

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Fourth Quarter 2023: *God's Mission—My Mission*
Lesson 7 “Mission to My Neighbor”

Read for this week's study

Luke 10:25–37; 2 Timothy 3:16; James 2:17–22; Matthew 22:37–40; Galatians 5:14; Micah 6:6–8.

Memory Text

“He answered, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ” (Luke 10:27, NIV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Question of Questions
- III. Jesus' Method and Response
- IV. To Inherit Eternal Life
- V. Loving Others as We Love Ourselves
- VI. The Good Samaritan Story Today
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Is it possible to have a deeper relationship with God than you have with other human beings? (Sabbath Afternoon's Lesson)
2. Read Luke 10:25. What relationship is there between the lawyer's desire to “test” Jesus and the question he chose to ask? Read 1 Corinthians 15:30-32. What point was Paul making about eternal life? What does that have to do with the lawyer's question in Luke 10? (Sunday's Lesson)
3. Read Luke 10:26. If Jesus is the living Word of God, why does He so often point His questioners to the Bible? What view of the Bible does Jesus imply here? How should we respond to questions about our faith that come from a potentially hostile source? How do you approach a spiritual conversation with people who don't take the Bible seriously? (Monday's Lesson)

4. Read Luke 10:27-29. How does the lawyer answer his own question? Why does the lawyer respond to Jesus' affirmation with another question? Read James 2:17-22. How does this passage parallel what Jesus said to the lawyer? Is there some way that we can learn how to care more for others? (Tuesday's Lesson)
5. Read Matthew 22:37-40. How does Jesus' own expression of the principle of love compare with that of the lawyer in Luke 10? What key to the interpretation of the Bible does Jesus offer in Matthew? How does Paul in Galatians 5:14 express these principles? What is the Old Testament equivalent of the principles Jesus and Paul articulate (Micah 6:6-8)? (Wednesday's Lesson)
6. Read the whole context of the Good Samaritan story (Luke 10:25-37). If the lawyer was testing Jesus, why did he ask this particular question? What could have been the hostile intent? What is the back story of the hostility between the Jews and the Samaritans? (Thursday's Lesson)
7. Begin praying daily for someone who is different from you or even someone you don't personally like. (Thursday's Lesson)
8. List at least three names of acquaintances not of your faith. Identify their emotional, physical, and social needs. Consider how you can personally minister to those needs. (Thursday's Lesson)
9. How can we learn to distinguish between acts of service done to earn salvation and acts of service that reveal a salvation that we already have in Jesus? (Friday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

There are more of course, but these three focuses or purposes of the Sabbath answer the three great questions that have stood in the minds of thinking people—the three great quests of philosophy. Where have we come from? Why are we here? And where do we go after we die?

But mankind has paid a heavy price for neglecting the Sabbath or substituting another day. For without the Sabbath to provide the answers to the three great questions of life, other solutions have been substituted. Where have we come from? Without the seventh-day Sabbath to remind us that in the beginning Christ created us, room has been left for the substitution of the theory of the evolutionary origin of the human race. Or as others say more scientifically, we don't know where we've come from.

Why are we here? How do we attain to the greatest good in life? Without the seventh-day Sabbath to remind us that righteousness and salvation come by faith in Jesus Christ, room has been left for the substitution of the fundamental error of righteousness by works. Or as others have said more carelessly, we don't know why we're here. So let's eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die!

And where do we go after we die? Without the seventh-day Sabbath to point forward to the second coming, to the rewards of faith and the results of sin, room has been left for the substitution of the belief in the natural immortality of the soul. Or as others prefer to say, we don't know where we go after we die. So again, let's eat, drink and be merry.

Incidentally, those three substitute answers; aren't they almost universally held? And not just in Christianity. Belief in the natural immortality of the soul is shared by almost everybody. The idea that salvation comes by works; Ellen White states that is the fundamental error of every false religious system, salvation by works. There are all kinds of substitute explanations as to where we came from that put God in a bad light, or that make of no effect the plan of salvation. But all three of these substitutions wipe out all the significance of the plan of salvation. This is why the seventh-day Sabbath is so vital a part of God's last message to the world. The main difference between the many religions in the world and true Christianity lies in the answers to these three great quests. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Faith, Righteousness and Salvation, #13, "Faith and the seventh-day Sabbath", recorded April 3, 1975, Lynwood, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/13MMFRS> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/14MMFRS> (Part 2)

Is faith a gift of God? Is that why some have faith and some don't? He's given it to some and not to others? If God gives faith, why do some have it and some don't? And does he give more to some than to others? Does he practice favoritism here? Can faith actually be given? You say to God, "I don't trust you. I think you're an absolutely untrustworthy liar as the devil has said, but I wish I trusted you and thought you told the truth. I'm praying that when I wake up in the morning I will trust you and not think you're a liar anymore."

You hop into bed, wake up in the morning, you love, trust, and admire God, you now know he tells the truth. Would you trust that? Can God give us faith as an outright gift? And yet, if God had not given us the capacity to reason and to weigh evidence and to discern between the true and the false, if God had not given us the capacity to make decisions and commitments, if God had not given us the revelation of the truth about himself at such cost, if God did not preserve us from the enemy who would destroy us and confuse us and take away our chance to weigh the evidence, in fact, if God has not done all that he has done would there be any chance that we could see him as he is and trust him? In fact, who even instructs us and works with us and persuades us, and tries to lead us to truth and conviction? Aren't all these things the work of God and the work of the Holy Spirit? Is there anything, though, that God doesn't do in the matter of faith? Does he also cast our vote? Does God not only bring the evidence but also force our vote? If God has forced our vote, then he's won the Great Controversy by stuffing the

ballot box, hasn't he? He really hasn't won our vote. As Ellen White says repeatedly, our vote is offered in the highest sense of freedom. The vote is ours.

So God gives us every opportunity to have faith, but the decision to trust it is left with us. And many religions don't like that. They don't want anything left with us. But if it isn't left with us, how are we held accountable in the judgment? Are we not judged as to whether or not we've chosen to place our faith in the true God?

Isn't that the only thing we're held responsible for? The decision is ours, or else our trust in God would mean nothing to him, would it? If he had manipulated us so that we trusted him, I mean, if our wives said they loved us because we had manipulated them, we'd be talking back to ourselves. Does God just want to hear himself talking back, "I love you God"? Or does he want to hear us say in the highest sense of freedom, "We do love and trust you, that's our choice." Hasn't he paid a heavy price to preserve our freedom to cast our own vote in the Great Controversy? And to love him because we've decided he's lovable and trustworthy. And I think it's so cruel of many religions to suggest that even faith is not our decision. God does all of that. Yes, he brings everything to us. Without him there would be no chance to exercise faith. But the decision, the vote is ours, and for that we're held responsible.

In fact, Ellen White says if the Holy Spirit should be poured out on you with a hundred-fold greater intensity, it would not make of you a Christian. (MB 142) The Spirit only leads to truth, leads us to conviction, but at the same time preserves our freedom to vote no. So when it says faith is a gift of God, I think we have to reserve that one act that is assigned to us—the decision whether we're going to respond to the evidence with trust or with rebellion and distrust. Why all the costly revelation these thousands of years and all the records of scripture that we might have the evidence, if God is the one who places faith in our hearts anyway whether we have evidence or not? If God just says, "Now you don't trust me, now you do" why do you need any evidence? The fact that God has been such a teacher and has brought us so much evidence is clear support that he'll bring us every opportunity; he'll preserve our lives to give us those moments of freedom when we cast our vote. But casting that vote is our privilege, our responsibility; he's created us capable of voting, and holds us responsible for the vote that we cast. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 12, recorded January 1978, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/23MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/24MMROMANS66> (Part 2)

There are no shortcuts to trust, or the Bible would be a much briefer book. Claims prove nothing. The Bible warns about accepting mere claims, and we'll spend some time on that. Even when a person has been falsely accused of being untrustworthy, ***only by the demonstration of***

trustworthiness, over a long period of time, and under a great variety of circumstances, especially difficult ones, can trust be re-established and confirmed.

The Bible records just such a demonstration, all the way from the entrance of sin into the universe, up until the death of Christ on the cross. My understanding is that Christ died to re-establish peace in God's family. The apostle Paul so explained the meaning of the purpose of the cross, and why Jesus had to die, and we'll spend a whole evening on this a little later in our series. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #1, "The Conflict in God's Family" recorded January 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/1MMCAG>*

Lou: You talked about faith as a gift. I remember that man who said to Jesus—he was worried about his boy, and he said, "Lord, I believe. Help thou my unbelief." What does God do in a situation like that, to help unbelief?

Graham: I have thought about his cry because this is what he spontaneously said. He obviously did believe, or the wonderful thing wouldn't have been happening that was. He did believe; he just wished he had more faith. Now, whether the man understood how God would increase his faith, it doesn't say. We have to look through the rest of Scripture to see that. And my understanding would be that God can indeed strengthen faith by offering evidence, by helping us to think about it, by protecting us from the adversary who would becloud our minds and deprive us of our freedom to weigh the evidence. The Holy Spirit even moves. I don't mind the Holy Spirit impressing me. It's just when I feel an impression, I want to make sure it's the Holy Spirit, and not what I had for supper. I think a lot of folks think they have been impressed by something, and it's something else. So God in many and various ways would work. Now maybe the man wanted a miracle at the moment. There is no mention that it happened. He already trusted God enough for this to happen. Jesus said, "You already have faith."

Lou: But I hear you saying that God doesn't give us an injection of faith.

Graham: That's the big thing.

Lou: He doesn't pop a pill into our mouth. That it's a process that involves our thinking and our understanding.

Graham: We want shortcuts. I think that's the appeal at the tree, when Eve was told, "Eat this fruit and you will be like God." And she said, "I thought sanctification was the work of a lifetime. And you can do it with one bite?" Well, the sawdust trail approach. Go down to the front, and you will be saved. We are always wanting shortcuts, busy people that we are. Instant salvation is rather attractive. Instant faith. It doesn't come that way. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #4 with Lou Venden, "God's Way of Restoring Trust"

recorded February 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/4MMCAG>*

Further Study with Ellen White

It is God's pleasure and will that the blessings bestowed on man shall be given in perfect completeness. He has made provision that every difficulty may be overcome, every want supplied through the Holy Spirit. {7BC 932.5}

In the story of the good Samaritan, Jesus gave a picture of Himself and His mission. Man had been deceived, bruised, robbed, and ruined by Satan, and left to perish; but the Saviour had compassion on our helpless condition. He left His glory, to come to our rescue. He found us ready to die, and He undertook our case. He healed our wounds. He covered us with His robe of righteousness. He opened to us a refuge of safety, and made complete provision for us at His own charges. He died to redeem us. Pointing to His own example, He says to His followers, "These things I command you, that ye love one another." "As I have loved you, that ye also love one another." John 15:17; 13:34. {DA 503.6}

Love is the basis of godliness. Whatever the profession, no man has pure love to God unless he has unselfish love for his brother. But we can never come into possession of this spirit by *trying* to love others. What is needed is the love of Christ in the heart. When self is merged in Christ, love springs forth spontaneously. The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within—when the sunshine of heaven fills the heart and is revealed in the countenance. {COL 384.2}

As you engage in this work, you have companions unseen by human eyes. Angels of heaven were beside the Samaritan who cared for the wounded stranger. Angels from the heavenly courts stand by all who do God's service in ministering to their fellow men. And you have the co-operation of Christ Himself. He is the Restorer, and as you work under His supervision, you will see great results. {COL 388.2}

Sanctification is the work, not of a day or of a year, but of a lifetime. . . . {HP 26.3}

Fallen humans, by laying hold of the divine power brought within their reach, can become one with God. Everlasting life is the blessing that Christ came to give to the world. {CTr 32.3}

The Bible is not given to us in grand superhuman language. Jesus, in order to reach man where he is, took humanity. The Bible must be given in the language of men. Everything that is human is imperfect. Different meanings are expressed by the same word; there is not one word for each distinct idea. The Bible was given for practical purposes. {7BC 945.7}

The Lord speaks to human beings in imperfect speech, in order that the degenerate senses, the dull, earthly perception, of earthly beings may comprehend His words. Thus is shown God's condescension. He meets fallen human beings where they are. {7BC 946.1}

The Bible is its own expositor. Scripture is to be compared with scripture. The student should learn to view the word as a whole and to see the relation of its parts. He should gain a knowledge of its grand central theme—of God's original purpose for the world, of the rise of the great controversy, and of the work of redemption. He should understand the nature of the two principles that are contending for the supremacy, and should learn to trace their working through the records of history and prophecy to the great consummation. He should see how this controversy enters into every phase of human experience; how in every act of life he himself reveals the one or the other of the two antagonistic motives; and how, whether he will or not, he is even now deciding upon which side of the controversy he will be found. {CT 462.1}

The Bible points to God as its author; yet it was written by human hands; and in the varied style of its different books it presents the characteristics of the several writers. The truths revealed are all "given by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16); yet they are expressed in the words of men. The Infinite One by His Holy Spirit has shed light into the minds and hearts of His servants. He has given dreams and visions, symbols and figures; and those to whom the truth was thus revealed have themselves embodied the thought in human language. {LHU 117.4}

The Bible contains a simple and complete system of theology and philosophy. {RH, June 11, 1908 par. 4}

All whom God has blessed with reasoning powers are to become intellectual Christians. They are not requested to believe without evidence; therefore Jesus has enjoined upon all to search the Scriptures. Let the ingenious inquirer, and the one who would know for himself what is truth, exert his mental powers to search out the truth as it is in Jesus. Any neglect here is at the peril of the soul. We must know individually the prescribed conditions of entering into eternal life. . . . We cannot allow these questions to be settled for us by another's mind, or another's judgment. . . . We cannot trust the salvation of our souls to ministers, to idle traditions, to human authorities, or to pretensions. . . . The Lord positively demands of every Christian an intelligent knowledge of the Scriptures. {RH, March 8, 1887 par. 1}

The Bible with its precious gems of truth was not written for the scholar alone. On the contrary, it was designed for the common people; and the interpretation given by the common people, when aided by the Holy Spirit, accords best with the truth as it is in Jesus. The great truths necessary for salvation are made clear as the noonday, and none will mistake and lose their way except those who follow their own judgment instead of the plainly revealed will of God. {5T 331.2}

As the will of man co-operates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings. {COL 333.1}

Love, the basis of creation and of redemption, is the basis of true education. This is made plain in the law that God has given as the guide of life. . . . To love Him, the infinite, the omniscient One, with the whole strength, and mind, and heart, means the highest development of every power. It means that in the whole being—the body, the mind, as well as the soul—the image of God is to be restored. {RC 51.2}

Satan is constantly urging men to accept his principles. Thus he seeks to counterwork the work of God. He is constantly representing the chosen people of God as a deluded people. He is an accuser of the brethren, and his accusing power he is constantly using against those who work righteousness. The Lord desires through His people to answer Satan's charges by showing the result of obedience to right principles. {6T 11.2}

God desires us to reach the standard of perfection made possible for us by the gift of Christ. He calls upon us to make our choice on the right side, to connect with heavenly agencies, to adopt principles that will restore in us the divine image. In His written Word and in the great book of nature He has revealed the principles of life. It is our work to obtain a knowledge of these principles, and by obedience to cooperate with Him in restoring health to the body as well as to the soul. . . . {AG 103.5}

But notice here that obedience is not a mere outward compliance, but the service of love. The law of God is an expression of His very nature; it is an embodiment of the great principle of love, and hence is the foundation of His government in heaven and earth. If our hearts are renewed in the likeness of God, if the divine love is implanted in the soul, will not the law of God be carried out in the life? When the principle of love is implanted in the heart, when man is renewed after the image of Him that created him, the new-covenant promise is fulfilled, "I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them." Hebrews 10:16. And if the law is written in the heart, will it not shape the life? Obedience—the service and allegiance of love—is the true sign of discipleship. Thus the Scripture says, "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." 1 John 5:3; 2:4. Instead of releasing man from obedience, it is faith, and faith only, that makes us partakers of the grace of Christ, which enables us to render obedience. {SC 60.2}

The government of God is not, as Satan would make it appear, founded upon a blind submission, an unreasoning control. It appeals to the intellect and the conscience. "Come now, and let us reason together" is the Creator's invitation to the beings He has made. Isaiah 1:18. God does not force the will of His creatures. He cannot accept an homage that is not willingly

and intelligently given. A mere forced submission would prevent all real development of mind or character; it would make man a mere automaton. Such is not the purpose of the Creator. He desires that man, the crowning work of His creative power, shall reach the highest possible development. He sets before us the height of blessing to which He desires to bring us through His grace. He invites us to give ourselves to Him, that He may work His will in us. It remains for us to choose whether we will be set free from the bondage of sin, to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God. {SC 43.4}

In calling them to His service, God offers them freedom. Obedience to God is liberty from the thralldom of sin, deliverance from human passion and impulse. {TM 247.1}

Where there is not only a belief in God's Word, but a submission of the will to Him; where the heart is yielded to Him, the affections fixed upon Him, there is faith—faith that works by love, and purifies the soul. Through this faith the heart is renewed in the image of God. {AG 137.5}

While it is true that our busy activities will not in themselves ensure salvation, it is also true that faith which unites us to Christ will stir the soul to activity (MS 16, 1890). {6BC 1111.6}

Genuine faith is followed by love, and love by obedience. All the powers and passions of the converted man are brought under the control of Christ. His Spirit is a renewing power, transforming to the divine image all who will receive it. {5T 219.4}

Many hold faith as an opinion. But saving faith is a transaction, by which those who receive Christ join themselves in covenant relation with God. Genuine faith is life. A living faith means an increase of vigor, a confiding trust, by which the soul becomes a conquering power. {GW 261.1}

When man surrenders to Christ, the mind is brought under the control of the law, but it is the royal law, which proclaims liberty to every captive. Only by becoming one with Christ can men be made free. Subjection to the will of Christ means restoration to perfect manhood. Sin can triumph only by . . . destroying the liberty of the soul. {FLB 91.3}

We show our faith in God by obeying His commands. Faith is always expressed in words and actions. It produces practical results, for it is a vital element in the life. The life that is molded by faith develops a determination to advance, to go forward, following in the footsteps of Christ. {HP 109.4}

The faith that works by love and purifies the soul produces the fruit of humility, patience, forbearance, long-suffering, peace, joy, and willing obedience. {HP 109.6}

The heavenly intelligences will work with the human agent who seeks with determined faith that perfection of character which will reach out to perfection in action. To everyone engaged in this work Christ says, I am at your right hand to help you. {COL 332.4}

The Lord will not compel men to deal justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with their God; He sets before the human agent good and evil, and makes plain what will be the sure result of following one course or the other. Christ invites us, saying, "Follow Me." But we are never forced to walk in His footsteps. If we do walk in His footsteps, it is the result of deliberate choice. As we see the life and character of Christ, strong desire is awakened to be like Him in character; and we follow on to know the Lord, and to know His goings forth are prepared as the morning. We then begin to realize that "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."—R. & H., March 31, 1896. {CS 138.1}

Wherever there is an impulse of love and sympathy, wherever the heart reaches out to bless and uplift others, there is revealed the working of God's Holy Spirit. {COL 385.1}

Wherever there is union with Christ there is love. Whatever other fruits we may bear, if love be missing, they profit nothing. Love to God and our neighbor is the very essence of our religion. No one can love Christ and not love His children. When we are united to Christ, we have the mind of Christ. Purity and love shine forth in the character, meekness and truth control the life. The very expression of the countenance is changed. {RC 104.2}

True sanctification unites believers to Christ and to one another in the bonds of tender sympathy. This union causes to flow continually into the heart rich currents of Christlike love, which flows forth again in love for one another. {5BC 1141.2}

As you engage in this work you have companions unseen by human eyes. Angels of heaven were beside the Samaritan who cared for the wounded stranger. Angels from the heavenly courts stand by the side of all who do God's service in ministering to their fellow men. And you have the cooperation of Christ Himself. He is the restorer, and as you work under His supervision you will see great results. {HP 295.5}

A tender spirit, a gentle, winning deportment, may save the erring and hide a multitude of sins. The revelation of Christ in your own character will have a transforming power upon all with whom you come in contact. Let Christ be daily made manifest in you, and He will reveal through you the creative energy of His word—a gentle, persuasive, yet mighty influence to re-create other souls in the beauty of the Lord our God. {MB 128.3}

The love of God alone can open and expand the heart, and give to love and sympathy a breadth and height that is without measure. Those who love Jesus will love all the children of God. The sense of personal infirmities and imperfections will lead the human agent to look away from self to Christ; and the Saviour's love will break down every cold, Pharisaical barrier, it will banish all harshness and selfishness, and there will be a blending of soul with soul, even with those who are opposite in temperament. {OHC 183.3}

By living to minister for others, man is brought into connection with Christ. The law of service becomes the connecting link which binds us to God and to our fellow men. {COL 326.3}