

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Third Quarter 2020: *Making Friends for God: The Joy of Sharing in His Mission*
Lesson 9 “Developing a Winning Attitude”

Read for this week’s study

John 4:27–30, 39–42; Matthew 15:21–28; 2 Thessalonians 1:1–4; Romans 15:7; Ephesians 4:32; 1 Peter 3:15.

Memory Text

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear” (1 Peter 3:15, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Receptivity to the Gospel
- III. An Attitude Adjustment
- IV. Presenting the Truth in Love
- V. The Foundation of Acceptance
- VI. Truth Lovingly Presented
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “In this week’s lesson we will explore more deeply Jesus’ attitude toward people and discover how to apply these principles in our own lives.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. What can we learn from the story of the Samaritan woman about receptivity to the Gospel in unexpected places? (Sunday’s lesson) What are the implications for our ministry and witnessing?
3. Jesus “had to go through Samaria” (John 4:4), though all pious Jews of his day bypassed it. Could we also see possibilities where the world, or even some segments of the church, see only difficulties? Where might that be?
4. Doubtlessly Ezra and Nehemiah treated the Samaritans the way they did, because they were convinced that was what God expected them to do. How does Jesus “redeem” the Samaritans in his day, four centuries later? Are there areas or groups

of people that we should treat differently than mainstream Christianity has treated them in the past (sincerely convinced that they are doing God's will)?

5. How do Phillip, Peter and John reap the consequences of Jesus' ministry years later (in Acts 8)? How easy is it to assume that our current results are the outcome of our marvelous methods, while we may only be reaping what someone else sowed years ago? And analogically, is it possible that many of the negative reactions, or even rejection, that we experience today might be a result of what people were exposed to years ago by overzealous believers who did not represent God well?
6. It has been said numerous times that *how* you say things is more important than *what* you say. What are the implications for our witnessing, if we see ourselves as those who 'bear witness to the truth so that people can be condemned on the judgment day'? What if our job is to build relationships and model a new type of community? If God is not in the condemnation business (Romans 8:34), shouldn't we also be "in our Father's business" (Luke 2:49)?
7. When he was the editor of *Adventist Review*, William Johnsson used to say: "You would not believe the amount of hate-mail I get. People believe they can be mean, because they are right." Where does this attitude come from? If Jesus calls us his "friends" (John 15:15), what are the implications for how we treat other people?
8. What can we learn from the way Jesus treated the Canaanite woman (Matthew 15:21-28) and the woman who anointed his feet (Mark 14:6-9)? (Monday's lesson)
9. How do we present truth in love (Tuesday's lesson)? What can we learn from the way Paul approached the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 1:1-14)? We all know people in the church, both locally and at all levels of the organization, who seem to be growing more cantankerous and bitter, and champion a fighting spirit, and yet are thought of as committed and sanctified people. Why do you think that is?
10. Wednesday's lesson looks at acceptance as the basis of how God relates to us, and how we relate to those around us. Why is this so difficult to put into practice? Would it be helpful to differentiate between acceptance and approval? If the task of "convincing the world of sin (John 16:8) is part of the Holy Spirit's job description, why do so many Christians seem eager to take it on themselves?
11. How would you lovingly present the truth (Thursday's lesson)? What worked and what did not work in your experience? Are there any lessons that you have learned recently? How can we better reflect in our own times and culture who God wants us to be, both individually and corporately?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

And you could count on God when things were that bleak, to send a message of encouragement and enlightenment and explanation to his people. He surely wouldn't send a book of mysteries and dates and schedules of events that they could not possibly understand. Rather, that sixty-sixth book that he did send, the book of Revelation (which means

clarification, not mystification), that sixty-sixth book is an invitation to discouraged early Christians to look a little higher—to take the larger view of things. To see how they've all been caught up in a vast great controversy that affects the whole universe! And that it's a controversy over God's own character and government. And then to read on and see that God has already won this war and the angels all agree with him, to see that this is the good news. And then to read on and realize that God is inviting us to join in the celebration; and then to go out to the world and invite all others who are willing to listen, to join in God's victory in the war. And then we Christians might not seem so much on the defensive all the time; we have good news to tell. There's no way God and His side can lose. And should we not join the winning side? is the invitation in that sixty-sixth book. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #1, "The Conflict in God's Family" recorded January 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/1MMCAG>*

And sometimes we Adventists are so concerned to be sure that the dead stay dead until the resurrection, that we deprive each other of this good news at funerals. We can say to the grieving family, Mother who was so sick and in pain all those years, do you realize now the next instant she wakes, she will be well? We can tell people that. It's the truth. In a way we don't have that much argument with our Christian friends over this. I don't think we should. In effect, it's the same.

The only thing that's damaging about the idea of the soul being immortal is the thing the devil has done with that. You see, if the soul is immortal, and God only will save good souls, bad souls, being immortal, must suffer for eternity. That's the bad thing about the immortality of the soul. It's not that there's a danger that you might think that when you die, the next moment you come face to face with the Lord, because in effect, even if it's a thousand years, it's true. And I like that. So if we don't make it home tonight, just like that. But if you're not prepared, it might be the wrong resurrection, and forbid that that should be so. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in all 66 – 1&2 Corinthians*, recorded May 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/63MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/64MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

The promise of the Holy Spirit is not limited to any age or to any race. Christ declared that the divine influence of His Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end. From the Day of

Pentecost to the present time, the Comforter has been sent to all who have yielded themselves fully to the Lord and to His service. To all who have accepted Christ as a personal Saviour, the Holy Spirit has come as a counselor, sanctifier, guide, and witness. {AA 49.2}

A person who is molded by the Spirit of God will know how to speak a “word in season to him that is weary,” and will realize the highest human blessedness—the joy of imparting to others the precious treasures of the wisdom and grace of Christ. {VSS 49.3}

Christ does not bid His followers strive to shine. He says, *Let your light shine*. If you have received the grace of God, the light is in you. Remove the obstructions, and the Lord’s glory will be revealed. The light will shine forth to penetrate and dispel the darkness. You cannot help shining within the range of your influence. {COL 420.1}

Heavenly intelligences co-operate with the human agent and impress the truth upon the heart. Abiding in Christ we are able to exert an influence over others; but it is because of the presence of Him who says: “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Matthew 28:20. The power we have to overcome Satan is the result of Christ working in us to will and to do of His good pleasure. {6T 399.2}

And in blessing others they will themselves be blessed. God gives us the opportunity to impart grace, that He may refill us with increased grace. Hope and faith will strengthen as the agent for God works with the talents and facilities that God has provided. He will have a divine agency to work with him. {AG 238.6}

The glory of heaven is in lifting up the fallen, comforting the distressed. And wherever Christ abides in human hearts, He will be revealed in the same way. Wherever it acts, the religion of Christ will bless. Wherever it works, there is brightness. {COL 386.1}

God’s work is the same in all time, although there are different degrees of development and different manifestations of His power, to meet the wants of men in the different ages. Beginning with the first gospel promise, and coming down through the patriarchal and Jewish ages, and even to the present time, there has been a gradual unfolding of the purposes of God in the plan of redemption. . . . He who proclaimed the law from Sinai, and delivered to Moses the precepts of the ritual law, is the same that spoke the sermon on the mount. . . . The Teacher is the same in both dispensations. God’s claims are the same. The principles of His government are the same. {AG 130.4}

Jesus longed to unfold the deep mysteries of the truth which had been hid for ages, that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs with the Jews, and “partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.” Ephesians 3:6. This truth the disciples were slow to learn, and the divine Teacher gave them lesson upon lesson. In rewarding the faith of the centurion at Capernaum, and preaching the gospel to the inhabitants of Sychar, He had already given evidence that He did not share the intolerance of the Jews. But the Samaritans had some knowledge of God; and the centurion had

shown kindness to Israel. Now Jesus brought the disciples in contact with a heathen, whom they regarded as having no reason above any of her people, to expect favor from Him. He would give an example of how such a one should be treated. The disciples had thought that He dispensed too freely the gifts of His grace. He would show that His love was not to be circumscribed to race or nation. {DA 402.2}

The blessings of salvation are for every soul. Nothing but his own choice can prevent any man from becoming a partaker of the promise in Christ by the gospel. {DA 403.2}

No distinction on account of nationality, race, or caste, is recognized by God. He is the Maker of all mankind. All men are of one family by creation, and all are one through redemption. Christ came to demolish every wall of partition, to throw open every compartment of the temple courts, that every soul may have free access to God. His love is so broad, so deep, so full, that it penetrates everywhere. It lifts out of Satan's influence those who have been deluded by his deceptions, and places them within reach of the throne of God, the throne encircled by the rainbow of promise. In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free. {PK 369.3}

But though the conflict is a ceaseless one, none are left to struggle alone. Angels help and protect those who walk humbly before God. Never will our Lord betray one who trusts in Him. As His children draw near to Him for protection from evil, in pity and love He lifts up for them a standard against the enemy. Touch them not, He says; for they are Mine. I have graven them upon the palms of My hands. {PK 570.4}

When the Christian takes his baptismal vow, divine help is pledged to him. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit stand ready to work in his behalf. God places at his command the resources of heaven, that he may be an overcomer. His own power is small; but God is omnipotent, and God is his helper. Daily he is to make known his wants at the throne of grace. By faith and trust, by availing himself of the resources provided, he can be more than a conqueror. {OHC 157.5}

The Christian always has a strong helper in the Lord. The way of the Lord's helping we may not know; but this we do know: He will never fail those who put their trust in Him. {PK 576.1}

His tender compassion fell with a touch of healing upon weary and troubled hearts. Even amid the turbulence of angry enemies He was surrounded with an atmosphere of peace. The beauty of His countenance, the loveliness of His character, above all, the love expressed in look and tone, drew to Him all who were not hardened in unbelief. Had it not been for the sweet, sympathetic spirit that shone out in every look and word, He would not have attracted the large congregations that He did. The afflicted ones who came to Him felt that He linked His interest with theirs as a faithful and tender friend, and they desired to know more of the truths He taught. Heaven was brought near. They longed to abide in His presence, that the comfort of His love might be with them continually. {DA 254.4}

His messages of mercy were varied to suit His audience. He knew “how to speak a word in season to him that is weary” (Isaiah 50:4); for grace was poured upon His lips, that He might convey to men in the most attractive way the treasures of truth. He had tact to meet the prejudiced minds, and surprise them with illustrations that won their attention. Through the imagination He reached the heart. His illustrations were taken from the things of daily life, and although they were simple, they had in them a wonderful depth of meaning. The birds of the air, the lilies of the field, the seed, the shepherd and the sheep,—with these objects Christ illustrated immortal truth; and ever afterward, when His hearers chanced to see these things of nature, they recalled His words. Christ’s illustrations constantly repeated His lessons.

{DA 254.2}

To take people right where they are, whatever their position, whatever their condition, and help them in every way possible—this is gospel ministry. . . . {MM 238.1}

The Bible enjoins courtesy, and it presents many illustrations of the unselfish spirit, the gentle grace, the winsome temper, that characterize true politeness. These are but reflections of the character of Christ. All the real tenderness and courtesy in the world, even among those who do not acknowledge His name, is from Him. And He desires these characteristics to be perfectly reflected in His children. It is His purpose that in us men shall behold His beauty. {Ed 241.5}

Love is the basis of godliness. Whatever the profession, no man has pure love to God unless he has unselfish love for his brother. But we can never come into possession of this spirit by *trying* to love others. What is needed is the love of Christ in the heart. When self is merged in Christ, love springs forth spontaneously. The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within—when the sunshine of heaven fills the heart and is revealed in the countenance. {COL 384.2}

Those who love God cannot harbor hatred or envy. When the heavenly principle of eternal love fills the heart, it will flow out to others, not merely because favors are received of them, but because love is the principle of action and modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, subdues enmity, and elevates and ennobles the affections. This love is not contracted so as merely to include “me and mine,” but is as broad as the world and as high as heaven, and is in harmony with that of the angel workers. This love cherished in the soul sweetens the entire life and sheds a refining influence on all around. {4T 223.2}

It should be our aim to bring all the pleasantness possible into our lives, and to do all the kindness possible to those around us. Kind words are never lost. Jesus records them as if spoken to Himself. Sow the seeds of kindness, of love, and of tenderness, and they will blossom and bear fruit. {OHC 293.5}

If in our ignorance we make missteps, the Saviour does not forsake us. We need never feel that we are alone. Angels are our companions. The Comforter that Christ promised to send in His

name abides with us. In the way that leads to the City of God there are no difficulties which those who trust in Him may not overcome. There are no dangers which they may not escape. There is not a sorrow, not a grievance, not a human weakness, for which He has not provided a remedy. {MH 249.1}

None need abandon themselves to discouragement and despair. Satan may come to you with the cruel suggestion, "Yours is a hopeless case. You are irredeemable." But there is hope for you in Christ. God does not bid us overcome in our own strength. He asks us to come close to His side. Whatever difficulties we labor under, which weigh down soul and body, He waits to make us free. {MH 249.2}

In the person of Christ we behold the eternal God engaged in an enterprise of boundless mercy toward fallen man. {FLB 98.3}

But forgiveness has a broader meaning than many suppose. When God gives the promise that He "will abundantly pardon," He adds, as if the meaning of that promise exceeded all that we could comprehend: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:7-9. God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness *for* sin, but reclaiming *from* sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10. And again he says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." Psalm 103:12. {MB 114.1}

The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means that sin is taken away, and that the vacuum is filled with the Spirit. It means that the mind is divinely illumined, that the heart is emptied of self, and filled with the presence of Christ. {OHC 154.5}

A kind, courteous Christian is the most powerful argument that can be produced in favor of Christianity. {GW 122.1}

Love imparts to its possessor grace, propriety, and comeliness of deportment. Love illuminates the countenance and subdues the voice; it refines and elevates the entire man. It brings him into harmony with God, for it is a heavenly attribute. {4T 559.3}

We are to be laborers together with the heavenly angels in presenting Jesus to the world. With almost impatient eagerness the angels wait for our co-operation; for man must be the channel to communicate with man. And when we give ourselves to Christ in wholehearted devotion, angels rejoice that they may speak through our voices to reveal God's love. {DA 297.3}