomination views God. Prayer is the way to address God. The picture one holds of God is intimately connected with how prayer is practiced. Prayer also comes to bear when addressing the belief of spiritual gifts and ministries, it is through prayer that

⁵ General Conference Ministerial Department Editors, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 2nd ed. (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2005).

we learn our role in the church.⁶ This chapter takes a closer look at Ellen White (1827-1915) and her rich history of prayer and communication with God. She counseled the early Adventists to “watch unto prayer” that their salvation would be sure.”⁷ In this vein she shares particulars on her personal prayer practices as well as the instruction she gave to others on how they could practice the discipline of prayer.

As the Adventists continued their study to identify what made them different from other denominations they began to see health principles that should be practiced. Early Adventists believed a Christian behaved differently than a non-Christian. This set of characteristics that identified a Christian became part of their lifestyle. Specific healthful living and dietary practices were embraced for the purpose of clear minds to understand and hear God’s leading, and strong bodies to do God’s work. Joseph Bates (1792-1872) was an early leader in realizing the value of healthful living. This chapter will look at the development of healthful living as a spiritual discipline.

M. Ellsworth Olsen’s *A History of the Origin and Progression of Seventh-day Adventists*⁸ contains many sad descriptions of the life of early Adventist preachers and their lack of ability to meet the needs of daily life. He includes young preachers rejoicing over simple blessings of half a barrel of flour for the winter or a hand me down winter coat. Through these early hardships early Adventists began to appreciate the value of the spiritual discipline of stewardship and simplicity. The discipline of stewardship is

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ellen G. White, *A New Life: Revival and Beyond*, 2nd ed. (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2002), 37.

⁸ M. Ellsworth Olsen, *A History of the Origin and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists* (Takoma Park, Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1925).

recognizing where blessings originate. Having the knowledge that whether they are great blessings, or small blessings, everything belongs to God and should be managed as a good steward would care for his master's possessions. "Simplicity sets us free to receive the provision of God as a gift that is not ours to keep and can be freely shared with others."⁹ This chapter will explore how stewardship was more than just a way of debt avoidance, but a way to focus on God. By looking at the life of James White (1821-1881) and his successes and failures in the practice of stewardship, applications for today will present themselves.

The last spiritual discipline that will be addressed is the discipline of worship. "To worship... is to know, to feel, to experience the resurrected Christ in the midst of the gathered community."¹⁰ Worship is recognizing in humble respect that God is God and we are His servants. To a Seventh-day Adventist this worship takes place throughout the week, but in a very special way on the Sabbath. This chapter will look at what worship meant to an early Adventists, and how the Sabbath as a spiritual discipline was employed to draw closer to God. The specific individual from Adventist history highlighted during the study of this discipline will be John N. Andrews (1829-1883).

These five spiritual disciplines are the spiritual practices that had the greatest impact on the shape and history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. These five spiritual disciplines are reflected in core Adventists beliefs – their doctrines – all twenty-eight are informed by these five disciplines.

⁹ Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, 85.

¹⁰ Ibid., 158.

Adventist Beginnings and Beyond

This section of the dissertation will explore a brief overview of the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. By understanding where today's church came from, especially in respect to spiritual disciplines, it will be easier to understand why the presented solution is necessary.

A brief snapshot of the history of what is today the Seventh-day Adventist Church is contained in the table below.

History of the SDA Church¹¹

Millerite Roots	Pre – 1840s
Doctrinal Development	1844 – 1848
Organization Development	1848 – 1863
Institutions and Lifestyle	1863 – 1888
Revival, Reform, Expansion	1888 – 1900
Reorganization, Crisis	1901 – 1910
World-wide Growth	1910 – 1950s
Challenges and Possibilities	1950s – ??

¹¹ Categories and time frames by Dr. George Knight, leading historian of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, as presented throughout his book *Anticipating the Advent: A Brief History of Seventh-day Adventists*.

Millerite Roots Pre-1840s

Foremost historian of Adventism, George Knight states, “Modern Seventh-day Adventism finds its immediate roots in the second advent movement of the early nineteenth century.”¹² In this spiritual fervor for Christ’s soon return, the denomination takes root. The denomination is marked by the enthusiasm and expectation for Jesus’ appearing even as it begins to grow. Scores of individuals awakened to a deeper love for God during the early nineteenth century.¹³ Among these individuals was a farmer named William Miller who felt a call to a deeper understanding of the Bible, and to gain this understanding, a call to the spiritual discipline of Bible study. In order to answer this call from God, he devoted himself to study and spent, according to his friend Joseph Bates, the next “two years of what appears to be full time study”¹⁴ reading through the Bible with only a Cruden’s concordance¹⁵ by his side. Sitting with his Bible open he read only as far as he felt he understood the Scriptures. When a verse became murky or difficult, when a question presented itself, Miller believed the Bible explained itself. To gain understanding he consulted the concordance to find other verses to explain the key words and concepts. Through almost two years of nearly full time Bible study a conviction grew

¹² George R. Knight, *Anticipating the Advent: A Brief History of Seventh-day Adventists* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1993), 7.

¹³ Walter R. Martin, *The Truth About Seventh-Day Adventism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1960), 27.

¹⁴ Joseph Bates, *The Autobiography of Elder Joseph Bates*, ed. George Knight, Adventist Classic Library (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, Reprint 2004), 147, 148, 155, 172, 184, 193, 228, 314-319. George R. Knight, *Lest We Forget: A Daily Devotional* (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2008), 15.

¹⁵ This concordance to the Bible written by Alexander Cruden some two hundred and fifty years ago contains an alphabetical listing of every word that appears in the King James Version of the Bible accompanied by chapter and verse references for each.

inside. He became convinced of the importance of the prophecy of Daniel 8:14, “And He said unto me, ‘Unto two thousand and three hundred days; and then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.’”¹⁶ He believed this prophecy pointed towards Christ’s return about the year 1843.¹⁷ In spite of this belief, it took another five years of intensive Bible study before William Miller began sharing his convictions from the pulpit.¹⁸ Miller’s practice of Bible study, and the fire it kindled in his heart, ignited the same fire among those who heard him speak.

The results of this fire appears in a story about William Miller and an invitation to speak before the Christian Connection congregation in Lowell, Massachusetts. Pastor, Timothy Cole, issued the invitation after hearing reports of Miller’s effectiveness as a revivalist. Cole wanted his church to be stirred with fervor for God and Jesus’ soon return.

With no pictures available, Cole could only guess at Miller’s appearance. When it came time to pick up the great and well known William Miller at the train station, Cole took along his own mental image of what a dynamic preacher looked like. He pictured a tall, strong fashionably dressed man. This image he compared with each passenger who alighted from the train. But each person he approached was not Miller. Finally, a short, slender farmer with a slight palsy approached Cole and introduced himself as William Miller.

¹⁶ “And He said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” Daniel 8:14 KJV.

¹⁷ Knight, *Lest We Forget: A Daily Devotional*, 16.

¹⁸ Arthur Whitefield Spalding, *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1961), 20.

Though he immediately repented the invitation, Cole took Miller to the church. After quickly introducing Miller, Cole then took a seat in the back of the church. Miller was a bit put off by this welcome, but he nonetheless opened his Bible and started to expound on the Word of God. Fifteen minutes into his lecture the pastor got up, walked down the aisle, and joined Miller on the platform. Such was the power of the message. It wasn't about the human package; it was about the Word of God. The Word of God in Miller brought passion and fire to his message and captivated the congregation. Even causing a change in Cole's heart.

As a result of his impassioned and reasoned lectures, a convicted and emboldened group of believers gathered around William Miller. The group shared Miller's conviction that prophecy predicted Christ's return about the year 1843. The realization that time was short inspired them to action because if the time was near people must be prepared to meet their Savior. The group utilized every tool available to them to spread the good news that Christ was returning soon. Methods used by the believers expanded: from preaching, to the presentation of lectures, to conferences, and even publication on the printed page.¹⁹

Seeking to effectively and quickly communicate this message, the group began hosting camp meetings as a method of sharing of Christ's soon coming. "On June 29, 1842, the advent believers assembled for their first camp-meeting in the states."²⁰ This was only the first of many camp meetings. Filled with anticipation for the second coming

¹⁹ Olsen, *A History of the Origin and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists*, 121-123.

²⁰ Ibid., 130.

of Christ, the movement sparked considerable interest, which led to rapid expansion and growth. From this first camp meeting the Advent believers went on to hold 130 more before the year 1844. The message and the vehicles for sharing it were so widespread, one author estimates that one out of every thirty-five Americans attended one of these camp meetings.²¹ All of this from the very humble beginning of a simple farmer committing himself to the spiritual discipline of Bible study. This same result is possible today when an open heart enters into God's presence through the discipline of Bible study. For the goal of Bible study is not to gain intellectual knowledge, but to meet the God revealed in the Bible, and to follow that time of study by being propelled toward kingdom action. This was true in the case of William Miller and is the reason to invite others to experience it today.

As a result of Bible study, a movement was born that crossed denominational barriers, and spanned religious traditions. The movement's only goal was to prepare Christians for the Second Advent of Christ. The belief of Christ's return is inseparable from Christianity²² and the message of Christ's soon appearing opened doors to preach in front of various denominations. This movement became known as Millerism and preached its unique doctrine: the Midnight Cry.²³ This expression is derived from the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25:6 and adopted by Miller as his call to be ready

²¹ George R. Knight, *A Search for Identity: The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Belief* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 11-12.

²² Arthur Whitefield Spalding, *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*, vol. 1, 13.

²³ Knight, *A Search for Identity: The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Belief*, 52.

for Christ's return.²⁴ The call spread far and wide and William Miller's name became a household word thanks to a young, zealous, Joshua V. Himes. Himes employed all of the publicist skills garnered from his time with William Lloyd Garrison to spread the Midnight Cry. Others joined in the effort to spread the message, and as the message spread difficulties also multiplied. "As Second-advent Conferences, prayer meetings, and social occasions were multiplying in various directions in the land, so in like manner opposition arose."²⁵ As this end time message was preached and gained momentum, so grew the fervor with which it was preached. And as the fervor grew, people pushed back against its perceived fanaticism. Doors began to close, and opportunities to speak dried up. This opposition caused Miller's followers to leave their denominations and band together as they waited for the Lord's appearing.²⁶ Initially a one-doctrine movement that flashed through many churches, religious groups, and across group boundaries, a transition took place. Now the Millerite Movement banded together, apart from others, as they waited for Christ's return.

Miller called for readiness for Christ's return about the year 1843, but he never gave a more specific date.²⁷ Yet a precise date was eventually adopted by his followers. This date came out of a rather enthusiastic meeting at the Exeter, New Hampshire camp meeting led by S.S. Snow. Through careful study into the prophecy that describes the

²⁴ P. Gerard Damsteegt, *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), 40.

²⁵ Bates, *The Autobiography of Elder Joseph Bates*, 270.

²⁶ Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant*, 47.

²⁷ Francis D. Nichol, *The Midnight Cry* (Takoma Park, Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1945), 454.

cleansing of the sanctuary and thus linking it to the Jewish Day of Atonement, the date of Christ's return was refined to October 22, 1844.²⁸

Doctrinal Development 1844 - 1848

But the date came and went and with it many of the followers of the Millerite message. According to historian George Knight, the fear of Christ's coming motivated some to join the group, others joined because of their desire to be part of a fiery and popular movement. Those with such shallow reasons to join the Millerites became disillusioned and quietly slipped back to their previous churches.²⁹

Yet some remained committed. Believing some significant event did take place on October 22, 1844, a small group of individuals continued to pray and returned to their Bibles to restudy the prophecies. The chosen method of the group: to join the spiritual disciplines of prayer and Bible study, and to continue in this mode until the group felt clarity on a subject. They spent countless hours pouring their hearts out to God, giving to Him their fears and concerns, turning the pages of their dearly loved Bibles and searching for understanding. Believing that the highest authority in their lives was the Bible and that God wanted them to understand it. Believing that the Bible agrees as a whole, that the whole Bible is needed, they continued in William Miller's method of study using Scripture to explain Scripture. They searched with a belief that God communicated through the Bible's pages, and struggled to find an understanding of how they erred so far

²⁸ Virgil E. Robinson, *James White* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1976), 31.

²⁹ Ellen G. White, *Early Writings* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1882; 2002), 15.

from its truth. Systematically they studied the prophecies of Daniel that originally led them to focus on October 22, 1844. Arthur Spalding describes this time as the group painstakingly retraced their steps. Through the 2,300-day prophecy the group came to a deeper knowledge of this prophecy and a renewed sense of hope and identity. With new understanding came new light,³⁰ while the date was correct, the event they expected was incorrect. In addition to this better insight came new depth to their beliefs. Instead of only one doctrine, others were found in God's Word the deeper they dug. Through this systematic study the themes of the Bible began to produce theology and a system of beliefs.

With this original Bible study effort, they also brought with them beliefs from their Christian heritage. Some in the group brought their belief from Methodism about how to attain holiness, and because of this right living came to the forefront and received attention.

The group hammered out doctrines with Bibles open. Often after reaching a decision a young woman by the name of Ellen Harmon received visions confirming the work. While these visions brought joy and affirmation, each doctrine required Bible study and examination to reach. Historian George Knight describes the interaction between Bible study and visions, "Ellen White's visions filled the role of confirmation rather than initiation"³¹ of any doctrine established for the Adventist church. Included among the doctrines hammered out by the group during this time was the belief that worship of God

³⁰ This time is recounting in my detail by Arthur Spalding in his book *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*.

³¹ Knight, *A Search for Identity: The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Belief*, 86.

involved the keeping of a seventh-day Sabbath to be observed from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday evening. The first article on this spiritual practice went to press early in 1845, authored by T.M. Preble.³² It articulated the Biblical basis for this practice, and invited others to adopt it.

In the time from 1844 to 1848 a one doctrine movement developed into a movement with a deeper breadth of articulated beliefs. During this time period Adventists finally were able to “acknowledge their deep indebtedness to countless other Christians through the ages who have cherished and passed on truth from one generation to another.”³³ But it took immersion in God’s Word to reach the point of the group actively acknowledging the connectedness to other Christians and diminished the separatist belief.

Organization Development 1848 to 1863

The next era of Adventist development was 1848 to 1863. Even while hammering out their core doctrines, the group of believers were afraid to label themselves a new denomination. Many were convinced that the moment they organized they would become “Babylon.”³⁴ A fearless young leader, by the name of James White, stepped forward to lead the group through the process of organization, the spiritual understanding necessary to accomplish it. Organization happened with a purpose: to aid the spread of the Bible

³² Matilda Erickson Andross, *Story of the Advent Message* (Takoma Park, Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1926), 55.

³³ C. Mervyn Maxwell, *Tell It to the World* (Omaha, NE: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1976), 106.

³⁴ Olsen, *A History of the Origin and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists*, 245-246. As quoted in this citation, George Storrs wrote: “Take care that you do not seek to organize another church. No church can be organized by man’s invention but what it becomes Babylon the moment it is organized. The Lord organized His own church by the strong bond of love. Stronger than that cannot be made; and when such bonds will not hold together the professed followers of Christ, they cease to be His followers, and drop off from the body as a matter of course.”

truths they held dear.³⁵ Organization was needed to serve as a vehicle to share the Sabbath, the value of the Bible, the need for healthful living, and an understanding of Bible prophecy. But the process was a painful one with further study and debate. Recognizing the difficulty of this time of growth and structuring in their description of Adventist history, the official church website describes the length of time the tension existed. “It took nearly twenty years for the tension over organization to come to resolution among the Sabbatarian Adventists.”³⁶ The name Seventh-day Adventist was first used to identify this body of believers on May 21, 1863.³⁷ This name was necessary in part to implement their belief in the spiritual discipline of stewardship. After the official adoption of the name Seventh-day Adventist, it was used to hold property titles so they were recognized as owned by the organization rather than by individuals.³⁸ They needed resources to further the work of sharing the good news of Christ’s soon return and how to prepare for this event. People donated the jewelry off their bodies and the land beneath their feet to make this goal a reality. But the holding of these assets by the church as an organization was also necessary to move the mission forward. If the individual maintained ownership, the donation could quickly be withdrawn. An example of the need for the structuring to hold title to churches and buildings is shown by a case in Cincinnati.

³⁵ Gerald Wheeler, *James White: Innovator and Overcomer* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2003), 125-128.

³⁶ George Knight, *Organizing to Beat the Devil, Anticipating the Advent: A Brief History of Seventh-day Adventists*, 40-41.

³⁷ Adventist Church Official Website, “History,” accessed November 12, 2015, http://www.adventist.org/world_church/facts_and_figures/history/index.html.en.

³⁸ Christian Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant*, 94.

A family in the city dedicated some of their property to the building of a church. The family, feeling moved by the message, chose to furnish a building for their fellow believers to meet and worship in on the corner of their property. Things went smoothly until the family became disaffected and withdrew their donation. The church group arrived one evening for a meeting, only to find the building converted to a vinegar factory.³⁹

Institution and Lifestyle Development 1863 - 1888

Known as the Era of Institutional and Lifestyle Development, 1863-1888⁴⁰ was a time supported by a completed doctrinal foundation. Now attention turned to the question, “What does it look like to be a Seventh-day Adventist, how do they conduct themselves, and how far does the church’s mission field reach?” In 1867 the first church census yielded a church roll with 4,320 members.⁴¹ The transformation from Millerism to Adventism was complete. The Seventh-day Adventist Church was now a doctrinally defined church body, and they set out to express their identity through positive assertions rather than contrasts.

During this time the spiritual discipline of healthful living came to the forefront. Many leaders who kept the organization moving forward found themselves with broken health as a result of their tireless work. These leaders realized the necessity of caring for the body. As they studied this theme, this realization broadened into a belief in the

³⁹ *Review and Herald*, “Good Testimony,” (October 23, 1860), 180-182.

⁴⁰ Knight, *Anticipating the Advent: A Brief History of Seventh-day Adventists*, 55.

⁴¹ Arthur Whitefield Spalding, *Captains of the Host*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1949), 286.

spiritual discipline of healthful living. The connection between a strong body and a capable denominational leader came to light. Ellen White added her voice to the growing focus saying, “The work God requires of us will not shut us away from caring for our health. The more perfect our health, the more perfect will be our labor.”⁴² This emphasis reached beyond the personal benefits of a strong and able body, as the spiritual connection was clarified. It became evident this was a practice to be shared along with their other doctrinal beliefs. In order to share the importance of caring for the temple of God, the group turned once again to the publication and distribution of pamphlets. As their magazines and booklets passed around the world and into people’s hands, many were won over to the idea that the stewardship and care for the body is an important part of our Christian responsibility. Because of the growing number of people open to the health message, the Adventist group felt the need to develop hospitals and sanitariums. The goal of these institutions was to care for the unwell in an environment that tied their health to their spiritual well-being. Among the institutions founded during this time were the Review and Herald Publishing House and the Battle Creek Sanitarium. The seeds of an educational system were also sown during this time.

Revival, Reform, and Expansion 1888 - 1900

The Era of Revival, Reform and Expansion began around 1888 and continued until 1900. Previously, the Adventist believers spent time defining who they were as unique and different from other Christian denominations, with this era the focus shifted to acknowledging beliefs held in common with other Christians. One author sees this

⁴² Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages from the Writings of Ellen G. White*, vol. 3 (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1980; 2002), 279.

progression as natural. He says, “It is only natural that it (the Seventh-day Adventist Church) trumpeted its uniqueness—especially its pillar doctrines⁴³. . . With that aim in view, most Seventh-day Adventists neglected these aspects of Christianity that they shared with other Christians.”⁴⁴ A few recognized the need to address shared beliefs, namely two young ministers—A.T. Jones and E.J. Waggoner. Ellen White described the focus of their presentation at the 1888 General Conference session which took place in Minneapolis, Minnesota: “Elder E. J. Waggoner had the privilege granted him of speaking plainly and presenting his views upon justification by faith and the righteousness of Christ in relation to the law.”⁴⁵ Jones and Waggoner’s purpose was for people to realize the good news of God’s grace and its place in our salvation. Their goal, as Spalding describes it, was to help the listeners recognize that even with all the uniqueness of Adventism “there could have been no Seventh-day Adventism without Christ, no allegiance to His law without His grace, no power to endure and to progress without His stretched-out hand.”⁴⁶

⁴³ The five pillar doctrines held by the Adventist group at this time: (1) the personal, visible, premillennial return of Jesus; (2) the cleansing of the sanctuary, with Christ’s ministry in the second apartment having begun on October 22, 1844—the beginning of the antitypical day of atonement; (3) the validity of the gift of prophecy, with progressively more of the believers seeing Ellen G. White’s ministry as a modern manifestation of that gift; (4) the obligation to observe the seventh-day Sabbath and the place of the Sabbath in the great end-time conflict prophesied in Revelation 11-14; and (5) that immortality is not an inherent human quality; people receive it only through faith in Christ. Knight, *Anticipating the Advent: A Brief History of Seventh-day Adventists*, 35.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 71.

⁴⁵ Ellen G. White, “The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials,” (1987, 2002), 211.

⁴⁶ Arthur Whitefield Spalding, *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*, vol. 2 (Washington, DC: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1962), 285.

Many at the 1888 session provided for the study and discussion of this message on righteousness by faith, accepted the message presented by the two young preachers, but others left unconvinced of the extreme emphasis they placed on salvation through faith and the overshadowing of the need for works this created. This division led to a split among the ranks of the Adventist leaders. All leaders at that time including Andrews, Waggoner, Smith, Loughborough, Cottrell, and James White assented to the truth that “the grace of Christ is the sole means of salvation.”⁴⁷ The challenge from the church leadership came because of the emphasis placed on that grace, and how as a result of the emphasis it excluded the balance of right actions. “Because in the minds of most the doctrine was assumed as the basic truth rather than emphasized as the dominant truth, it was in great measure lost sight of.”⁴⁸ The message presented by Jones and Waggoner confronted the church with its bent toward legalism. Falling back on the root spiritual discipline that sprouted the denomination, study groups were set up for prayer and Bible study.

In spite of the controversy, work in other areas moved forward. During this era the Adventist church’s focus on the spiritual discipline of service culminated in the move to share their message worldwide. Although the first missionary,⁴⁹ J.N. Andrews, had

⁴⁷ Ibid., 286.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ J.N. Andrews was the first Adventist missionary. He, along with his son and daughter, went to Switzerland in 1874. Andrews was sent in response to a request from a small group who were now Sabbath keepers. This group heard the message from a Polish Evangelist, M.B. Czechowski, who the Seventh-day Adventist Church had declined to sponsor as a missionary and had found other means to take his evangelistic message to Europe.

already been sent to Switzerland,⁵⁰ other missionaries now joined the effort. With missionaries heading out to various corners of Europe, the church moved beyond the borders of the United States. Missions began in Europe and were supported by visits of church leaders, among them General Conference President George I. Butler, Ellen White, and her son W.C. White.

Reorganization and Crisis 1901 - 1910

The climate of the previous era set the ground work for the Era of Reorganization and Crisis from 1901-1910. At the beginning of this era Adventism was centralized in Battle Creek, Michigan. At this location was found the world headquarters, the sanitarium, a college, even the publishing house.⁵¹ Divisions among the church leaders highlighted the need for reorganization to meet the needs of the growing world church and the need to share responsibilities across a team. One individual could not do all that was needed. The pressure built because of a “church organization that was no longer adequate for the needs of a rapidly expanding denomination,”⁵² and financial resources were needed to support it through the discipline of stewardship. One element of the need for change was the focus of power in one geographical location.⁵³ The conflict between church leaders and the fight for power led to a crisis point. This crisis eventually served

⁵⁰ Emma Howell Cooper, *The Great Advent Movement* (Takoma Park, Washington, DC: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1935), 157.

⁵¹ Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant*, 260-261.

⁵² Gilbert M. Valentine, *W.W. Prescott: Forgotten Giant of Adventism's Second Generation* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2005), 145.

⁵³ Ellen G. White, “Our Duty to Leave Battle Creek,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 80, no. 15 (1903).

as a catalyst for the institutions of the Adventist church to spread out across the United States and eventually the world. What looked like a dark foreboding cloud cast over the church structure as two men vied for power and control of the growing organization, turned into geographical expansion.

The impetus for change was not positive: there was a fight for power, and a devastating fire. The fight for power was between Kellogg, the head of the medical ministry, with A.T. Jones by his side, standing against the new church leadership of A.G. Daniels, and W.W. Prescott. While these two camps entrenched in their views tried to control the church headquarters in Battle Creek, a devastating crisis made them realize the church was too centralized. This conflict, combined with two devastating fires, demanded change take place. Both the Battle Creek Sanitarium⁵⁴ and the publishing house⁵⁵ burned to the ground. Astonishingly only one life was lost in the fire at the sanitarium. This statistic is staggering considering every bed in the facility was occupied at the time. In the midst of these tragedies the Adventist church prepared for a worldwide reach. One historian points out the need for mission amidst the need for structure. Church leadership “busied with the task of reorganization, was yet keenly awake to the call of a

⁵⁴ Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Early Elmshaven Years*, vol. 5 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1981), 148-163. “On February 18, 1902 every bed at the sanitarium was occupied and only a skeleton crew was on duty. Although the fire consumed all the principle buildings of the sanitarium only one life was lost: That life belonged to an eccentric patient who apparently snuck back into the building in order to save a satchel which contained his life’s savings.”

⁵⁵ Ibid., 223-242. “On Tuesday, December 30, 1902 the publishing house was switching from the day shift to the night shift when fire was spotted and the fire department contacted. In this fire all the equipment and building was lost, but no life was lost. B.P. Fairchild wrote a letter to Arthur L. White on December 4, 1965 where he commented about the Adventist fires, ‘There is something strange about your SDA fires, with the water poured on acting more like gasoline.’”

worldwide mission.”⁵⁶ As the grounds in Battle Creek cooled from the fires and the heated debate, the leaders saw that what they needed to do was move forward toward the goal of reaching every corner of the globe with their message. And as they wrestled through what it takes to become worldwide instead of centrally focused, a new understanding of their mission and vision developed. Leaders realized there was room for shared control, Kellogg left the church and took with him much of the controversy, and organizational structure was adapted to share the power among more leaders. Through these challenges a healthier and more balanced denomination emerged with a new headquarters near Washington, D.C. The expansion continued as several medical institutions spread out from California to Illinois, and new colleges were set up from California to Tennessee. It was the spirit of God, whose guidance was identified through Bible study and prayer once again, which served to redirect the wounded organization. The leaders shifted from a local mission to a global mission as they practiced the spiritual disciplines of stewardship, and healthful living to support the movement that preached the discipline of worship.

Worldwide Growth 1910 - 1955

The Era of Worldwide Growth (1910-1955) saw dramatic changes in the geographic locations of Adventists. According to Knight, “In 1900 the denomination was still predominantly North American, by the mid-1920s more than half its membership lived on other continents.”⁵⁷ Though previous eras saw an emphasis put on missions, the

⁵⁶ Arthur Whitefield Spalding, *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*, vol. 3 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1962), 93.

⁵⁷ Knight, *Anticipating the Advent: A Brief History of Seventh-day Adventists*, 104.

stage was finally set for this message to move beyond Europe and go worldwide. Among the elements making this refocusing possible was the leadership of A.G. Daniels voted as General Conference President and his burning passion to see missions expand.⁵⁸ He helped the church as a whole understand its mission to the world, and commit to making it happen.⁵⁹ Another element feeding this growth was the church's paper, *The Adventist Review and Sabbath Herald*. It carried a strong focus on overseas missions through reports and articles. The number of Adventist missions climbed from 87 in 1910 to 270 in 1930. These missions followed the philosophy of uniting Bible evangelism with medical work.⁶⁰ This meant that in many places a mission included a church, a school, a clinic and often a publishing house. Here again is an example of the linking of spiritual disciplines to support a holistic Christian faith. The Bible study supported the evangelism, prayer fueled the preaching, the belief in healthful living generated the medical work, the belief in service created schools and charitable organizations, and the churches provided a place for the corporate practice of worship on the Sabbath day.

Challenges and Possibilities 1955 - ??

In the current developmental stage, Challenges and Possibilities of Maturity (1955-Present), the Seventh-day Adventist Church gained a level of maturity only afforded by working through the previous years of growth and structuring. But with the strength of this history comes the tendency for the organization to become institutional

⁵⁸ John J. Robertson, *A.G. Daniells: The Making of a General Conference President, 1901* (Omaha, NE: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1977), 75

⁵⁹ Knight, *Anticipating the Advent: A Brief History of Seventh-day Adventists*, 109.

⁶⁰ Ellen G. White, *A Call to Medical Evangelism and Health Education* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1933; 2002), 41-42.

and bureaucratic.⁶¹ The solidly based growth and God's guidance also provide for a foundation for ongoing revival and reformation. As the Seventh-day Adventist Church moves into the future David Moberg suggests two guidelines to prevent fossilization: "always keeping its mission in view and maintaining a willingness to restructure and reform its organizations and institutions, thus keeping those entities functional in the achievement of the church's mission."⁶² While the previous time period contained a linking of the spiritual disciplines, this time frame saw a break down in the understanding of these practices. From six inter-linked spiritual practices, the time period sees a focus on only two methods of getting to know God: that of Bible study and prayer.

In this section a brief overview was presented of the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. From its beginnings as a movement that preached the soon return of Christ and the need to be personally ready for His return; to the official organization of a church that became a worldwide movement; to the possibilities and challenges that face an established denomination. The goal was to inform the reader of the movement and trends in the history of the Adventist church so as the focus shifts to specific spiritual disciplines and practices there will be an understanding of how these practices have shaped a denomination.

⁶¹ David O. Moberg, *The Church as a Social Institution: The Sociology of American Religion*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984).

⁶² Knight, *Anticipating the Advent: A Brief History of Seventh-day Adventists*, 116.

Methods of Teaching Spiritual Disciplines

Early Adventists desired a deep understanding of God's truth and the relationship with God this solid base supported. This section is an exploration of the methods utilized by the early Seventh-day Adventist Church to instruct its members in the practice of spiritual disciplines. The goal in sharing this instruction was so each individual could strengthen their connection with the divine. The church found a variety of spiritual disciplines helpful in pursuing this closeness, and chose to share instructions on these activities corporately. From family worship, to Sabbath school, to small group meetings, to publications, and camp meetings, the church as an organization supported these activities. They provided the framework to share personal experiences, and information on walking with Christ.

Family Worship

Picture the sun just slipping below the horizon at the end of the day, and at a word from the father the children huddle around the Bible. They wait expectantly, and energetically, for what will come next. This is family worship, a time for devotion to God, Bible study, and instruction on spiritual matters. This is also the first method for communicating the spiritual practices engaged in by early Adventists.

This time of worship happened twice a day in Adventist homes, first at the beginning of the day, and second as a close to the day. These book end gatherings put God squarely in the center of the family's life. The family is the first place an individual learns who God is, that He cares, and how to approach the divine person in worship. This also makes it the ideal context for communicating discipleship practices, and training children. Discussions on how to develop a relationship with their Savior can begin even

when they are very young. Early Adventists recognized these characteristics of family worship, and set out to support parents as they instructed their children.

While modeling a behavior is an important teaching method, there is also a need for formal instruction. In early Adventist homes children received teaching in spiritual disciplines and spiritual practices by seeing their parents engage in them, but also through the formal instruction of family worship. Recognizing the value of the family unity, early Adventist families were advised to spend time in family worship twice a day, once in the morning and at sunset in the evening.⁶³ The time of family worship included reading a generous portion of Scripture followed by both parents offering prayer as an example. As they grew to understand the meaning and nature of prayer, children also joined the prayer, and even received permission to be a part of the Scripture reading. Another element was music, if a family owned a musical instrument it could be used by adding Advent hymns to the worship time.⁶⁴

In describing the importance and frequency of family worship Ellen White includes this advice,

The Lord has a special interest in the families of His children here below. Angels offer the smoke of the fragrant incense for the praying saints. Then in every family let prayer ascend to heaven both at morning and at the cool sunset hour, in our behalf presenting before God the Saviour's merits. Morning and evening the heavenly universe takes notice of every praying household.⁶⁵

⁶³ Ellen G. White, "Ministry in the Home," *Australasian Union Conference Record*, June 1, 1900. Article B, Paragraph 15.

⁶⁴ Olsen, *A History of the Origin and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists*, 318.

⁶⁵ Ellen G. White, *My Life Today*, 33.

This counsel encouraged the growing church to train the children early in the spiritual walk. Morning and evening worship patterned for all the family members the necessity of time with God. It was to be a daily family priority.

Joyful, delightful, and treasured are words used to describe the family worship time. And to insure the family enjoyed, not dreaded, the privilege of regular worship, the church solicited advice from parents on their techniques on engaging their children. The advice included ideas on inviting the young ones to be actively involved in the experience, with one suggestion as simple as going around the circle and allowing each child to read a verse or two from the Bible.⁶⁶

Hymns articulated the theology of the “morning watch,” as the first worship of the day came to be titled. Rousing verses calling the singer to attention, to recommitment to Christ, and to guard against Satan’s deceptions during the day ahead. They made time for this morning exercise knowing that opening the Word in the beginning of the day prepared them to stand firm when temptations came. And thus, putting the most important things first in the day, they carried God’s presence through the events of the day. As the day drew to a close, the family gathered to focus on God’s Word again and thank Him for His presence during their day. The morning and evening worship times provided the framework for parents to guide their children by sharing their experience of drawing close to God, and their methods for devotional time. This was experiential learning at its best. A family united in devotion to God, and the value of continued devotion was passed on to the next generation.

⁶⁶ Ellen G. White, “The Children,” *The Bible Echo* (1899), par. 9.

Sabbath School

The main corporate method of teaching spiritual disciplines was in the Sabbath School. It took place every week, on Saturday morning before the worship hour. During this time each age group gathered to study at their learning level. Because they believed this corporate time with God was vital to a relationship with Him, the denomination encouraged everyone to be an active member of a Sabbath school. The Adventist church “early adopted the goal of ‘every church member a Sabbath school member’; ‘the church at study’ became its motto.”⁶⁷ The church as an organization wrote study material for these classes making these materials available for every age group, from the smallest children to the most senior adult. These curriculums focused primarily on Christian education, but also included lessons that instructed on discipleship, and the personal walk of spiritual formation. With each of the elements Christian education, discipleship, and spiritual formation overlapping, it is hard to differentiate definitively where one leaves off and the next begins. The three categories are inter-connected and supportive of one another while also focusing on different goals.

Sabbath schools began small, and spread throughout the denomination. In his classic Adventist history book, Schwarz describes its beginning. “The earliest Sabbath schools were organized in Rochester, New York, 1853; Buck’s Bridge, New York, 1854; and Battle Creek, Michigan, 1855.”⁶⁸ During his travels James White recognized the need for the development of a plan of study for young people. His answer to this need was to

⁶⁷ Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant*, 377-381.

⁶⁸ Sabbath School Department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Editors, *The Sabbath School Manual* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1979), 13.

create the *Youth's Instructor*, a periodical designed to place Bible lessons for children in the hands of their teachers.⁶⁹ From its small beginnings in a local church in New York the Sabbath school class grew to become supported by the denomination. The Sabbath school manual shared with contemporary teachers reminds of this important heritage. A definite Sabbath School program was not developed until 1870.”⁷⁰ When Professor G.W. Bell received the reins of the publication it flourished. Under his leadership it reached new areas with a defined program and plan for Bible instruction. In his President's page, then General Conference President R.R. Figuhr says that “loyalty to the Sabbath school has been one of the secrets of our growth and prosperity as a people.”⁷¹ R.R. Figuhr heralded the inauguration of a Sabbath School Activities section used for encouragement of church attendance through a focus on the Sabbath school. The goal was ready availability. If people could easily access these study tools, their study could be deepened. Sabbath school lesson helps were often included in the denomination's magazine *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* also.

Through this intentional focus on corporate Bible study, the denomination collectively shared Bible truths as well as fanning the flames of the people's deep desire to know God. The curriculum for these Sabbath schools included Bible lessons and practical steps on developing a deeper relationship with Him. All these pieces moved toward the same goal, a deeper relationship with Christ. It is only Christ who can change

⁶⁹ The Sabbath School Department, *The Sabbath School: Its History, Organization and Objectives* (Takoma Park, Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1938), 14.

⁷⁰ Sabbath School Department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Editors, *The Sabbath School Manual* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1979), 13.

⁷¹ R.R. Figuhr, “The President's Page,” *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, January 5, 1956.

the character and the being of a human creature, Bible study is merely a vehicle to present oneself for Christ to do His work. All these pieces are vehicles that work together, and yet it is Christ who must leave His mark for there to be a changed person.

Social Meetings

Among the converging religious influences to birth the Adventist Movement was Methodism.⁷² Several early church leaders came from the Methodist tradition and brought with them the flavor of their denomination. Adventism found the concept of social meetings to be a particularly useful tool in communicating discipleship methods. Ellen White is an example of a leader with a background in the Methodist Episcopal tradition. As one of the three main founders of the Adventist church, her influence carried weight and respect. She believed deeply that each person was responsible to continue to grow spiritually. A prime way to ensure proper stewardship of this part of life, was the social meeting. These weekly gatherings in small groups, provided accountability, fellowship, and support for spiritual growth. And Adventists saw these regular gatherings as an important part of the structure of a church body and a tradition to continue in their denomination.

As believers met mid-week for time to focus on God, they found joy in the intentional time for Bible study and prayer. It was an activity distinctly different from preaching meetings.⁷³ These social meetings included the sharing of personal experiences

⁷² Knight, *A Search for Identity: The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Belief*, 32-34.

⁷³ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4 (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1855), 70.

through testimonies of victories and trials. The recitations helped to fortify the speaker and also to instruct other group members in methods of drawing close to God. In addition, the social meeting encouraged a musical element as a way to praise and express devotion to God.⁷⁴ Through these practices members received the opportunity for spiritual enrichment, and gathered instruction, ideas and examples. It was accepted that anyone who pursued “the Christian course” had something to relate in the meeting, whether it was of “light, strength, or knowledge.”⁷⁵ This expectation of engagement and involvement made the social meeting a prime place for active learning. It both strengthened the connection to the church family and the growth set in the context of community. The special opportunity for accountability in Christian fellowship provided a strong focus on one’s personal walk with God. To be able to share in the meeting, something must have happened toward life change during personal devotional time.

Many social meetings were planned affairs, where the attendants put the date on their calendar well in advance of the gathering. Yet while social meetings most often scheduled small group time, they also seemed to crop up spontaneously. A biography of Ellen White written by her son Arthur White, recites examples of this very thing happening. One such example took place while Ellen White was in Australia, unable to attend the General Conference session of 1893 held in the United States. In place of a physical appearance, she sent a letter that was to be read to the assembly. It was one of correction and instruction, and the response of the listeners was to hold a social meeting

⁷⁴ Ibid., 71.

⁷⁵ Ellen G. White, “The Social Meeting,” *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, April 28, 1885, par. 5.

immediately following the reading of the letter.⁷⁶ The General Conference Daily Bulletin included the content of the letter as well as a description of the conference leader's prayer and contrition in response to hearing her rebuke.

Following the reading of this, a most excellent social meeting occurred, a number of brethren responding with hearty confessions and expressions of determination to walk in unity and love and the advancing light. The good Spirit of the Lord came in marked degree, tears flowed freely, and expressions of joy and thankfulness seemed to well up from every heart.⁷⁷

This example illustrates how important social meetings were in the life of the early Adventist movement. The purpose was to bring focus to personal responsibility and accountability, and to help members realize that each Christian needed a personal walk with their Savior: a time to connect and communicate with Him. The response to the realization of how important this type of connection to God and others was evidenced as members prayed specifically and earnestly for one another. They truly supported each other in a shared spiritual walk.

Publications

With a fever in their bones, and a passion for the lost, early Adventists set out to use every method to preach Christ's soon return. Using every method at their disposal to spread "the truth,"⁷⁸ meant printed publications. The leaders wrote magazines, tracts, and books. Each focused on the same theme: Christ is returning soon. Joshua V. Himes

⁷⁶ Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Australian Years, 1891-1900*, vol. 4 (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1983; 2002), 67.

⁷⁷ Editors, "Dear Brethren of the General Conference," in *General Conference Session* (1893), 421.

⁷⁸ Maxwell, 106.

helped William Miller spread his message around the world by the use of publications,⁷⁹ turning this simple farmer into a household name. So the early Adventist church reproduced his technique of using the printed page. Publications were tried and true. The message must be shared, and on the printed page it could be read and reread, and then shared with another. One of the earliest books was *Seventh Day Sabbath, A Perpetual Sign* authored by Joseph Bates. It was first published in May of 1846.⁸⁰ It endeavored to educate and communicate the Adventist message so that people might understand its urgency, adopting it, and become more deeply rooted in their faith.

Among these early publications was *A Word to the Little Flock*. Its twenty-four pages made up the first publishing collaboration “by the three founders of the Sabbatarian Adventist movement.”⁸¹ This little document was shared far and wide across the states even without the benefits of modern methods of communication. It strove to give a loosely organized group of believers a sense of community, direction, and belonging. *A Word to the Little Flock*⁸² focused the Bible’s lens on three main points: end-time events, the heavenly sanctuary and its connection to the seventh-day Sabbath, and an affirmation of Ellen White’s gift of visions. The content included thirteen articles: nine written by James White, three by his wife Ellen White, and one by Joseph Bates. This publication

⁷⁹ Knight, *Lest We Forget: A Daily Devotional*, 23.

⁸⁰ George Knight, *Joseph Bates: The Real Founder of Seventh-Day Adventism* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2004), 108.

⁸¹ George R. Knight, ed., *Earliest Seventh-day Adventist Periodicals* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2005), xv.

⁸² James White, Joseph Bates, and Ellen G. White, *A Word to the Little Flock* (Brunswick, ME: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1847).

was important to the fledgling church, it brought a sense of connectedness even as they were disconnecting from their previous church families. It highlighted the value of the Sabbath's biblical basis, and the benefits of keeping the day holy.

With the realization that periodicals provided an opportunity for regular influence upon people, James White published in July of 1849 the first issue of *The Present Truth*.⁸³ Its format as a regular publication had the benefit of keeping the truth before the believers spread around the nation. A year later, in December 1850, saw the release of the magazine *The Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*.⁸⁴

While these publications instructed in doctrine, they also encouraged and exhorted the believers to spiritual faithfulness, and helped a widespread group of believers maintain an identity. The connection between sound doctrine, and practical living came through in the pages. Articles shared information on the foundation for Christian living practices at the same time exhorting the believers to continue Bible study and prayer.

The printed word reinforced the other methods of educating believers about spiritual formation. Each practice, family worship, Sabbath conferences, camp meetings, and preaching were reported by the materials the publishing house produced. These printed materials made church doctrines accessible to people in far flung areas of the

⁸³ J.N. Loughborough, *Rise and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists* (Washington, DC: The Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1905), 153. This volume also contains a copy of the first page of the magazine.

⁸⁴ Maxwell, 103.

movement. So whether learning corporately or individually, reference material was available to refer back to as the Christian journey continued.

Camp Meetings

After the General Conference sessions of 1867 the conclusion came that the church was too focused on business, leaving a need for something more. The answer came in the form of camp meetings. James White “deplored the fact that annual General Conference sessions were so packed with business matters that no time was left for spiritual themes.”⁸⁵ The answer to this problem was a gathering for the purpose of hearing the word of God, fellowship, and recommitting the life to the service of God. This new style of gathering was dubbed “camp meeting.”

Camp meetings were not an invention by the recently organized denomination, but instead was borrowed from the Christian denominations the leaders came from.⁸⁶ To reach people with the knowledge of Christ’s soon return, Millerites organized camp meetings. In a span of two years the Millerites held more than 130 camp meetings, bringing attendance estimations to more than half a million, meaning that one in every thirty-five Americans attended a Millerite camp meeting.⁸⁷ Following in the pattern set

⁸⁵ Adriel D. Chilson, “Don’t Be Wrong About Wright: It Wasn’t Our First Campmeeting,” *Adventist Heritage* (Spring 1987): 4.

⁸⁶ The camp meeting movement came out of the Second Great Awakening in the early nineteenth century. Originally offering a time for those in sparsely populated areas to receive communion, community, and preaching, it developed into a time of revival and encouragement. Baptist, Presbyterian, and Methodist preachers all were among those who organized camp meetings. And with roots back to these denominations, early Adventists employed methods they were familiar with in their new denomination.

⁸⁷ Knight, *Anticipating the Advent: A Brief History of Seventh-day Adventists*, 11-12.

forward by their Millerite predecessors, the first regional Adventist camp meeting convened in Wisconsin. The first general camp meeting for the denomination was held in Wright, Michigan in 1868. Church leaders met after this first camp meeting and the conclusion was that camp meetings were a success. The meetings were well received by the audience and met the goals of their organizers to instruct in spiritual matters. Camp meetings provided a time for Biblical admonition from noted preachers. The community gathering provided for accountability and prayer support from fellow believers. A book tent provided the chance to purchase materials for continued personal growth, Bible study, and also sharing materials for witnessing. This evangelistic emphasis was also present in the meetings themselves, with encouragement for Adventists to bring their friends and neighbors to the gathering. With the nineteenth century carrying an openness to spiritual things and evangelism, Adventists joined in this community spiritual focus. These meetings became a much-looked forward to tradition among Adventists and local conferences scheduled annual camp meetings at the time officers needed to be re-elected.⁸⁸

Leroy Froom described early camp meetings and their success with these words:

And giant Camp Meetings, together with tent, grove, and tabernacle meetings, began to herald the imminent advent in stentorian tones in the 1843 and 1844. Multiplied thousands now openly declared themselves to be Adventists in expectation. Ministers by the score, some quite prominent, and coming from all the leading denominations, augmented the swelling chorus until its overtones could be heard all over the land, and even across the seas. It had become an amazing movement for the time — 50,000 to 100,000 comprising the loyal core

⁸⁸ *Review and Herald* 31 (May 26, 1868): 356.

— with some 500 preachers and 1,500 public lecturers proclaiming its urgent message to all men everywhere.⁸⁹

Usually located on a volunteered farm, the fields provided space for wagons to park and tents to be pitched. A large tent in the center of the gathering served as the main meeting hall. Invited preachers would take turns at regular intervals through the day to open the Word of God and exhort the listeners to follow Him. The audience responded by recommitting their lives to Christ and right living. Speakers would make public appeals and the believers came forward to the front of the meeting tent as an expression of repentance and need for prayer. Special prayer was given for those who had recommitted their lives in this way. Discourses presented included explanations of the Sabbath, deeper understandings of the great prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, as well as delving into Leviticus 11 and the descriptions of what was best for the body in terms of healthful eating. The calls to members included a deeper understanding of the Bible, more fervent prayer, and setting aside foods that God labeled unfit for human consumption. Moving beyond just a time of growth for current members, the evangelistic fervor invited guests to join the faith, commit to the same standards, and preparation for Christ's soon return.

Extending beyond meetings providing opportunity for spiritual growth was the community feeling. Families often invited others to join them when taking meals. This closeness and camaraderie bred a new belief in the movement and God. Seeing others who believed, studied, and trusted in a soon returning God encouraged believers, old and new. In these close quarters joy and hope were shared and multiplied.

⁸⁹ Le Roy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of our Fathers*, vol. 4 (Washington, DC: Review & Herald Pub. Assoc., 1954), 144.

Preaching

Using another avenue to the mind and heart, the early Adventists adapted the lecture format of presentation. It was a popular style of communication in the era when Seventh-day Adventism developed. Lectures were originally a form of entertainment, and groups gathered to hear presentations on political topics or scientific discoveries or inventions. Recognizing the opportunity a gathering of people offered, Adventists captured another tool to be employed in sharing their message. Seeing a lecture as a presentation of materials, Adventists moved into the world of a preaching lecture. Preaching included a Biblical message with an application and call to action at the end. Not just informational, these messages aimed to cause a life change and commitment to Christ.

A preaching lecture encompassed two styles: preaching or debating. Preaching came with careful preparation and Bible study. A message was carefully prepared and grounded in the Word. It was full of passion. A preacher secured a hall and prayed for an audience. Publicity printed pamphlets and banners invited attenders to come, hear, and be changed. With the message, leaders among the movement made huge preaching circuits to encourage and instruct the believers, reusing their lectures from city to city.

An alternative to this style of lecture was the debate. To accomplish this public ideal exchange a preacher rode into town, located a community leader, and promptly challenged them to a debate. Preparation required an agile tongue and hours of Bible study. The challenger needed to be prepared for whatever challenges came up. By choosing a community leader they hoped to draw a crowd to hear the discussion. A favorite topic for starting the debate was centered on the seventh day Sabbath. This meant the encounter began with, “Do you keep all ten commandments?” Startlingly enough, the

method yielded positive results. Historical accounts record congregations beginning after a fervent debate took place in towns across the United States.

This was the case for a young man by the name of J.N. Loughborough. Housepainter by day and on the weekends a preacher, he attended a debate in town. The challenger was James White who Loughborough suddenly recognized from a dream a few nights earlier. The twenty-year-old became even more shocked when James White used the very texts he compiled to show the law was abolished, to support a person's continued obligation to the law. Three weeks later, after much internal wrestling, prayer, and study, Loughborough became a Sabbatarian.⁹⁰

Travel was no easy feat in the 1860s and 70s. The expanse of circuits show the depth of commitment felt by Adventist preachers. Regular train service didn't begin until May 15, 1869 for America's first transcontinental railroad.⁹¹ So travel by buggies, on horseback, or on foot was required. The completion of the transcontinental railroad improved their travels, but much improvement was still needed to make it a comfortable journey. The trip from coast to coast took four or five days, if all was in good working order. Train cars didn't include such luxuries as environmental control, either heat or air, and each passenger was required to provide for their own necessities. Dining cars didn't exist, and neither did space heaters. But such was the commitment by early Adventists to preaching their message, that they endured these hardships with joy to attend face to face meetings. Among those who traveled extensively were the young preacher, James White,

⁹⁰ Schwartz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1979), 79.

⁹¹ Gary Land, ed., *The World of Ellen G. White* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1987), 64.

and the young woman, Ellen Harmon. James White and Ellen Harmon met in Orrington, Maine in August 1846.⁹² They proceeded to travel together to share the message they both deeply believed must be shared with their world. Eventually they married, in part to prevent people from speaking badly of their travels together.⁹³

Conclusions

In presenting the main methods of instruction in spiritual disciplines, this section presented a picture of how Adventists learned to be more deeply committed Christians. These methods: family worship; Sabbath school; social meetings; publications; camp meetings; and preaching were used by the early Adventist church and they worked together to unite the church and to draw members into a deeper relationship with Christ. Each of the methods carried a singular purpose, to create and share the importance of a relationship with God, and to give practical ways of building that relationship. The family worship started at the basic family unit, and included the children in this time of learning about God. Sabbath school provided a place of corporate gathering for small group Bible study on Sabbath morning. Small group social meetings, provided for accountability on the journey and motivation to continue. The publications showed how the printed word entered homes and challenged the reader to study and commitment. Reviewing the impact of camp meetings showed how these gatherings provided an opportunity for corporate spiritual growth with a cross section of people from across the country. The use

⁹² Arthur L. White, The Ellen G. White Estate, "A Brief Biography of Ellen G. White," 2000, accessed August 22, 2006, <http://www.whiteestate.org/about/egwbio.asp>.

⁹³ Robinson, 34-38.

of the preaching lecture and debate formats was successful for public education and idea exchange. Even the deep commitment and impact in message sharing of early Adventist preachers was highlighted.

Motivated by the urgency to share the message of Christ's soon return, early Adventist used many practices to reach people for witness. These methods united under one goal: to gain a clearer picture of God's character, and nurture a deepening relationship with Him. This section's purpose was to paint a picture of how Adventist history expressed beliefs on spiritual disciplines and instructed others in these disciplines. Each of the methods discussed made it possible for Adventists to communicate how they experienced God and invite others into a relationship with Him. Even with the heavy emphasis placed on the intellectual assent to various Biblical doctrines that was required for membership, these intellectual beliefs were based on a relationship with God. It was through time spent in God's presence that these practices and doctrines were revealed. Taking seriously the words of 1 Corinthians 2:14 that the words of God are spiritually discerned,⁹⁴ the believers only embarked on this time of study after asking God's presence. And each practice, whether family worship, or reading the printed page, or listening to a lecture, the goal remained the same, to be changed by God.

⁹⁴ 1 Corinthians 2:14 NKJV.

Specific Disciplines

The purpose of this section is to explore specific spiritual disciplines found in the early Seventh-day Adventist Church. This is necessary to see what a relationship with Christ looked like on the basic level and what actions made this relationship live and breathe. The process to accomplish this exploration is done through the use of historical Adventist definitions that are accompanied by examples of the particular practice in the Adventist life. Among those disciplines included here are Bible study, prayer, healthful living, stewardship, and worship. Each of these five disciplines is also practiced in the contemporary church. While a further description of adaptation and change while moving these disciplines into the contemporary world will be hinted and touched on, it is not until the next section that these details are explored more fully.

As an additional element of interest, this section, will include a few spiritual disciplines previously practiced in the Adventist church but not practiced in contemporary circles. Among these disciplines are the spiritual discipline of dreams, visions of guidance, and corporate confession.

Bible Study

Early Seventh-day Adventists were ardent Bible students who determined to have no other rule of faith but the Holy Scriptures. They viewed the Bible as authoritative, inspired, and complete. An outsider who attended services at Battle Creek described the service in these words: “The singing was fine, but the sermons were acceptable only to

those who believed in the literal inspiration of every word in the Bible.”⁹⁵ Though the author meant this evaluation in derision, it was an apt description for the level of esteem held for the Bible by the gathered Adventists. They believed both in *sola scriptura* and *tota scriptura*. Not only was the Bible the highest rule of faith, but every verse was needed for a proper understand on a topic. So believers quoted it often, expounded fervently, and studied deeply. Adventists saw the Bible as their sole rule of faith: that God inspired individuals to express His thoughts in their own words. And while Adventists believed in thought inspiration, rather than verbal inspiration, they believed every topic of the Bible was a divinely inspired rule of faith for their lives. With this level of authority, the Bible as a whole deserved study to ascertain the principal contained therein. In recognizing this authority, Adventists sought to follow God’s will for their lives and be obedient to His commands. In knowing the Bible quotes and truths, charts and prophecies, the goal was to know God’s commands and follow them fully. Bible study was the tool for understanding, for preparation for confrontations or temptations, and for witnessing. It was through saturation in the Word of God that God was invited to enter the heart and change the life to follow its standards.

An example of how the Bible’s authority informs everyday living is seen on one of the darkest days in Adventist history. Known as the great disappointment, October 22, 1844, a small group had to face the reality that a deeply held belief, was indeed false. Through searching the Scriptures, the small group of believers had ascertained that Christ would return on October 22, 1844. They believed with the cleansing of the sanctuary

⁹⁵ Hjalmar Rued Holand, “Catholics, Lentils and Strange Byways of Reform,” *Adventist Heritage* (Spring 1957; 1986): 52.

came a remaking of this world by Christ upon His return. The fact that a reader is sitting here today, reading these words, shows that Christ did not return to the earth as hoped. In the midst of this deep pain, disappointment, and soul crushing desire to see the face of Christ, the question came, “Where did we err?” The response to this almost debilitating tragedy, was a return to the Word. The group faced this great disappointment of 1844, and the failure of the hoped for return of Christ by opening their Bibles for study.⁹⁶ With broken hearts they turned to the Bible seeking to understanding their error, find the truth, and, in that understanding, to find comfort for their wounded hearts. As they studied they came to the realization of how they were wrong, and as they identified the areas of error they aligned their lives more fully with the Biblical teachings. The belief that Christ would come on October 22, 1844 was based on what the “sanctuary” of Daniel 8:14 described. Originally they believed the sanctuary to be cleansed after the 2,300 days, was the earth they lived on. Therefore this meant that Christ’s return was necessary to accomplish the task.⁹⁷ But as they prayerfully restudied the prophecies the realization came that while the date was accurate, the event was not. Their new study led them to accept that on October 22, 1844 Christ moved into the second phase of His ministry. The transition to the heavenly sanctuary was to begin the investigative judgment. Instead of cleansing the earthly sanctuary on that date, Christ stepped into the heavenly sanctuary to begin His work of judging: sorting the sheep from the goats.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Olsen, *A History of the Origin and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists*, 177-197.

⁹⁷ Daniel 8:14 NKJV.

⁹⁸ These terms are ominous and foreboding in their seriousness. The idea of a sorting between those saved and unsaved carries eternal implications. It was the realization that Christ stands as our Savior and mediator that grace comes into the picture. This judgment is a time of reading through the list of history’s roll call and entering names into the Book of Life described in Revelation. Yet when a name is

With this knowledge the group added phrases of comfort to their vocabulary, and found renewed joy in the anticipation of Christ's return. The phrase, "Christ entering their names in the Lamb's Book of Life," meant that after the examination of their life's record, God judged them deserving of heaven and salvation. Another concept that thrilled their hearts was the phrase, "the Savior who shared His robe of righteousness." This described their understanding of grace. The group believed Christ's perfect life and death saved them, and that His record, or robe of righteousness, covered their sins and provided forgiveness. It was during this time they discovered the balance of justice and mercy in God's character. The result was joyful living in thankfulness for these new realizations. And as they continued to travel and preach and share, this new element of living in the present brought new fervor to their preaching.

This was a marked change in the group's relationship to spiritual formation. Instead of a head-long sprint to be prepared to exit the world, there was now a view toward a long term ministry. What was once individual heart preparation to leave this world behind, the group realized its need to influence the current world for good. Where there was once just a belief in preaching the second coming of Christ, now there was room for healthful living to be prepared for the full life journey. Deeper Bible study to relate God's Word to the current reality replaced the surface level acceptance needed to be ready for a quick return. A message that was once an inch deep and a mile wide turned

called of one who accepted Christ as their Savior according to John 3:16's terms, then Christ stands in their place and they are judged righteous. This is a very brief summary of a belief founded on profound prophecy and Bible study, but more explanation is beyond the scope of this dissertation. The illustration here is to show that Bible study brought peace to a difficult and painful time.

into a deep message with nuances and subtleties that mark a growing relationship with God.

As shown in the previous example, Bible study served as the root of the early Adventists' spiritual beliefs. When neighbors questioned their beliefs, or raised theological points of contest, they readily turned to their Bibles to find solid and authoritative answers. Plumbing the depths of the Bible's themes brought not only answers to questions, but also a deeper understanding of God's character. As they studied topics like Sabbath rest, they learned how God values human life. An examination of healthful living led to an understanding of an intelligent Designer with ultimate creative power and infinite love. While proof texts answered questions and opened the way for neighborhood conversations, it was the God they encountered through Bible study that changed their character. This level of authority carried by the Bible was reflected in how the developing denomination treated topics in its early publications. The December 1849 issue of *The Present Truth* includes an article entitled "The Shut Door Explained."⁹⁹ This article is essentially a Bible study for the scattered believers seeking understanding on the great disappointment. The authors wrote to explain the conclusions they arrived at through a time of Bible study. Their goal was to share the new understandings about the events that took place on October 22, 1844. In reading, studying and responding to the article, the reader was invited to rest in the knowledge of Christ's ministry, and continue with their commitment to the church and God. This study also prepared them to answer

⁹⁹ David Arnold, "The Shut Door Explained," *The Present Truth* (December 1849): 1-6.

their neighbors' questions.¹⁰⁰ In the same issue there is a statement by the editor James White, "We are often charged with following our experience, instead of the unerring Word of God; but such a charge is unjust and untrue... The Bible is our chart—our guide. It is our only rule of faith and practice, to which we would closely adhere."¹⁰¹ So this issue of the magazine showed in practice their treatment of the Bible as a rule of faith and authority, and the editorial note gave voice to their beliefs as the Bible as an ultimate and authoritative guide. While charges came that experience held more authority than the Scriptures, the leaders and believers wished others to know their rule of faith and highest authority originated in the Bible alone. The group upheld the Bible as the ultimate source for knowing God and His character.

The fledgling church weathered the trials and challenges through dependence on the Bible. The Bible dictated policy, practice, and lifestyle. It was this foundation that gave the church the courage to continue as a body of believers and accomplish the mission before them: to preach Christ, and prepare for His second coming. The Bible was an ever present object study in homes, readily read at public gatherings, and often a focus of small social group gatherings.

¹⁰⁰ This article prepared the believers to answer questions is supported by the section "letters to the editor." The letters to the editor section contained several examples of a reader learning themselves and using the paper as a witnessing tool. The preparation was exhibited by either being able to gather information needed to face these questions through the study, or the individual using the paper as a study guide to review the topic through with their neighbor.

¹⁰¹ James White, "Who Has Left the Sure Word?" *The Present Truth* (December 1849): 6.

Prayer

Turning to God for help through prayer was a regular practice among early Adventists. When faced with disappointment, struggles, challenges, or joy the response was the combination of prayer and Bible study. An opportunity to see this spiritual practice in action is when the church faced the civil war and the draft. As this issue and how Adventists should ideally relate to it, came to the forefront, questions arose. Families questioned what action their sons should take as the draft letters rolled into the mail boxes of the faith's adherents. This challenge came through the publications as a church-wide call to prayer. Feeling strongly that only God's intervention could bring resolution James White wrote an appeal to the church as a whole to go to their knees in fervent prayer.

In view of the foregoing, we recommend to our people that prayer and giving of thanks for those in authority constitute a proper portion of their Sabbath and other season of public worship, and, also, of family and private devotions. And besides this, we recommend that the second Sabbath in each month be especially set apart to fasting and prayer in view of the present terrible war. . .¹⁰²

James White asked the church membership to lay their concerns before God and seek His guidance. These prayers appealed to the highest authority, God, to reveal to them the best course of action for their fathers, brothers, uncles, and cousins. And even more than the call to protect their own, was a call for God to intervene in this wretched war and bring it to an end.¹⁰³ They cried out for God to protect and care for the nation He established in America, and restore its unity.

¹⁰² *Review and Herald*, January 31, 1865, 77.

¹⁰³ Reflecting the issues inside other denominations, the Adventist church shared divided views on slavery. As they wrestled with this issue they also wrestled with social justice and how to relate to it as a group. S.M.I. Henry arose as the leader in the social justice movement among Adventists, but her main

While this first appeal was for a regular monthly time of prayer regarding the Civil War, the leaders also requested a special period of prayer. This call invited the church to pray that God bring an end to the Civil War. All across the United States members were asked to pray for four days beginning March 1, 1865 and end on March 4, 1865.¹⁰⁴ The plan included a daily meeting at one o'clock during the week days and for a prayer meeting time twice on Sabbath. These instructions were given: "During these days of prayer, we recommend on the part of all a very abstemious and simple diet, Daniel chapter 3, while some may more or less abstain from food, as their health may permit, or their feelings may prompt."¹⁰⁵

Early Adventists recognized three categories of prayer: (1) secret prayer, (2) family prayer, and (3) public prayer.¹⁰⁶ Secret prayer was the unburdening of the heart before God where no one else could hear. The advantage of secret prayer was a total honesty and openness with God. Family prayer was a time to address the spiritual growth and issues of the family. Public prayer was a time for the cooperate body to speak to God together and often carried a call for fasting to be a part of the prayer time. Advice was

focus was on temperance and prohibition of alcohol. As issues arose in the popular culture, the church was forced to make decisions about how to relate to things like slavery, prohibition, women's rights and more.

¹⁰⁴ The call for prayer issued was directed at our nation during this difficult time, but also included the newly formed denomination as they wrestled with how to relate to military service. Many Adventists felt the need to pay the monetary penalty required by the government to avoid military service, others felt their religious obligation involved military service. These diverse actions by the Adventists made it difficult for the denomination as an organization to reach an agreement with the government on how to relate to them in their matter of conscience. The details finally reached provided for a noncombatant status from the government for all Adventists who declared it, and in return the organization encouraged its members to serve the nation in a time of crisis.

¹⁰⁵ *Review and Herald*, February 21, 1865.

¹⁰⁶ Ellen G. White, *God's Amazing Grace* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1973), 239.

given to never neglect secret prayer and to keep public prayer short without pontification.¹⁰⁷ These three categories of prayer layered prayer into every part of the believer's life.

Prayer became a tool for communication with the God they found in the pages of the Bible. Prayer was both speaking to God and sharing requests, praises, and confession, as well as listening attentively for His answers. Prayer spread its threads throughout the believer's life, surrounding the family, and knitting them to the church as a denomination. It was their glue, and their lifeline, and an intrinsic part of their identity and belief in God.

Healthful Living

As the toll of the work before them began to break the health of early Adventists, a new belief in stewardship of the body came to light. Early Adventists worked tirelessly to spread the message of the Bible garnered through their extensive study. Many broke their health in the process and required months of convalescence before regaining the strength to resume their labors. One such leader was James White. When James suffered a severe paralytic stroke in 1865 his wife Ellen took him to a hospital in Dansville for treatment. Also suffering health complications as a result of their intemperance of labor, were two other vitally important leaders, J.N. Loughborough and Uriah Smith both in dire need of medical treatment. They joined Ellen on the journey to the hospital in Danville.¹⁰⁸ Reform and balance was necessary if the denomination was to continue. Not

¹⁰⁷ Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1915), 175.

¹⁰⁸ R. Numbers, "Dr. Jackson's Water Cure and Its Influence on Adventist Health Reform," *Adventist Heritage* (January 1974): 16, 58.

only were leaders so worn they needed periodic times of convalescence and treatment, but their spiritual lives faltered as they wore down. Their broken health led them to return to a study of the Bible, and with this study the need for balance came to light. The belief unfolded: God designed humans as stewards of the world and their own bodies. They found that through caring for the body one ended up with a clearer mind to discern the will of God.

In response to this realization, a return to the Bible for study was met with a dawning realization that God required care of the body. Adventists came to the conclusion that a healthy body and mind was best equipped to hear the voice of God. They were not the only group during this time to see a connection between health and spirituality. Along with an abundance of health reformers Adventists recognized the connection between health and spirituality. “Because many of the health reformers viewed good health as important for achieving perfection, they saw ill-health as both a medical and a spiritual problem.”¹⁰⁹ This meant that leaders who broke their health in pursuit of an ever broadening church system faced a medical and spiritual problem. While hard work was necessary to reach the world with the message of Christ’s soon return, balance was needed to do it most effectively.

In addition to health reformers, the leaders found motivation for healthful living in the pages of theologians. One such influence on the Seventh-day Adventist Church was John Wesley’s concept of sanctification: that sanctification is the work of a lifetime. He believed in “the dynamic Biblical concept in which one lived in a growing state of

¹⁰⁹ Winston J. Craig, “In the Pink of Health,” *Adventist Heritage* (Fall 1991): 35.

perfect love toward God and other people.”¹¹⁰ This belief in a process towards holiness came into the Adventist church through the influence of Ellen White as well. By realizing sanctification takes time, a lifetime and a process, it brought to focus the need for daily decisions to be made to care for the body and sustain health.

In reaching for this holiness and healthful living, people started examining their lives for habits affecting their closeness to God. In seeking to determine whether to continue a habit or give it up a series of questions were asked: “Is it in harmony with the profession of one who is looking for the return of his Lord? Is it a help toward the higher life? Does it make for purity and holiness? Or is it a mere means of gratifying the senses?”¹¹¹ Direct and honest answers to these three questions helped the group to identify practices detrimental to their health, mental clarity, and longevity.

The first habit determined by early Adventists not to measure up to this rule was the use of tobacco, with most among the group giving up tobacco before the autumn of 1844.¹¹² A picture of the time shows a farmer plowing in his field, pausing from his labor to “bury an idol” by dropping his tobacco pouch and well-loved pipe in the end of a furrow. This picture puts a focus on how quickly they responded God’s persuasion. Even in the midst of plowing, conviction struck the farmer’s heart, and there was no delay in answering. He quickly turned about to the open furrow and left his pipe behind. Desiring that nothing be between him and his Savior, the pipe must go as God demanded. This

¹¹⁰ Knight, *Pharisee’s Guide to Perfect Holiness*, 156, 163-166.

¹¹¹ Olsen, *A History of the Origin and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists*, 256.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 257.

farmer was not alone in his choice. Tobacco farmers gave up their crops believing that tobacco was not right for their own bodies, or for others either.

The magazine used as the voice of the budding church, *The Review*, included this description of healthful living in relationship to tobacco.

The person that uses tobacco cannot be as good a Christian as he could be without it. Religion, for its full development, demands all our mental powers. . . . This drug impairs them. It accordingly must follow that, in proportion to their derangement will be the defect of their action; so that in this sense it may be said with truth, that the person that uses tobacco cannot be as good a Christians as he could be without it.¹¹³

While tobacco is linked to a number of health problems, the first concern was to be clear minded. The Christian walk was all-encompassing. It involved the whole body toward the goal of having the clearest mind. A mind able to discern the will of God and follow it. And if tobacco hampered that communication with the divine, then it must be left behind. So the call went out to the church to leave behind tobacco that they might better serve the Lord.

Following this same philosophy Adventists began to examine every area of their lives. This examination led to various reforms, among them, not eating flesh foods, highly spiced foods, alcoholic beverages, tea, and coffee. Uniting all of these choices was the goal of being in the best condition possible to keep a healthy and open connection with God. In choosing to say, “no,” to each of these practices, the goal was for a stronger, healthier, and clearer mind. While a stronger body was the result of better health choices, the main motivation for these adjustments it was not the goal. The goal was the clearest connection with God through the mental faculties that was available.

¹¹³ *Review and Herald*, December 13, 1853.

This kind of real life application to Bible study is recognized by historians. One views this application of health principles as a natural conclusion for a group that sees the Bible as practical and able to impact daily life.

“The beginnings of health reform among Adventists date back to early times. It was but natural that a people who loved the Bible, and endeavored earnestly to weave its precepts into their daily lives, should ultimately adopt physical practices somewhat at variance with those of the world.”¹¹⁴

In reading the Bible it comes to light in Genesis and creation, in Leviticus and the health laws, and beyond, that it matters how one treats the body. What goes into the body will impact how the mind functions, and God cares deeply about this. The story in these same passages also shows the impact of negative health choices, and in seeking to follow the Bible as closely as possible the Adventists often needed to follow God’s health practices instead of the world’s.

In June of 1863 Ellen White received a vision that outlined the broad scope for health ministry and health reform for the Adventist Church.¹¹⁵ She saw that health was more than avoiding stimulants and harmful food, but it also required balance through rest. It was not just a list of negatives, but also prescriptions of good things to do. The vision also connected health with spiritual well-being.¹¹⁶ Other leaders joined with Ellen White voicing their agreement in this focus on health as part of the spiritual life. In 1866 J.H.

¹¹⁴ Olsen, *A History of the Origin and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists*, 255.

¹¹⁵ Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Progressive Years*, vol. 2 (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1986). 16-22.

¹¹⁶ Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4 (Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1858).

Waggoner wrote in the *Review and Herald* that health reform was God's chosen method for making a weak people strong. He called the people to wise health choices, to a balance between rest and work. In the article he encouraged the reader with a word picture of what living well could do to make them strong. Waggoner described a strong back, ready arms, and a clear mind all as a result of good nutrition and setting aside of habits that destroyed the body.

The previous description gives the impression that Adventists as a whole conquered harmful health habits. Healthful living proved to be a goal difficult to achieve. Even Ellen White, who was so highly regarded in Adventist circles, even after receiving the health vision that focused the church's work in this area, struggled. The Whites were often forced to eat what was available to them, such as when the family was in Grand Lake, Colorado with the Glover family. Although they traveled far and wide to hunt, finding anything to eat proved difficult. With high winds it was even difficult to fish, so Ellen White's son Willie went out and "shot two grey squirrels to make broth for Brother Glover."¹¹⁷ Squirrels did not meet the requirements for clean meats discovered in Leviticus 11 and affirmed by the church body, yet they used them out of what they saw as necessity. The ideal was hard to achieve. With the goal of strict adherence to the biblical mandate as the goal, there are several such instances recorded where the ideal was not reached. At times a necessity for food caused the deviation. At other times an affinity for a particular food, such as shell fish, made it difficult to reach the high standard.

¹¹⁷ Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, ed. Ellen G. White Estate, vol. 20 (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2002), 211.

In all these struggles, the connection between health and spirituality was cited as the reason for caring for the body. In order to draw as near to God as possible it was noted that “religion, for its full development, demands all our mental powers.”¹¹⁸ “This indicates that when physical habits were seen to influence spirituality negatively, an appeal for renunciation of such habits was inevitable.”¹¹⁹ The link between the health of the physical body and ability of the mind to function at its best was attested to repeatedly. The two were deemed inseparable, a healthy body and mind was best prepared to connect with the divine through any of the spiritual practices. As a result, the goal was to treat the body well, that it might be strong and clear headed, fully prepared to do the will of God.

Stewardship

Stewardship is the right handling of the resources God gives us. This includes the careful management of home resources to meet the needs of the household, as well as including God’s church in planned giving. Stewardship includes honoring God through investing time, talents and resources in His church.

As church leaders felt it necessary to establish such institutions as Battle Creek Sanitarium or the Health Reform Institute, money became a necessary tool. As a way to raise this money James White led a call for investments. The invitation to members was to contribute money for the project, and in return receive shares in the company. In this way it was a kind of investment process. This made it possible to begin these institutions

¹¹⁸ “Tobacco,” *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, December 13 1853.

¹¹⁹ P. Gerard Damsteegt, *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), 223.

on solid financial footing and provide room for expansion. When difficult times presented themselves, shareholders were invited to donate the proceeds from their shares to continue the work of the ministry.

One of the financial problems that arose as the early Sabbatarian Adventist work progressed was how to provide financial support for ministers. Promising young ministers returned to farming, carpentry, or a family business to make ends meet. The man who was tasked with addressing this problem was J.N. Andrews. “In the spring of 1858 the Battle Creek congregation formed a study group, under his leadership to search the Bible for clues as to God’s plan of systematic giving.”¹²⁰ The group came to 1 Corinthians 16:2 for its instruction for believers to set aside an offering on the first day of the week. The system was dubbed, “Systematic Benevolence” or “Sister Betsy.” “Brethren were encouraged to pledge from five to twenty cents per week, the sisters from two to ten cents. An additional amount of up to five cents per week should be pledged for every \$100 worth of property owned.”¹²¹

Among the letters from J.N. Andrews preserved from his missionary journeys are lists of accounting on how he invested the church’s money. His goal was to keep his work transparent to those around him. His openness in these investments also extended to asking for advice on how to use church funds. J.N. Andrew’s priority was the work of the

¹²⁰ Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant*, 89.

¹²¹ Ibid.

church, and his final act was with trembling hand, to sign over \$500 to the mission of the church, the bulk of his earthly possessions.¹²²

The first article on frugality and supporting the church work titled “Systematic Benevolence,” was written by J.N. Loughborough in 1861.¹²³ “The whole system was voluntary, and still is not a condition for membership or a basis for church discipline. It is diligently taught, and then left to the conscience of the true believer, as a more effective enforcer.”¹²⁴

Letters called for every church member to sell their jewelry as a way to raise funds to donate to the work. The early pioneers realized that to spread the message of Christ’s return people must go as missionaries. In order to do this, travel expenses must be paid. The group of believers felt so strongly that the message had to be preached they responded by taking off their jewelry and selling it to finance the movement. They wanted to be part of something greater than themselves.

Worship

Worship is honoring God above everything else. Worship is a heartfelt response to His redemption and daily activity in the Christian’s life. When Seventh-day Adventists think of worship they are immediately drawn to the Sabbath as a memorial of creation and the Creator. While they worship God throughout the week, it is the Sabbath which expresses their true theology of worship.

¹²² Olsen, *A History of the Origin and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists*, 308.

¹²³ Spalding, *Captains of the Host*, 271.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 272.

While the “seventh-day” in the denomination’s name Seventh-day Adventist refers specifically to this spiritual discipline, it was a discipline that took time and education to accept. Adventists met the Sabbath through Rachel Preston Oakes, a Seventh-day Baptist. In 1843 she challenged a young Adventist minister by the name of Frederick Wheeler to keep all ten commandments. His response was an assertion that he did indeed keep all the commandments. Rachel Oakes Preston directed his attention to the fourth commandment, at this Fredericks Wheeler admitted she was right.¹²⁵

In the earliest call to unity among the early Sabbatarian Adventists, *A Word to the Little Flock*,¹²⁶ the call for Sabbath keeping is presented as a truth to be acted upon. The topic is presented as a Bible study, giving an example of the interconnection of their spiritual disciplines. But as time went on the connection between the Sabbath as a command of God and how Sabbath keeping benefits the Christian who practice this discipline became clearer. In a quote from James White in an article that appears a year and a half after the previous publication, Sabbath keeping is linked to loyalty to God and is presented as a memorial:

So the Sabbath was given to man for a weekly memorial, that on the seventh day he might dismiss all servile labor and care, and look back to the creation and holy rest, and thus call to mind, worship and adore the great Jehovah. If man had kept the weekly rest, he would never have forgotten God, who made heaven and earth. This view gives the Sabbath its just weight of importance. How wise and wonderful the plan of Jehovah, laid out in the beginning. Man was to labour six days, and the seventh day rest from servile labour and care. He was to look to the

¹²⁵ Department of Education, *Lessons in Denominational History* (Washington, DC: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1942), 110-111.

¹²⁶ Joseph Bates, *A Word to the Little Flock*.

heavens, the earth, the sea, and all things, even himself—the noblest of creation, and thus call to mind the Living God.¹²⁷

Early Adventists took their Sabbath keeping very seriously. In the 1890s over a hundred Seventh-day Adventists in Tennessee served on chain gangs, while others received heavy fines, their only crime being they worked on Sunday.¹²⁸

John Nevin Andrews, the denomination's earliest researcher on the subject of worship and the Sabbath captured the heartfelt cry for the Sabbath's observance in his book called *History of the Sabbath*. In it he writes:

The Sabbath therefore, lies at the very foundation of divine worship, for it teaches this great truth in the most impressive manner, and no other institution does this. The true ground of divine worship, not of that on the seventh day merely, but of all worship, is found in the distinction between the Creator and His creatures. This great fact can never become obsolete, and must never be forgotten.¹²⁹

Historical Disciplines Not Currently Practiced

There is a broad history of spiritual disciplines in Adventism. Some of the practices engaged in at the beginning of Adventism did not make it through the pages of history into contemporary practice. In order to do a thorough job of understanding spiritual disciplines in the Adventist tradition, some of the practices in this category need to be addressed. Among these those described as confession of sins, corporate direction, and dreams of guidance. As the exploration continues, these disciplines need to be

¹²⁷ James White, "The Sabbath a Perpetual Weekly Memorial," *The Present Truth* (July 1849): 3.

¹²⁸ Everett Dick, "The Cost of Discipleship," *Adventist Heritage: A Journal of Adventist History* (Spring 1986): 26.

¹²⁹ John Nevin Andrews, *History of the Sabbath*, 3rd ed. (Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1873), 575.

defined and viewed in their context, but the question, “Why are these disciplines no longer practiced?” must also be addressed.

Confession

Confession is an admission of sin before God, and where appropriate to an individual.¹³⁰ At the beginning of the church’s history the call to confess was taken very seriously. An individual must confess first before God and then speak directly to the individual wronged. While the Adventist church still calls for confession, it shies away from placing a focus on the confession of wrongs to an individual or group. Olsen describes the very first camp meeting held by the Seventh-day Adventists. At this meeting a call was given to the congregation to confess their wrongs. The “prompt response” given on the part of the congregation to the call to confess their wrongs is described in beautiful language: “Parents made confession to their children, children to parents, and the spirit of grace and of supplication was poured out upon all.”¹³¹

Dreams and Visions of Guidance

The story of Hiram Edson’s vision in the corn field is one that is repeated to school children as an explanation of God speaking in a time of great sorrow. After the Great Disappointment of October 22, 1844 people wondered what went wrong. Among the group who believed something did happen on that date were Hiram Edson and a friend. In response to their sorrow they chose to attend a prayer and Bible study meeting to seek understanding. While they didn’t give up hope, they sought to comprehend where

¹³⁰ *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary; The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 8 (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1979; 2002), 234.

¹³¹ Olsen, *A History of the Origin and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists*, 275.

they went wrong in their understanding of that day. After the meeting concluded the two men headed toward home through a corn field. “Heaven seemed open to my view,” Edson later remembered, “and I saw distinctly, and clearly that instead of our High Priest coming out of the Most Holy of the heavenly sanctuary to come to earth. . . at the end of the 2,300 days that he for the first time entered on that day the second apartment of that sanctuary; and that he had a work to perform in the Most Holy before coming to this earth.”¹³² His mind was then led to Hebrews 8 and 9 where he began to understand for the first time Christ’s ministry in the heavenly sanctuary.

Intense Bible study followed this vision, and upon completion, led to the development of a key doctrine of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The belief is articulated today in Adventist Belief #24: Christ’s Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary.

There is a sanctuary in heaven—the true tabernacle which the Lord set up and not man. In it Christ ministers on our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross. He was inaugurated as our great High Priest and began His intercessory ministry at the time of His ascension. In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days, He entered the second and last phase of His atoning ministry. It is a work of investigative judgment which is part of the ultimate disposition of sin, typified by cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the Day of Atonement.... It declares that those who have remained loyal to God shall receive the kingdom. The completion of this ministry of Christ will mark the close of human probation before the Second Advent. This doctrine gave solace to a group of people who were reeling from a huge disappointment. This vision pointed them to Bible answers on where they had gone wrong in their understanding of this Bible prophecy.¹³³

¹³² Le Roy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, vol. 4 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1954), 879-881.

¹³³ Ministerial Association, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 348-349.

Another example of visions of direction pertains to Uriah and Annie Smith who became prominent in the development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Becoming church pioneers was not their original career goal, rather they shared plans for literary careers. Upon hearing that Elder Bates was coming through town to present a lecture, Annie's mother convinced her daughter to attend. The evening before, both she and Uriah dreamed about meeting Bates at this service. Annie was so impressed that she soon accepted the Sabbath truth and began sending poems to the *Review*.¹³⁴ Ten of her hymns are still featured in the Adventist church hymnal. Her brother, Uriah, also an author, wrote a 35,000-word poem entitled "The Warning Voice of Time and Prophecy." The only way to publish it in the *Review* was to run it serially.

A theme in these dreams of direction was that dreams seemed to be presented to people on both sides of the issue. It was not a case of one person receiving instruction to pass on to another about an activity they were to undertake, but rather two pieces meeting to complete a picture God gave. This was the case with the missionary trip of J.N. Loughborough and D.T. Bordeau to California. A dream led the two men to head to California, and it was a dream that led them to pitch their tent in the city of Petaluma. The first dream was given to the missionaries themselves, the second was to the leader of a congregation of Independent Christians in Petaluma.¹³⁵

Another example of dreams providing direction in the efforts of church life was that of James and Ellen White. Their work around the country often involved entering

¹³⁴ Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant*, 78.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 137.

areas not previously reached with their message. Their purpose was to present a series of meetings. One of these series was to be held in Monterrey, California.

Arriving in Monterrey, James and Ellen White laid plans to conduct a special outreach for the youth. Just before its opening night James had a dream of “catching many small, plump fish. In the weeks that followed, many young persons were converted.”¹³⁶ This experience of dreams continued. A regular way God communicated the success or failure of a series of meetings was through a dream of fishing. James White wrote later in the *Review and Herald*, “for twenty-four years, we have probably dreamed of catching fish a hundred times, just before an ingathering of souls. The size of persons, and their moral worth, is generally represented by the size and value of the fish.”¹³⁷

Conclusions

While each of these historical spiritual disciplines shaped the Adventist Church and its members, none are practiced by the contemporary church. The following section will look more closely at each as they are set in today’s era and why some disciplines were lost, and some adapted in new ways. Thus the goal of the section was to provide a picture of specific spiritual disciplines that were a part of the building blocks used to shape today’s Seventh-day Adventist Church.

¹³⁶ White, *Ellen G. White: The Progressive Years*, 165.

¹³⁷ James White, *Review and Herald* (February 5, 1867).

Upon evaluation of these practices, the “why not now?” question comes to the forefront. A look at confession leads to a conclusion of a shift of emphasis. The Seventh-day Adventist Church celebrates communion as corporate discipline once a quarter. So, every three months the church gathers to partake of the emblems that represent Christ’s broken body. Leading up to this time together a call is usually made to be right with God, to confess to one another where needed, and to refocus on Christ’s gift and our accountability to Him as a result. The shift from a public declaration of sins and confession for the action, shifts toward a more personal and internal confession of sins. This is different from the historical tradition where the church members received the call to stand before the church body or call up an individual and admit where they did wrong. The shift is in part to place an emphasis on the fact that only God can grant forgiveness and that our accountability lies towards Him. It is also a fear of becoming like a system that requires a human to grant forgiveness and gives that individual the authority to demand penance from the sinner. The goal in this adaptation is to keep the focus on a right theology which points to a God who claims the right to confession and forgiveness.

Today’s field of spiritual disciplines in an Adventist setting does not include a discussion of visions and dreams. While the church recognizes God communicated in the past in that method, today they are feared. It seems that a fear of substantive evidence or proof to act on guidance from a dream, means that this communication type should be precluded as an authority to direct the Christian walk. Preferring the ability to examine a topic by a body of believers is not possible with a dream given to one person. This practice is foregone in favor of Bible study or corporate prayer and study.

SECTION 4

BIBLICAL BASIS FOR SPIRITUAL FORMATION

In the swirling controversy over spiritual formation in the Adventist world, one question comes to the forefront: “Is it biblical to engage in the process of spiritual formation?” Thorough, prayerful research, and study offer a resounding, “Yes!” This section will explore briefly the biblical basis for spiritual formation and the call sounded in the Bible’s pages to become more like Christ. It will then explore the biblical basis for each of the five spiritual disciplines highlighted throughout this dissertation. The focus of this dissertation precludes an in depth presentation of this topic, so this will be a brief look at the biblical mandate for spiritual formation. This overview will provide the theological basis for the practices presented later on, as well as the call to the application and experience of the practices. The Bible calls each Christian to grow in Christ. It is this general command to be explored first. This will be followed by a closer view of the five specific practices that are spiritual formation in action as lived out in the lives of early Adventist leaders.

These disciplines are not an end in themselves. A skillful employment of the discipline is not the goal. It is not the mere practice that is to be anticipated and celebrated. Rather it is the God behind the practices that deserves the focus.

A leading voice in spiritual formation is Dallas Willard. It is his description that puts this balance best. “Yet the activities constituting the disciplines have no value in

themselves. The aim and substance of spiritual life is not fasting, prayer and so forth. Rather, it is the effective and full enjoyment of active love of God and humankind in all the daily rounds of normal existence where we are placed.”¹ The biblical basis for spiritual formation will provide a firm foundation to feel secure that the disciplines are God-blessed and correct. It is the interaction with God that causes change to happen in the one that practices these spiritual disciplines.

Biblical Basis of Spiritual Formation

This section takes a look at the biblical mandate for growing in Christ: the practice of spiritual formation. The commitment to Christ as Savior is the only requirement for salvation, yet it also starts a lifelong journey for the Christian. In speaking of the Christian life and care, Paul shares in Ephesians 4:15, “but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the Head—Christ.”² This text calls all Christians to become more like Christ. The call is to a relationship founded on God’s love, and growing always to better reflect the character of Christ. And yet growth doesn’t happen in a flash. Growth is a process. Just as a seed germinates and grows into a mature plant through the passage of days and weeks, the implication of this verse is that growth in Christ is also process in the life of the Christian. Growing up in love happens through personal time with Christ and the community of faith. It is a result that comes by being intentional about time spent in God’s presence. Through this growth the Christian

¹ Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 1988), 138.

² Ephesians 4:15 NKJV.

is no longer conformed to the world, but transformed.³ By the learning and doing of God's will in their life, the Christian becomes like the One they spend time with, Christ Himself. Spiritual formation is the practice of becoming more like Christ.⁴ The process describes how God can change His children to be more like Himself, and it is practiced in specific actions. It is not the disciplines themselves that alter the character, but rather God who does the changing. These disciplines simply allow time spent with God in many ways and for many days. Spiritual formation is the umbrella philosophy that comes to play in everyday life through the exercise and involvement in specific spiritual disciplines. It is like looking at a car as a whole, and then looking at the pieces and how they work. Then it becomes evident, that it is only by combining the pieces that the vehicle works. So it is with spiritual disciplines. It is the combination of disciplines that propels the Christian forward in the quest to be like Christ.

A Christian's character is indelibly marked and changed for the good by their time with God. This is the principle of 2 Corinthians 3:18, "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord."⁵ Character change sometimes happens in small baby steps, and sometimes as a leap forward, but it is from glory to glory that the Christian is changed. The Holy Spirit makes these changes as a result of the time spent in God's presence. This process of change is also described in Acts 4:13

³ Romans 12:2 NKJV.

⁴ M. Robert Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation*, 15.

⁵ 2 Corinthians 3:18 NKJV.

where those who see the disciples marvel at the impact their time with Christ left on them. Here these fishermen are able to articulate clearly their faith in Jesus as Savior, and as a result move many others to want to commit their lives to Christ. They are no longer unlearned fishermen, but men taught by Christ to further God's mission to the world. They are able to clearly describe Christ and invite others to become Christians. This is the same impact the Christian seeks today as a result of time spent with Christ. It is the connection with God that creates the restoration into His image. The impact is greater than anything else in life. There is an excellence in the knowledge of Christ as Lord.⁶ This knowledge of Christ, through the exercise of spiritual disciplines, shapes and conforms the Christian to His image. By spending time with God through a variety of methods, the very nature of the person is changed. God leaves His mark upon all who choose to make Him a priority. Just by spending time with God the Christian's character, choices and habits are adapted until the Christian becomes a clearer picture of their Savior. This interaction with God is why spiritual formation and disciplines are so important. It is God who does the changing, it is the practices that deliberately place the Christian in communion with Him.

When discussing spiritual formation, Joseph Kidder goes to Jeremiah 29:11-14,

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the Lord, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive.

⁶ Philippians 3:7,8 NKJV.

This quote describes a passion for God which requires a whole-hearted search for Him. Joseph Kidder continues in his appeal to spiritual formation with this invitation to a correct foundation, “The believer must worship not so much to have his or her needs met, but to seek God more than life itself.”⁷ This highlights a new facet to the spiritual formation process. Instead of just the nuts and bolts, it points out the motivation and drive for engagement with God: whole-hearted devotion and desire to a connection with God Himself. It is this motivation from which the practices flow. They begin with a heart that longs for God, and ends with a Christian regularly pouring themselves out before the God of the universe.

Biblical Basis of Spiritual Disciplines

The process of spiritual formation is accomplished through specific practices called spiritual disciplines. As this paper deals with five specific spiritual disciplines, this section limits itself to the biblical basis for each of these practices: Bible study, prayer, healthful living, stewardship, and worship. Through these practices the Christian is trained in godliness.⁸ Just as an athlete repeatedly exercises toward a goal, Christians need to as well. These exercises are to direct the attention, admiration, and worship toward God. Becoming holier does not happen on its own. “Holiness is a quality of life that can develop only through communion with the One who alone is holy.”⁹ One cannot become like Christ, unless they spend time with Him.

⁷ S. Joseph Kidder, *Majesty: Experiencing Authentic Worship*, 10.

⁸ 1 Timothy 4:7.

⁹ Dybdahl, *Hunger: Satisfying the Longing of Your Soul*, 122.

While the Bible emphasizes “sound doctrine;” the emphasis is in the context of holy living (1 Tim. 1:10, Titus 2:1-5). The true goal of biblical teaching is an ethical life manifested through service to others. Look carefully at those texts in Timothy and Titus, they link sound doctrine with correct living *as if correct living itself is sound doctrine!*¹⁰ This puts a new focus on spiritual disciplines. They are the practice of sound doctrine. Spiritual disciplines are the working out of theology, a demonstration of what theological belief is held in the heart.

Yet many question why the New Testament isn’t explicit about instruction on the practice of spiritual disciplines. Step-by-step instructions on performing spiritual formation are not given in the Bible because these practices were a common part of the culture at the time.¹¹ This is not true of today’s culture. Today a reminder is needed to engage in practical acts of devotion toward God. Today’s culture is one of constant activity to create upward mobility in career. Knowing how to spend time with God is seldom practiced, so it is seldom described. Before her study of seminary students to understand how to help with their spiritual formation, Carol Tasker first looks at spiritual formation in the life of Christ. Her summary description of His time spent with His father is appropriate to this discussion. “The life of Jesus exemplified a life lived in dependence on God, and the practice of such spiritual disciplines as meditation, prayer, fasting, worship, simplicity, solitude, service, frugality, submission, fellowship, and sacrifice

¹⁰ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Sabbath School Department, 88.

¹¹ Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, 3rd ed. (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998), 3.

were part of His daily life.”¹² As these practices were a part of His daily life, the people could learn by example rather than lecture.¹³

Today a new highlight on these practices is needed. All spiritual disciplines listed in the previous quote are noteworthy for exploration, yet the list is restricted to five in this dissertation. The five disciplines to be explored in this chapter are not the totality of practices Christ engaged in, but those which Adventists highlighted and adapted in a nineteenth century North American Christian context. Through exploration of Adventist history these five came to the forefront as those with the greatest impact on the denomination, and so these five receive the closest examination.

Bible Study

In keeping with the earlier discussion, each practice is aimed toward end results. Bible study is no different. Study can imply a mining for intellectual facts and figures. Such is not the case in Bible study. Richard Foster influenced generations with his book *Celebration of Discipline*, and his description of the propulsion value of Bible study describes the ideal. “Study is a specific kind of experience in which through careful attention to reality the mind is enabled to move in a certain direction.”¹⁴ Turning to Bible study, this lens brings a new view. The practice of Bible study calls for a change to take

¹² Carol Tasker, “The Impact of Intentional Learning Experiences for Personal Spiritual Formation on Seminary Students” (Andrews University, 2002), 25.

¹³ This is a cursory summary of Christ’s spiritual formation practices, and this is intentional. The goal of this dissertation is to keep the focus on spiritual practices of early Adventists. There is a whole dissertation inside the examination of Christ’s Jewish roots and its context for the practices he emphasized, disregarded, or changed.

¹⁴ Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, 63.

place as a result of the time spent in this practice. It demands that what is absorbed intellectually come to play physically. The goal is a mind so deeply impacted by the words of the Bible that the actions come to reflect what is studied in theological belief. Bible study changes the very nature of the Christian. The Bible claims the ability to change those who read it. When looking at the biblical basis for Bible study 2 Timothy 3:16 speaks, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”¹⁵ This text shares the multi-dimensional results of spending time in the Word of God, the Christian is trained, and enabled to do what is right. The goal when practicing the discipline of Bible study is correct doctrine, repentance, and right living. A simple, basic description is that it impacts from the inside out and results in right actions. This internal change is displayed in the external world through every good work. That is a lofty goal, the ideal, and yet often Bible study results in a doctrine that supports slavery, subjugates women, or results in the inquisition. Bible study gives facts and doctrines, and when this discipline is combined with others like social justice, rest, healthful living, prayer, compassion, and balance results.

The Bible may be the clearest revelation of God’s character, but it is not the only revelation of His character. Bible study in combination with other practices provide balance, and correction that prevents extremism or error. The realization of the evil exercised over others that was predicated on Bible study should serve as a caution that it

¹⁵ 2 Timothy 3:16, 17 NKJV.

is God's character replicated in the Christian that is the goal, not the ability to prove or debate.

This principle comes to play in the very life of the Savior. When tempted by the devil to turn stone into bread His response was, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God."¹⁶ He is saying that the Word of God is as important to humans as the necessity of eating. Just as food can nourish and provide fuel for the physical body, the absorption of the Word of God provides energy to act upon the call of God. Continuing on in examination of this passage the method Christ used to respond to temptation is evident—He rightly quotes the Scriptures. The recitation of Scripture turns away the attack of the devil and provides a solid foundation for correctly understanding God's desire in a given situation: resisting temptations as they arise. This shows another motivation for Bible study, to be prepared to resist the invitation to do evil. Each temptation Christ faces is to put something above God in His life, and yet He repels the devil's invitation to worship any other than God Himself.

It is the Scriptures that give the clearest picture of who Christ is. Bible study provides the time to look deeper into the face of the Savior and learn of Him. The result is a new life, a new being, and a new purpose guided by the connection with God. Life is given through a connection with Christ, and the Scriptures are what teach and testify of Him.¹⁷ Through a knowledge and incorporation of the Bible truths the Christian becomes more Christ-like. This is the main motivation and foundation for the invitation to learn

¹⁶ Matthew 4:4 NKJV.

¹⁷ John 5:38-40.

deeply through time spent contemplating the truths of the Bible. Looking at this clearest revelation of God's character, and understanding of His actions in the past, God's will, and guidance can be better discerned and followed in the present.

Prayer

David is described as a man after God's own heart. His life story gives us insight into the relationship dynamics involved in the practice of prayer. In Psalm 5:1-3 is his description of a dynamic prayer life. "Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation. Give heed to the voice of my cry, my King and my God, for to You I will pray. My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning I will direct it to You, and I will look up." This passage shows a man who is sure His God will listen, who takes time daily to converse, and describes an attitude of listening and waiting. This text describes a follower of God who is expectantly presenting their cares before their God and then waiting eagerly for a response. This connects well with the working definition of prayer adopted by this paper. Described by Ellen White as, "the opening of the heart to God as to a friend."¹⁸ With this relationship towards God, it is easy to understand how the author of Psalm 5 could speak with such longing for a time to commune with God. This relationship is the motivation of today's Christian as they come to speak with their God through prayer. Prayer is relationship. It is communication. It is talking with the God of the universe.

¹⁸ Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1892), 93.

When searching the Bible for prescriptions and admonitions towards prayer one finds their way to Paul's writings. Philippians 4:6 is more specific about the ingredients and elements of prayer, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be known to God."¹⁹ This gives two elements for the spiritual discipline of prayer, petitions and thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is a reminder God's acts in the past, and is also a time for recognition of who God is. This is the framework within which petitions are presented. A recognition of the One who hears the requests shapes their wording and their utterance. Requests are presented with an understanding that God acted in the past, which gives courage to trust that God has both ability and power to work again. The recognition of who God is serves as a reminder that He has the ultimate view of life and will choose what is best for His children.

The authority in which we present requests is in Jesus' own words: "I say to you, what you ask the Father in my name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full."²⁰ God delights to give good gifts, the invitation is to come to Him and ask in full knowledge of the love God has for His children. This love is exhibited through the death of His Son Jesus for our sins. And with the knowledge of this deep love, it is a delight to offer up thanksgiving and requests to God.

A fuller prayer theology is given by Paul in Ephesians. He includes six principles for prayer, (1) pray always; (2) pray with supplication in the Spirit; (3) pray in the spirit;

¹⁹ Philippians 4:6 NKJV.

²⁰ John 16:23-25 NKJV.

(4) pray watchfully; (5) pray with perseverance; and (6) pray for all the saints.²¹ These principles give a wide range of understanding to the discipline of prayer. It shows that prayer is much more than a time to say, “please” and “thank you” but rather a full life experience that includes opening all areas of the life and being to God.

Healthful Living

When investigating healthful living and its biblical basis it is easy to become bogged down in the health rules of Leviticus. Moving beyond these rules is the principle that is at the root of healthful living. The foundational principle of keeping the body in good health is found in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”²² It is because the body is the temple of God that it needs to be cared for and treated well.

Healthful living is exerting the body appropriately in hard work, and recovery time. It includes a balance between activity and rest. Proverbs 6:6-13 shares a description of what happens as a result of laziness. The passage also carries tones of a necessary balance between constant activity and rest. Jesus gave the invitation to His disciples

²¹ James A. Cress, ed., *Seventh-day Adventist Believe*, 2nd ed. (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2005), 158-159.

²² 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NKJV.

“Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.”²³ Both hard work and adequate time to recharge are necessary.

Other elements of healthful living include the importance of light, a look at Genesis 1:3 shows its importance through the order of its creation. Healthful living also crosses into the diet that is chosen to sustain life. The original diet given by God to Adam and Eve was that of a plant-based one. “See, I have given you every herb *that* yields seed which *is* on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food.”²⁴ It wasn’t until after the fall and sin had entered the world that they were allowed to eat “the herbs of the field.”²⁵ This description of the original diet in the Bible is that of a vegetarian, plant-based diet. After the flood instructions come to what meat is clean and acceptable to eat, and what is unclean and still unacceptable to consume. A full list of what is clean and unclean, and thus acceptable or unacceptable, is found in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. In order to have the body functioning at its best and so have the clearest mind and ability to focus on God, it is still wise to follow these biblical counsels.

As the Creator of the human body, God Himself is the best authority on how to care for and fuel the human form. When the Christian takes seriously the mandate to treat the body as the temple of God, then they will also turn to His Word to see what that means. It matters what is put in the body, because it will affect how the brain works.

²³ Mark 6:31 NKJV.

²⁴ Genesis 1:29 NKJV.

²⁵ Genesis 3:18 NKJV.

Diet matters because the goal is fueling the body with the best to provide the clearest mind possible in order to connect with God. To do this the body should be protected and cared for. To protect the body includes the appropriate diet, leaving out those items God explicitly describes almost like an owner's manual. He originally made the human body, and knows how it best functions. Beyond food, health is also in appropriate amounts of activity to keep the body strong, and this activity balanced with needed rest.

Stewardship

Scripture states that stewardship is a responsibility of all of God's children. Everything a Christian owns is not their own, it all belongs to God. This principle is found in these words: "You alone are the Lord, You made the heavens, The heaven of heavens, with all their hosts, the earth and everything on it, the seas and all that is in them."²⁶ Here God lays claim to everything in the earth, and everything on the earth. It is all His. He entrusts it to our care and safekeeping, and issues the invitation to treat His things well. Just as special care is used with a borrowed item, everything that the Christian has is owned by God. This ownership began at the creation of the world. God is the author of existence, therefore He has ownership of His creation. Genesis 1 describes a God who made matter from nothing. As Creator, God claims ownership of everything in

²⁶ Nehemiah 9:6 NKJV.

this world, from humans, to growing things, to possessions.²⁷ As the owner God carries the authority to assign its care to whomever He chooses.

The source of belongings colors the understanding of how those things should be treated. The source dictates the care as well as the sharing of them. Luke 12:15 gives a case study in this principle. “And He said to them, Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possess.”²⁸ What follows is the parable told by Jesus of a wealthy man who didn’t recognize where his wealth came from. Everything comes from God, Christians are His stewards. By recognizing where these blessings originate it puts possessions in the right focus. A perspective is reached where these possessions become tools to further His mission, not to hoard for selfish purposes. Because of this understanding the one entrusted with the resources will be willing to employ them for God’s work rather than to enrich their own life. Instead of holding white knuckled to a prized possession, the hands relax and resources are employed for the good of people, God’s church and others.

It almost sounds here that there might be a problem with the owning of goods. That is not the picture painted in the Bible. The danger comes when the Christian arrives in a financially stable and healthy setting, and forgets where those blessings came from. Even in the abundance of things and the enjoyment of wealth, the call continues to remember the Source of this wealth. Deuteronomy 8:11-17 describes the Israelites entrance into the promised land and provides needed advice on how to treat their wealth.

²⁷ Psalm 24:1 NKJV.

²⁸ Luke 12:15 NKJV.

They are cautioned, when you are well-cared for with full stomachs and growing crops, maintain your focus on God. The admonition is to avoid claiming the credit for the creation of a secure environment. Stewardship calls for a reminder of God's goodness and guidance. Stewardship is recognizing that the owner of all the possessions is truly God.

When the word "stewardship" is used people immediately brace to hear about returning tithes and offerings, and certainly this is a part of it. Looking at Malachi 3:7-9, "Yet from the days of your fathers you have gone away from My ordinances and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you," says the LORD of hosts. "But you said, 'In what way shall we return?' 'Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation.'"²⁹ These tithes and offerings are a sign of loyalty to God and acceptance of His leadership. Yet, stewardship extends to far more than the small percentage placed in an envelope and turned over to the church.

It includes right caring for gifts and abilities. In 1 Peter 4:10 it says, "As each one has received a gift, minister to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."³⁰ When God entrusts a gift or talent, stewardship requires it be used for ministry to one another. 1 Corinthians 4:1-3 supports this assertion by saying the Christian is responsible for the knowledge of God which they have, and in turn comes the

²⁹ Malachi 3:7-9 NKJV.

³⁰ 1 Peter 4:10 NKJV.

responsibility to share it with others. The conclusion based on these two verses is that not only are gifts and abilities designed for ministry, but also for spreading the gospel.

Worship

At the heart of the spiritual discipline of worship is Sabbath keeping. It is exhibited in the Adventist church through the keeping of Sabbath holy. Worship is recognition of God's glory and presence in a special way during this twenty-four-hour period of holy time. It means following the example of God Himself and celebrating in the same way He did at the close of creation week. When seeking a biblical view of worship, the first stop is the creation week. "And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made."³¹ Here marked from the beginning of the world is the establishment of a day like no other. It is a mandate to set aside a day of worship. The Sabbath worship was and is a creation issue, making our worship of God as He has requested it a recognition of Him as Author and Ruler over all things. Spiritual disciplines allow God to be placed as Leader. By gazing at God in worship, He is recognized as the One to follow and listen to. Placing God as first priority allows other less important things to slip into their proper place. Worship brings balance and rejuvenation in the knowledge that God is in control.

³¹ Genesis 2:2-3 NKJV.

When it came to establishing the nation of Israel, God handed down ten commandments to re-establish their covenant articulating its relationship principles. The Sabbath symbolized the bond between God as Redeemer and His people: a memorial of His redemptive power. This relationship is described in Exodus 20, and this passage also re-establishes the how of keeping the Sabbath from Genesis 1 and 2. The Sabbath commandment says, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. *In it* you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates.”³² Sabbath is about rest in God’s presence. A state of being at rest from the labors that are necessary to sustain life. It invites us into a realization that God is the ultimate source of the things that sustain life. Sabbath allows us to recognize that while there are many things that need to be done to hold together life and limb and to care for the monetary needs of the family. On this day absolute trust is placed in God that He will care for those things too.

A look at the life of Christ shows that it was His custom to worship God on the Sabbath day.³³ And just as the Sabbath was a time of worship from the foundation of creation, it was the foundation of a nation and of Jesus’ ministry here on earth. It will also be celebrated when this earth is recreated. “And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before

³² Exodus 20:8-10 NKJV.

³³ Luke 4:16.

Me,” says the Lord.”³⁴ By celebrating the spiritual discipline of worship on the Sabbath the Christian gains a foretaste of the heavenly experience even while still here on earth.

The Sabbath is to be a time of joyful fellowship and praise in recognition of God and of His ability to sanctify. A description of setting aside worldly concerns and looking to God is found in Isaiah.

If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in the Lord; and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the LORD has spoken.³⁵

The Sabbath is a day to delight in God’s presence. The rest of the week we are servants in this world working hard, but on the Sabbath we are kings and queens and may rest from labor. Or as Rabbi Abraham Heschel asserts, on the Sabbath “he must say farewell to manual work and learn to understand that the world has already been created and will survive without the help of man.”³⁶

Just as each spiritual discipline is to be an opportunity to come before a loving God and be transformed, the Sabbath also serves this purpose to change and recreate. “Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you.”³⁷ Through the spiritual discipline of worship the Christian is reminded that it is God who makes the

³⁴ Isaiah 66:23 NKJV.

³⁵ Isaiah 58:13-14 NKJV.

³⁶ Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath* (Farrar, NY: The Noonday Press, 1979), 13.

³⁷ Exodus 31:13 NKJV.

changes. It is God who sanctifies and makes the individual more like Him. The Sabbath is the weekly reminder that spiritual growth takes place through a relationship, not a gritting of the teeth, not by force of human will, but in relationship with a Creator God. Choosing to rest is a statement of trust that God will do the work that is needed. Purposefully choosing inactivity when motion might complete a task, is a statement of faith that God is able.

Choosing to rest from labor on Sabbath includes resting from professional work that produces a paycheck. Instead of working to earn the monetary necessities of life it is a day of trust. Rest says that instead of working to provide, God will provide.

SECTION 5

EARLY ADVENTIST LEADERS

This chapter focuses on the Adventists leaders themselves. After a brief look at the personhood of each of these leaders, this section will highlight how their leadership shaped the Adventist church. In each case a specific spiritual discipline from each leader's life will be referenced to be included in the resource book. Most leaders will have familiar names to the average Adventist today, but an explanation of why they were chosen for this project is also included.

A Historical Snapshot

Nothing happens in a vacuum. There are environments and personalities that effect the how and why of a particular action. Before moving forward to examine specific spiritual disciplines and how they shaped the Seventh-day Adventist Church, first a pause here to gather the historical snapshot. It is important to see the time and world events around the individuals who followed these spiritual disciplines' and taught others about them. This section will give the reader the viewpoint needed to contextualize the specific spiritual disciplines studied.

The time period in this historical snapshot is the events surrounding the lifetimes of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church: 1860-1900. By this time the church pictured itself as a separate entity from other Christian denominations, creating an

identity of its own. The leaders who both exhibited the spiritual disciplines focused on in this work, were active influencers of the denomination during this time period. The only exception to this statement is that of William Miller, and his inclusion will be argued in the section specific to him.

The graph below gives significant dates and events that affected the worldview of the individuals living during this time. A quick overview of them will set the stage for the description to follow.

Important Dates

1790-1840s	Second Great Awakening
1859	Charles Darwin's <i>Origin of the Species</i>
1861-1865	American Civil War
November 6, 1869	Transcontinental Railroad Completed
1865-1910	Mass Immigration to United States
Mid-18 th Century	Rise of Higher Critical Method
1872	D.L. Moody Style of Evangelism
Late 1800s	Industrial Revolution in North America

The early Adventist leaders original goal wasn't to start a new denomination. Instead they set out to warn the world of the soon return of Christ, to prepare people for His appearing. They wanted people to be ready, and with such an imminent return there was no time for leaving current churches and creating new ones. This one-doctrine

movement expected its believers to minister inside of the church communities they already belonged to, to be stay-at-home missionaries. Around the country the Second Great Awakening swirled and people were attuned to hear their message about Christ's return. But when Christ didn't return as quickly as expected they had difficult questions to answer.

By the 1860s the American worldview was forever altered by the Civil War lasting from 1861-1865.¹ The concept of brother fighting against brother was hard to comprehend. The casualties were staggering, scholars list the losses at 620,000, a number that exceeds the nation's losses in all other wars from the Revolution through Vietnam combined.² While the issue that precipitated the war, freedom for slaves, was now decided and declared by the government, the prejudices and mindsets surrounding it changed more slowly. This complicated world is recognized by Gary Land when he seeks to describe the worldviews surrounding the early years of the Adventist Church. He says, "During these years of transformations, Black Americans passed from slavery to freedom; but it was a freedom that many White Americans refused to acknowledge and sought to limit."³ Although the war was won, many battles still presented themselves. A law on the books, didn't translate into appropriate actions on people's part. This conflicting world impacted the growth of the church. As the church struggled with how to minister appropriately to all people, the organizations set up to reach all people reflected

¹ National Park Service Editors, *The Civil War at a Glance*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 2005, accessed July 23 2010, http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cic_text/misc/civilwar/civilwar.htm.

² Burke Davis, *The Civil War: Strange & Fascinating Facts*. (San Antonio, TX: Wings, 1988), 229.

³ Gary Land, *The World of Ellen G. White*, 48.

the views of the time. Sadly, this means there was a conference organization for whites and a separate regional conference for blacks.

Not long after, a nation that references God given rites when creating their Declaration of Independence was shaken by the printing of Charles Darwin's book *The Origin of Species*. With Darwin's natural selection theory gaining in popularity, questions arose about the biblical creation account. Although Darwin believed in God, to him his work was about biological evolution and adaptation not the origin of life. Others grasped on to his descriptions and translated them to evolution. The concept of things getting better, evolving, supported a change from pre-millennialism to postmillennialism.⁴ In fact, "the theory of evolution brought about an intellectual revolution in the Western world that would eventually infiltrate nearly every area of scholarly endeavor."⁵

The sad state of the world of medicine and health was ripe for reform. The work by Otto L. Bettmann⁶ can best describe the terrible state of health concepts during this time: At this point in history less than two percent of houses had indoor plumbing, hospitals were a place for the sick to go to die, and streets were daily washed with animal droppings. The work of reform had a toehold. The Adventists were not the only ones who recognized this need and spoke out for it. "From 1830 to 1870 a flurry of health reformers in New England and New York emphasized a variety of health habits. The movement was part of the protest against the prevailing medical practices of bleeding and

⁴ George R. Knight, *Ellen G. White's World* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1998), 88.

⁵ Ibid., 80.

⁶ Otto L. Bettmann, *The Good Old Days-- They Were Terrible!* (New York, NY: Random House, 1974).

purging and using heavily poisonous drugs like mercury chloride.”⁷ Among the organizations that sought for better health and society was the Women’s Christian Temperance Union. Adventist women joined with in supporting their aim of this organization. The Women’s Temperance Union rose to be one of the most powerful organizations in the late nineteenth century, and certainly the largest women’s organization in the world at that time.⁸

During this time change and growth came to transportation as well. Previously a three- or four-month trek by covered wagon was necessary to cross the expanse of the United States. Covered wagons were no longer the only way to get from coast to coast. Travel time was cut to a mere eight- to ten-day train ride on May 15, 1869 with the opening of the transcontinental railroad.⁹ While still containing many dangers, the transcontinental railroad was a great improvement over the wagon train.

With the Industrial Revolution came the shortening of the work week “from 70 hours a week in the 1850s to about 60 by the end of the 1880s.”¹⁰ With this came a bloom in recreational choices, options in entertainment previously only available to the wealthy upper class.

These major developments in history hatched the atmosphere in which grew the early Seventh-day Adventist church. Helping people to relate to a change in underlying

⁷ Winston J. Craig, “In the Pink of Health,” 34.

⁸ Kitt Watts, *Sarepta I. M. Henry* (Adventist Heritage Ministry, 1989), accessed July 26 2010, <http://www.adventistheritage.org/article.php?id=57>.

⁹ Gary Land, *The World of Ellen G. White*, 63-64.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 178.

premises always taken for granted like the origin of life challenged the church. Seeing people's lives crack open as they wrestled with changes, provided foot holds to share the message of Jesus. The world of the early Seventh-day Adventist Church developed in was one of change. Every area of life was changing and being effected by inventions and learning. This was the atmosphere that the Adventist church found itself in, and responded to as they articulated their message of hope in Christ.

Selected Leaders

For the purpose of this dissertation the focus is placed on those leaders who are recognized as influential leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The selected leaders are those widely recognized by historians for their part in shaping and creating the future of what is today a worldwide denomination. This is the reason these individuals were selected to be featured in the resource book.

Most of the selected leaders exerted their influence during the early formation of the church, with one exception. This is William Miller whose influence on the Adventist church started in the early 1800s. Although he did not live to see the formation and organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Miller provided the initial basis for its establishment. Without Millerism there would be no Seventh-day Adventism.¹¹ It was Miller's method of Bible study, the importance that he placed on knowing the Book, that was incorporated into the Adventist church and shaped it as a mission movement and

¹¹ On the title page of *Life Incidents, in Connection with the Great Advent Movement, as Illustrated by the Three Angels of Revelation XIV*, James White restates the Adventists debt to William Miller. He states that the movement he is currently a part of commenced with the work of William Miller. Other leaders also recognized this connection: Ellen G. White, Hiram Edson, and Joseph Bates.

denomination.¹² Miller's studying of the Bible lead to the conclusion that Christ would appear for the second time in the next twenty-five years. This belief, and his preaching of it, began a rush of excitement that it caused was the catalyst for what has been called The Great Awakening. People were ready to see Jesus. They craved His return. This group of Millerites drew both other earnest seekers and those looking for insurance against destruction. Among the sincere seekers were James White, Ellen Gould (who became Ellen White), Joseph Bates, and John N. Andrews. These four each contributed a striking mark on the shape of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. So, although Miller wasn't alive when the name Seventh-day Adventist was officially adopted in 1863, he brought together the leaders of the group that met on that momentous day. His prophetic message was the foundation of the "Adventist" movement, those looking for the second coming of Christ. Because of this, William Miller is included in the resource book.

Attention now turns to Ellen White and her role in the development of the Adventist church, specifically how she shaped the church through her practice and belief in prayer. Ellen White is viewed as one of the three principle founders of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. Her main contributions to the church come through her visions. In 1855, early Adventists met together in conference at the Battle Creek "House of Prayer" on Cass Street and articulated an affirmation and acceptance of her gift of prophecy.¹³ A prolific writer throughout her life she was featured prominently in the

¹² Damsteegt, *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission*, 16. Here Damsteegt lists the hermeneutical principles that were employed by William Miller.

¹³ Ron Graybill, "The Whites Come to Battle Creek: A Turning Point in Adventist History," *Adventist Heritage* (1992): 26.

publications of the time. She produced many books and spent a great deal of time answering letters written to her asking for advice. Because of this recognition of her gift as a prophet her works and their authority had a great impact on the formation of the Adventist church. She is still recognized in this capacity today and her works are frequently referenced or quoted when presenting biblical and spiritual topics.

There are those who view Joseph Bates as the actual founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.¹⁴ His influence gave direction in several areas of church development. These areas range from stewardship with his choice to invest his entire fortune in the spreading of the gospel message, to Sabbath keeping and his early adoption of the seventh-day Sabbath. Echoes of Bates can be seen in many areas of the movement. For the purposes of this paper his belief in healthful living as a spiritual discipline will be the focus. He was the first champion of this spiritual practice.

James White's passion and conviction made him a mover and shaker in the early church. The group often looked to him for direction and advice, and some see him as the financial architect. He employed his belief in handling money honestly and directly as an entrepreneur to care for his family's financial needs as well as those of the church. He put the discipline of stewardship into action. An example of this is James White's rescue of the failing Health Reform Institute. James had financially supported it at its creation and a few years down the road he was called upon to rescue it from bankruptcy.¹⁵ He did as he was asked and took over "direct management long enough to place the Institute on a

¹⁴ Knight, *Joseph Bates: The Real Founder of Seventh-Day Adventism*.

¹⁵ Robinson, 194.

sound financial basis.”¹⁶ James White desired the church to create institutions not only to further the message, but to provide the means for that message to be preached. Though he was a shining example of financial stewardship, he fell short on the stewardship of his health¹⁷ and a lesson can be learned from his successes as well as his failures.

While often seen as the first Adventist missionary, John Nevin Andrews was also an editor of *The Adventist Review and Sabbath Herald*. During his time as editor he wrote the first definitive work produced by the church on the belief and practice of worship as it is expressed through Sabbath keeping. Recognized as a leader, he was present at the first organizing conference for the Seventh-day Adventist Church held in 1855. One of the topics up for discussion was that of Sabbath keeping, specifically, when Sabbath actually begins. The debate raged between whether Sabbath went from 6pm to 6pm or from sunset to sunset. J.N. Andrews argued for a sundown to sundown Sabbath keeping experience, and supported it with conviction and biblical evidence.¹⁸ Because of his sound scholarship and biblical foundation of understanding for this belief, it was adopted by the church as a whole and is still practiced today.

These five leaders bring with them a rich diversity of spiritual disciplines. While each of them practiced more than one spiritual discipline in their lives, a decision had to be made on which discipline to focus. This will be more fully explored in the resource

¹⁶ James White, *Life Incidents*, ed. Jerry Moon (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2003), viii.

¹⁷ James himself recognized his failure to care for his health by securing proper rest, acknowledging this in the February 27, 1866 issue of the *Review and Herald*.

¹⁸ Graybill, “The Whites Come to Battle Creek: A Turning Point in Adventist History,” 26.

book, but the goal here was to give a defense for their inclusion in a study of the Adventist practice of spiritual disciplines.

SECTION 6

CURRENT ADVENTIST SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

This chapter will focus on the contemporary spiritual practices of Seventh-day Adventists and how they are taught. The need to apprehend contemporary spiritual disciplines is necessary in order that the resource book can be written in a language easily understood by the Adventist church members today. Though Adventists regularly engage in spiritual disciplines, they receive a different label. Spiritual disciplines are called spiritual practices, devotional, or discipleship exercises.

This section will focus in on the six main spiritual disciplines that are present today in the Adventist church. Each will include a definition, as well as examples of their practice inside the Adventist church. Some of the resistance to the terminology employed in the discussion of spiritual formation and spiritual disciplines will also be addressed.

SDA Church Statistics¹

Membership	18.5 Million
Churches	78,810
Countries Present In	216, of 237

¹ Office of Archives and Statistics, “Seventh-day Adventist World Church Statistics,” (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, June 30, 2014).

Education	
Schools	7,579
Enrollment	1,807,693
Health Care	
Hospitals	173
Clinics	294
Nursing Homes	126
Publishing Work	
Publishing Houses	63
Languages Used	366
Sabbath Schools	
Schools	140, 694
Membership	19,638,905
Tithe and Offerings	
Total	\$3,276,600,259
Per Capita	\$190.69

Current Instructions in Spiritual Disciplines

In this section an exploration of the current methods used to instruct members in spiritual disciplines will be presented. The statistics presented above illustrate the vast body of believers that need to be invited to an active experience with spiritual disciplines. Because the goal of this dissertation is to create a resource for teaching spiritual disciplines to today's church, an overview of current methods of instruction will help

show where this new resource will fit in the church's education on this topic. The goal of the resource is to join the current instruction methods and offer a complete method for studying spiritual formation. Current techniques lack a connection to the past, which can show continuity. Other methods are too focused on the negative, instead of saying how one should meet God, they merely say how not to. There is a better way, and the resource attached to this dissertation seeks to provide it.

The contemporary church recognizes the need for instruction on daily practices that pursue a deeper relationship with God. Though the Adventist church does not typically use the label spiritual disciplines, instruction takes place under the title "discipleship." When the term spiritual disciplines is employed the average Adventist brings to mind the process of church discipline: understood as a sin that needs to be corporately addressed. For this reason, it was chosen throughout the artifact to use the title "spiritual practices" instead of "spiritual disciplines." This term allows the reader to hear the subject matter before dismissing it from lack of understanding.

Many of the methods addressed in this section reflect how spiritual disciplines are currently taught. Many of these instructional tools retained their value through history and are still employed today. The Adventist church desires that people know their God in a deep and meaningful way. Toward this goal they employ many techniques to educate their members. Though the church as an organization displays caution on what constitutes their list of chosen spiritual disciplines, the goal still is to equip the members with tools to use in the pursuit of connection with God.

The areas of current instruction explored here are Sabbath School, family and personal worship, publications, media broadcasts, and internet sources.

Sabbath School

The primary place for corporate learning about spiritual disciplines is through the Sabbath school class. The Adventist church meets each Sabbath morning, in connection with the divine worship service, for a time of Bible study and prayer. This time is known around the world as Sabbath school. Each church that is a part of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists conducts a Sabbath school class for its members. From the official Seventh-day Adventist website the purpose of Sabbath School is: “discipleship through religious education—and so much more. In seeking to meet the spiritual needs of its members, it features emphases in fellowship, outreach, Bible study, and mission and provides a rich spiritual environment in practical, everyday settings.”²

At this study time the church is divided into classes or small groups in order to provide for a focused time of learning. “Seven of these divisions are graded according to age: adult, youth, earliteen, junior, primary, kindergarten, and cradle roll.”³ These classes are open to anyone who wishes to attend, whether regular members, visiting members from other congregations, or guests from outside of the Adventist church.

While the philosophy is effective, there are a few challenges to reaching each member through this method. The first is not all choose to attend Sabbath school. Another hurdle is when parents bring their children to Sabbath school, but do not attend their own class or stay for church. For these parents, the children’s Sabbath school is their only corporate worship service experience.

² General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Sabbath School and Personal Ministries*, 2011, accessed October 12, 2012, <http://www.sabbathschoolpersonalministries.org/>.

³ *The Sabbath School Manual*, 17.

The Sabbath school is supported by a carefully organized structure. At the local level there are Sabbath school superintendents and other officers who watch over each division, supporting the teachers of specific classes. Above the local level is a system that follows along with the organizational structure of the world church. This system provides support, training, and materials for the individuals who lead in this ministry.

The material used by each of the teachers in Sabbath school is produced by the world church. The General Conference, the Seventh-day Adventist Church's main offices, creates Bible study guides for every age group from infant through adult. The objective is that each member of the church takes personal time with God every day. By spending time with God the goal is to shape the character so it matches Christ's in actions and words. This time with God endeavors to give a firm theological understanding for the church's doctrines. For children's lessons the parents study along with them: this learning interaction builds on the tradition of family worship.

The study guides used in the Sabbath school are a syllabus, known as a Lesson Quarterly.⁴ This three-month guide is the primary object of study in classes around the globe. A quarterly is printed for each age level with the subject at hand presented on the appropriate level. Currently the quarterly for the children's divisions is known as GraceLink Sabbath School curriculum.⁵ This curriculum is produced by the Children's Ministries Department of the world church that pursues the mission "to nurture children

⁴ Mary S. Ogle, *You and Your Sabbath School* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1949), 12.

⁵ The use of the GraceLink curriculum in children's Sabbath school divisions is explained fully in a brochure that can be obtained from the Adventist Book Center. There is also the option of a booklet and training video that makes the case for the new curriculum as well as explaining how to employ the tool. These tools are copyright 2008.

into a loving, serving relationship with Jesus.”⁶ This loving, serving bond with God reflects our working definition for spiritual formation.

As this quarterly is a worldwide tool, it is printed in many languages, as well as easy English, large print, and in an audible format for the visually handicapped. Topics range from an exegetical study on a particular book of the Bible, such as Numbers, to a topical study of subjects which pertain to Christian living such as witnessing and evangelism. Each church purchases from the publishing house the quarterlies needed for use by its local members. While not expensive individually, providing a copy for each member at each age level makes up a sizable line item in the church budget. The willingness to expend this money shows the church’s commitment to spiritual education.

The ideal is each person personally studies their daily lesson assignment and comes prepared to discuss what they learned with their class. Some classes can be described as a small group where individuals bring their observations and notes made during the week to discuss and compare with the others in their group. Other classes are arranged like a lecture where teachers present their conclusions on the lesson and the student is invited to reflect on their own study inside the teacher’s context. Although many do not take advantage of this tool as they could, the goal is to provide the needed tool that encourages each person to spend time each and every day in spiritual study.⁷

⁶ The North American Division Committee, “Working Policy of the North American Division,” 2006, 371.

⁷ Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Sabbath School Work* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1928), 53.

This method of programming presents a few vital aspects in the endeavor to be spiritually transformed. The idea of daily, directed time with God is necessary. The Sabbath school lesson provides a place to start in spending this time. It also supports the corporate community's growth in spiritual matters. By preparing each day for what will be shared at the group gathering, there is the opportunity for accountability and group support or correction when needed. Where it falls short is in the depth of the time with God. The lessons seem to be superficial, with an invitation to go deeper in intellectual understanding, but with little emphasis on the experience with God that is so important. This method lends itself to scholarly absorption, but little of the contemplative Christian simply spending quiet time in prayer before God. The focus in the Sabbath school lesson is on intellectual absorption, and recitation: more is needed for spiritual formation to occur. There is no quiet, there is only input of information and digestion of the provided content. The book presented at the end of this written statement will include sound reasons for a particular practice, and then offer specific ways to build quiet space into the time with God.

Family and Personal Worship

Each year the church's publishing houses produce a devotional book with daily Bible passages and an accompanying religious reading. This is another example of instruction in the Adventist circle on spiritual formation. In fact, there is a book available for each age level. In addition, special interest devotional books are written, such as an Ellen White's writings devotional and a women's devotional book. These books can be

ordered through the local church or the Adventist Book Centers at the end of each year, and are available to begin January 1 of each year.

In times past this family worship was called the morning watch. In current times the morning watch developed into the use of devotional books published by the denomination. The format of these books is a Bible text and a short exposition on it. Children's devotional books take the form of stories, nature lessons, or learning activities. Adult devotional books are often a Scripture text with a theological explanation or a look at our history and how God has led in the past.

While the denomination authorizes scholars to write these books and the publishing houses to print them, it takes personal responsibility and discipline on the part of the member to further their relationship with God through the use of this tool. The value of these devotional books is that they provide a very simple, non-threatening way to have a daily time with God. A critique of these books is necessary. Because of their brevity, they leave room for only a cursory reading and little in-depth time spent with God. They leave the feeling that information input is the best way to spend devotional time, leaving out space for the other side of the relationship, listening to and experiencing God.

The publication of these devotional books by the denomination provides for another link to the world beyond the local church. A reader of the devotional book knows that all around them others are reading and learning the same things each day. This is a reminder of the community that is the world church. By choosing to produce an easy to use tool such as this for spending time with God, the goal is to encourage a deeper and

deeper walk with Christ so that the Christian can better reflect the character of their Savior.

Small Group Meetings

A typical definition for this type of meeting is taken from Dr. Roberta Hestenes. Hestenes' accomplishments include a lifelong focus on spiritual formation, and a desire to teach the Bible in groups. She took her research and experience to develop the spiritual formation and discipleship program at Fuller Seminary. When describing the function of a small group she says, it "is an intentional, face-to-face gathering of 3-12 people, on a regular time schedule, with the common purpose of discovering and growing in the abundant life of Christ."⁸ A more accurate definition would use this term as a technical term to describe interpersonal group dynamics.⁹ Its purpose is to provide an additional space for spiritual growth and accountability. Small group meetings cannot be artificially created, there must be an accepted element of accountability and common interest in spiritual growth to bring the group together. It cannot be required of a member to join a small group meeting.

For many years the Adventist church has put much effort into attempting to capture what an effective small group is and teaching on how to implement them in the local church. This work has failed, with success rates close to what George Barna cites in his research on small groups. He says the highest success rates have reached 18% of

⁸ Roberta Hestenes, *Class Lectures* (Pasadena, CA: Fuller Theological Seminary Pasadena, 1989).

⁹ Kurt Johnson, *Small Group Outreach* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1991), 25.

church membership as a part of a small group. Recognizing these facts, the present definition and use of small groups is undergoing a transformation.

The small group isn't completely forgotten or discarded, but morphed into what is termed free-market groups. These are groups that meet because they have a common interest, not because they have been artificially instituted. The book *The Search to Belong* by Joseph Myers¹⁰ addresses the why of human dynamic that has led to this shift.

Prayer meetings are in the category of small groups. In most Adventist churches across the denomination there is a midweek gathering called prayer meeting. This is an opportunity for the members to meet for a time of spiritual emphasis in the middle of the week. While the traditional time for gathering is Wednesday evening at 7pm, churches do move their date and time to accommodate the personality of the church.¹¹ The traditional format is a time of Scripture study followed by time for prayer and testimonies.¹² While this is a suggested format in the church manual, it is acceptable to alter the format to meet the needs of the church and provide a mid-week time of spiritual emphasis.

While it seems that prayer meeting attendance is remaining strong in rural areas, urban areas are suffering. With people's busy schedules it's estimated that in North America only ten percent of the membership chooses to attend prayer meeting on a weekly basis. Recognizing the importance of connection with the church family, and a

¹⁰ Joseph Meyers, *The Search to Belong* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003).

¹¹ This is evidenced by a look through the conference directory. This is a book which includes the physical locations and services of churches across the area. Church officers are listed as well as the meeting times and locations.

¹² Secretariat, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000), 78.

need for spiritual training, some churches are experimenting. The Arlington Seventh-day Adventist Church in Arlington, Texas offers seminars and club meetings on Wednesday night. This includes felt needs seminars for adults while children gather in Pathfinder or Adventurer clubs. While this adaptation provides for enough mass to continue meeting, more often prayer meetings are in decline in the denomination.

The prayer meeting when used today feels like a relic of the past. To re-energize prayer meeting one needs to change format. To connect prayer meeting with spiritual formation there are two options: to use the attached resource as a small group gathering for study and space for experiencing the suggested five disciplines. There is also the option of united prayer through a pattern such as the ACTS prayer espoused by Bill Hybels in his book *Too Busy Not Too Pray*. This is done by a collection of Scripture texts that can be prayed, with a set for each of the letters in the acronym: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication. A skilled leader is needed to make it safe for those attending to become as involved as they desire, listening to the Holy Spirit to prompt whether to be silent or to speak.

Publications

Publications include two categories: books and periodicals. With two official denominationally owned printing houses in the United States the Adventist church publishes vast quantities of materials to educate and share information with its members and others.

A major force of instruction under the category of periodicals is that of *The Adventist Review (The Review)*. Originally begun as *The Adventist Review and Sabbath Herald* this publication is still the official voice and general paper of the Seventh-day

Adventist Church. “*The Adventist Review* published since 1849. It is published by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and is printed 36 times a year on the second, third, and fourth Thursday of each month.”¹³ It can also be accessed online. *The Review* is made available free of charge to each household that contains an official member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The statement of mission for the magazine says, “Our Mission is to uplift Jesus Christ by presenting stories of His matchless love, news of His present workings, help for knowing Him better, and hope in His soon return.”¹⁴ On the weeks that the *Review* isn’t published, the magazine *Adventist World* is published, so there is a printed presence in each Adventist home weekly.

Among the other category, books, there are a host of titles to choose from. This topic was addressed in the section “Presentation of the Problem.”

Television and Radio Broadcasts

Moving beyond the printed page, another method of educating the denomination’s members on spiritual formation is through the use of television and radio broadcasts. The advantage of this method is the availability of these mediums and the wide audience to be reached through broadcasting.

A heavy investment on the church went into radio programs. These programs are designed to share the biblical message as Adventists see it. These programs are often

¹³ “Statement of Being,” *The Adventist Review* (2010): 2.

¹⁴ Ibid.

broadcast on rented area time from radio stations. Or in some areas through the purchase of a radio station so the broadcast can be shared full time. Many of these radio stations are dedicated specifically to sermon presentation while others may choose to stay with a music format. The goal of both is to share and educate on Adventist beliefs and practices.

The other element to the broadcast ministry is television. Two main channels preach the Adventist message: Three Angels Broadcast Network (3ABN) and the Hope Channel. 3ABN is a self-supporting ministry¹⁵ with twenty-four-hour-a-day programming. Because this dissertation is focusing on the official methods of teaching the church's message, closer attention will be paid to the officially sponsored channel. But, it is necessary to take a moment to recognize that there are independent ministries also seeking to share their message and brand of spiritual growth. Often the two agree, sometimes there is a difference of opinion. Yet the material presented by these self-supporting ministries does have an impact on the spiritual beliefs and practices of the Adventist church today.

The Hope channel is "the official Seventh-day Adventist twenty-four/seven station to spread the good news of the gospel to the world."¹⁶ Programming¹⁷ includes sermons from prominent speakers, re-broadcasts of church services across the denomination, programs on health or church history, as well as biblical teaching, music and children's programs. This ministry extends the television broadcast through an

¹⁵ A self-supporting ministry is one that does not receive direct financial support from the Seventh-day Adventist Church as an organization. These ministries depend on direct contributions to make their ministry vision happen.

¹⁶ Hopetv.org

¹⁷ Hopetv, "TV Schedule," accessed July 30, 2011, www.hopetv.org/watch-now/tv-schedule/.

internet source as well because programming can be viewed online with additional supporting materials.

These two channels are the main bandwidth to utilize television communication. Specific ministries often have their broadcasts shown on these channels, though they do not themselves provide around the clock programming. Among the most influential is the Amazing Facts Ministry with speaker Doug Batchelor. Each of these ministries also has a contribution to the education Adventists receive about the topic of spiritual formation.

Internet Sources

Through the dawn of the modern age and the expansion of technology, the instruction in Adventist spiritual practices continues to adapt and reach out. With the dawn of the internet and electronic communication, church leaders saw the value of enlisting another method to disseminate information.

Though this area is not as explored and utilized as it could be, an internet presence has developed. Among these resources is the official church website Adventist.org. While it contains information about the church in general, it also provides the opportunity for a visitor to gain a taste of what the church believes. For those with a specific topic to research being able to access the Ellen White Estate's content through an online database makes it easier than ever to conduct research.

Among the online resources is an interactive Bible study website sponsored by the ministry Voice of Prophecy. These lessons can be viewed and studied at

voiceofprophecy.com.¹⁸ The goal of these studies is to instruct people in the study of the Bible, and then the biblical beliefs on specific topics that arise from Bible study. One additional website worth mentioning is clubadventist.org. It is the unofficial worldwide Adventist forum, and proclaims “not part of, or affiliated with, or endorsed by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists headquartered in Silver Spring, Maryland or any of the subsidiaries.”¹⁹ In spite of being outside of the official lines of communication, its bulletin board format is welcome to many and provides a place for open discussion. It contains a section that shares elements of spiritual disciplines. By being available online these resources are readily accessible to today’s internet user and are constantly adapting and changing.

Currently Practiced Spiritual Disciplines

This section will present a look at the spiritual disciplines currently practiced among Seventh-day Adventists. When reading about what Adventists’ believe there is a chapter called “Growing in Christ.” Two sources for spiritual food are presented: “constant communion with God through the study of His Word, and through cultivating a life of prayer.”²⁰ Though this definition restricts the definition of what spiritual disciplines are, it at least allows for a belief that certain spiritual practices feed Christians spiritually. These are also the main two ingredients provided for a growing spiritual walk

¹⁸ Accessed July 30, 2011, http://www.vop.com/free_bible_guides/

¹⁹ Accessed July 28, 2011, <http://clubadventist.com/forum/index.php/>

²⁰ Ministerial Association, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 158.

with the Lord presented in the Ministers Manual provided for the denomination's pastors.²¹

Enlarging this definition and looking through the lens of spiritual formation, the definition of spiritual disciplines expands even in the Adventist world. In order to gain a picture of how today's Adventist meets with God, our study has focused on specific spiritual disciplines. (1.) Bible study and the methods that are used to absorb the Word of God. (2.) Prayer and how this conversation with God is practiced. (3.) Service to others, looking specifically at how sharing God's love in a tangible way enriches the giver's spiritual life. (4.) Healthful living and how it has marked Adventism and its importance for spiritual growth. (5.) Stewardship and how investing in God's work with available resources helps the individual become more like Christ. (6.) Worship, looking at the uniqueness of Adventist worship and the expression of it through Sabbath keeping.

Bible Study

Adventists have not drifted far from their roots. The number one spiritual practice among Adventists today is that of Bible study. With a church that believes in the ultimate authority of the Bible, it is the group's hermeneutics that will shape their theology and spiritual practices. Seventh-day Adventists continue to utilize the historical-biblical method of interpretation.²²

²¹ James A. Cress, *Seventh-day Adventist Minister's Handbook*, 18-21.

²² Richard M. Davidson, *Interpreting Scripture According to the Scriptures: Toward an Understanding of Seventh-day Adventist Hermeneutics*, Biblical Research Institute General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2003, accessed July 22, 2010, <http://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/documents/interp%20scripture%20davidson.pdf>. A summary of the hermeneutical principles of the Seventh-day Adventist Church contained in this article is: (1) *Sola Scriptura*, includes the primacy of scripture and the sufficiency of scripture; (2) *Tota Scriptura*, includes the

These principles when applied to a Bible study routine give an intellectual understanding of the truth in the Bible. This study as a spiritual discipline reaches its full meaning when intellectual learning begins to impact the learners' life. In order to do this the Bible needs to be understood on more than just an intellectual level. It must become a part of the readers' being with the theology expressed through action.

The power of Bible study is the foundational constant it provides for discerning what is right and wrong. Through studying the Word of God the believer is equipped with an understanding of what is "the voice of God and the whispers of the devil."²³ To aid in Bible study the publishing house makes available many tools such as commentaries, Bible dictionaries, and lesson studies. These are the resources that are available with an Adventist imprint, but there are other tools that are utilized as well. In the theology schools, instruction is given on the use of the BibleWorks. This program is "the premier original languages Bible software program for Biblical exegesis and research."²⁴ Instruction in the use of this tool equips pastors to present clear biblical teaching to their churches. Its use is not confined to the paid clergy, but is also employed by the laity as well. Other Bible study tools exist and are employed by Adventists, among them is the Logos software and the biblegateway.com website.

66 books of the Bible as canonical and recognizes the inseparable union of the divine and human, and the principle that the Bible is equivalent to, not just contains the Word of God; (3) *Analogia Scriptura*, includes the scripture as its own interpreter, the consistency of scripture, the clarity of scripture; (4) Spiritual things are spiritually discerned which includes the role of the Holy Spirit and the spiritual life of the interpreter.

²³ Ministerial Association, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 158.

²⁴ BibleWorks, accessed August 11, 2011, <http://www.bibleworks.com/>

The danger with all these tools is that Bible study becomes a mere intellectual exercise rather than connecting with the heart. When the intellect and the heart unite they create action in the Christian's life. The Adventist church tends to lean towards an intellectual absorption of the Bible that excludes the emotions from the experience in their practice of this spiritual discipline.

Prayer

Prayer continues to be a primary spiritual practice. It can be described as communion and communication with God. "Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him."²⁵ The primary reason for praying is to connect with God. While prayer is also connected with Bible study, the "active study of the Bible should not be done outside of prayer."²⁶

Specific types of prayer practiced by Seventh-day Adventists include: prayers of repentance and confession, prayers of request, prayers of thanksgiving and praise, prayer for guidance, devotional prayers, intercessory prayer, and dialogue prayer.²⁷ In these categories are prayer practices that are common to many denominations, such as the

²⁵ White, *Steps to Christ*, 93.

²⁶ Kris Coffin Stevenson, *Delighting in God: Prayer Is Opening the Heart to a Friend* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1996), 39.

²⁷ Morris L. Venden, *The Answer Is Prayer* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1988), 14-26.

palms down, palms up prayer.²⁸ Beginning with the palms resting in the lap facing down. When the palms are down, the Christian lists all the worries and carries and releases them to God. Then, the Christian turns the palms up to receive from God by claiming Bible promises, being silent, or listing the things needed from God. The change in the position of the hands reminds the Christian of an attitude of the heart. Another example is that of continuous prayer in the tradition of Brother Lawrence.²⁹ In this time of prayer described in his book, *The Practice of the Presence*, the Christian seeks to be constantly aware of the presence of God. Whether washing dishes, serving the poor, or preaching a sermon, the goal is to function in the knowledge that God is present.

Among the prayer practices is the use of prayer gardens. Prayer gardens are a place of beauty where a person can go to be with God. Prayer gardens are found on many Adventist university campuses—a place for students to go where they can be surrounded by nature and communion with God.³⁰ The combination of God's presence and His creation is a powerful way to step away from life's stress.

There is some concern in the Adventist church about spiritual formation and mysticism. This causes fear about what cannot be completely understood or controlled, especially when that spiritual experience is adopted from a non-Adventist source. This is hugely problematic when you look at God and realize He is the ultimate mystery. The Godhead is a paradox: a God who is three, yet is still one; a Savior who is completely

²⁸ Dorothy Eaton Watts, *Prayer Country: A Tour Guide to the Wonders of Prayer* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1993), 15.

²⁹ Stevenson, *Delighting in God: Prayer Is Opening the Heart to a Friend*, 88.

³⁰ "Prayer Gardens," *Adventist Heritage* (Winter 1993): 21-24.

divine and completely human at the same instance. Only by relinquishing control to this God does transformation happen. Fear inhibits the ability to let God do what only God can do, and transform. Ted N.C. Wilson in his first presentation as General Conference President, illustrates the inhibiting role of fear:

We must be vigilant to test all things according to the supreme authority of God's Word and the council with which we have been blessed in the writings of Ellen G. White. Don't reach out to movements or megachurch centers outside the Seventh-day Adventist Church which promise you spiritual success based on faulty theology. Stay away from non-biblical spiritual disciplines or methods of spiritual formation that are rooted in mysticism such as contemplative prayer, centering prayer, and the emerging church movement in which they are promoted.³¹

In evaluating this statement, it appears to be a statement made from lack of understanding. The call to test spiritual disciplines against God's Word is noble and true, yet also shows apprehension of what is not uniquely branded Adventist. That uncertainty shows the lack of understanding of what truly defines contemplative and centering prayer. "Contemplative Prayer is a loving attentiveness to God."³² This goes along with the Scripture's call to "Be still and know that I am God."³³ This Scripture is the heart of contemplative prayer, to be aware of God's presence and pray with the heart. Yet because it is not concrete and measurable it is misunderstood and this produces fear. Many religions are fear-based, either through anxiety about not measuring up to inspire right actions, or fear of demonic forces if one is not always in control. The eternal consequences of choices made today, carry serious connotations. This can turn into

³¹ Ted N. C. Wilson, "Go Forward," (Atlanta, GA: Seventh-day Adventist General Conference Session, July 3, 2010).

³² Richard J. Foster, *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home* (San Francisco, CA: HarperSan Francisco, 1992), 158.

³³ Psalm 46:10 NIV.

motivation with fear instead of hope. What if instead of apprehension, education was presented to counteract this fear of prayer, with the hope of what can be when God is the one in control. The tendency in the Adventist church today is for us to make our definition of prayer too small. Ellen White herself, according to the classical definition, was a mystic.³⁴ To counteract this trend there needs to be education. This instruction will help members to understand the true meaning of different kinds of prayer and how different prayer practices can remain true to the Bible as they fit in with their spiritual walk.

Proper education can help Adventists to understand there are many different types of prayer to employ in a pursuit of a deeper relationship with God. Agreeing with the deep value that prayer brings, variety provides room for many to connect and grow from this spiritual discipline. Ellen White, whose practices on prayer will be studied gives this admonition, “Prayer is one of the most essential duties. Without it you cannot maintain a Christian walk. It elevates, strengthens, and ennobles; it is the soul talking with God.”³⁵

Service

Service is caring for another person in Jesus’ name. This service asserts dignity and value to the person being served. They are worthy of care and respect. This kind of love is the call of the Christian. Derek Morris who leads out in a weekly Sabbath school teacher’s training event, puts a high value on prayer. He says, “We are called first and

³⁴ A mystic is someone who claims to have had a direct experience or intuition with God.

³⁵ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2 (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1885), 313.

foremost to serve our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and then to serve others' in Jesus' name."³⁶ The spiritual discipline of service is expressing the relationship one gains through personal devotions with the surrounding world. The Seventh-day Adventist Church places a premium on service offered to others in many ways through the official organization and personal efforts. Through this spiritual practice the members of the church are invited to share their commitment with Christ with those in need.

Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) is a worldwide organization that identifies itself as reaching out to others in Christ's name. The description they chose for themselves is: "The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) was started by the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a way to follow Christ's example of serving and caring for those in need. Put simply, ADRA improves the lives of people around the world."³⁷ Founded in 1956, their work continues today. Their efforts include the disaster relief in Haiti, which was both recognized and applauded by the struggling government. Many camps are still in a shambles with tents or poorly constructed shelters housing families who have to walk across traffic to reach the latrines. In contrast with this is the work done by ADRA in the Carrefour municipality in downtown Port-au-Prince where more than 500 families have already been moved to simple pine houses with concrete foundations.³⁸

³⁶ Derek Morris, "Lord of Our Service," *The Spiritual Life: Experiencing Jesus Christ as Lord* (2005), 96.

³⁷ ADRA International, "About Us," 2010, accessed July 16, 2010, http://www.adra.org/site/PageNavigator/about_us/.

³⁸ Deborah Sontag, "In Haiti, the Displaced Are Left Clinging to the Edge," *The New York Times*, July 10, 2010.

Church outreach ministries often include a service component. One of these ministries is Community Services. Community Services is a clothing depot designed to assist those in need. It often includes a food pantry as well. Church members themselves can take advantage of this resource, but membership is not a requirement for assistance to be given. Churches can also adopt outreach ministries that connect with people's personal and basic needs. The Adventist church sponsors events to cook at homeless shelters, passes out sack lunches to the homeless, as well as rebuilding and painting homes.

From these denominationally organized expressions of the spiritual discipline of services there are locally organized expressions. The Adventist church joined the trend of Random Acts of Kindness. A group of school children in British Columbia worked together with their chaplain to do random acts of kindness in the area. They would go and rake the leaves up in people's yards, and refuse any payment. Once they took cookies to the police station to thank the police for their hard work in keeping them safe. Word got out in the community about what the children's actions, and the chaplain soon got a call from the fire captain asking where his cookies were.³⁹ From raking leaves to handing out bottles of water in the park on a hot day, service is an expression of God's love in a tangible way.

Healthful Living

Caring for the physical body in recognition of their place as "the temple of God" is a prevalent spiritual practice among Adventists. Through the employment of the

³⁹ Deerlake Adventist Academy, British Columbia, Canada.

spiritual discipline of Bible study an awareness of health principles came to light. There are those who recognize Seventh-day Adventists as those who make particular choices about how they treat their bodies. Though, some do not make the connection between the healthful living and its spiritual implications, this dissertation seeks to refocus awareness on the link between these two. The goal through the artifact is to bring healthful living into focus as a spiritual practice, with spiritual motivation being the reason for making healthful choices. It is an attempt to bring the Adventist church back to its history.

The health focus is still prevalent in the Adventist church today; one example is the health studies recently conducted out of Loma Linda University. Seventh-day Adventist Health Studies showed a distinct difference in the overall health of Adventists as compared to a similar population. The first Adventist Health Study was conducted in 1958 among a group of about 22,000 Adventists living in the California area. The organizers at Loma Linda University had follow-ups at five and twenty-five year intervals.⁴⁰ By studying a group of people who avoided cigarette smoking, alcohol consumption, and diets heavy in fats, it was easier to find specific keys to healthful living. The results can be found in the book by lead researcher Gary E. Fraser, *Diet, Life Expectancy, and Chronic Disease: Studies of Seventh-day Adventists and Other Vegetarians*.⁴¹ The study yielded key lifestyle practices that added to the longevity and life satisfaction rates of Adventists. Among the practices identified is a vegetarian diet.

⁴⁰ School of Allied Health Editor, *Adventist Health Studies*, Loma Linda University, 2010, accessed July 22, 2010, available from <http://www.llu.edu/public-health/health/index.page?>

⁴¹ Gary E. Fraser, *Diet, Life Expectancy, and Chronic Disease: Studies of Seventh-day Adventists and Other Vegetarians* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2003).

The first health study is being followed up by a second with a much broader group of people participating in the survey.

While not all Adventists are vegetarian, these studies and other medical research show that this type of lifestyle makes a difference in one's overall health and life satisfaction. The impact of a plant based diet is not solely known to Adventists, but it is the spiritual and health connection that makes their message so powerful. This connection is also recognized by the author of *Blue Zones*.⁴² The author points out that it is the healthful lifestyle, but also the connection of the spiritual life that brings longer, stronger lives.

The goal of healthful living is to bring into balance the spiritual, mental and physical so that all three will function at optimum.⁴³ When health becomes a spiritual discipline, when it is done to strengthen the relationship with God rather than to run a marathon the benefits are multiplied. The acronym "New Start" carries the eight essentials Adventists recognize are needed for optimum health. These letters stand for Nutrition, Exercise, Water, Sunshine, Temperance, Air, Rest, and Trust.⁴⁴ The word Trust refers to trust in God, the foundation of Adventists belief in health as a spiritual discipline. The blessing of health is the gift the individual can give to themselves, caring for the body pays dividends now. And by caring for the body, the Christian has the energy to work in God's service for others.

⁴² Dan Buettner, *Blue Zones: Lessons for Living Longer from the People Who've Lived the Longest* (Washington, DC: National Geographic, 2009).

⁴³ Samaan, *Christ's Way to Spiritual Growth*, 171.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 177.

Stewardship

How we handle our material goods, time, and resources are representations of how we view our spiritual responsibility. The Seventh-day Adventist Church articulates five areas Christians are responsible as stewards of: the body, abilities, time, material possessions, and the earth.⁴⁵ This includes an esteem for creation and caring for it through environmentalism. It provides space for concern for global warming and other ecological concerns. When a church educates its members on stewardship the area of possessions comes to the forefront, but a balanced view of stewardship includes all five. This kind of stewardship is “more than outward action—it includes inward attitude as well.”⁴⁶ The Minnesota Conference of Seventh-day Adventists when educating their people on stewardship included seven areas – Time, Treasure, Temple, Talent, Trusts, Truths, and Terrain.⁴⁷

The attitude of being a part of something greater than the individual is present today even as it was in the formative days of the movement. It is evident from the financial structure of the Adventist church. All pastors are paid from a conference rather than locally so that funds can be distributed around the world so the message can go forward. This is the corporate attitude that filters down to the individual.

⁴⁵ James A. Cress, *Seventh-day Adventist Believe*, 302-307.

⁴⁶ Dybdahl, *Hunger: Satisfying the Longing of Your Soul*, 95-96.

⁴⁷ Reggie Leach, *The Seven T's of Stewardship*.

Worship

Worship is “experience of the resurrected Christ in the midst of the gathered community.”⁴⁸ Sabbath keeping, as worship of our Savior and a sign of loyalty to Him, is one of the marks an Adventist claims in their walk with God. It is a symbol of loyalty to God and freedom in His presence.

The Lord intended that the weekly Sabbath rest, if properly observed, would constantly release man from the bondage of an Egypt not limited to any country or century but which includes every land and every age. Man today needs escape from the bondage that comes from greediness, from gain and power, from social inequality, and from sin and selfishness.⁴⁹

This special Sabbath experience is a sacred institution. The preparation for worship throughout the week prepares the worshipper to connect with God. The Sabbath is welcomed at sunset on Friday evening, and celebrated through the day until sundown on Saturday evening. During this period of sacred time is set aside for God. This means the Sabbath hours are for worship, both as a family and as a corporate church body. The Bible lessons are soaked up through instruction and the invitation to a study of God’s second book, nature. It is embodied as a joyful walk where we are attentive to details: an awareness of God’s awesome creative power and His hand over His creations. A Sabbath celebration may include a visit to a sick friend or an opportunity to share one’s faith. The usual concerns of life are set aside, even secular readings and secular broadcasts are saved for a later time.⁵⁰ But to see the Sabbath as merely a vacation from secular

⁴⁸ Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, 158.

⁴⁹ Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Rest for Modern Man* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1976), 15.

⁵⁰ Secretariat, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, 163-164.

activities is to understand this spiritual discipline too narrowly. “It is a religious day, a festal day, and a day of worship.”⁵¹

Through Sabbath keeping the Christian comes into “a more intimate relationship with Jesus and a more effective witness in the world.”⁵² Sabbath keeping originally was a celebration of what God had done at creation, and after sin entered the world the additional celebration of what God had done in the act of redemption was added. These are the elements that will draw the Christian towards this spiritual practice as the second coming of Christ nears.

Conclusions

This chapter reviewed spiritual disciplines in the Seventh-day Adventist Church today. The goal of this overview was to help the reader place the artifact in the context where it will be employed. By looking at the current instruction in spiritual disciplines as well as the specific disciplines that are employed by the Adventist church in contemporary times, the artifact becomes a more understandable tool.

⁵¹ Neils-Erik Andreasen, *Rest and Redemption: A Study of the Biblical Sabbath*, Studies in Religion, vol. 11 (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1978), 60.

⁵² Carrol Johnson Shewmake, *The Worshiping Heart: Key to a Relationship with God* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1998), 113.

SECTION 7

THE RESOURCE BOOK

Connection, refreshing and joy are the goals of these pages. Connection with the one living God, a refreshing of your relationship with Him, and joy in following His will. In a relentless world that demands everything, moments of peace are what renew. It is the feeling of being wrapped inside a text so fully that you can hear the word of God anew. In those moments, the rush of the world stills and all that matters is the heartbeat of God.

Each day demands so much, and so we rise to the occasion. We manage the tasks required for work. We accomplish the necessities for the family. We even find time to volunteer at church. In this whirlwind of doing, the quiet of being is eclipsed.

The focus of this book is creating spaces to intentionally be with God. The five spiritual practices are opportunities to be with the living God. From seeing a spiritual practice in the life of an Adventist pioneer to examples of how to experience it in your life, this book will walk you through an invitation to let the flurry of the world wait, for just a bit, while you relish the presence of God.

My Experience in Biblical Spirituality

Growing up in a double pastor's family, my very first words were quite possibly "potluck" and "Numete." I embraced this heritage proudly, and with it the three angels

message my church shares. I am the product of sixteen plus years of Adventist education and the values that come with that privilege.

In my world Week of Prayer was a yearly occurrence. This traditional meant shortened classes, relaxed homework assignments, and a daily meeting, creating space for students to hear impassioned speakers share stories of an amazing God. These speakers stood with fire in their eyes, stories on their lips, and a fervent plea that we form a relationship with this God. My heart opened to their testimonies. It was clear they knew the God they talked about; it was apparent in the sparkle in their eye and the fervor in their voice. I waited on the edge of my seat for the next step. Tell me how! I desired a relationship with Him, and I needed the building blocks explained. I desired to know how. And each year my heart's desire was left unrequited—the burning question of how unquenched. This left me disappointed, to see such clear and passionate pictures of the Who but to have how missed completely.

Being a resource pathfinder I muddled my way through. I compiled a list of musts. I must open my Bible each day. I must read a relevant passage in the Spirit of Prophecy. I must spend time praying for others. I must keep the morning watch to prepare for the spiritual battles ahead. I must share my praises and requests in prayer. Any unchecked box left me with a burden of guilt.

And so I let the lists crowd out the relationship. So often our relationship with God denigrates into one of lists. First a list of “Dos” and then one of “Don’ts.” But in our list making our spiritual walk becomes burdened and heavy, and the picture of our Savior is obscured by the check boxes. An emphasis on the end result crowds out the

relationship. It is the relationship that we desperately need. It is that relationship that causes the change in our lives.

In the spaces between my burdens, I found a relationship, but it was mechanical, forced, and touched with edges of guilt. I buried the question of how so deep that I almost forgot to keep asking it. Then sitting in a class in seminary—one I thought I didn't need—the question came again. In order to find the answer, I turned to the lives of early Adventist leaders. I was versed in theology, word studies, and employing the power of the original Biblical languages to mine the depths of a verse. To find the answer to the question, "How do we get to know God?" I needed a new study. It felt most natural to turn to the lives and stories of the early Adventist leaders. These leaders, who grew out of a time in history surrounded by the fervor of the second great awakening, deserved my attention. These leaders heard a message of Christ's soon coming and preached it boldly. I knew that there must be a relationship with God to fuel this passion and energy, so I started reading their letters, articles, biographies, and autobiographies—if I could find them! My lenses turned on these characters seeking a focus on their practical walk with God. How did they spend their time with Him? And then the question: How can I follow in their footsteps?

In this book I give you the results of my years of study in the hope that your relationship with God will also deepen. In the class I thought that I didn't need, the professor knew where to push us forward in our relationship with God. I learned to see my God in a more personal way. Waves of guilt unloaded when I learned to spend time with God in ways I never labeled acceptable. It began with a challenge from the professor: spend time with God without reading. He knew the life of a seminary student

and how it was immersed in theological discourses and scholarly tomes. Instead, he challenged us to balance our diet and experience other elements of Biblical spirituality.

I was forced to branch out and be creative. I discovered that sitting at the piano and singing gave me an atmosphere of praise in His presence. My soul breathed as I walked through nature and talked with the creator of the stately trees and tickling grass. My depth of spirituality deepened. I saw God's hand all around and in every place, not only on the printed page. Just like Pilgrim in John Bunyan's classic, my weight of guilt rolled away as I entered God's presence. I learned that we all meet God in various ways. Variety is a balanced diet that provides a deep knowledge of Him. To truly know Him deeply, many spiritual practices are needed. Balancing being and doing comes through meeting God in many ways and in many places. Through my research and Bible study, I discovered five areas that promote a balanced walk with God. What is needed is a depth of Biblical study, a conversational prayer life, respect for the health of the human body, placing God first in your use of resources, and joyful moments of worship on the Sabbath. "All who are pursuing the onward Christian course, should have, and will have, an experience that is living, that is new and interesting. A living experience is made up of daily trials, conflicts, and temptations, strong efforts and victories, and great peace and joy gained through Jesus."¹

Only God causes change and spiritual health. These practices will place you where God can change you, but activities that will cause the change. The God you will meet will change your character and refresh your soul. Just as my burden of guilt rolled

¹ Ellen G. White, "The Social Meeting."

away as I learned and broadened my relationship with God, so will yours as you encounter the Almighty and loving God. So take a deep breath—maybe even a gulp—and risk what could be when you encounter God personally.

William Miller and Bible Study



Fig. 1 William Miller (1782- 1849)²

² Religion Facts, “Seventh-day Adventist,” accessed May 12, 2011, http://www.religionfacts.com/christianity/denominations/seventh_day_adventist.htm

From farmer to justice of the peace, to sheriff, and even Baptist preacher—William Miller’s life is one fit for a storybook legend.³ His legend began in Pittsfield, Massachusetts with a love of books. From an early age, Miller was a voracious reader, gobbling up every book he could find. Work on the family farm crowded out time for reading, so his evenings became study time. He stockpiled pitchy wood and pine knots that he lit to use as candles and read far into the night, while his family snored peacefully in the other end of the house. Farm chores still called early in the morning; so back to work he went. Reading every book he could lay his hands on, he became acquainted with the works of Voltaire, Volney, Hume, and Paine. As he soaked up their philosophical examinations and critiques, he applied this same spirit to Bible study. This critical nature even led him to embrace deism for many years. Through his research he became a deist—one who believes God does exist, but He created the world and then walked away, leaving it to run according to natural laws that He put in place.

Miller had the odd distinction of preaching himself to conversion. His mother, Paulina Miller, attended the local church. When the pastor was away a deacon would read a prepared sermon. While filling this role at his local church in Low Hampton, New York, Miller was reintroduced to God. Miller felt that the other fill-in speakers did poorly at reading the chosen sermon; he said that he could do better. The wise church leaders invited him to do just that. Miller was asked on Sunday to read from *Proudfit’s Practical Sermons*, on Isaiah 53. Partway through the sermon he was so moved by the message and

³ “Pathways of the Pioneers: William Miller,” The Ellen G. White Estate, 1999, accessed June 25, 2011, <http://www.whiteestate.org/pathways/wmiller.asp>

the spirit of God that he sat down in tears. “His mind was now satisfied, and his heart found rest.”⁴

Though his heart found rest in God, he did not leave his need for logic behind. He entered a time of study to address the questions he had previously hurled at passing preachers. Wishing to understand for himself, William Miller set out to study the Bible through. He read several commentaries and discovered they didn’t always agree on the meaning of particular passages, so he decided his only tools would be his Bible and the Cruden’s Concordance. His favorite book to study was Daniel,⁵ as evidenced by the wearing of the edges of his Bible pages.

His tools of choice were an \$18 Bible and an \$8 *Cruden’s Concordance*.⁶ This systematic study of the Bible lead him to write 20 articles in the blank pages of his old sheriff’s book, which he called his “regular system of divinity,” or “my faith.” Each of these 20 points articulated a truth that he had found in the Bible that expressed who God was and how He communicated to His children. The first article was “I believe the Bible is given by God to man, as a rule for our practice, and a guide to our faith—that it is a revelation of God to man.”⁷

His method was to read along in the Bible. As he reached a passage he didn’t understand, He used the concordance to look up other passages with the words in

⁴ Froom, 461.

⁵ *William Miller Collection (Collection 25)*, edited by Adventist Heritage Center, Box 2 (Berrien Springs, MI: James White Library, Andrews University).

⁶ Froom., 462.

⁷ Ibid., 466.

question. By comparing text with text he would come to a conclusion on the meaning of the passage.⁸ With this method, beginning with Genesis, he would only progress as far as he had understanding.⁹ William Miller studied for two years before coming to the conclusion that Christ was coming soon. He then continued in study for five more years before he answered the call to preach what he had learned. He then struggled with God's call to preach, resisting the call. It took a while for Bible study to have its intended affect—action. It took seven years for him to preach the message he was so deeply convicted of. Seven years of study before he felt ready to preach the message that so deeply convicted his heart. At first thought we might criticize him for not being quicker to share what he had learned, but his power of preaching came from the deep conviction he felt. He spent sixteen years earnestly seeking God's truth and came out changed on the other side.

Miller continued as an ardent Bible student, focusing on the prophecies for 14 years before he publicly presented them in 1831. During that time, he continued to explore the Bible, question, find answers in its pages, and soak up the Word of God. His primary method was to allow the Bible to explain itself. He came to the conclusion that the great 2,300-day Bible prophecy would be fulfilled around 1843. Jesus was coming back! A sense grew inside him that he was responsible to preach this message or, as Ezekiel 31 said, he would be held accountable. But he didn't feel that he could preach.

⁸ An examination of page 112 in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics* by Gordon M. Hyde will give a list of the eight hermeneutical principles employed by Miller.

⁹ Nichol, 27-34. Robert Gale, *The Urgent Voice: The Story of William Miller* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1975), 28-33.

As was his practice, Miller was in his study with his Bible open and his concordance nearby. His heart was open to God that fateful Saturday morning, August 13, 1831. As he studied he felt God calling him to go and tell what he had learned.

He answered, “I can’t go, Lord.”

The reply came: “Why not?”

Miller countered with all the arguments he could muster, “about his age, not being a preacher, his lack of training, want of ability, slowness of speech . . .”¹⁰ Finally, coming up short and seeing how thin those excuses were when he looked at the strength God made available to his servants, he made a deal with God. If God would open the way, he would go.

“What do you mean by opening the way?” the voice seemed to ask.

“Why, if I should have an invitation to speak publicly in any place, I will go and tell them what I have found,” he replied.

Thinking that was the end of the matter, Miller rose from his devotional time with burden lifted and a certainty that the matter had been put to rest. Knowing in his heart that there was no way an invitation would come to him. But he did not know that a 16-year-old boy was already on the way to extend that invitation to him.

Others studying the same Bible, around the world, reached the same conclusion as Miller – the conviction that Christ was coming soon. People were ready to hear and respond to this invitation to be ready to meet their Savior.

¹⁰ Froom., 482.

My favorite story about William Miller involves an invitation to speak to the Christian Connexion congregation in Lowell, Massachusetts. Their pastor, Timothy Cole, issued the invitation after reports of Miller's effectiveness as a revivalist. Cole wanted his church to be stirred with fervor for God and Jesus' soon return.

In a world devoid of Twitter or Facebook, Cole could only guess what Miller looked like. When it came time to pick up the great and well-known William Miller at the train station, Cole had a mental image of a tall, strong fashionably dressed man. This image he compared with each passenger who alighted from the train. But each person he approached was not Miller. Finally, a short, slender farmer with a slight palsy approached Cole and introduced himself as William Miller.

Though he immediately repented the invitation, Cole took Miller to the church, introduced him quickly, and then sat in the back. Miller was a bit put off by this welcome, but he nonetheless opened his Bible and began to expound on the Word of God. Fifteen minutes into his lecture the pastor got up, walked down the aisle, and joined Miller on the platform. Such was the power of the message. It wasn't about the package; it was about the Word of God. The Word of God in Miller brought passion and fire to his message and captivated the congregation.

The same can be said of us when we choose Bible study as our spiritual practice. When we focus on the Word of God and let it become a part of who we are, a passion and conviction will develop. We will know what we believe and why, and know the God who authored the Bible. This is the very essence of spiritual practices, to place us before God so that He can change us into His image. May we grow from glory to glory as

Christ's character is reproduced in our hearts. This is accomplished through time with God in Bible study.

After accepting his initial speaking invitation in 1831, Miller went on to preach over 3,200 lectures in the next 13 years.¹¹ He became a household name, a rallying cry for the second coming, and the catalyst for a denomination that now spans the world. All of this was because he chose to study the Word of God. Will you do the same and see what God will do with your life?

Experiments in Bible Study

What does your Bible study look like? Do you own—like William Miller—a worn Bible and concordance? Are there commentaries you love to open? Is there a written statement of beliefs on the flyleaf of one of your books?

By following the invitation in Isaiah 1:18, “Come let us reason together,” you can also experience Bible study and the God within its pages. This verse calls us to marvel over forgiveness: “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.” This conversion is an amazing value that you can explore through Bible study. Reason with God in Bible study. Let Him change you.

“Study is a specific kind of experience in which through careful attention to reality the mind is enabled to move in a certain direction.”¹² Using this definition as a lens to view the spiritual discipline of Bible study—the practice of this study calls for a

¹¹ James Nix, “The William Miller Farm: Birthplace of the Adventist Movement in America,” *Adventist Heritage* (Fall 1992): 18.

¹² Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, 63.

change to take place in the student's life. It demands that what is absorbed intellectually come to play in actions. Bible study changes a Christian's nature. The Bible claims this result. The Biblical basis for Bible study in 2 Timothy 3:16 says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."¹³ This text shares the multi-dimensional results of spending time in the word of God. The Christian is trained and enabled to do what is right. The Bible is useful for correction, but the purpose of Bible study is not to only to gain knowledge but also to promote action.

There are great sweeping prophecies of time in the Bible. The 2,300-day prophecy of Daniel was especially fascinating to William Miller. It still intrigues us today. Pictures of beasts and golden images in the Bible draw us in and tempt us to learn, to dig to understand. The greatest value in understanding these prophecies isn't to draw a chart; it is to trust God. By seeing these prophecies fulfilled exactly as God predicted, we can turn to the rest of the Bible with faith. And from its pages we can return to our life with an assurance that God knows what is next.

When Jesus was being tempted by the devil to turn stone into bread, His response was, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God."¹⁴ He is saying that the Word of God is as important to humans as the necessity of eating. In the same passage the method Christ used to respond to temptation

¹³ 2 Timothy 3:16, 17 NKJV.

¹⁴ Matthew 4:4 NKJV.

is immediately evident; He quoted the scriptures. This gives another motivation for Bible study—that of being prepared to resist temptation.

Life is given through a connection with Christ, and the scriptures are what teach and testify of Him.¹⁵ Through knowing and incorporating Bible truths, Christians become more Christ-like. This is the main motivation and foundation for why the Bible should be studied.

Now comes the time to try this spiritual practice yourself. Use your knowledge of the Biblical imperative for Bible study and a pioneer who employed it to apply the practice in your life.

Below you will find five specific examples of how you can experience Bible study for yourself. I challenge you to choose one of these five examples and try it out for a week. At the end of the examples, you'll see a form to evaluate this application of Bible study and evaluate how it can continue to be a part of your walk with God.

Key Word Study

When you choose this spiritual practice, commit to it for a week. A Key Word Study contains many steps, so take a few moments each day on one step. Do not seek to complete the exercise in a single day. The precious moments you work through the study are vital, and the between times are too. In the between times the term will rest in the back of your mind. You may catch the word flitting through your head in the middle of a

¹⁵ John 5:38-40.

conversation or a quiet moment. Then when you return to your devotional time and focus again, answers may come quickly because of the work done in the back of your mind.

In a Key Word Study you will be seeking understanding on a difficult idea in the pages of the Bible. This is where verse explains verse. Choose a word you are curious about from a topic that intrigues or challenges you. Perhaps there is a term in your memory verse for the week, or something from your Sabbath school lesson study. Maybe your Bible reading app gives you a scripture of the day and you can choose a main word from it to study.

Your main tools for this experience are your Bible and an exhaustive concordance just as William Miller used as he explored the pages of the Bible. This is how it works: you read a scripture, say Ephesians 2:8-10, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”¹⁶ You sit in your study chair at home, wrapped in these beautiful words, and then the questions start coming. What is Paul talking about? What is this faith word? If I am saved by grace through faith, what must I do? The more you ponder, the more questions spiral, until you become mired in questions. You then search this word in the concordance to gain understanding.

Your target is to understand “faith” as it is described. Start simple—try the English dictionary and find out how faith is described there. Return to good, old Webster’s Dictionary, from your elementary school days, for a first understanding: “(a)

¹⁶ NKJV.

Strong belief, or trust in someone or something; (b) belief in the existence of God: strong religious feelings or beliefs; (c) a system of religious beliefs.” In this case there are three different definitions of the word faith. Choose which you think is the closest definition to the usage in this verse. In the case of Ephesians 2, I choose option (a), Strong belief, or trust in someone or something. This gives you an idea of what the translator wished you to know when they carefully chose that word “faith” to translate the Greek word or phrase.

Now sit back for a few minutes and think through this verse. Answer a few questions in your mind: Who wrote this verse? Did this author write other Biblical passages? What kind of literature is this—a prophecy, poem, history, or sermon? Jot down your answers. Using Ephesians 2 as an example, you can see that Paul wrote this passage as well as many others in the New Testament. He wrote it as an epistle—a letter to the church in Ephesus to share instruction and correction. This is Paul’s theology on salvation, summarized in a few verses.

This evaluation prepared you for the next step: opening the concordance. An exhaustive concordance, like Young’s or Cruden’s, is most effective. Find an exhaustive concordance for the translation of the Bible you prefer to do your study work in. There are also many online concordances, if you are interested in the ease of an electronic resource.

Take your chosen word and locate it in your concordance and look through the places it appears in the Bible. Continuing your study on the word faith, give preference to places inside Paul’s writings. This is because authors maintain some consistency in their use of a word. To expand on what “faith” means in Ephesians 2, read where Paul uses

this word in his other writings. You will discover the word in Romans 1:17 and Galatians 3:11 and 23 as well as in Ephesians 3:12, and 17, 4:5 and 13, 6:16, 21 and 23. Write these verses down to compare for Key Word Study. Do the same thing each time you choose a word. Jot down five verses where your word appears. These five verses are the heart of your Key Word Study. These verses will inform your understanding of the selected word.

When I researched “faith” as it appears in Ephesians 2, a light bulb went on in my head. That is where it started. Reading in Romans and Galatians, I discovered that Paul likes to use “faith” to describe believers. He indicates their reception of the gospel with the word faith. “Faith” can be used in many ways: to describe a person, to describe an action, or as a term on its own.

As I worked through the verses, it became clear that faith isn’t a bragging term. Faith is an arrow that points toward the object that faith rests on. It is not about who has faith, but about what that person has faith in. I returned to my verse with this understanding and read it again. Ephesians 2:8, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.” This verse is all about God. When I declare my faith in God, I not sharing so much about me, as it says, “God is a trustworthy God.” My testimony is to tell others that God is faithful and trustworthy, so that they too will enter into a relationship with Him.

After your word study, the last step is the most important. Sit back prayerfully and think through the lessons you learned through the process. How is your verse new to you? How is the verse more meaningful and textured? What does it tell you about God? Is there an action He is asking you to so as a result of your new understanding?

Activity Sheet for Key Word Study

1. Chosen word
2. English definition
3. Background details
4. Occurrences in the Bible
5. Use in this passage
6. Application and evaluation

Verse Comparison

The goal of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of a particular set of verses. Here you will compare a set of verses in different translations in order to understand them more completely. By choosing a set of five to 10 verses to be your focus for the week, you will end the week with a deeper understanding of their meaning. Dedicate the whole week to digging into your verse set. This means you won't accomplish the whole exercise in one day. You will need many days. Soak in the texture. Evaluate the variances. Read different translations. Give yourself permission to leave the task unfinished at the end of the first day. Let opened-ended questions draw you back to your devotional time the next day. Enter into conversation with the text with delight each day—with the awareness that it is a conversation that needs to continue all week.

First, choose your set. What about your devotional book this morning—did the included Bible verse trigger contemplation? You can choose the other verses around it. Perhaps a co-worker mentioned a passage yesterday at work. Look at that passage so the next time the opportunity presents itself, you can dialogue with more information. It is easy to get bogged down in choosing. Give yourself permission to choose quickly and work through the exercise. The value is the time you spend with God, and gaining understanding of any text will afford that privilege.

With your chosen verse in mind, start by looking it up in your primary study translation. This is the Bible version that you are most comfortable with—the one you reach for when you keep the morning watch, the one you carry to church, the one that is marked up and highlighted and even chain referenced. Start there. Open your Bible to your chosen passage and start reading. This first day, read quickly first and then more

slowly. Ruminates on the words and think through their meaning in your life. Consider the picture presented of God. Do you have questions? Did answers present themselves?

I studied Psalm 119:9-16 in this way. These verses are in the heart of the longest chapter in the Bible. There are 176 verses in this chapter, and they all carry the same theme: love for the law of God. Laws sometimes get a bad rap, so my choice to study them came from a desire to understand that love. I knew that I couldn't do justice to 176 verse in one week, so I chose eight. I admit that it was an arbitrary choice. I loved verse 11, "Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You." Wanting to read it in context, I chose the set of verses surrounding it for my focus.

The first day I read the verses. I read them out loud. I sang them. I sat, I paced, I wrote it in my prayer journal. All of this was in the New King James version. This was my starting point, so the first day was all about this one translation. It felt comfortable, real, and familiar.

Then the next day I branched out. You will do the same. It is time to enter uncharted territory and choose three other translations to read your passage in. It might be as simple as walking to the Bibles on your bookshelf. It may be as complicate as a trip to the bookstore to choose a few new Bibles. You can even borrow a Bible from a friend for the week if you want to get a feel for the pages but you aren't ready to purchase another translation. Or you can take advantage of digital information and head to the Internet. There are websites that make the Bible accessible, so they present the Bible as a whole. On these websites, like Biblegateway.com or Biblia.com, you can read any translation you want and switch to a different one with a click of your mouse.

I chose Biblegateway.com for my comparison. I opened the page and typed “Psalm 119:9-16” in the search window. When I hit pushed enter, my primary study translation popped up—the New King James Version. I used the pull-down menu and switched to the New Living Translation. My verses appeared in a new translation. The meaning held, and yet they felt foreign and new. With my Bible open, I started to read and compare, noting the differences. Despite the differences, the theme was the same: the law of God is something to delight in. For the next two days I did the same thing. Each day I chose a new translation—New American Standards and then the New International Version.

I noted different words that appeared across the versions, yet theme remained. I chose to print out the passages in each of the three comparison translations. My workspace centered around an open Bible and three print-outs arranged in a semicircle. I even pulled out my highlighters and highlighted key words in each version. Concepts started crystalizing in my head and I wrote them down. Your space might be similar. You could choose to open each Bible to your passage and line them up. This makes for easy scanning if you place them in two rows. Or you can print each of them out. Maybe you chose one audio Bible and there is an MP3 player next to your open Bible.

When it comes time to make your analysis ask yourself, “What does this passage tell me about God?” Every scripture communicates about God; it tells us something about his Character, so this is always the starting point. Next, move on to applying it to your life. Is there something God is calling you to do as a result of your study?

In my study of Psalm 119, I noticed three verses are the heart: 9, 11, and 15. The question is how can a heart stay pure? This is followed by the instruction to hide God’s

word in your heart. It ends with sharing how to hide the word of God through meditation and study. I felt God's call to a deeper study in His word. I felt a call to know Him through the pages of the Bible. I wanted these words in my heart, so my choices on viewing, reading, speaking, and even status updates on social media, will reflect my relationship with Him.

Topical Study

A Topical Study will take you deep into one of the themes of the Bible. Which theme intrigues you? Is there a topic in the Bible that you are curious about but need the time to explore? Here is your chance. There are so many to choose from! What about salvation, or suffering, or healthful living, or service? How about miracles or redemption? Or you can follow closely in William Miller's footsteps and explore the year day principle or the sanctuary. You could easily find yourself under a pile of themes not knowing where to start. Just pick one and go with it. This exercise is part of a walk with God. There are many days ahead. Choosing one doesn't mean the others are not important; it means this is where you will start.

You could choose the image in Daniel 2. It attracted Miller. He poured over it and flipped back and forth in its pages. This great time prophecy covers hundreds of years of history. First, begin with prayer. Daniel is heavy apocalyptic writing. It is only understood by the Holy Spirit's inspiration. Recognize your need for His guidance, ask for it, and then begin.

For this theme, begin in Daniel 2. You'll notice immediately that it is a long chapter, but your devotional time this morning is limited. Don't see this as a sprint; see it

as a 5k. Start slow but keep moving forward. Stop when you need to and come back the next day. Remember, you are building a relationship, not seeking proof for your belief.

The first day you may only get through the first few verses. Maybe you start imagining what Nebuchadnezzar felt when he woke from a troubling dream—disorientation with the switch from dream state to reality, grasping at pieces that slip away too fast. The pieces slip, but they leave an impression of importance. In fact, he realizes this dream is vital and he must understand the meaning. Take that feeling with you as you read and maybe you can start to understand his order of execution at his counselor's failure. Or maybe you question it even more, because you already know that God sent the dream and that only God can interpret it.

When you study a theme like this, you will want to visit a few outside sources. After you familiarize yourself with the passage itself, a few passages outside Daniel 2 might help. Is your Bible a reference Bible? Is there a column in the middle that refers to other verses? Follow these threads. The reason your reference Bible chains references together is because there is an allusion, or a key word in common. Follow them, read it over. See what you can learn.

You may want to visit the Adventist.org website and look at fundamental beliefs related to this prophecy. This resource gives you the summary of research by a group of scholars. Do you agree with them? Is there an area about this great time prophecy that you want to revisit for deeper understanding?

Studying a theme is like following threads. Just like a tapestry is made up of many colored threads, so is a theme in the Bible. The theme is best understood by following

these beautiful threads and understanding as much as we can. The end result is weaving the pieces together to see a fuller picture of God.

Are you ready for heavier study? Try AdventistBiblicalResearchInstitute.org. Their powerful search engine will pull up articles by the denomination's leading scholars. Search for Daniel and scroll through the options. These are theological treatises that will take you deep into the scripture themes and pull you into deeper study. Don't get lost among the many articles! There is so much learning here. But remember, you dedicated only a week to this. Give yourself permission to just scratch the surface and return to your passage in the Bible.

At the end of the week you may feel like William Miller that more study is needed. That's okay, it is as it should be. There is always more to read, always more to learn. This is the dynamic of a Bible that communicates a living and engaged God. There will always be more building blocks to your relationship with Him. Summarize what you learned thus far, and decide what you will do the next week at the conclusion. At the end of the week write a paragraph about how you see God after your studies. How does this prophecy express God's character and love of humanity to you?

Each study of the Bible leads us to a relationship with God, so an understanding of Him is the primary purpose. God always gives enough information for us to rest our faith in Him, fully and completely. The goal of studying Daniel 2 is not to draw a prophetic chart or to properly label a diagram of the image. The goal is to draw near to God and learn to trust. Just think, if God could predict in just a few verses the sweep of history, we can trust He knows where we are in the present. Look at this amazing time prophecy, revel at its accuracy. Be amazed that this dream came through God to a pagan

king. What does this tell you about God? It tells me He cares. It tells me He is to be trusted. It tells me that there is more to learn.

Follow a similar pattern with any Biblical theme you choose to study. The call of commentaries may come your way, and hearing another Christian's voice can enrich our study of the Bible. The goal in studying themes is to see a topic in the context of the total Bible instead of just a small piece. While you will cover a topic only briefly when you dedicate a week to it, it will set the stage for more. Perhaps you will choose to return to this topic, or there will be another theme that presents itself as you study. Follow the threads and see what God reveals in His word. The goal is to spend time with God, and let His word become a part of who you are.

Memorize a Bible Text

Do you ever find yourself in a difficult situation, and suddenly the words from a bygone memory verse come flooding through your mind? Words like, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want" from Psalm 23, or "For God so loved the world that He gave," from John 3:16, or the echo of "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive," from 1 John 1:9. These are precious words that come back to our minds at precisely the right moment. When the Word of God becomes a part of you, stressful situations will often trigger a memory—a God-given memory of one of His promises. Those precious words will bring comfort and hope in difficult times. These words are able to echo in your heart because you took time to memorize them. When you choose this spiritual practice you dedicate a week to memorizing a specific passage of the Bible.

Take up the challenge to store away more of these passages in your heart. A few to choose between are: Philippians 4:6, John 3:16, Galatians 2:20, or Romans 6:23. A quick Google search of favorite Bible memory verses, or opening your Bible reading app, will give you a place to start. There are so many amazing and precious words to memorize from the Bible that it is easy to become overwhelmed. Just choose one; just start somewhere. This is only a one-week commitment. You can do it. Whether you ask a friend for their favorite text and memorize it, or you open your Bible to a much-underlined passage—just start. Choose the passage for this week, and another week you can do others.

Now that the hardest part of the task is complete, it's time to get started. My favorite tool for memorizing is to write the verse on a 3x5 card. It is portable, easily accessible, and simple. Write one phrase on each line. For example, John 3:16 becomes:

For God so loved the world
 that He gave His only begotten son
 that whosoever believeth in Him
 should not perish
 but have everlasting life.

Your mind thinks in concepts and phrases, so use that to your advantage. Play to your strengths to make memorizing easier. Place the 3x5 card where you can readily access it when you wake up. Is that place your night stand? Is a better place taped to the mirror in your bathroom so you can review it while you brush your teeth? Think through your life and put it where you can most easily see and learn.

Do your preferences lean toward the high tech? Put a reminder in your phone that will pop up with your text twice a day. In the calendar event notes, just write the verse in phrases like I suggested for the notecard.

Remember I mentioned spending the whole week on a verse? Some of you will get to Wednesday and the verse is down pat. You might start asking what to do next. Keep working on your verse. Spend the remainder of the week reciting it, thinking about it, and praying it. This allows it to creep deep into your heart. It is like a mountain stream that etches a path in the ground. The stream continues to pass over that path every day, so the path becomes a cut and then a ravine. The path is established and the water follows it down the mountain. It is like that when we memorize scripture. The more the path is etched, the easier it is to access. The more a scripture becomes a part of you, the more easily your mind can bring it to the forefront when you need it.

At the end of the week, celebrate that you now have more of the word of God hidden in your heart. If you didn't quite finish the memorizing part, evaluate if you want to spend another week on it or come back to it in the weeks ahead. Whether you accomplished everything you desired or not, you spent time with God. Each of the activities presented in this book are precious, from Adventist history, and served me well for many years. However, it is not the practice that changes you, it is God's presence. These exercises are intentional ways to spend time with God so that He can change and transform. The activities merely place you where He can do His work.

Clarification of Beliefs

This spiritual practice provides you the opportunity to crystalize your beliefs into words. William Miller chose to write out his beliefs as a way of articulating his study conclusions. It took Miller 20 points to cover his beliefs. How many will it take you?

Miller's first state of belief was, "I believe the Bible is given by God to man, as a rule for our practice, and a guide to our faith—that it is a revelation of God to man."

What do you believe about the Bible? Is there a verse that springs to mind when you think about your belief on the Bible? Accompanying your list with a Bible verse will help you solidify your belief and understand what you base it on.

Some topics to include in your statement of beliefs might incorporate some of these. Who is God to you? What role does the Bible play in your life? Who is Jesus and what was His mission on earth? How are you saved? What happens when we die? What is the meaning of the Sabbath?

Writing out your beliefs will not only solidify these beliefs in your mind, it will give you avenues for further study and prayer on the questions that arise. This week of writing out your beliefs may bring your focus for the next week's study. Remember, these experiments are an entire week at a time. You won't be able to accomplish them all in one week. That's okay. The point of this book is to draw you into intentional relationship with God, not to create burdens.

Your devotional life right now might consist of a devotional book and a scripture passage in the morning and the Sabbath school lesson in the evening. Perhaps you and your church are following a Bible reading calendar. These experiments are to augment and intertwine with your current ways of spending time with God, not to crowd them out.

So this week of writing out your system of beliefs may mean you add five minutes a day to your devotional time to write.

Any relationship is built on shared experiences, time, and connection. So is your relationship with God. In a relationship you don't expect to visit a delicious restaurant, read a book together, climb a mountain, and share a heart to heart conversation all in one day. Your relationship with God also takes time. One day will be Bible reading, another day will be a memory verse and prayer, and another day will be Key Word Study and intercessory prayer. There will be balance and a flow of activities. The only non-negotiable is intentional time with God.

Writing out a clarification of beliefs is part of a relationship with God. Not only can it aid your spiritual health, it can also serve as preparation. The Bible gives us the invitation to be ready to give defense of our faith, and this exercise provides preparation for that. Conversations, chance meetings, and encounters with friends are opportunities to share your faith. This exercise places these beliefs in your mind, so you are ready when God provides the place. Write down your beliefs in a journal, a note on your phone, or a file on your computer. Find a place to list what you believe. Write a date next to it. As you study, God may change your beliefs, and then your testimony may transform to how God brought you to this belief.

Report on Experiments with Bible Study

Just like any good science experiment there needs to be an evaluation. This is the time to look back over the time spent and decide its effectiveness. Below is a form to use during the week to evaluate your chosen spiritual exercise. This is a completely

subjective review, because this is your walk with God. This is the time to prayerfully decide, in God's presence, what worked and what didn't.

If you chose a scripture to memorize for the week, write that topic in the line labeled "Chosen Experiment." Now sit back and think over the week. Recall the details from your week and time with God. After a few minutes of review, it's time to start asking questions. Begin with, "How did it go?" This question asks for your overall impression. Was it a joy to focus on a Bible promise? Did it encourage your faith in God? Was it difficult to stay focused on one passage all week? Jot down your impressions.

Next move to the question, "Did you feel God's presence during the exercise?" The goal of a spiritual practice is God's presence, so this question is vital. If there are parts of the exercise that did not place you in God's presence, then identify them. Highlight and celebrate the parts that did give you space to be close to God.

Now you move to the question, "Is it worth repeating?" Your heart and pen might immediately say, "Yes!" Your week of memorizing Psalm 23 was not only encouraging, but it also reminded you of our caring and loving God. If you spent the week memorizing John 3:16-17 you might immediately say, "No, I have this memory verse down pat." But then you might note that you do want to memorize more scripture, you just want to add to the scripture library in your head with a new passage.

Finally, the last evaluation question, "Is there anything that needs to be done differently?" As you analyze the memory verse challenge, you might weigh it with the following factors: Did you choose two verses when you really needed a longer passage to keep the light of challenge alive? Perhaps your optimism and enthusiasm got the best of you, and you admit that the entire 119th Psalm was too big a piece to handle in one week.

These evaluations will help you to prepare for your next week with God. By analyzing the experience, you will come to recognize places where you met God that you only see in hindsight. You might notice that the Key Word Study you chose was just the information you needed to answer a co-worker's question. You might notice that your small group at church wants to study a new theme in the Bible and your week of study on salvation matches the group. All of these are examples of God's impact on your life and how He uses our time with Him to prepare us for life ahead. This is where a devotional life puts on shoes and walks around with us. God's influence is for our lives and for the everyday living that we do—not only for the moments we dedicate to a spiritual practice.

Experiment Evaluation Tool

Chosen Experiment: _____

How did it go? Did you feel God's presence during the exercise?

Is it worth repeating? What needs to be done differently?

Ellen White and Prayer



Fig. 2 Ellen G. White (1827-1915)¹⁷

A Formal Introduction to Ellen White

Ellen and her twin sister, Elizabeth, were born on November 26, 1827.¹⁸ Her parents, Robert and Eunice Harmon, had been married for 17 years when they added the twins to their family. At this time, the family owned and lived on a farm in Gorham, Maine. The Harmon family, including the twins, had eight children. The parents believed that children's hands should be busy so they were put to work on the farm and helped

¹⁷ Accessed July 12, 2009, <https://www.adventist.org/en/information/statistics/>

¹⁸ The White estate.

Robert in his business as a hatmaker.¹⁹ The close-knit family took God and church seriously, and made time for family worship.

The large family were members of the local Methodist church where they regularly attended. In this church family Ellen made the decision to be baptized by immersion in the Atlantic Ocean on June 26, 1842.²⁰ Think of the depth of conviction to be baptized in the Atlantic Ocean in June. That same year the Harmon family heard of a powerful Baptist preacher by the name of William Miller who was traveling around preaching at churches, meeting halls, and camp meetings. The family chose to attend one of these camp meetings, and they took seriously Miller's message that Jesus would soon return. Ellen was especially touched by the message and began to meet with others who joined with Miller to proclaim the second coming of Jesus. These groups were known as Adventists.

Call to Ministry

Ellen Harmon was a committed Christian who took prayer and Bible study seriously. One of her spiritual disciplines was joining with a group of four other young women for study and prayer. On a December evening in 1844, as this group was meeting, Ellen felt God's presence resting on her, and she saw a vision of the Adventist people journeying toward heaven with God's leadership and presence in their journey. This vision she related to prayer group and they felt it needed to be shared with the rest of the

¹⁹ Kilgore, January 14.

²⁰ Knight, *Meeting Ellen G. White*.

church.²¹ The rest of the church was very encouraged by her description of this vision and asked her to write it down to share with others. This began a ministry of writing, preaching, and traveling that extended throughout her lifetime.

Through her travels and ministry, she met a young man by the name of James White. This striking young preacher attracted her attention and her heart. They were married in 1846. The two were united with a common passion to light the world on fire with the Bible message and their lives and ministries joined. A ministry that was united until James' death in 1888 and continued right up to Ellen's death on July 16, 1915.

Her Impact

Ellen White worked fearlessly through the power of the pen. While she did travel extensively and preach, her impact is most felt today because she took the time to write her messages down. During her life, White wrote more than 50,000 pages of manuscripts, and she published more than 5,000 periodical articles and 40 books. Her small book *Steps to Christ* has been translated into more than 140 languages, making her the most widely translated American author of either gender.²²

²¹ Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, 13-20.

²² Statistics courtesy of the White Estate.

Her Prescriptions

“Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him.”²³

Throughout the mounds of books, letters, and journals that Ellen White wrote, she continually returns to the topic of prayer. Whether her main topic is prayer or another Biblical theme, the topic of prayer still permeates her words. The reason for this comes across clearly in the quote above; prayer is connecting with a friend and building a relationship. She communicates a passion for connecting people to the God of the universe who wants to be their friend. She wants those who read her words to be so inspired that they want to begin their own conversation with God.²⁴ Then they too, through these conversations with God, will feel Jesus’ constant presence.

If you read through White’s journals, you will be moved with how prayer permeated her life. She was especially fond of Psalm 121, which she quoted often when she was ill or in pain. Prayer is not an isolated experience that happens only when we are feeling low. Prayer isn’t a prescription to fix us like a prescription for antibiotics is for an infection. Prayer is an essential daily habit, if we are to be formed into His likeness. By practice and habit we can learn to live in God’s presence.²⁵ These descriptions of the benefits of prayer are what are so captivating and uplifting to the reader. It is magnetic to

²³ Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, 93.

²⁴ Ellen G. White, *The Faith I Live By*, 222.

²⁵ Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*.

take in her descriptions of walking in step with God so that we are able to resist the temptations that surround us because we are in tune with our Savior. This connection takes place through prayer.

To walk the Christian walk is to stumble daily—to realize each and every day that your goal is still a little out of reach. Prayer is what connects you to the possibility of reaching that goal. Ellen White describes the world around as a miasma; we are surrounded by a “tainted, corrupted atmosphere.”²⁶ But instead of leaving the Christian depressed that he is breathing tainted air and perhaps the end ought to come sooner rather than later, the same passage affirms that “Prayer turns aside the attacks of Satan.” This statement is a reflection from White’s Bible reading. Throughout her writings you can’t separate Bible promises from the practice of prayer.

Descriptions of Prayer in Practice

For Ellen White prayer isn’t a passive word; it is an action—a linear action at that continues into every part of your life. She recognizes that we, as humans with sin-warped minds, cannot comprehend the mysteries of God, yet she asserts that it is our privilege through prayer to ponder and discuss these mysteries with the Creator. In this knowledge she says that “in prayer we enter the audience chamber of the Most High; and we should come before Him with holy awe.”²⁷ This delicate balance is intriguing. We are talking with a friend, but that friend is the Creator of the universe. What greater awe than to realize that

²⁶ Ellen G. White, *The Faith I Live By*, 222.

²⁷ Ellen G. White, *God’s Amazing Grace*, 94.

the Creator wants to be your friend? What greater motivation to open up one's heart and share everything? God knows me so completely that all my talents and faults are completely known, and He still loves me. I am compelled to sing Psalm 139 as a prayer.

Prescriptions for Prayer

When she tried to make a list of the kinds of prayer, Ellen White quickly found it an impossible task. In every action during the day—whether it is as simple as folding the clothes or as expansive as leading a church service—her suggestion is unceasing prayer. “Only by constant watchfulness and persevering and almost unceasing prayer shall we be able to exhibit in our life the character of Christ or the sanctifying influence of the truth.”²⁸

To experience prayer we must set aside the idea of it merely being a time of requests and thanks. Prayer is a time of communication. As Psalm 51:6 says, “I desire truth in the inward parts.” That desire for truth must be there. A desire for, and expectation of, change must exist. If a prayer is formulaic and without heart, nothing will happen; it is vain repetition.²⁹ Just as the persistent widow kept asking for resolution to her inheritance problem,³⁰ and just as Jacob said, “I will not let you go unless you bless me,” we also cannot weary God with our requests. It is not that our repetition will

²⁸ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 303.

²⁹ Ellen G. White, *Resisting Temptation*.

³⁰ You can read this parable in Luke 18:1-8.

somehow convince God that we should get what we want, but God desires to do good things for His children. He is already able, willing, and eager to do what is best for us.

Private prayer lasts as long as the Christian desires. Just as that five-minute telephone call to your best friend turned into a two-hour heart-to-heart chat, in the same way the prayer prescription is that in private we can pray as long as we want. We cannot wear out God's ear or run up His telephone bill. Private prayer is where we place all our challenges, problems, faults, and sins.³¹ God knows them, and He is waiting to hear, forgive, and give strength to fight. It is not Christian duty to have as brief an audience as possible with the divine but rather to bask in His presence.

Public prayer is a different matter. Here short and precise is the prescription. It is a great honor to lead a congregation in prayer, but it is not the time for a lengthy sermon. Ellen White eloquently says public prayer is not a time to make up for all the prayer you have neglected during the week.³²

If you are in need of healing, gather people of belief together and pray. There are instances where White describes her own healing as a result of the prayers of fellow believers. Healing doesn't just mean a cough or an ache, it also applies to a hurt soul or a heavy burden. There is comfort in bearing one another's burdens. Some of her most caring words describe her prayer group.

³¹ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 577.

³² Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers*, 175.

I see a great love of diverse methods of prayer. Pray in many ways, in many places, and at many times is her constant advice. The only stipulation is that it is done in reverence toward the God of the universe.

It was a regular practice of White's to pray on the behalf of others. One such person that she prayed for was Dr. John Harvey Kellogg. Kellogg was the dynamic doctor who was charged with caring for and leading out in the health work of the church. But a point had come when the direction he wished to take the sanitarium was in direct opposition to the leadership of the church. Ellen White was among those who disagreed with him. White's method was to write a direct but kind letter to Kellogg sharing her concerns and care for him as a brother in Christ. In her letter she includes these lines:

I pray for you constantly, in private prayer and at family worship. Sometimes I am awakened in the night, and rising I walk the room, praying, "O Lord, hold Dr. Kellogg fast. Do not let him go. Keep him steadfast. Anoint his eyes with the heavenly eyesalve, that he may see all things clearly."³³

Experiments in Prayer

This is the time to try prayer out for yourself. Below, you will find five experiments you can choose from to try the spiritual practice of prayer. You may be tempted to keep going with your experiments from Bible study and then just add another layer. Don't wear yourself out. Just change focus. You'll still read your Bible this week, but be more intentional with your prayer practice. Choose one area to focus on each week and then, as you learn what tunes your heart towards God, you'll develop a balance between the practices.

³³ Ellen G. White, *Battle Creek Letters* (Leaves-of-Autumn Books, 1928; 2002), 65.

The exercise is to choose one specific method to focus on for this week, then at the end of the week you'll again have the opportunity to evaluate how things went.

A search of the Bible's mandates and admonitions on prayer brings the reader to Psalm 5:1-3 where a description is given of a dynamic prayer life. This text describes a follower of God who is expectantly presenting their cares before their God and then waiting eagerly for a response. This connects well with the working definition of prayer that "prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend."³⁴ With this relationship toward God, it is easy to understand how the author of Psalm 5 could speak with such longing for a time to commune with God. This relationship is the motivation the Christian today has when coming to speak with their God.

Philippians 4:6 gets more specific about what the ingredients and elements of prayer are when it says "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be known to God."³⁵ This gives two elements that should be included in prayer: petitions and thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is a reminder of what God has done in the past, and is also a time for recognition of who God is. This is the framework within which petitions are presented. Requests are given with an understanding that God has acted in the past, which gives courage to trust God has the ability and power to work again. The recognition of who God is serves as a reminder that He has the ultimate view of life and will choose what is best for his children.

³⁴ Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, 93.

³⁵ Philippians 4:6 NKJV.

The authority that our requests come under is given in Jesus' own words: "I say to you, what you ask the Father in my name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full."³⁶ Our God delights to give good gifts. We are to come to Him and ask in full knowledge of the love God has for us. This love is exhibited through the death of his son Jesus for our sins.

Paul in Ephesians gives a fuller prayer theology. He includes six principles for prayer, (1) pray always; (2) pray with supplication in the Spirit; (3) pray in the spirit; (4) pray watchfully; (5) pray with perseverance; and (6) pray for all saints.³⁷ These principles give a wide range of understanding to prayer. It shows that prayer is much more than a time to say, "please" and "thank you" but rather a full life experience that includes opening all areas of your life and being to God.

Pray the Scriptures

This spiritual practice allows the Bible to soak into your life as you pray the words of the scripture. First, choose a passage in the Bible to focus on. A good place to start is Psalm 121. During a particularly painful time in Ellen White's life, this verse lived for her. It was a source of great hope during her time in Australia. There came a point in White's life that her opinions differed greatly from the General Conference. Their choices went contrary to her advice. To create space without her dissention, they

³⁶ John 16:23-25 NKJV.

³⁷ James A. Cress, *Seventh-day Adventist Believe*, 158-159.

gave White a ticket to Australia. Ostensibly, the reason was to help organize the work in Australia, but it also meant that she would be far from the center of decision making.

This hurt Ellen White deeply—after all the hours and prayers she poured into the church to be treated this way. But she went, and prayed all the way. She often turned to Psalm 121 and its words of comfort. When you try this practice, start where she did.

This precious passage in Psalm 121 begins with, “I will lift up my eyes to the hills—From when comes my help? My helps comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.” Read the words of the passage very slowly, one phrase at a time. Keep your heart attentive to God’s message for your life. When I spend time with this spiritual practice, I hear the word of God applied and living. Reading through a passage seeking to see God’s presence in your life lets these scriptures apply to your situation directly.

For example, when I read Psalm 121, seeking to pray the scriptures, my heart landed on verse 4. It says, “Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.” Several concerns in my church kept me up late worrying. How would these seemingly insurmountable obstacles be conquered? Opening my Bible, I started reading slowly through Psalm 121 and this verse struck me. No need to stay up late worrying over these things when God was already up? Why try to brain storm or plan my way through this problem? What I really needed to do was rest and let God stay up through the night working on these challenges. So I wrote in the margins of my Bible, “I can sleep, because He does not.” After a time of talking over the situation with God, I was ready to rest. With this done I closed my Bible and turned out the light, trusting God to handle this problem like He had so many others.

Choose a passage and let it live in your life. The book of Psalms is full of encouragement, so they are a ready place to begin. Perhaps you can start with a passage of encouragement for your relationship with God, like Ephesians 2:8-10. Choose a passage to pray. Perhaps you could use the passage from your devotional book or the memory verse you are preparing for Sabbath school.

Do not expect lightning to flash or the earth to shake. Expect the still, small voice of God reminding you He is here. The experience itself is not life changing, but the God you seek is. Your goal is to immerse yourself in a scripture, pray it to God, and be present with your Lord.

This is a gentle practice, where you slowly read the scriptures, waiting for the Word of God to comfort you in your situation. The scripture could gently nudge you forward after His calling or shift your heart into a deeper commitment to your Savior. This happens softly—as the still small voice speaks through the scriptures. This is relationship with God; time with Him is what changes us.

Sometimes this affirmation comes through a phrase in the heart of your chosen scripture that speaks to your heart. It could be a reminder from 1 John 1:9 that God forgives and, even more, He cleanses. Maybe that phrase standing out will allow you to let go of the guilt for your past action and move forward in your life. Perhaps it is a word of challenge from James 2, that faith without works is dead. Perhaps this phrase pushes you to commit to your church family through service as a deacon or Sabbath School teacher. The goal is to be with God and let him lead your life through His scriptures.

Focus on God's Presence

God's presence brings comfort, holds us accountable for our actions, and provides strength for the road ahead. This spiritual practice gives you a pause to be intentionally aware that He is very real.

I remember reading a book as a child. It describes a young man imprisoned for his crimes. The young man lay on his bunk and pictured a video camera held by a divine angel. What followed was a frightening picture of a recording angel seeking and recording each action. It left me fearful and jumpy—afraid that each choice I made might dishonor God and that my mistake would be recorded for all eternity. As I took time to read promises, like Matthew 28 where He says I will never leave you nor forsake you, my viewpoint changed. God's presence is not to be feared; it is to be welcomed.

In Ellen White's books, letters, and journals, I can see her delight in knowing God's presence. I desired that same delight. Through the promises of God I found joy in knowing that He saw everything. I invite you to the same experience—to turn fear to joy. This is accomplished through reading the words of assurance in the Bible and attentive moments remembering and relishing God's presence.

Spend three to five minutes just sitting quietly and being aware of God's presence. The Bible tells us, in Deuteronomy 31:6, "Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the presence of all Israel, 'Be strong and courageous, for you must go with this people into the land that the LORD swore to their forefathers to give them, and you must divide it among them as their inheritance. The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be

discouraged." This promise assures us that God is always with us. Claim this promise and then be attentive and aware of God's presence with you at that moment.

In those moments, you may feel encouraged to stand up for truth in difficult situations. You may remember a moment at your job where gossip started. This may give you the courage to turn that conversation toward the truth. You may remember a friend who looked burdened and take that opportunity to ask if they want you to pray with them.

The knowledge that God is with you is meant to be a comfort. It should instill a thread of iron in your backbone for difficult situations. Knowing God is near when your heart breaks gives courage to step into the future. God's presence can enable you to serve with a joyful heart.

Looking at a spiritual practice like this takes only a few moments. You will realize that each of these spiritual practices on its own isn't enough. Spend time with God in many ways and on many days. Even a practice that is delightful and enriching should be balanced with other practices for a growing and rich relationship with God. Each spiritual practice holds hands with the next. Bible study brings knowledge and a concrete basis for hope. Prayer comes from that knowledge. Pray the promises of God and understand God's presence because of the Bible description of God's care for humans. Each practice holds hands with the next and strengthens our relationship with God.

Pray on Another's Behalf

In this type of prayer—usually known as intercessory prayer—you pray on the behalf of another person. Perhaps someone shared at Sabbath School that the company they work for is downsizing. Their fear of unemployment moved your heart and you

committed to pray for them. Throughout the week you lift the person's name and situation to the God who hears. Maybe during your small group a friend announced the joyful news that a baby is on the way. You can commit to pray for the health of the mother, baby, and growing family. Throughout the week you joyfully lift the person up to God, asking Him to protect and bring peace to all the new mom fears.

In some cases, you may know the person's need well and can pray specifically for it, asking God's presence in their trial. Or it may be a prayer of thanksgiving for what God has done in that person's life. What about asking for their favorite Bible text? By choosing to learn the person's favorite text, you are getting to know them in a new way. If your friend's favorite text is Proverbs 3:5-6, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths" not only will you learn a new promise text, but you will also learn about the person you are praying for. If this is their favorite text, you can pray that God give them courage to trust Him. You could pray that God direct their plans. Then through the week, as you spend your time with God, repeat that Bible text. This is a way of praying for that person and recognizing who they are to God.

As you pray, recognize the great value God places on the person you are praying for. If you are brave, you may even choose to pray for one who wronged you and needs your forgiveness. Choosing to pray for someone who hurt you—even one who doesn't deserve forgiveness, —is the first step toward being able to forgive.

Choosing to be part of intercessory prayer also puts the focus on God. Recounting another's needs with our own will also give a better perspective. When we go through difficult times, our own needs can eclipse anyone else or what they need. Praying for

another person reminds us that we are not the only ones hurting in the world. Even though we continue to present our own requests, we realize how expansive God's love is when we also choose to pray for another person.

Picture Christ on the Cross

Ellen White talks about spending a “thoughtful hour” focusing on the closing hours of Christ's life. The *Desire of Ages* invites us to remember what Christ did for us. In this experiment, you'll read through a part of the gospel that describes what Christ went through. Maybe you want to read the closing hours of his life in the book of John and see the gentle way this disciple expresses that painful time. Whenever you choose to read about those hours, expect a solemn time.

Pick the verses and read through carefully. Read slowly, repeating a verse if you want to. You can choose to read it out loud or while pacing in your room. Maybe you want to print the passage in bold font and take it with you while you walk through the woods. After spending time in careful reading, take time to reflect and image. Imagine what it would have been like to witness to those events. Ask yourself questions like, “How would I have reacted? What would this have meant to me at that time?” Picture being an observer. Allow yourself to feel helpless to stop it. Allow yourself to feel angry at the crowd. Dare to feel the push of the crowd and the group mentality that drove the events forward. Realize the anger in people's hearts to want to crucify this innocent man.

Imagine the dry air at the moment the anger settles into sadness and disbelief. Picture yourself as one of the disciples. Maybe you crept back to the crowd after running far and fast. Now you feel the weight of responsibility that comes from abandoning your

post. Through all this thinking and imaging, go back to the main point of this passage. The main point is that Jesus chose this. The song is right—He could have called ten thousand angels, but He chose to die for you and me. Remember the choice and love involved in His actions. Why would your Savior hang on a cross and die? Jesus chose to die in our place for love. He loves us. Remember this reason, this motivation, and pause to feel. Feel a realization that Jesus loved you unto His death. Realize that it was your sins that nailed Him to the cross. This may bring you to a time of praise to Christ for being your savior, but it will also bring you to a time of repentance. Repent and confess your sins to the God who hears. Pour out your heart in sorrow for your actions. Before you leave this sacred place of knowing and being with your Savior, pause to recommit. Choose this day who you will serve. Declare that you will serve the Lord.

This activity is weighty. Spending time recalling, imaging, and recommitting is necessary at times. From this place, we need to go forward in the call that God gave us. There are others in the world who do not know their Savior died for them. A natural step after this exercise may be to find a place to serve in Jesus' name so that others may know Him too.

Pray Your Heart

Do you ever approach prayer with so many whirling thoughts you don't know where to begin? Romans 8 invites us to pray even in those moments, knowing that the Holy Spirit himself will interceded and will lift our prayers to God even when we merely pray with our joy, or sorrow, or hope. In those moments, God will come near and meet us where we are.

This practice is where you begin your prayer time—by praying your emotions. There doesn't need to be clear thought, only the clear intention to meet God. It begins with a jumble and ends with clarity. Being in God's presence to lift up the cares of the day and the stresses and necessities of life, is choosing to unravel the tangled threads of your life in God's presence and allowing His light to bring clarity.

In this exercise, remind yourself of God's promise to come near. A promise that will help you remember is Jeremiah 29:12 and 13, "Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart." He has promised to hear you when you pray. Then lay before your God the deepest desires of your heart, the worries that seem to plague you, the plans you have for the future, and everything else. Put whatever is in your heart before God so His presence is a part of your desires, worries, and plans. If worries dominate, label the worry and then ask yourself, "What am I most concerned about here?" Keep asking these questions of each worry that crops up, and then realize God's presence and power. You can repeat a few memorized Bible promises as reassurance of God's wish to do what is best for you.

Through lifting your emotions to God, you may be moved to draw, paint, or write in a prayer journal. All of these are ways of lifting your heart to God. If dark colors seem the best way to illustrate that picture of the forest, then draw with them. If you are drawn to a palette of shadows, then paint with them. Some will want to create an expression of their emotions as a time spent with God. In this situation, the dialogue and planning in your head turns to prayers as you communicate with God what you are feeling. You can express anything and know that God is listening.

When you feel that God hears you, and you are ready to move on to hope, it is time to repeat a promise text. Perhaps you have a Bible promise book that you can open, or you might want to Google scriptures of hope. Begin to read the words of comfort God made sure to place in His Bible.

These texts will remind you of the hope and the future God desires for all His children. That God wants you to be whole, well, and strong. Whatever your struggle, He will never leave or forsake you.

Report on Experiments with Prayer

You bravely chose a new way to pray. Now it is time to evaluate your experience. After your week of trying a new way to pray, decide how it affected you. How did it affect you to pray on another's behalf? Did a thoughtful hour focusing on the closing events of Christ's life place you in God's presence? Ask yourself the questions on the form below to evaluate your experience. Remember the details and jot down a few sentences or phrases to describe the experience. Did God feel near or far when you practiced this spiritual exercise? Your notes will help you when you move to the question of whether to include this in your spiritual toolbox for future use. Is there an alteration needed to better match the individual God made you to be?

While every Christian needs this vital connection with God, it is not the practices that change you. What is important is God's presence that comes through intentionally when you choose to spend time with Him, not the exercise itself. The *who* is what changes, not the *what*. If you chose the exercise of intercessory prayer for the week, it is possible to change how you prayed. Maybe you started the week knowing that White

faced significant challenges at work and your focus stayed on her as you prayed for courage and wisdom. But at the end of the week you realize it was too narrow a focus. The edits you suggest are that next time you pray on another's behalf, you will pray for the specific need and also for God's presence to be in their life. Perhaps next time you want, instead of just words, to pray with your imagination—picturing your friend satisfied and happy with the decisions God led her to. This picture in your mind could help you remember other characteristics you may want to pray for. In this instance, it might bring you to pray for a clear mind to do what is best in each situation, or to pray for energy to face these challenges.

Sometimes you will try a prayer exercise and be so excited that you immediately add it to the list of practices to repeat in the future. This is a joyful moment when you realize that your devotional time is a live and breathing and energizing. Put an exclamation point and come back to it again! While Bible study and prayer will always remain the foundations of your relationship with God, how you practice them may change. Just because spending those moments praying the scriptures delighted and connected you, doesn't mean it must happen each day. Just as in a relationship, we don't expect our date to take us for bowling, pizza, a concert, and a pottery class on the same day. Our time with God will vary. One day you will choose intercessory prayer and find yourself in God's presence. Another day you will choose to be intentional about a Key Word Study. When a practice matches your personality, it doesn't mean you must do it every day for the rest of your life. Let there be variety and joy and creativity in your growing relationship with Christ. This is why there are so many opportunities to spend time with God, and you will not be able to do practice them all at one time.

Experiment Evaluation Tool

Chosen Experiment: _____

How did it go? Did you feel God's presence during the exercise?

Is it worth repeating? What needs to be done differently?

Joseph Bates and Healthful Living



Fig. 3 Joseph Bates (1792-1872)

“You have lost your baby, I hear,” said one gentleman to another. “Yes, poor thing! It was only five months old. We did all we could for it. We had four doctors, blistered its head and feet, put mustard poultices all over it, gave it nine calomel powders, leeches its temples, had it bled, gave it all kinds of medicines, and yet, after a week's illness, it died.”³⁸

This is the world where Joseph Bates lived. Modern health concepts had yet to be developed. Today, we recoil from the horrible things that were done to that ill baby, but at the time it was the very best in cutting-edge medical practice.

³⁸ *Hygienic Family Almanac* (Battle Creek, MI: Office of the Health Reformer, 1875), 23.

Joseph Bates was the first among the Adventist leaders “to practice health principles comprehensively and to advocate them in a wise and tactful way.”³⁹ Many of the early church leaders were impressed with his youthful energy as he traveled from state to state preaching.⁴⁰

On a voyage to South America, Bates gave his heart to God and began to notice how his health decisions affected his connection with God. So he made changes. He gave up using all stimulants. Eventually he even gave up profane language, feeling it was not in keeping with what he deemed the proper Christian life. Upon returning home, in the spring of 1827, he cemented his decision by being baptized.⁴¹ His first action as an actively involved church member was to set up a temperance society with the cooperation and involvement of several other sea captains. The motivation for their involvement was based on their first-hand observance of the evils of liquor use by sailors. This society, which he formed in Fairhaven, “was one of the earliest organizations of the kind in this country.”⁴² Its influence spread throughout the surrounding area, then across the country, with others setting up similar societies and using the printing press and the pages it turned out as a method to spread their beliefs.

³⁹ Olsen, *A History of the Origin and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists*, 258.

⁴⁰ G.T. Anderson, *Outrider of the Apocalypse* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1972), 104-116.

⁴¹ Olsen, *A History of the Origin and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists*, 258.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 259.

He commanded the first American temperance ship to sail from New Bedford, Massachusetts.⁴³ On his first sailing trip after being convicted to change his own health habits, Bates sailed a “temperance ship.” But he didn’t tell any of the sailors who signed up to be his crew what they were getting into. As the ship pulled away from the dock, he sailed peacefully along for a couple of miles. Then Bates called a meeting of the sailors and announced how they would treat one another on his ship. The first requirement was no nicknames; they would address each other by their given names. The second requirement was there was to be no swearing or using the Lord’s name in vain. The third requirement was that no matter where they were at they would prepare for Sunday services. This included when they were at port. There would be no leave granted on Sunday. The last, and probably most shocking to the crew, was that there would be no daily ration of grog, even though it was typical of sailing vessels.⁴⁴ They would have to do without their alcohol. Bates’ journal shows that there was resistance at the beginning, but by the end of the trip all but one agreed to sign up for another venture.

His personal reforms did not stop at leaving off alcohol. They extended to tea and coffee, when he found that having tea at a friend’s house late one night kept him from sleeping. “After returning from a tea party at midnight, my bed companion said, ‘What is the matter? Can’t you lay quiet and sleep?’ ‘Sleep, No.’ ‘Why?’ ‘I wish Mrs. Bunkers’ tea had been in the East Indies. It’s poison.’ Here I bid adieu to poison forever, and to coffee. After a while my companion joined me and we discarded it from our table and

⁴³ Gary Land, *The World of Ellen G. White*, 28. The year was 1827.

⁴⁴ Wheeler, *James White: Innovator and Overcomer*.

dwelling.”⁴⁵ From there he looked to his diet and reformed it to plain, wholesome food. When asked why he didn’t partake of pastries, meat, or condiments, his favorite answer was, “I have had my share of them.” His quiet living example had a profound effect on those around him, because most of the early Adventist leaders were plagued by illness and poor health. The illness that plagued the Adventist leaders was common to early Americans in general. Health was a topic that desperately needed to be addressed.

In February 1843, Joseph Bates adopted the vegetarianism recommended by the health reformer Sylvester Graham.⁴⁶ *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, by James White, contains a description of Bates at 54. This description is of an energetic man, with elasticity and spring in his step, who walked upright and with strength.

Although Bates lived his belief on healthful living, rather than preaching, on one occasion he was rather outspoken about his beliefs. At a church 4th of July picnic in Michigan, he was called upon to offer the blessing. When he looked at the food on the table, he saw many things he felt were unfit to be consumed, including highly spiced food and greased meats and sweets—things which he had removed from his own diet. When he offered the blessing, he asked a blessing on “the clean, nutritious, wholesome, lawful food”⁴⁷ and left out the rest. His pointed prayer didn’t go unnoticed. Nudges and meaningful looks passing between those gathered for the meal.

⁴⁵ Joseph Bates, “Monterrey, Michigan,” (February 14, 1872).

⁴⁶ Winston J. Craig, “In the Pink of Health,” 40.

⁴⁷ Bates, “Monterrey, Michigan.” He recounts this occasion in a letter to Ellen G. White.

For 20 years Joseph Bates toiled alone as a living, breathing example of what healthful living could do. He watched the other leaders of the church suffering illness after illness, which he himself avoided by following simple health principles. Then, on June 6, 1863, Ellen White had a vision.⁴⁸ This vision was instruction on healthful living, and she began to incorporate this topic into her publications and speaking appointments.⁴⁹

At the age of 79, Bates gave his testimony regarding health and its personal impact on him. An attendee said of Bates, “at that very moment he stood as straight as a marble shaft, and tripped about as lightly as a boy.”⁵⁰

Part of the health reform message is rest. Bates was one of the earliest Adventist leaders to embrace the understanding of the Sabbath. He presented the Sabbath as not only a part of our healthful living in rest, but also as a sign of God’s end-time people, citing Revelation 14:12, “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” “Now,” commented Bates, “it seems to me that the seventh day Sabbath is more clearly included in these commandments than the other nine.”⁵¹

The goal of having better health was not to be an end in itself; it was always for a purpose. “Health reform enables people to become better missionaries and enables healthy and healed people to come to the place where they can better understand the

⁴⁸ Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Progressive Years*, 73.

⁴⁹ Does Eugene Robinson, *The Story of Our Health Message* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1965), 78.

⁵⁰ J. O. Corliss, “Healthful Living,” *Review and Herald*, (January 25, 1923): 8.

⁵¹ Knight, *A Search for Identity: The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Belief*, 69.

gospel.”⁵² Bates had the idea to treat the temple of the Holy Spirit well. By being in good health and clear-minded, one could better understand and serve the Lord.

Experiments in Healthful Living

When investigating healthful living and its Biblical basis you could easily get bogged down in the health rules of Leviticus. The foundational principle of keeping the body in good health is found in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”⁵³

Healthful living includes a balance between activity and rest. Proverbs 6:6-13 shares a description of what happens as a result of laziness. The passage also carries tones of a necessary balance between constant activity and rest. Jesus gave the invitation to His disciples “Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.”⁵⁴

Other elements of healthful living include the importance of light. A look at Genesis 1:3 shows its importance through the order of its creation. And healthful living also crosses into the diet that is chosen to sustain life. The original diet given by God to Adam and Eve was that of a plant based diet. “See, I have given you every herb *that* yields seed which *is* on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to

⁵² Knight, *Anticipating the Advent: A Brief History of Seventh-day Adventists*, 66.

⁵³ 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NKJV.

⁵⁴ Mark 6:31 NKJV.

you it shall be for food.”⁵⁵ It wasn’t until after the fall and sin had entered the world that they were allowed to eat “the herbs of the field.”⁵⁶ This description of the original diet in the Bible is that of a vegetarian, plant-based diet. After the flood instructions were given as to what meat is clean and acceptable to eat, and what is unclean and still unacceptable to consume. A full list of what is clean and unclean, and thus acceptable or unacceptable, is found in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. In order to have the body functioning at its best and so have the clearest mind and ability to focus on God, it is still wise to follow these Biblical counsels.

Fasting

For 100 years, Christian authors didn’t publish a single book on fasting. However, in recent times it is once again being addressed. In a world full of plenty, with food available on every corner, to abstain is out of step with society. Yet fasting as a spiritual practice can enrich your walk with God. When fasting is done as a spiritual practice, it is used to create time to focus on God. Fasting is an opportunity to remember that what sustains us is not the food we eat but the God we service. Fasting reminds us that He is ultimately in control and provides space in our lives to focus on Him.

You may be familiar with fasting, and regularly choose to fast. If it is new to you, the easiest way to try it is a 24-hour fast. To do this, eat a balanced and healthy lunch, then forgo supper that evening and breakfast the next morning. Then break your fast with

⁵⁵ Genesis 1:29 NKJV.

⁵⁶ Genesis 3:18 NKJV.

joy and a simple lunch the following day. During the time you dedicated to fasting, keep it between you and God. Your co-workers do not need to know you are undertaking this spiritual practice. It is between you and God. Choose a smile and extra prayer to carry you through. At the time you would normally spend in preparing food or eating, choose to feast on the Word of God.

This is a difficult practice for me. When I skip meals I feel fuzzy and my brain moves slowly. Yet I do practice this discipline periodically because it causes me to pray more, pause before I answer out of bad temper, and depend on God. Sometimes the difficult practices are those we need most—not because it is a grand gesture to show God we are worthy, but rather for us. When we are pushed from our comfort zone, things happen. We break out from the expected and realize that God is also in the unexpected. Meeting God in a new way prepares our eyes to see Him in other new places.

There are those who cannot fast for medical reasons. If you are one of those people, do not lament. You can be a part of this practice in a modified way. The goal is to focus on God as our source and create more time to be with Him, so choose a different activity to create time. There are many ways that you can fast. You can fast from food, sports viewing, reading novels, or any activity that consumes part of your time. The time that you rescue from these pursuits is best reinvested in your relationship with God.

If you choose to set aside the time you usually use to read novels before going to bed, reinvest the time. Did you know that adult coloring books are all the rage these days? Some are of nature, or animals, or even include scripture passages. You could choose one of these to replace your novel reading. And as you color and take in the scripture, you can talk with God. Or you could take the time on Monday evening that was

previously set aside to watch the football game to read a Bible story book with your kids. What about, instead of picking up the latest gossip magazine, choosing to walk with your spouse hand-in-hand through God's second book—nature? Prayerfully evaluate your activities. Which is God inviting you to try a week without?

Whether you choose a food fast, an activity fast, or a modified fast, prayerfully choose which you will try. Choose one you can set aside for a set length of time so you can have more time to spend with God. Delight in your newfound pockets of time to be with God. Choose a short length of time to begin with, if you are not familiar with fasting. If you chose a food fast, start with a 24 hours. For an activity fast, choose two days to start. Begin small, and you may choose next time to extend the time. The goal is not for this fast to be a big, grand gesture to God; this is extra time created to be with God.

Give Up Refined Sugar

When you read the phrase “refined sugar,” what comes to mind? Do you picture a tempting chocolate bar? Do you think of your favorite sports drink? Refined sugar appears to be energizing, but it ends with a crash. One athletic coach said, “If you want to use a candy bar to win a race, give it to your competitor.” That coach is right! Our bodies are not designed to be fueled by sugar. Case in point, the controversy about including corn syrup in food products. Take a risk and give up refined sugars.

Try small steps at the beginning. First, try a day without refined sugar. This exercise could drive you to distraction when you pore over each food label in an attempt to live up to the letter of the law of your conviction. This activity is to enrich

your walk with God, not to make you paranoid. Just decide to give up refined sugar and then avoid the things you immediately know contain it. If you find out later that your wheat bread snuck some in, it is okay.

During this time, satisfy your sweet tooth with God's candy—a piece of fruit. Bite into a fresh peach and let the juice drip down your chin. Remember when, as a child, everything tasted better spread all over your face. Choose one day to do without refined sugar and tempt your taste buds with fresh fruit and whole grains. Get those cherries that keep beckoning you at the supermarket. When you sit and eat them, instead of the doughnut, at work remember the God who created the flavor of the fruit from His own imagination.

When you return to your regular eating habits for the rest of the week, think about your day without refined sugar. Remember God's gift of food and the endless variety He gave us—tart lemons, sweet pomegranates, crisp apples, and juicy persimmons. God designed us to delight in the food He made. Imagine God walking with Adam and Eve through the Garden of Eden. I picture Him introducing them to each fruit and taking delight as they enjoyed His creation. Refined sugar is another way we made an artificial replacement for the ideal. Trying this spiritual practice gives you an invitation to remember God's designs.

After you've tried a day, you may want to be more adventurous and try two days next week. Or you may choose to set aside this spiritual practice for a while and return to it another time. Our God created us, and He knows the way our bodies function best. This exercise is a simple way to focus in on God's designs and remember who created you.

Rest

Our lives are full of racing from one event to another. When one task is completed, it feels that seven others take its place. In the hurry and scurry of everyday life, details can be dropped. One of these details could be your focus on God and intent to hear His voice. This spiritual practice is an invitation to make space through rest.

Take a whole day and find a way to truly rest. This means no appointments or To-Do's—just do what your body dictates. Turn off the noise of televisions, radios, Internet, and electronics and just rest. This is taking a vacation day for yourself to let the flurry of life settle. In one of my scholarly classes, the professor suddenly stopped his lecture to talk about rest. He recognized the demand that school put on our lives and appealed to us to try the spiritual practice of rest. It was surprising and shocking to hear a driven and highly motivated professor talk about the need for rest. We knew how busy his life was. When he presented this appeal for us to rest, it hit home. Those who are busiest need moments of rest the most.

You may not know what to do with all this time. You could engage in a hobby that restores your soul. Are your hands gifted in woodworking? Perhaps this hobby can bring restoration. As your hands move and your mind stills, listen for God's still, small voice. Perhaps you enjoy making cards. Take time to pull out the paper, scissors, and adhesive. Create beautiful cards and then take time to write a note of thanks to someone who spiritually encouraged you. Maybe you want to take a bike ride in nature or around your neighborhood. Rest doesn't mean you must be still; it means stepping away from frantic activity needed to survive day to day. Rest creates pauses and spaces where we hear God's voice. Maybe it comes as the whispered reminder of a memory verse. Perhaps

it comes through recounting God's blessings in the past. Maybe rest restores you as your head clears and you are able to ponder that deep theological truth that is salvation.

Think broadly. This rest doesn't have to be by yourself. You can involve your family in a simple outing to a park. Maybe your spouse wants to rest with you. You can choose to keep conversation focused on the spiritual. The whole family can join in and rest by walking through nature, pointing out God's creation.

For me, this spiritual practice looked different in different phases of my life. When I was single, rest time was a spiritual retreat of scripture reading, journaling, and deep prayer. When I married, it became a time of praying and reading the Bible to each other. As the kids entered our lives, rest was elusive. Now that they are preschoolers, rest isn't sitting at home. They don't know stillness, but they do know a hike in the woods playing "I Spy Something God Made." Adapt this to your phase of life and be attentive to God's presence.

If you are more adventurous, make this a retreat. Choose a day to go away and focus on God. Perhaps you can swap houses with a friend or choose a beautiful location in nature to hike. Follow the pattern of Psalm 103 and praise and thank God. Beginning with verses one and two, spend a time of blessing the Lord. Shower Him with praises. Recount what you are thankful for. Praise God for who He is. Then move on to verses three and four and ask for forgiveness, healing, and redemption. Admit to God where you fell short of His ideal for your life. Ask for the broken places in your life to be healed and focus on the plan of salvation and your need of His redemption. After this is complete, read verse five and recognize that He provides for our daily needs. Think of the multitude of ways He provides each day. After reading verses six through nine, recognize God's

blessing in your history. Where did God intervene? Was there a place you chalked up to coincidence that now you see was God's moving? Read verses 10 through 12 and focus on how God cares for His children. Remind yourself that you are His child! Close with verses 13 through 16 as a reminder of the church family God placed you in to grow. How can you praise Him and engaged in His work?

Spend half an hour to an hour on each step of walking through Psalm 103 as described above. Use sketches or words to document your experience walking through this psalm. The goal is to rest in a prayerful, knowledge that God is near, and recognize who He is. Psalm 103 will take you through a time of praise and refocusing and, at the end, a recommitment to your Savior.

Take a Walk

Moving the body can invigorate the mind. Sitting still is not a rule for time with God. The stillness we seek is from the distractions of the world. Try motion and experience the spiritual practice of health. This week, commit to a daily 20-minute walk. Maybe the best time for you to walk is as soon as you roll out of bed. Perhaps when you pull in the driveway from work you can grab the kids and walk around the block. Lunch break at work is even a possibility if you pack a simple meal and take a light walk after eating.

Just before the walk, read over a scripture passage, such as a few verses from 1 Corinthians 6:19 or Genesis 1:26-28. The goal is to read the word of God before you go, so be creative on where the passage comes from. Each morning a friend of mine sends me a Bible verse, so I often choose to read the text and the verses around it for my focus

that morning. There is something about motion that helps me process. When I come up against a challenge I don't know how to solve, I take a walk with God. As I walk I focus on a scripture text. My conversation with God centers on the text and then moves out to the issues I'm wrestling with. Somehow, by the time I'm done walking I feel more peace. Sometimes the still, small voice whispers an answer to the problem; sometimes that same voice just reminds me God is near, but the presence of God always brings me courage.

To try out this spiritual discipline, read your chosen scripture text and then head out on your walk. As you walk, focus on these scripture texts and hear how God's word works in your life. If your family is with you, share the verse with them and ask their views. If you are alone, mull it over. Turn the scripture this way and that. If you find that the scripture slips quickly from your mind and the worries of life crowd in, make a plan to keep the scripture with you. Instead of reading the scripture and leaving your Bible behind, take it with you. Write the scripture out on a card to take with you, or print out the scripture in a large font so it is easy to read while you are walking.

Get Enough Water

The blessing of cool, clean water is expected in our lives. The twist of a faucet brings water at our command. We don't have to take a lengthy walk to a well. We expect that when we turn the tap water fit for drinking pours into our glass. We can even order it for free when dining at a restaurant. This isn't the case around the world. This week, concentrate on the blessing of water as you drink.

Get enough water both inside and out. Choose to intentionally drink your six to eight glasses of water. Drink a glass or two when you wake in the morning. Do this with

an attitude of gratitude to God. At mid-morning, get up from your desk, walk to the water cooler, and grab another glass. When the mid-afternoon slow-down creeps into your mind, stand up and drink another glass of water. When you get home from work, walk straight to the kitchen and drink another glass. While you prepare supper for your family, drink your last glass of water. Give thanks for the living water when you drink water to cleanse the inside.

Inside is not the only place we need enough water, we also need it on the outside to cleanse. As you do your morning or evening cleansing routine, count your blessings. Talk to God while you use water to clean your skin and prepare for the day. Invite God to be involved in every decision and every action. This focus on cleansing in and out may lead you to repentance. Talk to God about places in your life where you need His cleansing.

Report on Experiments with Healthful Living

At the end of each exercise, it is time to evaluate. Write down the experiment you chose to undertake and then sit back to prayerfully evaluate it. Did things go well? The purpose of every spiritual exercise is to spend time with God. The exercises just create spaces to be with God, so your evaluation is how effectively the exercise created that space.

God is an infinitely creative God who designed the world that surrounds us. He designed long-necked giraffes and delicate butterflies. His design included stately redwood trees and scrubby agarita bushes. In His mind there is room for creativity, distinctiveness, and variety. His goal is not to make you a cookie cutter Christian who

perfectly replicates the spiritual life of the head elder of your church. God made you unique, and He loves you with your attributes. Whether you delight in managing details or imaging grand possibilities, this is the way God designed you. Take this uniqueness to your walk with God. Experiment, try new things, and evaluate and adjust.

Review your activity to see if it created space to be with God. Examine the exercise and see if there are adjustments that might make that exercise more effective in focusing you on God's presence. Perhaps your experiment on getting enough water inside and out was too structured. Remembering all those pauses for water didn't work. Next time you undertake this spiritual practice, change the pattern. This time, measure your water into two large water bottles. Carry one with you throughout the day and sip away. This adjustment brings the reality of healthful living through consumption of the right amount of water. It also provides the adjustment that removes the piece that didn't work.

Use the form below to evaluate and critique how your time with God went. You can see again how the spiritual practices hold hands. Even while focusing on healthful living, the Word of God remains an anchor. As you practice one, another will present itself. The goal isn't an endless check-list but to spend time with God.

Experiment Evaluation Tool

Chosen Experiment: _____

How did it go? Did you feel God's presence during the exercise?

Is it worth repeating? What do you need to do differently?

James White on Stewardship

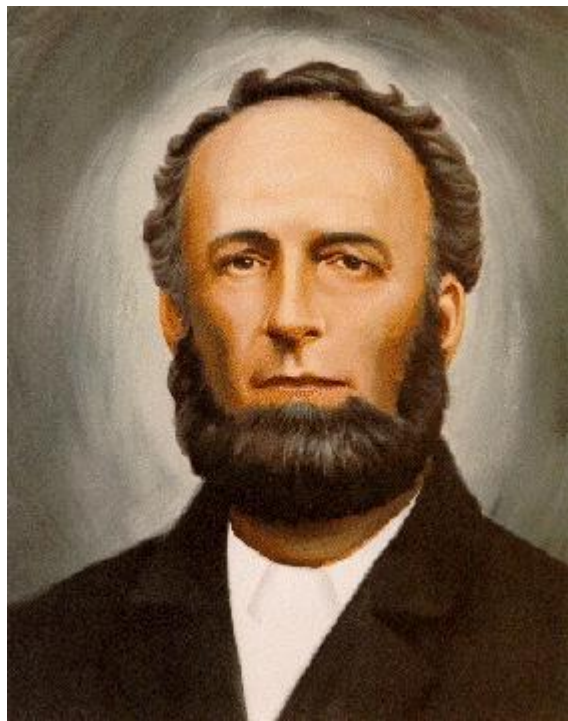


Fig. 4 James White (1821-1881)

James White served as leader and financial architect to the fledgling Seventh-day Adventist denomination. During his leadership time he established a medical institution, a publishing house, a college and the church structure. “He initiated almost everything that is the Seventh-day Adventist church today. From church organization to publishing to education, health, and the church’s worldwide mission, he was involved in the first stages of almost every major project, either as initiator or major participant.”⁵⁷

From an early age, James White determined to be financially independent. Preaching didn’t pay well, so to reach his goal of financial independence he asked a wealthy farmer to hire him to mow hay. The other hired workers quickly learned that James was a preacher, and they resented his presence. Putting their heads together, they hatched a plan to make things so difficult for James that he would quit. Their plan to ask James to lead the pack as they mowed across the field, and they would drive at a pace to crowd him out from behind. James agreed to lead and proceeded to pick up his scythe, cutting a wide swath as he went. And “with every swing of the scythe James was sending up a prayer to heaven for physical strength.”⁵⁸ The group quickly found they couldn’t keep up; they cut narrower rows and finally admitted defeat, shortly confessing their plan to James.⁵⁹ This commitment to prayer and hard work showed as he traveled widely preaching the gospel.

⁵⁷ Wheeler, ix.

⁵⁸ Robinson, 28-29.

⁵⁹ Ellen G. White, “Ellen G. White Estate Document File,” 718.

Described by those who knew him as a serious and earnest Christian, a child pointed out he was not always solemn. She added his preaching style made it easy to remember his instruction. Apparently James was an energetic preacher. According to one story the popular young preacher was featured at a camp meeting where a huge downpour hit. White's suggestion was to sing until the noise of the storm passed and they could hear him again. So they sang and sang. Soon the storm passed and James resumed his sermon. He was so completely absorbed in his message that he walked right off the front of the stage. But that didn't stop him! He picked himself up and climbed right back on the platform, preaching the whole time. In fact, he built the incident so well into his sermon many in the audience believed he planned it that way.

Growing up with a voice teacher for a father, James White incorporated music into every part of his life. A friend, Elder W. A. Spicer, recalls:

I remember well, as a boy, sitting in our church waiting for the preacher. Our backs were to the street door, through which the minister would enter. Then suddenly the silence would be broken by a sweetly musical and strong, sure voice, singing a familiar hymn. I can see the singer now, James White, silver-haired, coming down the aisle beating time on his Bible, and singing. . . . By the time he had finished the first stanza and the chorus, the congregation had been caught and carried along in the spirit of it, and was joining in.⁶⁰

James White recognized the value of music in the Christian life, and he also saw it as a business opportunity. This led him to publish five hymnals and four supplemental hymnals between the years of 1849 and 1861.

James met his match in speaker Ellen White, and they married and combined their work efforts. Their united efforts drew crowds, eager to hear their favorite messages:

⁶⁰ W.A. Spicer, *Pioneer Days of the Advent Movement*, 146-147.

“The wonders of redemption; the position and work of Christ as one with the Father in the creation; and in all the dispensations pertaining to the plan of salvation; and finally, the glories of the coming restitution. . . .”⁶¹ They traveled extensively by the most modern methods—horse back, train and foot. The first transcontinental railroad completed its track length of 1,776 miles in 1869, making it possible to cross the United States from coast to coast in a week. This was a huge improvement! Yet no modern amenities existed. Each passenger was responsible for meeting their own needs for food, drink, and warmth. Should a track become impassable, the passengers waited until service resumed. Such was their passion for sharing the good news of Christ’s soon return, the Whites eagerly undertook the requirements for travel.

James White knew from personal experience the effort it took to travel as a preacher and support a family financially. As the Seventh-day Adventist church grew, one of the growing pains centered on paying the clergy. Several energetic and called preachers left the work to return to farming or carpentry. Among them was John N. Andrews, who retired from pastoral work in his mid-20s to work as a clerk in his father’s store. The reason was no money to support their families. Heavy-hearted to see this loss of clergy over such a small issue, James White set out to organize a way to meet the challenge. After working with a committee to create a plan, White gladly announced their findings. He invited believers far and wide to be involved in Systematic Benevolence, or “Sister Betsy” as it was coined. The challenge was issued for each man and woman to support the clergy. Inviting men to contribute five to 25 cents a week, and women to give

⁶¹ Uriah Smith, quoted in *In Memoriam*, 36.

two to 10 cents each week. These funds went to the organized church for the purpose of keeping preachers at work spreading the message. The lesser challenge to the ladies took into account their main source of income was the household accounts.

As an innovator and overcomer, James White energetically faced challenges and pushed forward toward solutions. He was so deeply involved in the financial workings and stewardship of the church that some started asking questions. Attacks and questions were raised about the personal financial gain White received, doubting a clear separation between denomination finances and personal finances. An investigation into his financial leadership and dealings was launched in 1869. A committee, led by J. N. Andrews, invited all with evidence of any financial dishonesty to present it. The result was a 155-page book containing the testimony of 54 individuals stating their satisfaction with the way James dealt with them. No written evidence against James White was offered. However, the questions kept coming and continued throughout his life.

While all these stories are true and accurate, there was another side to this talented man. He often overworked. Entrusted with so many talents, he energetically employed them for the good of the church, but often to the detriment of himself and his family. Stories of overwork and exhaustion come out of the Seventh-day Adventist church organizational time. Groups of broken leaders caravanned to medical establishments for recovery and healing. James White among them.

His example brings a challenge to invest as heavily in God's work as did James White, but at the same time to achieve balance. Hard work must be balanced with rest and rejuvenation. Total stewardship is one of time, talents, and resources.

Experiments in Stewardship

Scripture shares a key principle that stewardship is a responsibility of all of God's children. Christians have nothing that belongs to themselves; it is all God's. This principle is found in these words: "You alone are the Lord, You made the heavens, The heaven of heavens, with all their hosts, the earth and everything on it, the seas and all that is in them."⁶² Just as special care is used when using a borrowed item, everything that the Christian has is owned by God. This ownership is from the creation of the world. God created, therefore, He has ownership of his creation. Genesis 1 describes a God who created from nothing. As creator, God claims ownership of everything in this world—from humans to growing things to possessions.⁶³ As the owner, God has the authority to assign its care to whomever He chooses.

Being aware of the source of resources gives an understanding of how those things should be treated. The source dictates the care of those resources as well as their sharing. A look at the passage in Luke 12:15 gives a case study in this principle. "And he said to them, Take heed and beware of covetousness, for a one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possess."⁶⁴ What follows is the parable told by Jesus of a wealthy man who didn't recognize where his wealth came from. Everything we have comes from God. Christians are His stewards. Recognizing where these blessings originate puts possessions in the right focus. A perspective is reached where these

⁶² Nehemiah 9:6 NKJV.

⁶³ Psalm 24:1 NKJV.

⁶⁴ Luke 12:15 NKJV.

possessions become tools to further His mission, not to hoard for their own selfish purposes. Because of this understanding, the one entrusted with the resources will be willing to employ them for God's work rather than to enrich their own life.

When the word stewardship is used, people immediately brace to hear about returning tithes and offerings, and certainly this is a part of it. Looking at Malachi 3:7-9, "Yet from the days of your fathers you have gone away from My ordinances and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you," says the LORD of hosts. "But you said, 'In what way shall we return?' 'Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, For you have robbed Me, even this whole nation.'"⁶⁵ Tithes and offerings are a sign of loyalty to God and acceptance of His leadership. Yet stewardship extends to far more than the small percentage placed in an envelope and turned over to the church.

Stewardship includes caring for our gifts and abilities, 1 Peter 4:10, "As each one has received a gift, minister to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."⁶⁶ 1 Corinthians 4:1-3 supports this by saying that the Christian is responsible for the knowledge of God that they have, and in turn they have the responsibility to share it with others.

⁶⁵ Malachi 3:7-9 NKJV.

⁶⁶ 1 Peter 4:10 NKJV.

Donate Five Items

If your house is like mine, it is full of blessings. All my needs are met, and even many wants. Try this: walk through your house and look at things. Which are things that you need to live? Which are things that fulfill a want? Looking at your possessions in this light may fill your heart with gratitude and thanks. In that spirit, walk through your house again and choose five items to donate. Choose five things you can share with someone else. Pick them up quickly and put them in a box. On your next trip out, deliver them to your local community services or another charitable organization you wish to support.

How about taking this a step further—when you receive a gift choose something to share. My kids enjoy this spiritual practice. When someone gives them a gift, they come home and search through their toys for something to share. Sometimes it is a few books to share with their classroom. Other times it is a pair of jeans to share as hand-me-downs. This receiving and sharing motivates in us an attitude of thankfulness. By receiving and then passing on that joy we are reminded that all we own is God's and that He will provide for our needs.

By sharing items left untouched for several days, our hearts are required to think about others. Instead of always taking in and adding to our possessions, we are able to pass God's blessings on to others. It also simplifies our life. Instead of amassing great treasure and a multitude of possessions, we share. Instead of hoarding books and gadgets and clothes, we can keep things simple by sharing with another.

Return to God First

When your paycheck comes, put God first. Whether it arrives as a direct deposit to your bank account, or as a check in the mail, give to God first. When you see the money you worked so hard to earn arrive under your control, choose to place God first. Immediately write your check to the church for your tithes and offerings. Or immediately click over to your church's online giving page. Or even withdraw cash to put in the offering plate. Whatever method you choose, before you start giving out the kids' allowance or paying the electric bill, return God's portion first.

The Bible invites us to be good stewards. We are invited to return ten percent of our income to God as tithe, and then above that to choose at our discretion what our tithes and offerings will be. If tithes and offerings are currently a part of your lifestyle, this step will be simple. It merely changes the timing of the giving. But if you are new to tithes and offerings there will be a little bit of a process as you choose how much to give.

The exact amount of giving can only be determined by a prayerful heart and a family meeting. If you are single, it is easy to decide what to give. You are the sole arbiter of where your funds go. If you are married, a family meeting is required. This communication and choosing together to include God in your family finances will strength your bond to one another and to God. Lay out your budget before God and pray over where your resources go. Determine that God's portion will be returned first.

By returning God's portion first, it says He is most important. It also removes the temptation to choose to keep God's part when the balance in the checking account shrinks. As paying bills and purchasing groceries shrinks the dollar figure, it is easy to

start rationalizing keeping more of it for your personal use. In addition to reminding us of our priorities, financial stewardship also is blessed by God.

I remember the huge transition from full-time work to student labor when I returned to school for my master's degree. From a balanced budget with allotments for savings and discretionary income, I went to living off of \$804 a month. With a rent payment of \$350 a month, you can start picturing what my life looked like to cover utilities, a car payment, food and purchasing warm winter gear. The temptation came to shorten God's piece. On paper it just didn't work, and so I gave into the temptation. However, the month that I took courage and challenged God to stretch what was left because I wanted Him first, strange things happened. I remember a tube of toothpaste that seemed to keep producing. Simple things like the milk lasting longer in the fridge and a roll of toilet paper that seemed never ending. All these little things with no explanation were because of God's blessings.

As you put God first in your finances, see what He will do for you. Step up into this calling to be a steward of your time, talents, and financial resources. Dare to risk returning to God first, and see what He will do to show His faithfulness.

Volunteer at a Homeless Shelter

How often do we collapse at home at the end of a busy day without offering thanks for the roof over our head? Blessings that are consistently present can often be treated as commonplace. Remind yourself of how blessed you are in the simple things by connecting with a group of people in need. Contact a local homeless shelter to find out what need you can meet.

Some shelters need donations of food, but the goal in this exercise is to connect with people and use your hands. Perhaps you can join them in preparing a meal or hospitality packets for the residents. By sharing your time you will not only provide something the ministry is in need of, but you will also be reminded of the blessings you have.

Serving at a homeless shelter is far outside of my comfort zone. That is exactly why this spiritual practice of service is so beneficial to me. I remember well the ease of planning a menu, gathering ingredients, and recruiting a team. But finding the right parking place behind the locked gate pushed me beyond my ideal. The coordinator for the day met us at the back door and energetically showed us the space we needed to prepare the meal. She even answered all the questions on locating utensils and cooking pots. It just felt so foreign, and I found myself praying often. A simple meal of spaghetti, green beans and garlic bread finished off with a generous serving of peaches stretched me and left my heart thankful. Smiling and greeting the people as they came through line felt more normal, but many of these people connected in a different way. They came through line without makeup or perfectly placed hairstyles, but there were smiles and thanks from most. Instead of feeling superior, I felt thankful. If they could be so thankful for such a simple meal, I must be thankful for regular food. I must give my thanks to God for choices at a meal time and for knowing that breakfast is also coming and not in question. I came to their place to serve, and they served and challenged me.

This is an activity that can include a broad age range, and can make a lasting impression on children, so include children in this activity if possible. Many shelters can

include children serving in the back or preparing the meal, others cannot. Check with the shelter on their policy about children volunteering before you head out the door.

Normally, these suggested spiritual exercises seek to connect you with your comfort zone and expand the ways you connect with God. This one is designed to challenge you to step outside of your usual and try a new way to serve God. While the majority of our time with God can be spent in the way we are most comfortable, there are times we need to stretch and reach and try. Find a way to serve outside the usual or a new way to dig deep in the scriptures. This challenge will give you an opportunity for growth. Time spent with God is for comfort and restoration, and it is also a place to grow. That means many days you will delight in a spiritual practice that is familiar and safe, and other times you will need to challenge yourself.

Host a Birthday Party

Many women's shelters also include the children of the family in their services. These children are in stressful situations—often coming to the shelter as a result of leaving an unsafe situation. This means that their mother may not be able to provide a birthday celebration. Maybe you can! Contact a women's shelter in your area and ask about throwing a birthday party for some of their children.

You'll need to call the shelter and talk with their volunteer coordinator. Share your vision for celebrating these children. You will need their volunteer coordinator to make this event successful, so create a relationship, listen carefully to their advice, and follow their suggestions. Do they suggest a simple celebration that only includes a cake, or do they think a larger event will work? Maybe you can plan and host a birthday party

for all the children with birthdays in the month of April. Perhaps you can learn their gender and ages so each will receive a small gift. The goal is to recognize the dignity of a child through celebrating their time in this world. Then by serving, to recommit yourself to a God who is big enough to love each one individually and deeply.

Use Your Talent

Each of us is entrusted with at least one talent. Use that gift to support the ministry of your local church. Churches definitely need our financial support. We return tithes to the world church and share our offerings with the local church. But to be a healthy and growing Christian, we also need to invest our time and abilities in building up God's church.

Take a prayerful moment to take stock of what God entrusted you with. Do you delight in making Biblical truths simple? Do your eyes light up when a child understands something new about their Savior? Maybe you can volunteer in your children's ministry. Please note: most children's ministries will need a couple things from you before putting you to work. Usually this is your authorization to perform a background check and a half hour of training on how to protect our kids from predators. These are hurdles that are necessary. They are not there to make volunteering difficult, but to make it more effective. Count this training time as part of your spiritual practice of stewardship. Log on to the website and take the training joyfully. Prayerfully learn how to protect our kids in a sinful world, and then find out the best place to use your talents with the children's ministry. Maybe they need someone to help teach a Bible lesson for Vacation Bible

School. Ask good questions about the goal of the lesson. What is the main Bible point for the day and how can you help the kids learn it well?

If you're finding it difficult to identify your talent, think about asking your pastor for a spiritual gifts inventory. This simple questionnaire helps you to identify which gifts from 1 Corinthians you are entrusted with. There are also many versions of these tests available free online. But if you contact your pastor, you are also signaling your intent to be involved and invested.

These hosts of gifts are for the purpose of building up the church. Many gifts are quiet—as simple as helping to set up for communion or cleaning up after fellowship meal. A way to invest your talent in the church might be to repair that toilet that keeps running. Perhaps you can arrive early and unlock the facility in preparation for the guests who come to learn and worship.

The goal is to find a way to be active, instead of sitting quietly during your devotional time. Not only will the motion encourage and broaden your view of time spent with God, but it will also enable the church to be strong and healthy. Find a way to work inside the system that exists in your church and to support the work that is already going on there.

Report on Experiments with Stewardship

Now it is time to evaluate. Think on and prayerfully evaluate how the experiment went. How did it feel to serve at a homeless shelter? Was it enriching? Did it challenge you in your walk with God? Did it make your heart more thankful? Perhaps you answered yes to each of those questions, or perhaps you say it caused more stress than

growth. Think of another way you can serve that will stretch and provide room for growth without damaging.

Just like any relationship, our relationship with God must grow. This means finding new ways to spend time together. So many of the other topics in this book are about quiet reflection and thought; this chapter challenges movement and activity. Evaluate how you spent time with God this week and endeavor to adapt these exercises to fit who you are as a growing, committed Christian.

Experiment Evaluation Tool

Chosen Experiment: _____

How did it go? Did you feel God's presence during the exercise?

Is it worth repeating? What needs to be done differently?

John N. Andrews on Worship



Fig. 5 John Nevin Andrews (1829-1883)

An Introduction to John Nevin Andrews

His career path was set; John Nevin Andrews would become a lawyer. Uncle Charlie, a member of congress, graciously volunteered to fund the education required to reach this goal. But Andrews' life changed drastically when he read a tract by T. M. Prebel proclaiming the Sabbath. John accepted this experience as his own and committed his life to further this message. This life altering decision took place at the ripe young age of 15.

Looking at his accomplishments you can well see why his uncle coveted him as a lawyer by his side. However, God called him to serve the young Seventh-day Adventist

church as its foremost scholar. As an adult he could read the Bible in seven languages. He reportedly could reproduce the New Testament from memory.

Andrews' first official church leadership post started at the age of twenty-one serving as a traveling minister in New England. "Within five years he was utterly prostrated because of intense study and a heavy program of writing and public speaking. Having lost his voice and injured his eyesight he went to Waukon, Iowa."⁶⁷ Here with his parents he endeavored to recover his health. Rest slowly mended John and his health returned, and with it his energy in furthering the growth of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

Many remember him for his status as the Adventist church's first official missionary, yet his contributions to the church began well before he sailed for Switzerland. He felt at home with research and study. He joined James White and Joseph Bates as the publishing head of the *Review* and soon after took over as editor. During this time he studied and researched voraciously. Later, he even served as General Conference president for a short time.

The Sabbath conferences in 1855 hosted energetic debate on the manner in which to keep the Sabbath. Andrews spoke up. This gathering by the church, as a general conference body, sought to understand Biblical topics and in understanding them to find how to practice these beliefs. The main topic under discussion in 1855 was the Sabbath. The Sabbath as a day of worship was already agreed upon and accepted by the denomination. The trouble was deciding when the Sabbath actually began. One group

⁶⁷ Knight, *Lest We Forget*, 135.

proposed keeping the Sabbath from 6pm to 6pm, citing the Bible's from "even to even." In their reasoning this meant 6pm to 6pm, with 6pm as the official start of evening. This was an area of Andrews' research, and he voiced his opinion. He felt strongly that from "even to even" meant from sundown to sundown. After much prayer, his suggestion was accepted by the gathered body. To share this with the larger world church, a definitive paper was in order. James White invited Andrews to write the definitive paper on the start of the Sabbath, putting forward Bible proofs for the sundown start to the Sabbath. This he did with his usual dedication and fervor.

Within this scholar also beat a heart of compassion. John Andrews was interested in the well-being of others. While attending the Wright Camp Meeting in Michigan, in 1868, he went from tent to tent in the evening asking the question, "Are you all comfortable for the night?" When he found needs he aided and visited with those gathered.

When the civil war arose questions came. Of special interest was a collection of questions about noncombatant soldiers and Adventists. Should Adventist soldiers carry a weapon? He again stepped up to help. He used his connections in congress and elsewhere in the political circle to help Adventist young men by securing noncombatant status for Adventists during the Civil War.

Continuing in his study of the Sabbath, John Andrews produced the church's first definitive work on the Sabbath. After much work he published the monumental and scholarly volume, *History of the Sabbath and the First Day of the Week*. This book placed before the church the foundation for Sabbath keeping and its history. It also made plain, to all those curious about this unique doctrine, why they kept the Sabbath day holy.

The Sabbath therefore, lies at the very foundation of divine worship, for it teaches this great truth in the most impressive manner, and no other institution does this. The true ground of divine worship, not of that on the seventh day merely, but of all worship, is found in the distinction between the Creator and His creatures. This great fact can never become obsolete, and must never be forgotten.⁶⁸

Experiments in Worship

At the heart of the spiritual discipline of worship is Sabbath keeping. The spiritual discipline of worship is exhibited in the Adventist church through keeping Sabbath holy. Worship is recognition of God's glory and presence in a special way during this 24-hour period. It is following the example of God Himself and celebrating in the same way He did at the close of creation week. When seeking to get a Biblical view of worship, the first stop is creation week. "And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done."³ Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made."⁶⁹ The Sabbath worship was and is a creation issue, making our worship of God, as He requested it, recognition of Him as creator and God over all things.

When it came to establishing the nation of Israel, God handed down 10 commandments that were given to re-establish their covenant and articulate their relationship principles. Sabbath symbolized the relationship between God as redeemer and His people—a memorial of His redemptive power. This relationship is described in

⁶⁸ Andrews, *History of the Sabbath*, 575.

⁶⁹ Genesis 2:2-3 NKJV.

Exodus 20, and this passage also re-establishes how to keep the Sabbath, from Genesis 1 and 2. The Sabbath commandment says, “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor they son, nor they daughter, they man-servant nor they maid-servant, nor they cattle, nor the stranger that is within they gates.”⁷⁰ Sabbath is about rest in God’s presence. A state of being still from labors that are necessary to sustain life and realizing that God is the ultimate source of the things that sustain life.

A look at the life of Christ reveals that the Sabbath was a day of worship. It was His custom to worship God on the Sabbath day.⁷¹ Just as the Sabbath was a time of worship from the foundation of creation to the foundation of a nation and throughout Jesus’ ministry here on earth, it will also be celebrated when this earth is recreated. “‘From one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me,’ says the LORD.”⁷² By celebrating the spiritual discipline of worship, the Christian can get a foretaste of that heavenly experience here on earth.

The Sabbath is to be a time of joyful worship, in recognition of God and of His ability to sanctify.

If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the LORD honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor

⁷⁰ Exodus 20:8-10 KJV.

⁷¹ Luke 4:16.

⁷² Isaiah 66:23 NIV.

speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the LORD has spoken.⁷³

The Sabbath is a day to delight in God's presence. The rest of the week we are servants in this world, but on the Sabbath we are kings and queens. On the Sabbath "he must say farewell to manual work and learn to understand that the world has already been created and will survive without the help of man."⁷⁴

Just as each spiritual discipline is to be an opportunity to come before a loving God and be transformed, the Sabbath also serves this purpose to change and recreate. "Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you."⁷⁵ Through the spiritual discipline of worship, the Christian is reminded that it is God who makes the changes. God sanctifies and makes the individual more like Him. The Sabbath is the weekly reminder that spiritual growth takes place through a relationship, not a gritting of the teeth or by force of human will but in relationship with a Creator God.

Prepare for Worship

This experiment is an invitation to enter the worship experience gently. So often Sabbath morning is a rush of activity and a flurry of tempers. It starts when the alarm clock fails to wake us. Then the desired shirt is in the laundry instead of available to

⁷³ Isaiah 58:13-14 NKJV.

⁷⁴ Heschel, *The Sabbath*, 13.

⁷⁵ Exodus 31:13 NKJV.

wear. Breakfast becomes a complicated task, as is taking 15 things to the car to take to church. Loading the car with children's limbs flailing and tempers flaring sets a phrenic air for the day.

Begin your preparations on Friday night. Before crawling into bed for much needed rest, take a few moments to prepare. Check the alarm clock and even set a backup. Check the weather and set out appropriate outfits for each member of the family. Include all the needed items, like socks, shoes, and belts. Maybe even plan breakfast. This preparation is an opportunity to begin thinking about the Sabbath and worship. It also removes some of the guess-work from the morning routine.

This is my family pattern. Friday night is a detail night. It is preparing for Sabbath morning and thinking through every detail by setting out outfits and planning meals, and even preparing the kids' quiet bags for church. This makes the morning one of following a plan, instead of creating a plan and then executing it. While there are still surprises every Sabbath morning, the planning limits the unknown.

Leave in time to arrive at church early. When you pull up to the church, whisper a prayer of thanks for the opportunity to worship. You might even remind yourself that worship is a privilege; the country you are in provides freedom that others lack. Instead of rushing through the door at the last minute in order to drop into your seat seconds before the welcome takes place, come 10 or 15 minutes early. When you enter the sanctuary, pause to thank God for His presence. Sit quietly in your seat and become aware that you are in the house of the Lord. Maybe open your Bible and read a psalm of ascent, such as Psalm 103 or 121. Maybe you feel in need of comfort and turning to Isaiah 40 is more fitting.

With this renewed spirit of worship, proceed through the rest of the service with your heart tuned to hear God. Sing each song as worship to God. Hear the scripture reading as a reminder of who He is. Listen to the words of the sermon and seek to apply it to your personal relationship with God.

Worship doesn't just happen. Worship is an intentional and chosen activity. Your personal time with God throughout the week prepares you for community worship on Sabbath morning. Alter your thinking. Change your picture of how worship works. Replace the picture of the worship service on Sabbath morning as a filling station to carry you through the week. Instead, that filling station takes place each day during your alone time with God. In this new reality, you will worship out of the overflow of the week's time with God.

When I choose to be intentional and focused when entering worship, my heart is better prepared for the blessing. When I pause to prepare throughout the week, Sabbath becomes an outpouring of thanks. Instead of coming to worship like a camel to an oasis in the desert, I come as a joyful child of God ready to worship in spirit and in truth.

Welcome the Sabbath

The welcome sets the stage for the rest of day. Enter joyfully into the Sabbath as it begins. On Friday evening, instead of rushing to the last moment to see how much you can fit, greet the Sabbath with joy. First, look up what time sundown will come. The goal is to think joyfully that the Sabbath is coming each time you look at the clock. Countdown to joy. Replace the countdown of time left to accomplish things with a countdown to rest and special time with God.

As sundown approaches, gather your family together. Let each person turn off their cell phone. Instead of just silencing it, power it down. The world will keep turning without you for this brief worship time. Voicemail can go unanswered for just a bit. Read a scripture together—maybe the beautiful Sabbath commandment found in Exodus 20. Perhaps you need a reminder of the perpetuity of the Sabbath and Isaiah 66:23 can remind you that we will keep Sabbath in heaven too.

Growing up, our Friday nights marked a change in the week. They reminded us of a better day coming. Each Friday night we sat around the table with candles lit and talked. The menu was simple: popcorn and fruit. If we smiled very sweetly at Mom, and asked her very nicely, there would also be tapioca pudding. The best part of the meal, to us kids, was the paper plates. You see, we grew up with chores to do, so paper plates meant a reprieve from washing dishes. It meant rest. This was our Sabbath tradition—a way to start together.

Start a Sabbath tradition with your family. Maybe your choice is to eat a simple meal of fruit by candlelight. Maybe you want to connect with the Bible memorization presented in the first chapter of this book. You can recite Bible texts together as the Sabbath beings. Choosing to start the Sabbath in celebration helps us remember the value of the Sabbath. It also helps the whole day to be one of joy, instead of a countdown to secular activities. Sabbath needs to be a day of joy and things to do. A day like none other that brings joy, rest, and a special reminder of God's presence. It is a day of trust in God. Sure, we could spend this 24-hour period engaged in the occupation that pays the bills, but on this day we rest and trust God to care for the needs and wants of life.

Take a Hike

Usually when someone says, “Take a hike” It is an invitation to leave quickly. In this case, it is an invitation to time with God. Nature is God’s second book. Each tree and leaf and blade of grass carries God’s signature. He made the amazing photosynthesis process that fuels plants. God is the designer of the creativity and variety in the insect world. Studies recently even indicate there are antidepressant properties in the dirt needed for gardening. The experiment this week is to take a hike and read God’s second book.

Find a park nearby that you can walk in. Perhaps your state park pass will get you into the peaceful hill trails. The area of the country my family and I live in is graced with parks in abundance. We can take our pick of trails to walk on, a field to stroll through, or even paved paths. Finding a place that is at your fitness level will provide a joyful and peaceful walk through nature.

This spiritual practice is one that is best shared with a group. If your immediate family is so inclined, suit them up with water and sturdy shoes. Other options to gather a group for the walk are a quick text to friends, inviting them to meet you for this adventure, or a morning invitation to your Sabbath school class.

Talk with your group and share observations. Marvel at God’s creative and artistic powers. Think about a God who can speak and the world takes form. Who else could use words to form light into the sun? What other God merely uttered the words and the ocean teemed with creatures, and the ground crawled with creeping insects? Talk about what you see with your friends. Be aware of the awesome creative power it took God to make all of these things, and realize that God chose to rest on the Sabbath day. He chose this as a time of celebration for His creation’s completion. God made the Sabbath;

He blessed it and hallowed it. The Sabbath is a time of worship and communion and connection with God.

If you want to go the next step—when you arrive home pull out your prayer journal. In it record your observations. Write down scripture texts that come to mind. Describe how you feel about God after spending this community time with God. You may even choose to quote the observations shared with you by your hiking companions.

Research the Sabbath

This is an invitation to research the topic of the Sabbath. Remember that curiosity about how Jews kept the Sabbath. Maybe you have a question about Bible promises that point toward the Sabbath. Now is the time to pull out that curiosity and seek to satisfy it.

Find a work that is written on the importance of the Sabbath and read it to find out more about this spiritual practice. There are a plethora of options available. You might choose Thomas M. Preble's work on the Sabbath, *A Tract Showing that the Seventh Day Should be Observed as the Sabbath, Instead of the First Day: "According to the Commandment."* If there is a university library that contains an Ellen White Research Center, they may be able to offer you a copy, or you can find it with a quick stop at the Ellen White Estate online. It is amazing how accessible these tracts are.

A more recent work is Abraham Heschel's *The Sabbath*. I first read this book while in seminary. Its author is a Hebrew rabbi. He is a committed Jew who honors the Sabbath in a way different from Sabbatarian Christians. A beautiful quote describes that it is the Sabbath that kept Israel through difficulty and exile. It was not they who kept Sabbath, it was the Sabbath that kept Israel. The spiritual practice of Sabbath keeping is

so integral to our relationship with God that it can keep you also. The Sabbath is a reminder of a God so interested in your life, that nothing but time together will do. Sabbath is not about getting to church; it is about a relationship with God.

While taking a class called The Works of God, I found a new love for the Sabbath. We researched the Sabbath through the Old Testament, and then we moved on to the New Testament. Pausing at each occurrence of the Sabbath in the Bible grew a picture of a loving God and a picture of a jealous God who designed a weekly appointment to worship and build a relationship. Awe and respect for Him also grew.

After your research concludes, talk with God. Talk to Him about the details you learned. Are there new ways you can respect and honor the Sabbath? Did you gain an understanding on why the Sabbath begins at sundown? Did you learn more about the character of God as you studied? As you talk with God, you may want to write down a few notes you can review later. Then as the next Sabbath comes, keep it with a new freshness and respect. Take the things you learned and let them color how you keep the Sabbath. Enter the next Sabbath with a greater understanding of worshiping God through a love of the Sabbath.

Worship Through Service

Worship is a many faceted experience. Worship includes quiet, reflection, adoration, and praise. True worship must end in action. In this experiment, put actions to your worship. Take your heart of worship and choose to serve. Find a way to serve at your local church during the Sabbath hours.

What gifts did God entrust you with? What can you do to serve your church?

Maybe you are trustworthy and arrive early. Assist the deacons in their work of opening the church facility and making it ready for guests and church members. Did you walk into the bathroom only to find a tower of towels tumbled across the counter? Pause and pick them up. Make the space welcoming to others who will come to worship God today.

If there is a fellowship meal, join the team. Bring your covered dish ready to eat so all the team needs to do is keep it warm. Take a moment to help arrange the tables and chairs. Talk with God while you serve. Remember He is why you choose to perform these simple tasks. Follow the directions of the fellowship meal coordinator to spread out tablecloths and arrange centerpieces. Perhaps you can sweep the corner of the fellowship hall where the Sabbath school class tracked leaves. Does your church's hospitality team include parking attendants? Offer to help direct cars into their parking spaces. If it is a hot day, pass out bottles of water to those staffing this team.

There are so many details that need to be in order on Sabbath morning and most of the time we take them for granted. These details just happen and we fail to recognize the hours of work it takes to create this atmosphere. What can you do to be a part of creating the welcoming space that greets your guests?

As you serve, enter into this experience with the attitude of worship to God. Your service facilitates others' time at church. As you worship through service, it creates a space for others to connect with God as well. Perhaps your talent for music can lift others into a time of worship. Talk with your worship pastor about how you can be a part of the team that leads the congregation in praises. Or offer to share your gift as a special music to worship God.

Something as simple as your warm smile as a greeter can begin worship on the right foot for a church guest. You could even find a way to prepare the facility for worship by straightening hymnals or restocking tithe envelopes. These details create the atmosphere for worship and lift your heart toward God as you choose to serve.

Report on Experiments with Worship

Every good experiment ends in evaluation. Your experience with worship also needs this time of reflection and evaluation. In order to be more effective the next time, choose to spend a few minutes thinking about how worship went this time.

Below are the pertinent questions to ask in your evaluation. To begin with, how did it go? This is just an overall impression. Let it spring immediately from your heart. You may immediately respond with a joyful expression of thanksgiving. If you connected well with this method of spending time with God, note it. You won't be able to experience each spiritual practice every week, but you want a balanced diet. You want to move between the spiritual practices in order to build up your walk with God. An experiment well done is worth remembering to revisit down the road.

Think it through. Did you love your worship through service so much that you want to make assisting the deacon team a permanent gig? Maybe reading the tract on the history of the Sabbath sparked a hunger inside of you to know more. If so, begin the process of putting your hands on J. N. Andrews' tome on the history of the Sabbath.

When your heart tells you that the experiment was a failure, try to identify why. Did you seek too ambitiously to welcome the Sabbath? Next time, does the welcome need to be simpler? Instead of a whole meal and candles to welcome the Sabbath, perhaps

you could just have a simple prayer circle before the family separates again. The time with God is always worth it, and there are things you can do to make it more effectively match the personality God created in you.

Experiment Evaluation Tool

Chosen Experiment: _____

How did it go? Did you feel God's presence during the exercise?

Is it worth repeating? What needs to be done differently?

Invitation to a Continued Journey

The quest of a Christian is to be so deeply marked by God's presence, that your character is transformed to be like Jesus. Just as Ephesians 4 describes, we might grow up in all things into Him who is the head, Christ. Spending time with God results in a change in our character. Our thoughts become more loving. We pause a moment to put ourselves in the other person's shoes before responding. Our hearts are moved with compassion when we see others in need. The very impulses of our heart alter to compassion and spiritual integrity. This is the goal of the time spent with this book and with the spiritual practices described.

When the question of how to accomplish this became too loud for me to ignore, I jumped into research mode. I chose research as my entry point and turned to my Adventist heritage to find out what a living, breathing relationship with God looks like. My seminary class propelled me forward. My research solidified my understanding. As a long time Adventist, I chose to find out what it looks like to be a fully devoted Adventist follower of Christ. Looking in church history I chose to look around the 1860s. This is the point where we were officially organized as a denomination. The decisions on what we share with other Christian denominations was analyzed. With this came an identity that sorted out what was, and was not included in this new denomination. Through this research five personalities came to light. With these characters also came five spiritual practices. I looked closely at the five characters in this book and their walk with God. Then I took their examples, principles, and experience and made them apply to today. The result of this research is what you just walked through, experimented with and examined.

This research project took me years. Years to understand the personalities of the Adventist leaders. And through all of this life happened. My life was challenging, and changing and stressful and a mess. But over all of it, it was marked by God's presence. It was these very practices that helped me to survive. This included a move from an unhealthy situation, to a new district with a church that was not ready to grapple with the idea of women in ministry. I aged during this time, and I saw it in my face and in my reserves. But I also saw the very disciplines I chose to research for this dissertation as the very tools that helped me through it. I continue on this journey, daily spending time with God, and letting His spirit bring clarity and the motivation to continue with the work He places before me.

I invite you to continue this journey. Make room in your life for your Savior. Open the pages of your Bible and dig in. Bend your knees in prayer to the King of kings. Place God first in all your resources. Treat your body like the temple of God it is. Intentionally chose to worship what is most important, God. Go back and repeat exercises you found helpful. Edit the ones that did not. Explore and find new ways your heart makes room for God.

Becoming more like Him naturally creates Christ like actions. Bible study, prayer, rest, healthful living and stewardship to allow Christ to change the inner fibers. Thus as the inner fibers tune themselves to Christ's melody, the Christian's actions are changed from the inside out. So instead of feeling the immediate impulse to behave selfishly or maliciously, the impulses are bent towards Christ's actions. Thoughts become purer, actions become kinder, others are cared for and loved as a result of becoming like Christ.

Though these are the last pages of this book, they are not the last moments you will spend with God. May your walk with God be vibrant and varied. May you relish your moments with Him. May His word become a part of who you are, so that others will hear Him in you. May you risk new things, test them against the Word, and share with another what Your Savior means. May the journey last a lifetime, and end in the arms of Christ at the second coming. Let it be that your chosen spiritual practices are what carries you through the difficult times of life, and augments the joyful moments. Continue this journey until the day you see Jesus face to face and recognize Him as the friend you spent all those hours with.

SECTION 8

THE RESOURCE BOOK AT WORK

The purpose of the resource book is to bring spiritual renewal to Adventists who are feeling the weight of doing too much and not spending enough time being. Just as the Adventist pioneers were good at getting the work done, today's Adventist can roll up their sleeves and get to work. What Adventists need in addition to the ability to rally to action is to just have time to be in God's presence. The resource book has laid out some practical ways used by the early pioneers to be with God and grow in Him. The goal of the book is that others can experience the same freedom in spending time with God through these practices that the author herself did.

The book can be used in three ways: as an individual, with a small group or as an outline for a series of presentations. The individual who picks up this book can read through and try out the exercises for themselves. The provided spaces to record the experience make for an evaluation experience. This evaluation time will help the individual to decide what should be added to their spiritual walk.

The small group that is looking for another resource to walk through together can use the book as a discussion starter. Each individual can read through the chapter, then come to the group prepared to share their insights and encouragements. The group method will also provide accountability for the experiments in the various spiritual disciplines. The third option to use the book as an outline for a series of presentations.

This makes the book a resource for church leaders. Each spiritual discipline in the book includes the scriptural basis, a real life illustration and suggestions on trying that discipline. This could easily be converted into a presentation that could challenge the church as a whole to commit to growing spiritually.

What will bring spiritual renewal to Adventists is not the practical ideas of the book, but rather the intentionality of spending time with God. Rather than just getting the prescription to spend time with God here are offered specific methods to try. The book gives the how to get to know God that makes being in God's presence a practical reality rather than something that can only be attained by the paid clergy or spiritually advanced individuals.

The benefits this being with God has are as great as the willingness to let God be in control. For pastors the benefit is to have a tool to share with people who are seeking to have a deepening relationship with God. The pastors themselves may also be interested in trying a few spiritual disciplines to refresh their own walk. The lay leaders will have the benefit of being able to know what to present for the next six weeks of prayer meeting. In small churches it is often the lay leaders that are depended upon to find subject material to present for the church's gatherings, the book is an option for them. Lay leaders are also welcome to use the book in their personal walk with God. The average member can use the book as a devotional guide to spending time with God. The use of the book will bring an added depth and trust to the time with God through teaching the member to be with God and learn about Him.

SECTION 9

REFLECTIONS

The writing of this dissertation and resource book was a work of pain, determination and in the end fulfillment. It is the determination to go through the pain of researching, writing and editing that requires commitment and the support of many people. What is hard is the determination to finish and to continue even in difficult times.

Ten years ago when my father was in the throes of completing his doctorate the Ripley clan had a family meeting. Around the Thanksgiving table our traditional goal setting for the next year was discussed. My father's goal was to drop his doctoral studies and focus full time on his pastoral ministry. An idealistic college student at the time I couldn't imagine putting in all those hours of study only to stop short of the goal. I very clearly told him, and in no uncertain terms, that there was no way that he was not going to complete his dissertation. My shocked face must have spoken as much as the words, because with the family support and constant encouragement my father finished his dissertation shortly thereafter.

In the process of my own doctoral quest those words have come back to haunt me more than once. It was in the process of writing the dissertation that quitting seemed so often an option, feeling that I had gained enough through the process to move on. Yet, my family wouldn't hear of it. They were right.

The class work toward this degree was a delight and a challenge, stretching me in ways I hadn't conceived of as possible. From the first time showing up on campus and

facing the newness of stepping outside my denominational system for a degree, to being presented with strange and wonderful spiritual disciplines, I was hooked. The experience was a stretching and reaching one for me. The first on-sight meeting I lost eight pounds over the course of the two weeks from the sheer force of will to engage in the process and give it my all. Being challenged to walk a prayer labyrinth stretched me again. I had no concept of what it was, and felt very uncomfortable with the practice. Yet as I sat in the room and prayed God's spirit invited me to walk and talk. It was in that walk God's voice said to prepare to move. Because of it I was ready to listen when the call inviting me to move to the church at Keene was given. In Keene my life has stretched and grown again, meeting my husband, beginning our lives together as a two-person family, and now a three-person family. Through this all the constancy of the doctoral program loomed and shaped me.

Each time I was challenged with a new spiritual practice that made me twitch and question whether it was a practice that was right or good, I would pray. From unplanned worship services, praying with icons and experiencing contemplative prayer, God's spiritual beckoned me into a deeper and experiential relationship with Him. It's that relationship that has made this process worthwhile. It is relationship deepening that I passionately want others to have the opportunity to experience. That is why I prayerfully offer my resource book up, after all the pain and determination and support it took to get it written. I offer it up in the hopes that even though the readers may not agree with what I say that they will still try the practice and meet their God in a new and refreshing encounter, and that in the end, it is His voice that will direct their lives.

My life was challenging, and changing and stressful and a mess. But over all of it, it was marked by God's presence. It was these very practices that helped me to survive. This included a move from an unhealthy situation, to a new district with a church that was not ready to grapple with the idea of women in ministry. I aged during this time, and I saw it in my face and in my reserves. But I also saw the very disciplines I chose to research for this dissertation as the very tools that helped me through it. I continue on this journey, daily spending time with God, and letting His spirit bring clarity and the motivation to continue with the work He places before me.

WORKS CITED

- ADRA International. *About Us*. 2010. Accessed July 16 2010.
http://www.adra.org/site/PageNavigator/about_us/.
- Anderson, G.T. *Outrider of the Apocalypse*. Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1972.
- Andreasen, Neils-Erik. *Rest and Redemption: A Study of the Biblical Sabbath*. Vol. 11 Studies in Religion. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1978.
- Andrews, John Nevin. *History of the Sabbath*. 3rd ed. Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1873.
- Andross, Matilda Erickson. *Story of the Advent Message*. Takoma Park, Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1926.
- Adventist Heritage. "Prayer Gardens." *Adventist Heritage* (Winter 1993): 21-25.
- The Adventist Review. "Statement of Being." *The Adventist Review* (2010): 2.
- Advent Review and Sabbath Herald. "Tobacco." *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* (December 13 1853): 178.
- Arnold, David. "The Shut Door Explained." *The Present Truth* (December 1849): 1-6.
- Bacchiocchi, Samuele. *Rest for Modern Man*. Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1976.
- Bates, Joseph. "Monterey, Michigan." February 14, 1872.
- Bates, Joseph, James White, and Ellen White. *A Word to the Little Flock*. Brunswick, ME: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1847.
- _____. *The Autobiography of Elder Joseph Bates*. Adventist Classic Library. Edited by George Knight. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, Reprint 2004.
- Bettmann, Otto L. *The Good Old Days—They Were Terrible!* New York: Random House, 1974.

- Beuttner, Dan. *Blue Zones: Lessons for Living Longer from the People Who've Lived the Longest*. Washington, DC: National Geographic, 2009.
- Bliss, Sylvester. *Memoirs of William Miller*. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2005.
- Chilson, Adriel D. "Don't Be Wrong About Wright: It Wasn't Our First Campmeeting." *Adventist Heritage* (Spring 1987): 2-8.
- Coon, Glenn and Ethel. *The Abc's of Bible Prayer*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1972.
- Cooper, Emma Howell. *The Great Advent Movement*. Takoma Park, Washington, DC: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1935.
- Corliss, J. O. "Healthful Living," *Review and Herald* (January 25, 1923): 8.
- Craig, Winston J. "In the Pink of Health." *Adventist Heritage* (Fall 1991): 34-41.
- Cress, James A., ed. *Seventh-day Adventist Believe ... A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines*. 2nd ed. Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2005.
- Damsteegt, P. Gerard. *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977.
- _____. *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977.
- Davidson, Richard M. *Interpreting Scripture According to the Scriptures: Toward an Understanding of Seventh-day Adventist Hermeneutics*. Hagerstown, MD: Biblical Research Institute General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. 2003. Accessed August 19, 2015.
<http://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/documents/interp%20scripture%20davidson.pdf>.
- Davis, Burke. *The Civil War: Strange & Fascinating Facts*. San Antonio, TX: Wings, 1988.
- Department of Education. *Lessons in Denominational History*. Washington, DC: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1942.
- Dick, Everett. "The Cost of Discipleship." *Adventist Heritage: A Journal of Adventist History* (Spring 1986): 26-32.
- Dybdahl, Jon L. "Doing Theology in Mission." *Ministry* 79, no. 1 (2006): 19-25.

_____. *Hunger: Satisfying the Longing of Your Soul*. 1st ed. Hagerstown, MD: Autumn House Publishing, 2007.

_____. "The Messenger." Presentation at *Texas Conference Workers' Meeting*. Camp Allen, Allen, Texas. August 11, 2009.

Figuhr, R.R. "The President's Page." *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* (January 5 1956): 3.

Foster, Richard J. *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*. 3rd ed. San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1988.

_____. *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*. San Francisco, CA: HarperSan Francisco, 1992.

_____. *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*. 3rd ed. San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998.

Fraser, Gary E. *Diet, Life Expectancy, and Chronic Disease: Studies of Seventh-day Adventists and Other Vegetarians*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Froom, Le Roy Edwin. *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*. Vol. 4. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1954.

Gale, Robert. *The Urgent Voice: The Story of William Miller*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1975.

General Conference Ministerial Department. *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*. 2nd ed. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2005.

General Conference Session. "Dear Brethren of the General Conference." *General Conference Session*. 1893.

General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. *Sabbath School and Personal Ministries*. 2009. Accessed May 12, 2009. <http://www.sabbathschoolpersonalministries.org/>.

General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Sabbath School Department. *The Sabbath School Manual*. Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1979.

Knight, George R. ed. *Earliest Seventh-day Adventist Periodicals*. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2005.

Graybill, Ron. "The Whites Come to Battle Creek: A Turning Point in Adventist History." *Adventist Heritage* (1992).

Heschel, Abraham Joshua. *The Sabbath*. Farrar, NY: The Noonday Press, 1979.

Hestenes, Roberta. *Class Lectures*. Pasadena, CA: Fuller Theological Seminary
Pasadena, 1989.

Holand, Hjalmar Rued. "Catholics, Lentils and Strange Byways of Reform." *Adventist Heritage* (Spring 1957; 1986): 50-55.

Hygienic Family Almanac. Battle Creek, MI: Office of the Health Reformer, 1875.

Jarnes, David C. *We Have This Hope*. Vol. 1. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2008.

Johnson, Kurt. *Small Group Outreach*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1991.

Kis, Miroslav. *Follow Me: How to Walk with Jesus Every Day*. Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2001.

Knight, George R. *Anticipating the Advent: A Brief History of Seventh-day Adventists*. Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1993.

_____. *Ellen White's World*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1998.

_____. *Joseph Bates: The Real Founder of Seventh-Day Adventism*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2004.

_____. *A Search for Identity: The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Belief*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000.

_____. *Lest We Forget: A Daily Devotional*. Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2008.

Land, Gary, ed. *The World of Ellen G. White*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1987.

Loughborough, J.N. *Rise and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists*. Washington, DC: The Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1905.

Martin, Walter R. *The Truth About Seventh-Day Adventism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1960.

Maxson, Ben C. *Steps to Discipleship*. Lincoln, NE: Master's Workshop Disciples, 2009.

- Maxwell, C. Mervyn. *Tell It to the World*. Omaha, NE: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1976.
- Moberg, David O. *The Church as a Social Institution: The Sociology of American Religion*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984.
- Morris, Derek. "Lord of Our Service." *The Spiritual Life: Experiencing Jesus Christ as Lord*. Sabbath School Net. May 23, 2005. Accessed Month day, 20xx.
<http://ssnet.org/qtrly/eng/05c/less12.html>
- Mulholland, M. Robert Jr. *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993.
- National Park Service. *The Civil War at a Glance*. 2005. Accessed July 23, 2010.
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cic_text/misc/civilwar/civilwar.htm.
- Nichol, Francis D. *The Midnight Cry*. Takoma Park, Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1945.
- The North American Division Committee. "Working Policy of the North American Division." 2006. 844.
- Nix, James. "The William Miller Farm: Birthplace of the Adventist Movement in America." *Adventist Heritage* (Fall 1992): 18-24.
- Numbers, R. "Dr. Jackson's Water Cure and Its Influence on Adventist Health Reform." *Adventist Heritage* (January 1974).
- Office of Archives and Statistics. "Seventh-day Adventist World Church Statistics." General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, October 25, 2007.
- Ogle, Mary S. *You and Your Sabbath School*. Washington, DC: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1949.
- Olsen, M. Ellsworth. *A History of the Origin and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists*. Takoma Park, Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1925.
- Renovare. *What Is Renovare?* Englewood, CO: Renovare. 2010. Accessed January 13, 2010.
<http://www.renovare.us/WHOWEARE/WhatIsRenovaré/tabid/2475/Default.aspx>.
- Review and Herald*. "Good Testimony," (October 23, 1860): 180-182.
- Robertson, John J. A.G. *Daniells: The Making of a General Conference President, 1901*. Omaha, NE: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1977.

- Robinson, Dores Eugene. *The Story of Our Health Message*. Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1965.
- Robinson, Virgil E. *James White*. Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1976.
- The Sabbath School Department. *The Sabbath School: Its History, Organization and Objectives*. Takoma Park, Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1938.
- Samaan, Philip G. *Christ's Way of Reaching People*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1990.
- _____. *Christ's Way to Spiritual Growth*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1995.
- School of Allied Health. *Adventist Health Studies*. Loma Linda, CA: Loma Linda University. 2010. Accessed July 22, 2010. <http://www.llu.edu/public-health/health/index.page?>
- Schwarz, Richard W. *Light Bearers to the Remnant*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1979.
- Secretariat. *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000.
- Shewmake, Carrol Johnson. *The Worshiping Heart: Key to a Relationship with God*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1998.
- Smith, James Bryan and Lynda Graybeal. *A Spiritual Formation Workbook*. San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 1999.
- Sontag, Deborah. "In Haiti, the Displaced Are Left Clinging to the Edge." *The New York Times*, July 10, 2010.
- Spalding, Arthur Whitefield. *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*. Vol. 2. Washington, DC: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1962.
- Spalding, Arthur Whitefield. *Captains of the Host*. Vol. 1. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1949.
- _____. *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*. Vol. 1. Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1961.
- _____. *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*. Vol. 3. Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1962.

- Stevenson, Kris Coffin. *Delighting in God: Prayer Is Opening the Heart to a Friend*. Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1996.
- Tasker, Carol M.. "The Impact of Intentional Learning Experiences for Personal Spiritual Formation on Seminary Students." PhD diss., Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, 2001.
- Valentine, Gilbert M. *W.W. Prescott: Forgotten Giant of Adventism's Second Generation*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2005.
- Vande Vere, Emmett K. *Windows*. Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1975.
- Venden, Morris L. *The Answer Is Prayer*. Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1988.
- Watts, Dorothy Eaton. *Prayer Country: A Tour Guide to the Wonders of Prayer*. Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1993.
- Watts, Kitt. *Sarepta I. M. Henry* Battle Creek, MI: Adventist Heritage Ministry. 1989. Accessed July 26, 2010. <http://www.adventistheritage.org/article.php?id=57>.
- Wheeler, Gerald. *James White: Innovator and Overcomer*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2003.
- White, Arthur L. *Ellen G. White: The Early Elmshaven Years*. Vol. 5. Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1981.
- _____. *Ellen G. White: The Australian Years, 1891-1900*. Vol. 4. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1983; 2002.
- _____. *Ellen G. White: The Progressive Years*. Vol. 2. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1986.
- _____. "A Brief Biography of Ellen White." The Ellen White Estate, 2000.
- White, Ellen G. "Ellen G. White Estate Document File, 718."
- _____. *Testimonies for the Church*. Vol. 4. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1855.
- _____. *Spiritual Gifts*. Vol. 4. Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1858.

- _____. *Early Writings*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1882; 2002.
- _____. "The Social Meeting." *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, April 28 1885.
- _____. *Testimonies for the Church*. Vol. 2. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1885.
- _____. *Steps to Christ*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1892.
- _____. "The Children." *The Bible Echo* (1899): par. 9.
- _____. "Ministry in the Home." *Australasian Union Conference Record*, June 1 1900, par. 15, article B.
- _____. "Our Duty to Leave Battle Creek." *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 80, no. 15 (1903): 17-19.
- _____. *Gospel Workers*. Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1915.
- _____. *Counsels on Sabbath School Work*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1928.
- _____. *Battle Creek Letters*. Payson, AZ: Leaves-of-Autumn Books, 1928; 2002.
- _____. *A Call to Medical Evangelism and Health Education*. Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1933; 2002.
- _____. *God's Amazing Grace*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1973.
- _____. *Selected Messages from the Writings of Ellen G. White*. Vol. 3. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1980; 2002.
- _____. "The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials." 1987, 2002.
- _____. *Manuscript Releases*. Vol. 20. Edited by Ellen G. White Estate. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2002.
- _____. *A New Life: Revival and Beyond*. 2nd ed. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2002.

White, James. "The Sabbath a Perpetual Weekly Memorial" *The Present Truth*, July 1849, 2-3.

_____. "Who Has Left the Sure Word?" *The Present Truth*, December 1849, 6-7.

_____. "Meeting in Michigan," *Review and Herald* January 31, 1865.

_____. "Report from Bro. White, No. 4," *Review and Herald* February 5, 1867.

_____. *Life Incidents*, edited by Jerry Moon. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2003.

Willard, Dallas. *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives*. San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 1988.

_____. *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God*. New York: HarperOne, 1998.

William Miller Collection (Collection 25). Box 2, edited by Adventist Heritage Center. Berrien Springs, MI: James White Library, Andrews University.

Wilson, Ted N. C. "Go Forward." Atlanta, GA: Seventh-day Adventist General Conference Session, July 3, 2010.

Women's Christian Temperance Union. 2009. Accessed July 26, 2010.
<http://www.wctu.org/>.