



Sabbath FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:23, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 10, The Experience of Salvation:** "Led by the Holy Spirit we sense our need, acknowledge our sinfulness, repent of our transgressions, and exercise faith in Jesus as Saviour and Lord. . . . Through the Spirit we are born again and sanctified; the Spirit renews our minds, writes God's law of love in our hearts, and we are given the power to live a holy life."
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 103-106

ROCK BOTTOM

Bill was a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army when he had his first drink. At 22 years of age he had a good career ahead of him. He was well on his way to making a success from a life that had gotten off to a rough start. His father's alcoholism had broken up Bill's parents' marriage when he was just a kid, and he'd been raised by his grandparents. But it looked as if Bill would overcome that rough start until he found out that, just like his dad, he loved to drink.

By the time he was in his 30s Bill was a wreck. Whereas once he used to drink to celebrate a successful business deal, now he couldn't hold down a job. He and his wife were living in her parents' house because they couldn't afford a home of their own. Bill was so down and out that he sometimes begged for cash on the street. He was hospitalized four times to try to quit drinking.

One day in 1934 Bill gave up. He admitted that he couldn't do anything to break the power of alcoholism in his life. It was up to God to help him out.

Seventy years later the organization Bill W. founded, Alcoholics Anonymous, has more than 2 million members in 150 countries, as well as dozens of spin-off groups including Alateen. The very first steps of the program are to admit that you are powerless over your problem and to ask a higher power for help.

As Christians, citizens of God's kingdom, we know God is our higher power. Alcoholics talk about having to hit rock bottom, even if that means begging for money on the street, before they realize how much they need help. But we're not all homeless or down-and-out. Many of us are pretty well-off, popular, clean-living people, aren't we? Do we all need to hit rock bottom before we can accept God's offer to help us?

Sunday RESPONDING

- » Read John 3:16.
- » It's the last evening of your church's Week of Prayer meeting, and the pastor's making an appeal for people to give their hearts to God. The lights are low, the music is playing, the Holy Spirit is working.
- » But from your place in the back row you feel confused. Lately nothing seems to be going right at school, at home, even with your friends. You wonder if "giving your heart to Jesus," like the preacher says, would make a big difference. What would it even mean? What would your friends think if you stood up and walked to the front? How will your life change if you take this step?

Monday BIBLE ANSWERS ON THE EXPERIENCE OF SALVATION

- » Read John 3:3-8; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Titus 3:3-7.
- » God loves you. He sent His Son to die in your place so you might live forever with Him. He has also sent the Holy Spirit to help you resist the devil and live a life filled with His goodness and love.
- » What in your life is holding you back from making the life-changing decision to live a life for Him instead of yourself?

Bill and wife, Lois, with his Harley; a page from the original draft of the Big Book in Bill's handwriting; Bill later in life.



Tuesday REFLECTING

- » Read Ephesians 2:8, 9.
- » What does it mean to “accept Jesus” or “give your heart to God”? Do you have to “hit rock bottom” first?
- » If you grew up in church, you’ve probably heard about “salvation” for as long as you can remember. Now it’s time to find out what it means for you, personally.
- » It isn’t just about getting baptized because you’re “old enough” and all your friends are doing it. It isn’t even about going up to the front after a special meeting when the preacher has everyone feeling kind of guilty.
- » It’s about knowing in your own heart that *you need God*. That doesn’t mean you have to “hit rock bottom.” It just means knowing you can’t live a perfect, holy, happy life all on your own strength. You need God to make you complete. You need God’s power to become the person you were created to be. Most of all, you need Jesus’ death on the cross for your sins as your only ticket to heaven.
- » See, eternal life isn’t something we can earn or deserve, no matter how good we are. We’re human, sinful, and born to die. Imperfect beings can’t live forever in a perfect world unless we accept the prepaid ticket Jesus bought for us at Calvary.
- » “Accepting Jesus” means you get His power in your life today and the promise of eternal life in the future. All you have to do is admit you can’t do it alone.
- » “But when the heart yields to the influence of the Spirit of God, the conscience will be quickened, and the sinner will discern something of the depth and sacredness of God’s holy law, the foundation of His government in heaven and on earth” (Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 24).

Thursday CONNECTING

- » Read Revelation 3:20.
- » Review the memory text.
- » Sometimes we hear about someone’s “search for God.” Really, it should be the other way around. God is searching for *you*. He’ll do anything to get your attention; He’ll stop at nothing to make sure you notice Him.
- » Why does He love you so much? He made you. Only He knows you inside out. He knows the worst about you and loves you anyway. And only He knows the person you’re capable of becoming, with His help.
- » What is He waiting for? Well, He won’t force His way into your life. He’s waiting for one simple thing: for you to respond to His Spirit and admit that you need Him, that you want Him in your life.

Wednesday BIBLE INSIGHTS

- » Look up the Bible verses in the New King James Version and fill in the blanks.
 1. John 3:16. “For God so _____ the _____ that He _____ His _____ begotten _____, that _____ in _____ should not perish but have _____ life.”
 2. Ephesians 2:8, 9. “For by _____ you have been _____ through _____, and that not of _____; it is the _____ of _____, not of _____, lest anyone should boast.”
 3. 2 Corinthians 5:17. “Therefore, if _____ is in _____, he is a _____; old things have _____; behold, _____ things _____.”
 4. Romans 5:8. “But _____ demonstrates _____ own _____ toward _____, in that while we were still _____, Christ _____ for us.”
 5. Romans 6:23. “For the _____ of _____ is _____, but the _____ of God is _____ in _____ our Lord.”
 6. Romans 3:23. “For _____ have _____ and _____ of the _____ of _____.”

Friday APPLYING

- » Read Psalm 51:10.
- » Sit down and take a few minutes to write a letter to God. Write it out by hand in the space below, or type it on your computer as if you were sending God an email. Tell Him the worst things that are going on in your life, and the best. Tell Him about the areas in which you need His help.
- » Finish up your letter by telling God that you need Him, and that you’re willing to do whatever it takes to give Him first place in your life. Thank Jesus for dying on the cross for your sins, and tell Him you accept His sacrifice—His payment of your debt.
- » When you’ve finished, go back and read the Bible verses from Wednesday’s section. Imagine God is answering your letter. Beneath your message, write God’s reply. What would He say to you?

