

November 5, 2022



## COVERT OPERATIONS

The artist named Herkomer was born in the Black Forest in Europe. While Herkomer was a gifted artist, his father was only a simple woodchopper. As Herkomer's fame spread he moved to London and continued to work. And he soon sent for his father to join him. His father was so proud of the gifted artist his son had become. Jokingly he would often attribute his son's success to a genetic trait.

The old man would try to make artifacts out of clay, and while they were often quite good, they were not the quality of his son's work. Still, the father and son worked together and made a good living as artisans in the London area. As time went on, the old man's abilities decreased, and the quality of his work diminished. Sometimes it was clear on his face how disappointed he was in himself and in the quality of his work.

Herkomer felt sad about his aged father's condition and would often notice the flaws in his handiwork and want to do something to help him. So when his father would go upstairs to bed, Herkomer would stay up late and begin his covert operations. He would shape and fashion the artifacts that had defects until they were perfect. He would then smile as he retired, knowing that the next day his father would hear the people remark about the quality of his work. And when people did comment, the unsuspecting old man would beam with a sense of value. Herkomer knew that his father's dignity and pride were all that he had in his old age, and he wouldn't allow those to be taken away.



## Sabbath

### FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** "Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly" (Matthew 6:2-4, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 12, The Church:** "The church derives its authority from Christ, who is the incarnate Word revealed in the Scriptures. The church is God's family; adopted by Him as children, its members live on the basis of the new covenant. The church is the body of Christ, a community of faith of which Christ Himself is the Head."
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 80-83

## Sunday

### RESPONDING

- » Read Acts 2:44, 45.
- » Brenda secretly made a plate of cookies for a man who lived on her street. He seemed old and lonely; she thought that knowing someone cared might cheer him up. She left the plate on his doorstep with a note of encouragement and left quietly. The next day she received a small loaf of freshly baked bread on her porch with a note. She thought, *He must have seen me leave the cookies, and now he knows it was me.* Then she read the bottom of the note, which said, "PS: I saw how kind you were to that man and just wanted you to know that it made an impact on me. But I'm not telling you who I am either." The secrecy continued around the neighborhood.
- » Which is more important, the secrecy or the act of kindness? Which part of the experience has an impact on the giver? Which has an impact on the receiver? What is the kindest thing someone has done for you as a secret? How did it make you feel not knowing who it was?

## Monday

### BIBLE ANSWERS ON THE CHURCH

- » Read Acts 2:44-47; 5:23-26; Colossians 1:17, 18; 1 Peter 2:9.
- » One of the distinguishing marks of the church is Christian service to the needs of the community. We are to minister in loving service to those around us, taking care of their physical and spiritual needs.
- » "Sincerity of purpose, real kindness of heart, is the motive that Heaven values. The soul that is sincere in its love, wholehearted in its devotion, God regards as more precious than the golden wedge of Ophir. We are not to think of reward, but of service; yet kindness shown in this spirit will not fail of its recompense" (Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 81).
- » Read Psalm 139:1-3 in different versions of the Bible (go to Biblegateway.com) and write down your favorite.

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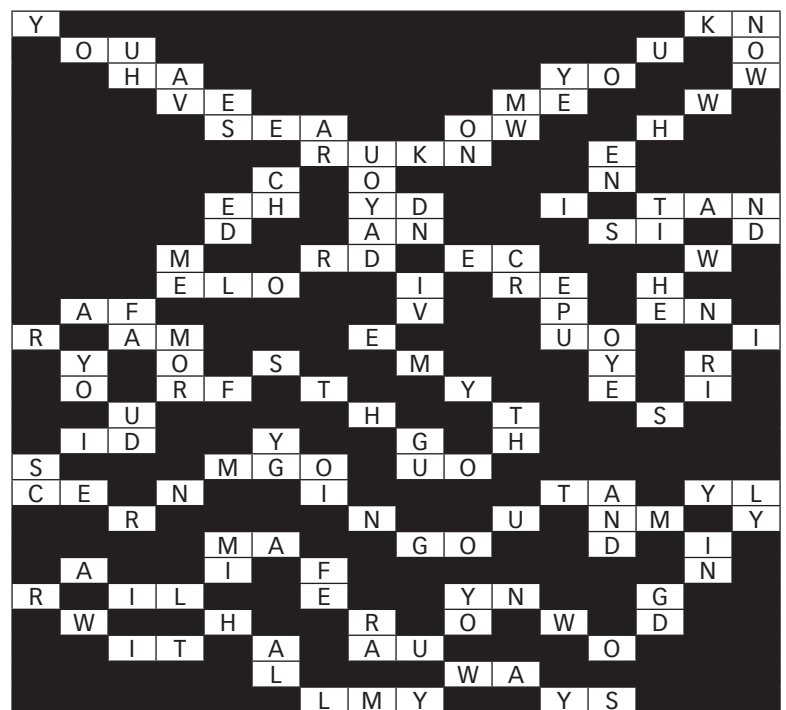


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Find the Bible text in the maze below. You may go up, down, forward, backward, and diagonal. The last letter of the word touches the first letter of the next word. It is one of the three texts listed here: James 2:14-17; Matthew 6:2-4; Psalm 139:1-3.





Tuesday

**REFLECTING**

- » Read Matthew 10:8.
- » "Christ has linked His interest with that of humanity, and He asks us to become one with Him for the saving of humanity" (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 504).
- » Treating others with kindness, with no strings attached, is what God wants us to do for others.
- » Give secret kindness a chance to shape the way you live each day.
- » Those who want to run a marathon have to train. Training in the spiritual life is not much different. God does not claim that this disciplined way of life is easy. But He promises that it is full. He guarantees that your life will be exciting. But it does take exercise. So take the tiny steps today to follow through on an act of kindness, and see for yourself how rewarding it is to live for Jesus as you serve others. You will be back for more.

Thursday

**CONNECTING**

- » Review the memory text.
- » "Acts of kindness performed in secret will bind hearts together, and will draw them closer to the heart of Him from whom every generous impulse springs" (Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 82).
- » God has many gifts to give you—love of family members, success, even a few moments of sadness to remind you of a better world coming. When we give gifts of unselfish service to others, we get a "sneak peek" into how God must feel when He gives to us. Selflessness is God's outstanding characteristic, and it draws others to Christ. But how can anyone get a glimpse of God's selflessness other than through us, His children? Think about it.
- » No, actually, most people have already thought about it. Go beyond thinking about it. Try it.
- » Think about your answers to these questions:
  1. Name some of the gifts God has given you.
  2. What are some ways you could show kindness to others? (What's your plan?)
  3. When you're trying to show kindness to someone, what is most important to remember: to keep it a secret, or just do good for someone? Explain.
  4. Why is it suggested that we "do good" in secret?

Wednesday

**BIBLE INSIGHTS**

**Fill in the blanks.**

Look up the following texts and fill in the blanks. When you have finished this activity, choose a text to share with your class and explain what it means to you. Texts are from the New International Version.

1. "I the Lord \_\_\_\_\_ the heart and \_\_\_\_\_ the mind, to reward each person according to their conduct, according to what their \_\_\_\_\_ deserve" (Jeremiah 17:10).
2. "A \_\_\_\_\_ given in \_\_\_\_\_ soothes anger, and a bribe concealed in the cloak \_\_\_\_\_ great wrath" (Proverbs 21:14).
3. "\_\_\_\_\_ you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the \_\_\_\_\_, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ \_\_\_\_\_ are \_\_\_\_\_" (Colossians 3:23, 24).
4. "All the believers were \_\_\_\_\_ and had \_\_\_\_\_ in common. They sold \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ to anyone who had \_\_\_\_\_" (Acts 2:44, 45).
5. "What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have \_\_\_\_\_ but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is \_\_\_\_\_ clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; \_\_\_\_\_ warm and \_\_\_\_\_ fed,' but does \_\_\_\_\_ about their \_\_\_\_\_ needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by \_\_\_\_\_, is dead" (James 2:14-17).

Friday

**APPLYING**

- » Read Romans 12:9-13.
- » It is essential to plan acts of kindness thoughtfully. Start with one or two that are manageable. It is also extremely important to be open to spontaneous opportunities that spring up around you.
- » The checkpoints for planned kindness are the same ones to use for more spontaneous acts of kindness.
- » Below is a series of questions to help you. Reflect and write out your experiences this week.
- » The criteria:
  - Who is someone who has a need?
  - What can you do to respond to that need with no strings attached?
  - How can you avoid being recognized as the source of help?

**Planned**

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**Spontaneous**

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