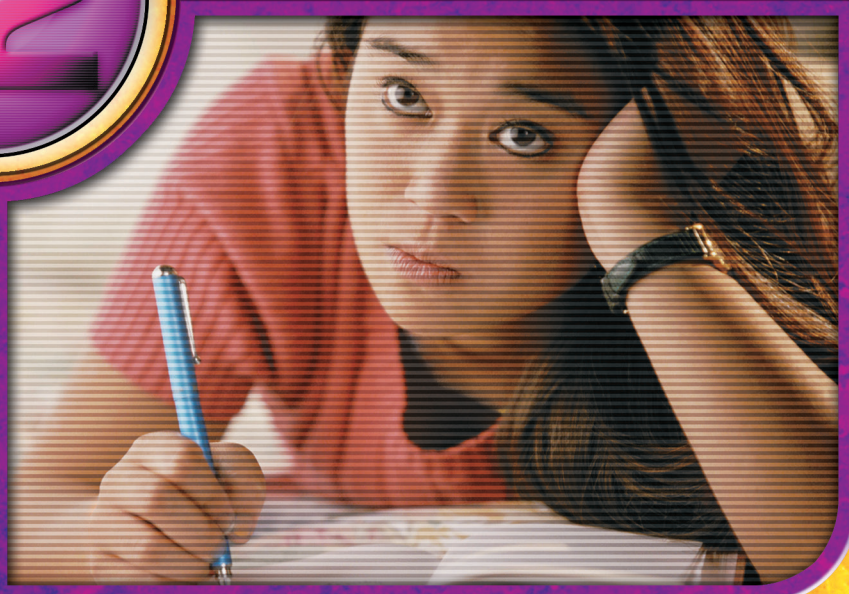


March 25, 2023



Sabbath
FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 12, The Church:** “The church is the community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. . . . 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. 38-40.

A FOUNTAIN OR A GARDEN?

A young man was strolling through a park and noticed a garden surrounded by a brick-and-tile border about two and a half feet high. Inside were various plants, shrubs, and flowers growing. The center of the garden had a small fountain where water trickled out of the top of an opening the size of a modest birdbath. To the young man, it looked weird—a big circle with a birdbath fountain in the middle.

A gardener came by, and the young man struck up a conversation with him. “Can you tell me about this garden? How long has it been here?” the curious young man asked.

The gardener laughed and shook his head. “This garden has been around as long as I have been working here—13 years this fall. It’s a funny thing, this garden. It wasn’t meant to be a garden at all.”

“It wasn’t?”

“No. I was sweeping the base of the bricks last year and saw a lever hidden at the bottom. I didn’t know what it was for, so I turned it and heard what sounded like running water, but I didn’t see any water. I left it on, and when I returned an hour later the center of this circle was spilling out water. I dug around, and the water spewed upward like a geyser.”

“What had happened?” the young man asked.

“Well, I called my supervisor to find out what to do. He laughed over the phone and told me that the whole circle used to be a fountain long ago, but it wasn’t kept up, and it filled with weeds and grass. Finally, the dust and dirt built up in there so badly that people completely forgot it was a fountain,” he reported.

“This would be a beautiful place for a big fountain! Why is the little birdbath trickling instead?” the young man asked thoughtfully.

“I asked the same question. I even volunteered to take out all this stuff and make it into a fountain again, but the supervisor and the people seem to like it the way it is,” he concluded.

King David recognized that God is the fountain of life: “For with You is the fountain of life; in Your light we see light” (Psalm 36:9). Jesus said to the Samaritan woman at the well: “Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:13, 14). How can we participate in the life of the church so that others will come to know our church as a fountain that offers abundant living water to the entire community? When we allow God to work through us, the water of life can spill over with His love and the hope of His Salvation to all who thirst. With whom can you share Jesus’ offer today: “I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts” (Revelation 21:6)?

Sunday
RESPONDING

- » Read Hebrews 10:24, 25.
- » In one particular church the pastor wanted to encourage a renewed commitment to church membership. So he sent out a well-written letter that was positive and full of grace, but contained the following challenge: In the next month we will be having a series of celebrations during worship, in which everyone who wants to be a member of this church can say so by either writing in a community journal their commitment to the beliefs and the mission of this church, or making a public testimony during the service.
- » Those who didn’t feel as if they could do this were welcome to worship and be part of the church as it met for worship and service, but to be a member one needed to make a regular declaration of their faith and be willing to practice it. How would you respond to such a letter?

Monday
BIBLE ANSWERS ON THE CHURCH

- » Read Exodus 19:3-7; Ephesians 2:19-22; Colossians 1:17, 18.
- » God is the head of the church, and we as members of the church are to reflect His love to a lost and dying world. Just as the body is made up of many parts, so God’s church is made up of many members.
- » List ways that you can, as a member of Christ’s church, spread God’s message of love and His soon coming.

- » Unscramble this Bible verse using the New King James Version.

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Tuesday
REFLECTING

- » Read Acts 1:8.
- » “The church is God’s appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God’s plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency” (Ellen G. White, *God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 338).
- » Some of the most meaningful acts of grace occur because believers band together and spend themselves in selfless service to others. The church is God’s chosen instrument to show the world His character of love. From large communities to small, God intended that His people would come together to share His love with everyone with whom they come in contact. God sent the Holy Spirit to lovingly lead His people to change the world, one person at a time. Today, do you sense your part in this endeavor?

Thursday
CONNECTING

- » Read Genesis 28:10-17.
- » Review the memory text.
- » “The Lord has appointed the youth to be His helping hand” (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 64).
- » Paul’s advice to Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:12-14 reminds us that young people are not just spectators in church: they have an important role to play. In fact, they can set an example for older church members! Think about what kind of example you and your friends can set for adults in the church.
- » How can you begin making your church the kind of place you’d like it to be? Write your answer on the lines below.

Wednesday
BIBLE INSIGHTS

- » Fill in the blanks with 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 from the New King James Version of the Bible.

“For as the body is _____ and has many _____, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all _____ into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many. If the _____ should say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,’ is it therefore not of the body? And if the _____ should say, ‘Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,’ is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where would be the _____? If the whole were hearing, where would be the _____? But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. And if they were all one member, where would the body be? But now indeed _____ many members, yet one _____. And the _____ cannot say to the _____, ‘I have no need of you’; nor again the _____ to the _____, ‘I have no need of you.’ No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be _____ are _____. And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unrepresentable parts have greater modesty, but our presentable parts have no need. But _____ the _____ having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the _____ the _____ for _____. And if one member _____, _____ the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. And God has appointed these in the church: first _____, second _____, third _____, after that _____, then gifts of _____, _____, _____, varieties of _____. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more _____ way” (1 Corinthians 12:12-31).

Friday
APPLYING

- » Read Acts 2:42-47.
- » Below are the four core values seen in the church of Acts. What would these values look like if you were to try to live by them this week? How would your church change if everyone were committed to these values? Think of specific ways you and your church can put these values into practice this week. Then share your ideas with an adult leader in the church. Offer your services to help put these values into action.

1. Action: How does your church live out what they believe? How is your church a church of action?

2. Community: How is your church connected like a family? In what ways are your church members united and working together for Jesus?

3. Transformation: In what ways are the people in your church learning to be more like Christ? How are the members in your church changed because they know Jesus?

4. Service: How does your church provide help to the needy? In what ways does your church proclaim the gospel of Christ to lost people?

