



Sabbath FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord'" (Psalm 122:1, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 21, Stewardship:** "We are God's stewards, entrusted by Him with time and opportunities, abilities and possessions, and the blessings of the earth and its resources. We are responsible to Him for their proper use."
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 106, 107

WHAT'S HE WORTH TO YOU?

Every once in a while adults feel the need to really clean the house. Much thought is put into what should be kept and what should be thrown out. And then there is almost always a yard sale for the unwanted items that are just too good to throw away.

Recently that whole scenario was played out at my house. My wife made quick work of a few closets upstairs and pointed to several boxes that needed to be taken out to be sold at the yard sale.

"Just put them in the garage, and I'll get them ready to sell," she said rather nonchalantly.

While she is a precious and wonderful bride, she is a terrible actress, and her casual way of instructing me to take the boxes out caused me to become suspicious.

"What's in the boxes that she does not want me to discover?" I mused to myself.

She noticed my suspicion and quickly said, "If you don't have anything else to do, I could think of a few . . ."

Sensing the ultimatum, I wisely chose to carry the boxes downstairs to the garage.

When I was alone with the boxes, I opened one of them and rummaged through the contents. Overall, I was pleased to see the items in the box on their way out. On the bottom, however, was my green sweatshirt I have had since college. Fifteen years that sweatshirt accompanied me through football seasons and work bees, mission trips, and vacations. Clearly, it had seen better days, but that was exactly the point. It had been with me as a faithful friend through the best and worst of times.

"Why would she hide this at the bottom of the box?" I wondered. It was a conspiracy. What was extremely valuable to me was seen as trash to be discarded by my wife. I was keeping this and was willing to fight for it. I took the price tag off the sweatshirt and stomped back into the house ready for war.

Sad to say, I lost the battle for the sweatshirt. It seems that my love for my wife is greater than my love for a dingy, old, worn-out sweatshirt. My reaction shows, though, that what we value is extremely personal. The stories, experiences, and memories of our lives are all tied up in simple symbols, and some of those symbols are as old as an old sweatshirt. Kneeling in prayer may seem old-fashioned and out of place to some today, but why? Returning tithes and giving to the work of the church might seem like less of a priority to many today than it did 100 years ago. Why? Listening to a preacher teach from God's Word may seem almost irrelevant to people in our fast-paced world. Why would that be? What happens to us that makes it hard to worship our God?—Pastor Troy.



Sunday RESPONDING

- » Read Isaiah 29:13.
- » Kurt had been coming to worship in the same church for years. It seemed ordinary to him, and he had a hard time staying focused on what was happening. Then some changes occurred. The service exploded with new life, new church initiatives, new people. But after a year he found himself slipping out of church again. He found himself becoming disengaged and uninterested. How could you encourage Kurt? What could be at the root of his disengagement? What difference does it make if a person is actively involved in worship rather than being a passive observer?

Monday BIBLE ANSWERS ON STEWARDSHIP

- » Read Haggai 1:3-11; Malachi 3:8-10; Matthew 23:23.
- » Everything we have is from God, so everything we own belongs to Him. When we view our belongings as God's, we will use them the way He wants us to. It will help keep us from becoming selfish and holding on to the things He has blessed us with so we could help others.
- » How do you view the blessings God has given you? _____

- » Are they yours to do with them what you want? _____
- » How can you use them to help others? _____

- » Find the verse by underlining the following message: **we should use our blessings to bless and help others.** By omitting the underlined message, write the remaining verse on the lines below. The text is from NKJV.

wesouldletuseeachouroneblessingsgivetoasblesheandpurposes
helpinothershisweheartshouldnotusegrudginglyyourorblessingsofto
necessityblesforandGodhelplovesothersawecheerfulshouldgiver
use2ourCorinthiansblessings9:to7blessandhelpothers.

Tuesday
REFLECTING

- » Read John 2:13-17.
- » Most of the time when Jesus addresses the issue of worship, the subject of money comes up. Not music. Not style. Not how long the service lasts. Money. What a peculiar thing. The Scripture is clear about tithes and offerings. The tithe (one tenth of your income) is to be returned to the storehouse (the church) for the work of God’s kingdom around the world. Our offerings (additional gifts beyond the tithe) are given to support the local church and its mission in the community.
- » While Scripture is clear about what to do and how much to give, Jesus made it personal. The Savior made it a matter of the heart. Jesus maintained that you can tell a lot about a person’s heart by the nature of their gift. Giving joyfully with a heart of praise is worship. Even giving in such a way that you live differently says something about which kingdom you are going to stick your neck out for. Remember the widow who gave abundantly out of her poverty? Jesus didn’t make a scene over the number of coins she dropped in the plate. He numbered the size of her heart and counted her generosity and rebuked the elite for showing off the pounds of cash they popped in the offering plate.
- » The heart of the giver is what God sees. A girl is saving all her extra money to go on a short-term mission trip for a few weeks. A dad drives an old car so other things are possible for his church. A family decides to forgo their holiday to keep a young boy in church school. A college student sells his guitar to buy Bibles for a church across the globe. Whether it be the songs we sing or the prayers we pray, you can tell what God is worth to people by the way they give in worship.

Thursday
CONNECTING

- » Read Hebrews 10:23-25.
- » Review the memory text.
- » Sometimes picturing the face of the Father is an important thing to do in worship. It might help to focus your attention to visualize Him there with you. He loves you with a love so great, it is hard to understand (see **John 3:16, 17**). The rich young ruler came to Jesus looking for a shortcut to the kingdom. The Bible says, “Jesus looked at him and loved him” (**Mark 10:21, NIV**). Even though Jesus wanted him to follow Him, the ruler walked away from Jesus. Everyone is loved the same way. It has to be painful for the Father when His children resist His attention, ignore His presence, and walk away. Even so, He loves them the same.
- » Worship is a moment to stop and spend time talking with God and listening to Him. It is a time that everyone can sing and praise God, letting Him know how much He is worth to them. Sometimes just being there quietly is enough to know He is there. Like every other exercise, it requires little steps taken regularly. Try it. If you forget or get distracted or even get bored, don’t get down on yourself. Find a way to tell God that you love Him and want to know Him more. The promise is that you will find Him when you seek Him with all your heart (see **Jeremiah 29:11-13**).

Wednesday
BIBLE INSIGHTS

- » Match the phrase with the text.
 - A. “Let us hold unswervingly . . .”
 - B. “Let the peace of Christ . . .”
 - C. “So he made a whip out of cords.”
 - D. “Their worship of me is based on merely human rules they have been taught.”
 - E. “They broke bread in their homes and ate together.”
 - F. “There were no needy persons among them.”
 - G. “Suddenly there was a great earthquake.”
 - H. “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father . . .”
 - I. “The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them.”
- ___ Isaiah 29:13 (NIV)
- ___ John 2:13-17 (NIV)
- ___ Acts 2:42-47 (NIV)
- ___ Acts 4:31-37 (NIV)
- ___ Acts 16:22-26 (KJV)
- ___ Matthew 21:12-14 (NIV)
- ___ Ephesians 5:15-20 (KJV)
- ___ Hebrews 10:23-25 (NIV)
- ___ Colossians 3:15-17 (NIV)

Friday
APPLYING

- » Read Colossians 3:15-17.
- » The parts of the worship service that are most meaningful to me are:

	Least					Most				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Music and Singing	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Fellowship and Community	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Praying	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Preaching/Teaching	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Giving	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Serving and Helping	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Applying and Living	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
- » As you look at the results of this inventory, think of some ways you can make your worship experiences more meaningful. Ask God for wisdom.

