



Sabbath
FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** “Blessed are those who keep justice, and he who does righteousness at all times!” (Psalm 106:3, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 12, The Church:** “The church is God’s family; adopted by Him as children, its members live on the basis of the new covenant.”
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 84, 85.

COMING HOME

Turning off his Honda 750, Chad paused a moment. Conflicting thoughts raced through his head as he stood in the church parking lot. He hadn’t been to church for a while, and he was already 15 minutes late. What would people think when he walked in dressed in a T-shirt and faded blue jeans? Would they disapprove of his long hair?

Yet something drove him on, compelling him to keep going. Deep inside, his heart ached, and something was missing. Somehow he felt this was his day to “come home.” A voice within seemed to urge, “Chad, just do it.”

Entering the sanctuary as quietly as possible, he hoped to slip into the last row unnoticed, but it was packed. As he moved down the aisle, it seemed as if every row were jammed. The congregation quietly sang, “Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling, calling for you and for me.” Heads turned. Chad felt that everyone was staring at him.

Nervously he made a quick decision. *I guess I’ll just sit in the aisle*, he thought to himself. He sat there a moment feeling as if dozens of eyes were boring into his back. Then he heard footsteps behind him. The church’s head elder approached. *Oh, no! He’ll probably throw me out*, Chad thought. But to his utter amazement, the older gentleman sat on the floor beside him, gently touched him on the shoulder, and simply said, “Glad you’re here, boy.” Placing a hymnal in Chad’s hands, the elder added, “It’s number 287.”

Kind words, a caring gesture, a moving sermon, an invitation to dinner, and Chad knew he had come home.

God wants our church to be a place of love, acceptance, and forgiveness. Bruised, battered, broken, beaten-up people will come through the doors of our church this week. As children of God we want to open our arms and hearts to receive them.

Sunday
RESPONDING

- » Read Psalm 146:3-8 and Jeremiah 17:5-8.
- » You love going to church and being with others who love Jesus just as you do. One of your friends seems sad and angry. You ask her if everything is OK. She tells you that she doesn’t understand how the Bible says to love one another, and yet she sometimes sees the opposite happening.
- » How would you respond? What solution does the Bible offer? See Bible reading for today.

Monday
BIBLE ANSWERS ON THE CHURCH

- » Read Acts 2:38-42; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Peter 2:9.
- » We are God’s children and are part of the church family. The church and His children have a mission—to share God’s grace, mercy, and love. We are God’s hands and feet here on earth—we are to show love to everyone—both in the church family and in the world.
- » How can you be an example and share God’s love with your church family?

» Put this verse back in its proper order.

in whom the whole building,
but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,
in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit”
grows into a holy temple in the Lord,
having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
“Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners,
being fitted together,
(Ephesians 2:19-22, NKJV).
Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,



Tuesday
REFLECTING

- » Read Acts 4:32-35.
- » Why is it so difficult to genuinely love one another in the church? Why is it so difficult to be real with one another? With your friends—you choose them. In the church, we don’t get to choose who we are supposed to love. We come from all walks of life with so many different problems and issues, and we are expected to become like a body, a single unit? How is that possible? 1 Thessalonians 3:12, 13 says, “And may the Lord make your love for one another and for all people grow and overflow, just as our love for you overflows. May he, as a result, make your hearts strong, blameless, and holy as you stand before God our Father when our Lord Jesus comes again with all his holy people. Amen” (NLT).
- » God is the source of that kind of love. It doesn’t happen overnight, but it does happen. People from different ethnic groups and political positions come together to work on behalf of God. Even in the unchurched world there is a movement to build community and understand one another. It’s part of being human. It’s part of what it means to be made in the image of God.
- » Another reason to take off your mask and be real with others is that it would be lonely to go through life alone—never allowing others to know the real you. You know how lonely can feel. All of us need for the real us to be seen, recognized, and known.

Thursday
CONNECTING

- » Read Acts 2:42-47.
- » Review the memory text.
- » Everything about you is known by God: the number of hairs on your head, what you would say today, how you will feel tomorrow, what makes you most angry, and what fills you with joy. Always be encouraged by your desire to be “made without wax” because God begins with your desire and your choice and coaches you through. Remember this promise, “Every test that you have experienced is the kind that normally comes to people. But God keeps his promise, and he will not allow you to be tested beyond your power to remain firm; at the time you are put to the test, he will give you the strength to endure it, and so provide you with a way out” (1 Corinthians 10:13, GNT).

Friday
APPLYING

- » Read 1 Peter 1:22.
- » Think about the people you have a difficult time being around. Who are the people around whom you feel you must wear a mask or pretend? First, pray for

Wednesday
BIBLE INSIGHTS

- » Match the following texts from the New International Version of the Bible (available at www.BibleGateway.com) with the phrases that correspond to them. The verses will give you the biblical view on “being real.”
- A. Philippians 1:15-18
B. 1 Peter 1:22
C. Galatians 2:11-14
D. Luke 22:31-34
E. Acts 2:42-47
F. Acts 4:32-35
- _____ “. . . For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.”
- _____ “. . . The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.”
- _____ “. . . Jesus answered, ‘I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me.’”
- _____ “Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart.”
- _____ “. . . How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?”
- _____ “. . . And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

them throughout the week and see if your attitude shifts a little when you think of them. Second, write down a few ways to be “real” in their presence. Be sure to write a few thoughts as you pray and practice being authentic (real).

