

## **Study Guide to the Christian Service**

### **March 2015**

#### **1<sup>st</sup> Week.**

**Dates: March 1 to 7, 2015**

**Reading Assignment: Pages 35.1- 36.3**

#### **Chapter 3—Conditions Among God’s People**

##### **Missionary Spirit Lacking**

There has been but little of the missionary spirit among Sabbath-keeping Adventists. If ministers and people were sufficiently aroused, they would not rest thus indifferently, while God has honored them by making them the depositaries of His law, by printing it in their minds and writing it upon their hearts.—Testimonies for the Church 3:202.{ChS 35.1}

The true missionary spirit has deserted the churches that make so exalted a profession; their hearts are no longer aglow with love for souls, and a desire to lead them into the fold of Christ. We want earnest workers. Are there none to respond to the cry that goes up from every quarter, “Come over and help us”?—Testimonies for the Church 4:156.{ChS 35.2}

I was shown that as a people we are deficient. Our works are not in accordance with our faith. Our faith testifies that we are living under the proclamation of the most solemn and important message that was ever given to mortals. Yet in full view of this fact, our efforts, our zeal, our spirit of self-sacrifice, do not compare with the character of the work. We should awake from the dead, and Christ will give us life.—Testimonies for the Church 2:114.{ChS 35.3}

My heart is pained when I think how little our churches sense their solemn accountabilities to God. It is not ministers alone who are soldiers, but every man and woman who has enlisted in Christ’s army; and are they willing to receive a soldier’s fare, just as Christ has given them an example in His life of self-denial and sacrifice? What self-denial have our churches as a whole manifested? They may have given donations in money, but have withheld themselves.—The General Conference Bulletin, 1893, 131.{ChS 35.4}

Many of the professed followers of Christ feel no more burden for souls than do the world. The lusts of the eye, and the pride of life, the love of display, the love of ease, separate the professed Christians from God, and the missionary spirit in reality exists in but few. What can be done to open the eyes of these sinners in Zion, and make hypocrites tremble?—The General Conference Bulletin, 1893, 132. {ChS 35.5}

There is a class that are represented by Meroz. The missionary spirit has never taken hold of their souls. The calls of foreign missions have not stirred them to action. What account will those render to God, who are doing nothing in His cause,—nothing to win souls to Christ? Such will receive the denunciation, “Thou wicked and slothful servant.”—Historical Sketches, 290.{ChS 36.1}

As an illustration of the failure on your part to come up to the work of God, as was your privilege, I was referred to these words: “Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.”—Testimonies for the Church 2:247.{ChS 36.2}

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### **A Self-complacent Class**

There was presented before me a class who are conscious that they possess generous impulses, devotional feelings, and a love of doing good; yet at the same time they are doing nothing. They possess a self-complacent feeling, flattering themselves that if they had an opportunity, or were circumstanced more favorably, they could and would do a great and good work; but they are waiting the opportunity. They despise the narrow mind of the poor niggard who grudges the small pittance to the needy. They see that he lives for self, that he will not be called from himself to do good to others, to bless them with the talents of influence and of means which have been committed to him to use, not to abuse, nor to permit to rust, or lie buried in the earth. Those who give themselves up to their stinginess and selfishness, are accountable for their niggardly acts, and are responsible for the talents they abuse. But more responsible are those who have generous impulses, and are naturally quick to discern spiritual things, if they remain inactive, waiting an opportunity they suppose has not come, yet contrasting their readiness to do with the willingness of the niggard, and reflecting that their condition is more favorable than that of their mean-souled neighbors. Such deceive themselves. The mere possession of qualities which are not used, only increases their responsibility; and if they keep their Master's talents unimproved, or hoarded, their condition is no better than that of their neighbors for whom their souls feel such contempt. To them it will be said, "Ye knew your Master's will, yet did it not."—*Testimonies for the Church* 2:250, 251. {ChS 36.3}

### **Questions to Ponder- March 7, 2015**

1. What can we do to revive our Missionary Spirit?

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Week.**

**Dates: March 8 to 14, 2015**

**Reading Assignment: Pages 37.1- 39.2**

### **Satanic Death Stupor**

God's people must take warning and discern the signs of the times. The signs of Christ's coming are too plain to be doubted; and in view of these things every one who professes the truth should be a living preacher. God calls upon all, both preachers and people, to awake. All heaven is astir. The scenes of earth's history are fast closing. We are amid the perils of the last days. Greater perils are before us, and yet we are not awake. This lack of activity and earnestness in the cause of God is dreadful. This death stupor is from Satan.—Testimonies for the Church 1:260, 261.{ChS 37.1}

Unbelief, like the pall of death, is surrounding our churches, because they do not exercise the talents God has given them, by imparting the light to those who know not the precious truth. The Lord calls for the pardoned souls, those who rejoice in the light, to make known the truth to others.—The General Conference Bulletin, 1893, 133.{ChS 37.2}

Satan is now seeking to hold God's people in a state of inactivity, to keep them from acting their part in spreading the truth, that they may at last be weighed in the balance and found wanting.—Testimonies for the Church 1:260.{ChS 37.3}

Men are in peril. Multitudes are perishing. But how few of the professed followers of Christ are burdened for these souls. The destiny of a world hangs in the balance; but this hardly moves even those who claim to believe the most far-reaching truth ever given to mortals. There is a lack of that love which led Christ to leave His heavenly home and take man's nature, that humanity might touch humanity, and draw humanity to divinity. There is a stupor, a paralysis, upon the people of God, which prevents them from understanding the duty of the hour.—Christ's Object Lessons, 303. {ChS 37.4}

Satan uses the listless, sleepy indolence of professed Christians to strengthen his forces and win souls to his side. Many who think that though they are doing no actual work for Christ, they are yet on His side, are enabling the enemy to pre-occupy ground and gain advantages. By their failure to be diligent workers for the Master, by leaving duties undone and words unspoken, they have allowed Satan to gain control of souls who might have been won for Christ.—Christ's Object Lessons, 280.{ChS 38.1}

When I study the Scriptures, I am alarmed for the Israel of God in these last days. They are exhorted to flee from idolatry. I fear that they are asleep, and so conformed to the world that it would be difficult to discern between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not. The distance is widening between Christ and His people, and lessening between them and the world. The marks of distinction between Christ's professed people and the world have almost disappeared. Like ancient Israel, they follow after the abominations of the nations around them.—Testimonies for the Church 1:277.{ChS 38.2}

### **Spiritual Discernment Dimmed**

And not only in the world do we see the result of the church's neglect to work in Christ's lines. By this neglect a condition of things has been brought into the church that has eclipsed the high and holy interests of the work of God. A spirit of criticism and bitterness has come into the church, and the spiritual discernment of many has been dimmed. Because of this the cause of Christ has suffered great loss.—Testimonies for the Church 6:297.{ChS 38.3}

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I am filled with sadness when I think of our condition as a people. The Lord has not closed heaven to us, but our own course of continual backsliding has separated us from God. Pride, covetousness, and love of the world have lived in the heart without fear of banishment or condemnation. Grievous and presumptuous sins have dwelt among us. And yet the general opinion is that the church is flourishing, and that peace and spiritual prosperity are in all her borders. The church has turned back from following Christ her leader, and is steadily retreating toward Egypt. Yet few are alarmed or astonished at their want of spiritual power. Doubt and even disbelief of the testimonies of the Spirit of God is leavening our churches everywhere. Satan would have it thus.—Testimonies for the Church 5:217. {ChS 38.4}

### **A State of Spiritual Weakness**

Accumulated light has shone upon God's people, but many have neglected to follow the light, and for this reason they are in a state of great spiritual weakness. It is not for lack of knowledge that God's people are now perishing. They will not be condemned because they do not know the way, the truth, and the life. The truth that has reached their understanding, the light which has shone on the soul, but which has been neglected or refused, will condemn them. Those who never had the light to reject, will not be in condemnation. What more could have been done for God's vineyard than has been done? Light, precious light, shines upon God's people; but it will not save them, unless they consent to be saved by it, fully live up to it, and transmit it to others in darkness.—Testimonies for the Church 2:123.{ChS 39.1}

### **The Need of Heavenly Eyesalve**

The churches need to have their eyes anointed with the heavenly eyesalve, that they may see the many opportunities all about them to minister for God. Repeatedly God has called upon His people to go out into the highways and hedges, and compel men to come in, that His house may be full, yet even within the shadow of our own doors are families in which we have not shown sufficient interest to lead them to think that we cared for their souls. It is this work lying nearest us that the Lord now calls upon the church to undertake. We are not to stand, saying, "Who is my neighbor?" We are to remember that our neighbor is the one who need our sympathy and help. Our neighbor is every soul who is wounded and bruised by the adversary. Our neighbor is every one who is the property of God. In Christ the distinctions made by the Jews as to who was their neighbor are swept away. There are no territorial lines, no artificial distinctions, no caste, no aristocracy.—Testimonies for the Church 6:294. {ChS 39.2}

## **Questions to Ponder March 14, 2015**

1. What can I do to overcome the "State of inactivity" in my local church?

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Week.**

**Dates: March 15 to 21, 2015**

**Reading Assignment: Pages 40.1- 43.2**

#### **Fanaticism and Cold Formalism**

Satan is now working with all his insinuating, deceiving power, to lead men away from the work of the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with mighty power. When the enemy sees that the Lord is blessing His people, and preparing them to discern his delusions, he will work with his masterly power to bring in fanaticism on one hand and cold formalism on the other, that he may gather in a harvest of souls. Now is the time to watch unceasingly. Watch for the first step of advance that Satan may make among us.—The Review and Herald, January 24, 1893.{ChS 40.1}

There are moral icebergs in our churches. There are plenty of formalists who can make an imposing display, but cannot shine as lights in the world.—The Review and Herald, March 24, 1891.{ChS 40.2}

#### **Narrowed by Selfishness**

The reason why God's people are not more spiritual minded, and have no more faith, I have been shown, is because they are narrowed up with selfishness.... It is not the abundance of your meetings that God accepts. It is not the numerous prayers, but the right-doing, doing the right thing, and at the right time.—Testimonies for the Church 2:36.{ChS 40.3}

#### **Covetousness**

Yet some refused to be converted. They were not willing to walk in God's way, and when, in order that the work of God might be advanced, calls were made for freewill offerings, some clung selfishly to their earthly possessions. These covetous ones became separated from the company of believers.—Testimonies for the Church 9:126.{ChS 40.4}

#### **Not One in Twenty Prepared**

It is a solemn statement that I make to the church, that not one in twenty whose names are registered upon the church books are prepared to close their earthly history, and would be as verily without God and without hope in the world as the common sinner. They are professedly serving God, but they are more earnestly serving mammon. This half-and-half work is a constant denying of Christ, rather than a confessing of Christ. So many have brought into the church their own unsubdued spirit, unrefined; their spiritual taste is perverted by their own immoral, debasing corruptions, symbolizing the world in spirit, in heart, in purpose, confirming themselves in lustful practices, and are full of deception through and through in their professed Christian life. Living as sinners, claiming to be Christians! Those who claim to be Christians and will confess Christ should come out from among them and touch not the unclean thing, and be separate....{ChS 41.1}

I lay down my pen and lift up my soul in prayer, that the Lord would breathe upon His backslidden people, who are as dry bones, that they may live. The end is near, stealing upon us so stealthily, so imperceptibly, so noiselessly, like the muffled tread of the thief in the night, to surprise the sleepers off guard and unready. May the Lord grant to bring His Holy Spirit upon hearts that are now at ease, that they may no longer sleep as do others, but watch and be sober.—The General Conference Bulletin, 1893, 132, 133.{ChS 41.2}

#### **Revival and Reformation Needed**

Christians should be preparing for what is soon to break upon the world as an overwhelming surprise, and this preparation they should make by diligently studying the word of

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God, and striving to conform their lives to its precepts.... God calls for a revival and a reformation.—Prophets and Kings, 626.{ChS 41.3}

A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work.—The Review and Herald, March 22, 1887.{ChS 41.4}

The time has come for a thorough reformation to take place. When this reformation begins, the spirit of prayer will actuate every believer, and will banish from the church the spirit of discord and strife.—Testimonies for the Church 8:251.{ChS 42.1}

A revival and a reformation must take place under the ministration of the Holy Spirit. Revival and reformation are two different things. Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection from the spiritual death. Reformation signifies a reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices. Reformation will not bring forth the good fruit of righteousness unless it is connected with the revival of the Spirit. Revival and reformation are to do their appointed work, and in doing this work they must blend.—The Review and Herald, February 25, 1902.{ChS 42.2}

Do not the Scriptures call for a more pure and holy work than we have yet seen? ... God calls upon those who are willing to be controlled by the Holy Spirit to lead out in a work of thorough reformation. I see a crisis before us, and the Lord calls for His laborers to come into line. Every soul should now stand in a position of deeper, truer consecration to God than during the years that have passed.... I have been deeply impressed by scenes that have recently passed before me in the night season. There seemed to be a great movement—a work of revival—going forward in many places. Our people were moving into line, responding to God's call.—The General Conference Bulletin, May 29, 1913, p. 34.{ChS 42.3}

In visions of the night representations passed before me of a great reformatory movement among God's people. Many were praising God. The sick were healed, and other miracles were wrought.... Hundreds and thousands were seen visiting families, and opening before them the word of God. Hearts were convicted by the power of the Holy Spirit, and a spirit of genuine conversion was manifest. On every side doors were thrown open to the proclamation of the truth. The world seemed to be lightened with the heavenly influence. Great blessings were received by the true and humble people of God.—Testimonies for the Church 9:126.{ChS 42.4}

There is great necessity for a reformation among the people of God. The present state of the church leads to the inquiry, Is this a correct representation of Him who gave His life for us?—Testimonies for the Church 3:474.{ChS 43.1}

When the reproach of indolence and slothfulness shall have been wiped away from the church, the Spirit of the Lord will be graciously manifested. Divine power will be revealed. The church will see the providential working of the Lord of hosts. The light of truth will shine forth in clear, strong rays, and as in the time of the apostles, many souls will turn from error to truth. The earth will be lightened with the glory of the Lord.—Testimonies for the Church 9:46.{ChS 43.2}

### **Questions to Ponder March 21, 2015**

1. What can I do to avoid falling into "Fanaticism" and "Cold Formalism"?
2. How can we foster a spirit of Revival and Reformation in our church?

**4<sup>th</sup> Week.**

**Dates: March 22 to 28, 2015**

**Reading Assignment: Pages 43.3- 46.1**

**Delay Is Fatal**

I was shown God's people waiting for some change to take place,—a compelling power to take hold of them. But they will be disappointed, for they are wrong. They must act; they must take hold of the work themselves, and earnestly cry to God for a true knowledge of themselves. The scenes which are passing before us are of sufficient magnitude to cause us to arouse, and urge the truth home to the hearts of all who will listen. The harvest of the earth is nearly ripe.—*Testimonies for the Church 1:261.*{ChS 43.3}

On the other hand, there are some who, instead of wisely improving present opportunities, are idly waiting for some special season of spiritual refreshing by which their ability to enlighten others will be greatly increased. They neglect present duties and privileges, and allow their light to burn dim, while they look forward to a time when, without any effort on their part, they will be made the recipients of special blessing, by which they will be transformed and fitted for service.—*The Acts of the Apostles, 54.*{ChS 43.4}

**Not Producers but Consumers**

The professed followers of Christ are on trial before the heavenly universe; but the coldness of their zeal and the feebleness of their efforts in God's service, mark them as unfaithful. If what they are doing were the best they could do, condemnation would not rest upon them; but were their hearts enlisted in the work, they could do much more. They know, and the world knows, that they have to a great degree lost the spirit of self-denial and cross-bearing. Many there are against whose names will be found written in the books of heaven, Not producers, but consumers. By many who bear Christ's name, His glory is obscured, His beauty veiled, His honor withheld. There are many whose names are on the church books, but who are not under Christ's rule. They are not heeding His instruction or doing His work. Therefore they are under the control of the enemy. They are doing no positive good, therefore they are doing incalculable harm. Because their influence is not a savor of life unto life, it is a savor of death unto death.—*Christ's Object Lessons, 303, 304.* {ChS 43.5}

**Commandment Keeping a Cloak for Sin**

The same danger exists today among the people who profess to be the depositaries of God's law. They are too apt to flatter themselves that the regard in which they hold the commandments will preserve them from the power of divine justice. They refuse to be reproved for evil, and charge God's servants with being too zealous in putting sin out of the camp. A sin-hating God calls upon those who profess to keep His law to depart from all iniquity. Neglect to repent and obey His word will bring as serious consequences upon God's people today as did the same sin upon ancient Israel. There is a limit beyond which He will no longer delay His judgments.—*Testimonies for the Church 4:166, 167.*{ChS 44.1}

**Dead in Trespasses and Sins**

Today a large part of those who compose our congregations are dead in trespasses and sins. They come and go like the door upon its hinges. For years they have complacently listened to the most solemn, soul-stirring truths, but they have not put them in practice. Therefore they are less and less sensible of the preciousness of truth.... While making a profession, they deny the power of godliness. If they continue in this state, God will reject them. They are unfitting themselves to be members of His family.—*Testimonies for the Church 6:426, 427.* {ChS 44.2}

### **Human Moralists**

Many who call themselves Christians are mere human moralists. They have refused the gift which alone could enable them to honor Christ by representing Him to the world. The work of the Holy Spirit is to them a strange work. They are not doers of the word. The heavenly principles that distinguish those who are one with Christ from those who are one with the world have become almost indistinguishable. The professed followers of Christ are no longer a separate and peculiar people. The line of demarcation is indistinct. The people are subordinating themselves to the world, to its practices, its customs, its selfishness. The church has gone over to the world in transgression of the law, when the world should have come over to the church in obedience to the law. Daily the church is being converted to the world.—Christ’s Object Lessons, 315, 316.{ChS 45.1}

### **A Spotted Record**

Many have a form of godliness, their names are upon the church records, but they have a spotted record in heaven. The recording angel has faithfully written their deeds. Every selfish act, every wrong word, every unfulfilled duty, and every secret sin, with every artful dissembling, is faithfully chronicled in the book of records kept by the recording angel.—Testimonies for the Church 2:442.{ChS 45.2}

### **The Burden-Bearers Are Wearing Out**

Because some will not lift the burdens they could lift, or do the work they might do, the work is too great for the few who will engage in it. They see so much to do that they overtax their strength, and are fast wearing out.—Testimonies for the Church 2:645.{ChS 45.3}

### **Unable to Give an Intelligent Reason for Faith**

Many who profess to believe the truth for these last days, will be found wanting. They have neglected the weightier matters. Their conversion is superficial, not deep, earnest, and thorough. They do not know why they believe the truth, only because others have believed it, and they take it for granted that it is the truth. They can give no intelligent reason why they believe.... Others are not enlightened or edified by their experience, or by the knowledge which it was their privilege and duty to obtain. Strength and stability are with truehearted professors.—Testimonies for the Church 2:634. {ChS 45.4}

### **Some Will Trace Down the Prophetic Roll**

God has a people upon the earth who in faith and holy hope are tracing down the roll of fast-fulfilling prophecy, and are seeking to purify their souls by obeying the truth, that they may not be found without the wedding garment when Christ shall appear.—Testimonies for the Church 4:307.{ChS 46.1}

## **Questions to Ponder March 28, 2015**

1. How can I become a “Producer” rather than a “Consumer”?
2. What is a “Human Moralist”?