



Sabbath FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy” (James 3:17, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 10, The Experience of Salvation:** “This saving faith [faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord] comes through the divine power of the Word and is the gift of God’s grace. Through Christ we are justified, adopted as God’s sons and daughters, and delivered from the lordship of sin.”
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 76-78.

THE EMPEROR’S SEEDS

Once there was an emperor in eastern Asia who was growing old and knew the time was coming to choose his successor. Instead of choosing one of his own children, he decided to do something different. He called all the young people in the kingdom together one day. He said, “It has come time for me to step down and to choose the next emperor. I have decided to choose one of you.” The kids were shocked! But the emperor continued. “I am going to give each one of you a seed today. One seed. It is a very special seed. I want you to go home, plant the seed, water it, and come back here one year from today with what you have grown from this one seed. I will then judge the plants that you bring to me, and the one I choose will be the next emperor of the kingdom!”

There was one boy named Ling who was there that day, and he, like the others, received a seed. He went home and excitedly told his mother the whole story. She helped him get a pot and some planting soil, and he planted the seed and watered it carefully. Every day he would water it and watch to see if it had grown. After about three weeks some of the other youths began to talk about their seeds and the plants that were beginning to grow. Ling kept going home and checking his seed, but nothing ever grew. By now others were talking about their plants, but Ling didn’t have a plant, and he felt like a failure. Ling didn’t say anything to his friends, however. He just kept waiting for his seed to grow.

A year finally went by, and all the youths of the kingdom brought their plants to the emperor for inspection. Ling told his mother that he wasn’t going to take an empty pot. But she encouraged him to go and to take his pot and to be honest about what happened. Ling felt sick to his stomach, but he knew his mother was right. He took his empty pot to the palace.

When Ling arrived, he was amazed at the variety of plants grown by all the other youths. They were beautiful—in all shapes and sizes. When the emperor arrived, he surveyed the room and greeted the young people. Ling just tried to hide in the back. “What great plants, trees, and flowers you have grown,” said the emperor. “Today one of you will be appointed the next emperor!”

All of a sudden the emperor spotted Ling at the back of the room with his empty pot. He ordered his guards to bring him to the front. Ling was terrified. “The emperor knows I’m a failure! Maybe he will have me killed!” When Ling got to the front, the emperor asked his name. “My name is Ling,” he replied. All the kids were laughing and making fun of him. The emperor asked everyone to quiet down. He looked at Ling and then announced to the crowd, “Behold your new emperor! His name is Ling!”

Ling couldn’t believe it. How could he be the new emperor? Then the emperor said, “One year ago today I gave everyone here a seed. I told you to take the seed, plant it, water it, and bring it back to me today. But I gave you all boiled seeds, which would not grow. All of you, except Ling, have brought me trees and plants and flowers. When you found that the seed would not grow, you substituted another seed for the one I gave you. Ling was the only one with the courage and honesty to bring me a pot with my seed in it. Therefore, he is the one who will be the new emperor!”—Wayne Rice, *More Hot Illustrations for Youth Talks* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995). Used by permission.

Sunday RESPONDING

- » Read Hebrews 10:22.
- » Kim wrote this question: “When I pray to God, I want to be open and honest, but I don’t know where to begin. I feel as though there is so much to tell Him, but He obviously knows already. How do you talk with someone who knows what you are going to say? I have made so many promises to Him that I have broken. I keep asking for forgiveness. Is there a better way? I’m really open for suggestions.”
- » What would you say to Kim? Is there anything you have experienced that might encourage her? When have you felt the same? What solution did you find?

Monday BIBLE ANSWERS ON THE EXPERIENCE OF SALVATION

- » Read Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 10:17; Galatians 3:26.
- » When we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we become sons and daughters of God. And as sons and daughters of God we want our actions and the words we speak to match. We want to be examples of living according to God’s plan for us. God’s plan is found in His Word—the Bible. When we study His Word, our faith in Jesus will grow.
- » Why is it important that the things we do and the words we speak reflect clearly that we have a genuine relationship with Jesus?

- » Unscramble the verse below and answer the following question.
- » God now to then 20 reconciled we be are behalf Corinthians ambassadors Christ’s for 2 on Christ you as implore 5: though we God us were NKJV through pleading
- » What does Christ implore us to become for Him? _____
- » What does this mean? _____

Tuesday
REFLECTING

- » Read Revelation 3:14-18.
- » Having a “see-through” faith is what God is calling young people to. Have you noticed how difficult it is to believe people are who they say they are today? They say one thing and do something different. Their actions do not match what they say. They leave you confused as to the type of person they really are. Are they someone you want to be with or be like?
- » The Bible refers to our faith as being “of greater worth than gold” (see 1 Peter 1:6, 7). When gold is completely purified, it is transparent—the yellow color in gold comes from the impurities still remaining in the metal. When John describes the streets of gold, they are “like glass.” God’s hope for you is that you become pure and others can see the real you—a child of God.
- » It’s not as though God can’t read your thoughts and know your mind. He does not scratch His head and wonder what you are thinking or if you really do love Him. He knows. He also knows that a relationship is a two-way street, and although your ticket to heaven isn’t earned by being good, it has everything to do with knowing God (see John 17:3).
- » One thing is certain: no one will sneak through the pearly gates with a mask on pretending to be a child of the King. God’s children will let the world see who they are and to whom they belong. How pure is your life?

Wednesday
BIBLE INSIGHTS

- » Match the following texts with the words that correspond to them. All texts are from the New International Version of the Bible. If you do not have a copy, you can find one at www.BibleGateway.com.
- A. 1 Peter 1:6, 7
 - B. Hebrews 10:22
 - C. Psalm 139:1-4
 - D. James 3:17
 - E. 2 Corinthians 11:3
 - F. 1 Timothy 1:5
 - G. 2 Corinthians 6:2-10
- _____ “You have searched me, Lord, and you know me . . .”
 - _____ “But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure . . .”
 - _____ “In all this you greatly rejoice . . .”
 - _____ “I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor.”
 - _____ “The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.”
 - _____ “But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning . . .”
 - _____ “Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings . . .”

Thursday
CONNECTING

- » Read Galatians 3:16.
- » Review the memory text.
- » While shopping with his father, a young boy tried to scare his dad by putting on a mask and sneaking up behind him. He donned the image of some weird creature, but the father saw the boy’s sandy hair sticking up. His shoes, which the father had bought him the previous week, were untied, as always. The hands contorted in the form of scary claws were familiar.
- » The father had held those hands as they trembled with fear when the boy got his first shot from the doctor. The father had wrapped countless Band-Aids on those fingers over the previous five years. The voice, although garbled by the plastic lips of the mask, was unmistakably clear—it was his son’s. Although the son was pretending, the father could never imagine his son, no matter how crazy or scary he dressed up, being anything other than his son.
- » The boy pulled the mask off and said, “It’s me!” God is waiting for you to say the same thing. Probably the safest place to remove your mask is on your knees before Jesus.

Friday
APPLYING

- » Read 1 Timothy 1:5.
- » Make a list of three things you want to pray about this week to practice being authentic.

