

THE YOUNG MESSENGER



Reformation

In the Daily Life of Youth





THE YOUNG MESSENGER

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“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth” – Ecclesiastes 12:1

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Youthful Purity

In the Corrupted World

Strength of Character Through Conflict

“The first thirty years of the life of Christ were passed in the obscure village of Nazareth. The inhabitants of this village were proverbial for their wickedness, hence the inquiry of Nathaniel: ‘Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?’ The evangelists say but very little in regard

to the early life of Christ. With the exception of a brief account of His accompanying His parents to Jerusalem, we have the simple statement only, ‘And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him.’

“Christ is our example in all things. In the providence of God, His early life was passed in

Nazareth, where the inhabitants were of that character that He was continually exposed to temptations, and it was necessary for Him to be guarded in order to remain pure and spotless amid so much sin and wickedness. Christ did not select this place Himself. His Heavenly Father chose this place for Him, where His character would be tested and tried in a variety of ways. The early life

of Christ was subjected to severe trials, hardships, and conflicts, that He might develop the perfect character which makes Him a perfect example for children, youth, and manhood.

“Children and youth are frequently situated where their surroundings are not favorable to a Christian life, and they quite readily yield to temptations, and plead as an excuse for pursuing a course of sin that their surroundings are unfavorable. Christ chose retirement, and through a life of industry, keeping His hands employed, He did not invite temptation, but kept aloof from the society of those whose influence was corrupting. Christ placed His feet in the most uneven path that children and youth will ever be called to travel. He did not have allotted to Him a life of affluence and indolence. His parents were poor, and dependent upon their daily toil for sustenance; therefore the life of Christ was one of poverty, self-denial, and privation. He shared with His parents their life of diligent industry.

Purity Not Dependent on Circumstances

“None will ever be called to perfect Christian character under more unfavorable circumstances than that of our Saviour. The fact that Christ lived thirty years in Nazareth, from which many thought it a wonder if any good thing could come, is a rebuke to the youth who consider that their religious character must conform to circumstances. If the surroundings of youth are unpleasant and positively bad, many make this an excuse for not perfecting Christian character. The example of Christ would rebuke the idea that His

followers are dependent upon place, fortune, or prosperity, in order to live blameless lives. Christ would teach them that their faithfulness would make any place or position, where the providence of God called them, honorable, however humble.

“The life of Christ was designed to show that purity, stability, and firmness of principle are not dependent upon a life freed from hardships, poverty, and adversity. The trials and privations of which so many youth complain, Christ endured without murmuring. And this discipline is the very experience the youth need, which will give firmness to their characters, and make them like Christ, strong in spirit to resist temptation. They will not, if they separate from the influence of those who would lead them astray and corrupt their morals, be overcome by the devices of Satan. Through daily prayer to God, they will have wisdom and grace from Him to bear the conflict and stern realities of life, and come off victorious. Fidelity and serenity of mind can only be retained by watchfulness and prayer. Christ’s life was an example of persevering energy, which was not allowed to become weakened by reproach, ridicule, privation, or hardships.

“Thus should it be with the youth. If trials increase upon them, they may know that God is testing and proving their fidelity. And in just that degree that they maintain their integrity of character under discouragements, will their fortitude, stability, and power of endurance increase, and they wax strong in spirit.” –*The Youth’s Instructor*, March 1, 1872

Death Before Dishonor

“Choose poverty, reproach, separation from friends, or any suffering, rather than to defile the soul with sin. Death before dishonor or the transgression of God’s law, should be the motto of every Christian.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 147

Resisting Temptation

“Those who are partakers of the divine nature will not give way to temptation. The enemy is working with all his might to overcome those who are striving to live the Christian life. He comes to them with temptations, in the hope that they will yield. Thus he hopes to discourage them. But those who have planted their feet firmly on the Rock of Ages will not yield to his devices. They will remember that God is their Father and Christ their Helper. The Saviour came to our world to bring to every tried, tempted soul strength to overcome even as He overcame. I know the power of temptation; I know the dangers that are in the way; but I know, too, that strength sufficient for every time of need is provided for those who are struggling against temptation.

Needless Temptations to Be Shunned

“God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.’ And we also have a part to act. We are not to place ourselves needlessly in the way of temptation. God says, ‘Come out from among them, and be ye separate, ... and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto

you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters.' If by associating with worldlings for pleasure, by conforming to worldly practices, by uniting our interests with unbelievers, we place our feet in the path of temptation and sin, how can we expect God to keep us from falling?

"Keep yourselves away from the corrupting influences of the world. Do not go unbidden to places where the forces of the enemy are strongly entrenched. Do not go where you will be tempted and led astray. But if you have a message for unbelievers, and if you live so near to God that you can speak to them a word in season, you can do a work that will help them and will honor God. 'I pray not,' Christ said, 'that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil.'" -*The Review and Herald*, April 14, 1904

Duty Above Inclination

"When the youth attempt to break away from Satan's control, he will redouble his temptations. Taking advantage of their ignorance and inexperience, he attempts to obscure the distinction between right and wrong. He transforms himself into an angel of light, and beguiles by promises of pleasure in a forbidden path. If the youth have formed the habit of following inclination rather than duty, they will find it hard to resist temptation. They do not see the danger in indulging even once in forbidden pleasures. The suggestions of Satan will stir every lingering element of depravity in the heart." -*The Signs of the Times*, January 19, 1882

Ellen G. White

Christian's GRWWM

Ellen White Revealed the Morning Habit that OPENS the MIND to the Holy Spirit Before the End

By Reshelle Curato



Have you ever woken up with that feeling of emptiness, as if even after sleeping you were still tired, spiritually exhausted? Have you noticed that the day often begins without direction, without focus, without the strength to overcome the temptations that come in the very first hours? Maybe you are trying to maintain an active Christian life, going to church, participating in programs, even reading the Bible occasionally. But you still feel weak, cold, disconnected from God. Worse, you realize that something is not right, but you do not know exactly what to do to change it. What many do not understand is that the secret to a strong spiritual life does not start at night, nor on Saturday, nor in special meetings. It starts in the first hour of

the morning. Sister White revealed this with a clarity that leaves no room for doubt. And the lack of this habit has been one of the biggest spiritual gaps among those who say they are prepared for the final events but are spiritually asleep.

Do you want to know why so many Christians today cannot hear the voice of God? Why they live confused, making impulsive decisions without spiritual clarity? Because they have given up the most crucial moment of the day, the first minute after waking up. “Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 70. It is as if she were shouting to our generation, “Wake up. The Holy Spirit wants to speak to you, but He waits to be invited.”

This morning surrender is an act of spiritual warfare. When you wake up and go straight to your phone, you have already lost. When you get up late, rush to work and only remember God at mealtime or before sleeping, you are already spiritually defeated. “Those who will put on the whole armor of God and devote some time every day to meditation and prayer and to the study of the Scriptures will be connected with heaven and will have a saving, transforming influence on those around them.” —*Prayer*, p. 157. “In no case neglect secret prayer; for it is the soul of religion. If you expect salvation, you must pray.” —*The Signs of the Times*, November 18, 1886. This is very serious. This moment right after waking up is where you decide whether that day will be lived in the Spirit, or in the flesh. It is there, even before getting out of bed, that you can say, “Lord, this day is yours. Govern my mind, guide my words, and guard my steps.” But instead, most people give their



In no case neglect secret prayer; for it is the soul of religion. If you expect salvation, you must pray.

The Signs of the Times, November 18, 1886

first hours to Instagram, the news, the rush, and this has eternal consequences.

In addition, it is not just prayer. The first meal of the day also directly influences mental clarity and spiritual sensitivity. “Instead of this the food should be more simple, and less should be eaten in order that the mind may be clear and vigorous to comprehend spiritual things. A clogged stomach means a clogged brain. The most precious words may be heard and not appreciated because the mind is confused by an improper diet.” –*Ministry of Healing*, p. 307. Now think: if breakfast is loaded with sugar, caffeine, excess fat or artificial foods, what do you think that does to your mind? How can you expect spiritual discernment if your very brain is being poisoned first thing in the morning? The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. If it is out of balance, how can the Spirit dwell and direct with clarity?

“In the morning the Christian’s first thoughts should be of God. Come before Him with humility, with a heart full of tenderness, and with a sense of the temptations and dangers that surround yourself and your children. Morning and evening, by earnest prayer and persevering faith, make a hedge. . .” –*The*

Signs of the Times, November 18, 1886. This is not spiritual romanticism. It is survival. The world will crush you out there. The pressures, the conflicts, the temptations. All of this waits for you even before you leave home. If you are not strengthened, you will be dominated.

Have you noticed that on the days you pray and consecrate yourself early, everything seems to flow differently? Decisions are wiser, emotions are more controlled, the mind is lighter. This is no coincidence. It is the Holy Spirit, acting in those who make room for Him to work.

Now, stop and think, what have your mornings been like? What has been your first activity upon waking up? Have you handed your thoughts, your plans, and your desires to God before anything else? Or have you let the world invade your mind while still in bed? Maybe that is why you feel spiritually stuck, because you are not connecting when you should be. In addition, if you do not change this habit, you will continue to move away from the only One who can prepare you for the last days. Today is the moment of decision. To restore the altar of morning communion, wait no longer. Start tomorrow. Better yet, start right now by determining in your heart that the next morning will

be different, that God will be the first to hear your voice and the first to speak to your heart. This could be the beginning of a revival.

You have decided in your heart that you are going to wake up earlier, set aside time with God, pray, and study the Bible. But when the alarm goes off, reality hits hard. The body feels heavy, the mind is tired, the pillow seems to pull you back. And then the cycle begins. You hit the snooze button, get up late, rush through life. And time with God gets put off until later, until it becomes never. Do you know what this is? One of the biggest battlefields of your spiritual life. Sister White was very clear. Satan’s greatest effort today is to prevent God’s people from having true communion with heaven, and he knows that the most vulnerable point is in the morning.

“Satan well knows that all whom he can lead to neglect prayer and the searching of the Scriptures, will be overcome by his attacks.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 519. Understand that it is not a possibility, but it is a certainty. Whoever gives up morning prayer is handing themselves over to the enemy on a platter. And the most shocking thing, many think they are standing, but they have already fallen. They are spiritually cold, dry in-

side, operating on autopilot because they are not connected to the source. However, the enemy is not going to appear with horns and a pitchfork to stop you from praying. He will use tiredness. The excessive commitments, the cell phone late at night, anxiety, distractions, everything that leaves you without time or energy to start the day with God.

“We should accustom ourselves to often lift the thoughts to God in prayer. If the mind wanders, we must bring it back; by persevering effort, habit will finally make it easy.” –*Messages to Young People*, p. 115

In other words, this morning habit will not appear on its own. It is a firm decision. It will require effort, and at first you will feel resistance. Nevertheless, understand one thing—you are not just fighting against laziness; you are fighting against an invisible plan of distraction and spiritual weakening.

“Pray, O pray most earnestly to God that you may be kept from the snare of Satan.” –*Letter 59*, 1880

She was speaking directly about this type of neglect. When you wake up and decide to seek God, heaven draws near. Angels place themselves around you. The Holy Spirit begins to prepare your heart. But if you ignore this moment, you are on your own. In the days that we live in, this is far too dangerous.

Maybe you think, “But I go to bed very late. I can’t wake up early.” What makes you go to bed so late? Is

it work? Social media? Entertainment? Sister White touches on this point in *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 99, where she talks about regularity in the hours of sleeping and waking, and how this is essential for physical, mental, and spiritual equilibrium. In other words, if you want morning communion, you need to go to bed earlier. It is that simple; it involves cutting out what does not edify, disconnecting from screens, creating a routine of silence. Do you want the Holy Spirit, or do you want another episode of the series? Do you want spiritual clarity or another endless scroll on your phone?

This also applies to food. There are those who eat a heavy dinner, eat late, and then cannot wake up feeling light. “As a result

of eating late suppers, the digestive process is continued through the sleeping hours. But though the stomach works constantly, its work is not properly accomplished. The sleep is often disturbed with unpleasant dreams, and in the morning the person awakes unrefreshed, and with little relish for breakfast.” –*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 38

Look how serious that is. The way you end the day determines how you will begin the next. Morning worship does not just begin when the alarm goes off, it begins the night before in the choices you make.

Now here is a practical principle that transforms lives: Prepare your meeting with God as if it were a meeting with someone very important, because it is.



aside your Bible, choose a hymn, write your prayers, program the alarm with purpose, and when it rings, get up. Do not negotiate with the flesh. The flesh will always ask for more sleep, but the Spirit longs for the presence of God. And the more you feed the Spirit, the stronger it becomes. With time, you will realize that the sacrifice of waking up earlier transforms into the best moment of the day.

Many people say, “oh, but I pray on the way to work.” However, that does not replace the time reserved exclusively for God. “Abstract meditation is not enough; busy action is not enough; both are essential to the formation of Christian character. Strength acquired in earnest, secret prayer prepares us

to withstand the allurements of society.” -*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 112-113

This is profound. The Holy Spirit wants to meet you before the world meets you. And if you do not open that door early, you will end up being dragged along by the day’s urgencies. What is the biggest obstacle you face in having this time with God first thing in the morning? Be sincere. Let us walk together in this. Be determined to take the first step—“I choose to prioritize God in the morning.”

Do you want to know what happens to those who truly live this habit? Not those who try it for a day or two, but those who decide day after day to put God first in the morning? The

answer is direct. Life changes, character changes, the mind changes, and the heart begins to prepare to resist in the most difficult days to come. This is not theory. Sister Ellen White speaks directly and practically about the impact of this daily habit. And we are not just talking about an improvement in routine. We are talking about real spiritual preparation for the final crisis. “We ask students and teachers to look at these representative youth in wicked Babylon. Under most trying temptations, they placed themselves in a right position. We read of these as ‘for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.’ [Daniel 1:17.] They placed themselves under the supervision of heaven, and the purest and most complete education was given them by God because they consecrated themselves daily to Him, and sought Him in prayer. Three times a day their supplications were offered in faith, that they should have the things they asked for, and God heard them. He cooperated with them, and they cooperated with God. It was a mutual work.” -*Manuscript 76*, 1898

Read this statement carefully. You not only receive strength to overcome sin, but you become a visible blessing wherever you are. Your spirit changes. The way you deal with people changes because you are starting the day filled with the Holy Spirit and not empty, dry, or confused.

“If the life we live in this world is wholly for Christ, it is a life of daily



Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work.

Steps to Christ, p. 70

surrender.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 116

When does this begin? When the day begins, when thoughts are still pure, when the mind is fresh. This is why Sister White affirms that we should direct our first thoughts of the day towards heaven. “Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work.” –*Steps to Christ*, p. 70

This is what moves heaven. This is the prayer that the Holy Spirit waits to hear. In addition, here is an essential point: the Holy Spirit works with greater intensity when He finds a heart already prepared. He does not force His way in; He responds to the invitation, and this invitation is made when you consciously kneel, open the word and say, “speak, Lord, I am listening.” This practice opens up space for spiritual discernment, for right decisions, for answers that previously seemed silent. “When you rise in the morning, kneel at your bedside and ask God to give you strength to fulfil the duties of the day and to meet its temptations. Ask Him to help you to bring into your work Christ’s sweetness of character. Ask Him to help you to speak words that will draw those around you nearer to Christ” – *Manuscript 125*, 1902. This is a promise. It is a divine guarantee.

Do you know that peace that seems unattainable, that clarity you feel is missing, that strength to say no to temptation that

seems greater than you? All of this begins in morning communion, and the more this habit becomes a part of you, the more heaven responds with intensity. What seemed dry and cold begins to flourish. It is not a superficial emotion; it is real transformation. You begin to perceive the voice of God more clearly. You start to make decisions that are more aligned with His purpose, and especially, you begin to resist where you previously fell easily.

“The secret of success is the union of divine power with human effort. Those who achieve the greatest results are those who rely most implicitly upon the Almighty Arm. The man [Joshua] who commanded, ‘Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon,’ is the man who for hours lay prostrate upon the earth in prayer in the camp of Gilgal. The men of prayer are the men of power.” – *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 509

Notice that it is not enough to pray occasionally, it is each morning, and it is not just asking for blessings, it is consecrating yourself. This changes the center of spiritual life. You stop seeking God just for what He can give you, and you start seeking Him for who He is.

Another important point: this habit directly affects your resistance to deception. “It will serve his [Satan’s] purpose well if we neglect the exercise of prayer, for then his lying wonders are

more readily received.” –*Messages to Young People*, p. 59

This is frightening, but it is real. Those who live disconnected will not recognize the final deception; only those who hear God’s voice every day will know how to discern between truth and error, between appearance and reality. Do you want to know if you are truly preparing for the end of time? Do not just look at the doctrines you know or the videos you watch. Look at how you start your day. The Holy Spirit is waiting for you as soon as you wake up and every morning without consecration is a lost opportunity to be stronger, firmer, more aligned with God’s will.

Today, heaven is calling you to something simple but profound. It is no longer about emotion. It is about decision, waking up, kneeling, praying, opening the word, meditating, and leaving the house filled with the Holy Spirit. This is what will sustain you in difficult times. This is what will prepare you for the latter rain. This is what will keep your mind firm when many are being swept away by the current of deception. You already understand the spiritual value of starting the day with God.

You have seen how this habit transforms, protects, and strengthens. However, maybe now you are asking yourself, “How can I keep this alive in the midst of such a busy routine? How can I not let this spiritual

commitment die after a few days?" The answer begins with a simple but forgotten truth: you will never find time for God; you need to choose to give time to God. This decision is counter-cultural. It is difficult, but it is vital. Sister White does not soften this. She states with clarity that, "Prayer is the breath of the soul." –*Prayer*, p. 84. "It will serve his [Satan's] purpose well if we neglect the exercise of prayer, for then his lying wonders are more readily received." –*Messages to Young People*, p. 59. This is the point—it is not just about having a peaceful morning. It is about being spiritually prepared for the greatest tests that will come upon the earth.

Sister White makes it clear that many who seem firm today will be swept away by the final crisis because they neglected time with God. The modern routine, the rush, the commitments, all of this becomes an excuse. But before the throne of God, no excuse will be enough. Maybe you say, "but I work too early. I barely have time to breathe." Yes, life can be hard, but what is at stake here is eternal. Communion with God does not require two hours; it requires priority. You can start with ten minutes of real surrender, then 15, then 30, but it must be daily, faithful, and consistent. A brief moment given to God in the morning will bring a holy atmosphere to the rest of the day. Do not underestimate the power of a few minutes with heaven. And here is a practical tip: prepare the environment the night before. Set aside your Bible, leave a verse marked, choose a hymn, have a fixed place, a corner of the house where you meet with God. This creates a sacred rou-

tine. It teaches your mind and body to recognize that moment as special. Make this a priority as strong as eating, brushing your teeth, or going to work, because it is. It is food for the soul. It is spiritual hygiene. It is armor against the enemy's attacks. Do you know what begins to happen to those who maintain this habit with faithfulness? The Holy Spirit begins to act with greater depth. The promises begin fulfilling. The mind becomes more sensitive, more balanced, freer from emotional pressures.

"The secret of success is the union of divine power with human effort. Those who achieve the greatest results are those who rely most implicitly upon the Almighty Arm. The man [Joshua] who commanded, 'Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon,' is the man who for hours lay prostrate upon the earth in prayer in the camp of Gilgal. The men of prayer are the men of power." –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 509

Consecrating themselves wholly to God enables those, each morning, to live with greater power, influence, and peace. This is the latter rain beginning to fall in small drops on the lives of the faithful. It is not emotion. It is real preparation. And here is the most solemn point of this message: those who do not develop this practice today will have great difficulty receiving the latter rain tomorrow. It will not be magic. It will not fall on people who live distracted, hurried lives, and are negligent in their personal communion. "It was by the confession and forsaking of sin, by earnest prayer and consecration of themselves to God, that the early disciples

prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The same work, only in greater degree, must be done now." –*The Review and Herald*, March 2, 1897

If you are waiting for some mystical or special event to begin preparing, you are already late. Preparation begins with the first prayer of the day.

Now, imagine this: the final crisis arrives, pressures increase, deceptions multiply, and you are standing firm, serene. Why? Because you trained your mind to hear God's voice in the early mornings, because you strengthened your soul every morning, even when you were tired, because you cultivated a secret life with God. And that, my friend, no one can take away from you. Not a decree, not persecution, not anguish. The promise is clear: those who seek God in the morning will be guarded throughout the day. Moreover, if you have fallen out of this practice, if you started well and stopped, God is calling you today to start over. He does not accuse you; He invites you. His mercies are renewed every morning, and this can be the morning of your restoration. It does not matter how many times you have failed. What matters is what you are going to do from now on; the Holy Spirit is calling you back. He wants to awaken you, He wants to seal you, He wants to fill you with His presence, but He needs to find time and space in your schedule. Are you willing to rebuild the altar of morning communion in your life?

Amen.

The Broad & The Narrow Way

By Evald Pederson

The Bible tells us that there are two ways in this life. Jesus says, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Matthew 7:13-14

We often come to a new fork in the road

and we have to make a choice. I am not only talking about the literal roads that we walk and drive on. Everyone must make many choices in life, and this is especially for young people. What profession should I choose and what education do I need? Where *should* I live, or where *can* I live? What kind of friends will I make? These are all questions a young person has to deal with. The decisions you make will influence the general direction of your life. Be careful,

because there are many distractions out there and if you are not careful, it is easy to be turned away from the narrow way. Suddenly you may realize that you are being swept away and you are following the main stream, the broad road, which is going in a direction you did not plan to go.

Do you think about how you can serve God and benefit others when you are considering



Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.

which field you would like to go into? Do you think about the surroundings of the school, which you plan to attend? One important influence in your life will be the friends with whom you associate. We all like to glide along the main stream, where one does not have to use much effort to be accepted. We like to be part of the popular group and just go along with everyone else. This would be OK if the majority would always do what is good. Unfortunately, this is not the case in most situations. We live in a society where most people look out for themselves. This is why Jesus tells us to strive to enter in through the narrow gate, and difficult is the road that leads to life.

Satan is trying to set up traps for all of us; however, he especially tempts the young people to follow his suggestions. He will paint a picture of the broad road that is so wonderful, so bright and attractive, that it is almost impossible to resist if one does not have strong faith in the words of Jesus. Jesus warns us; He tells us that it ends in destruction. Why does it end in destruction? Because it is built on unrighteousness and deceit. Our world has convinced itself that it pays to cheat and to be dishonest... at least sometimes.

I would never have thought it possible, at least years ago, that

two of the biggest automobile makers in the world, General Motors and Volkswagen, have been sued for defrauding the public. General Motors has been sued for using Chevrolet transmissions in the Oldsmobile (which were of lesser quality and cheaper to make). Volkswagen was sued for finding a way to make their diesel engines pass the pollution test without controlling the pollution they emitted into the air.

Who knows how many times companies have done something dishonest without being discovered by human judges; however, one day they will have to stand in front of the eternal judge and will be found wanting, unless they confess and repent. Often, companies will not allow you to work for them and be part of their team, if you do not go along with their unrighteous decisions.

Do not expect to have many friends if you choose to walk on the narrow way. Jesus says, "There are few who find it." On the narrow way, you will not be able to take part in the many amusements that the world offers. "The true followers of Christ will have sacrifices to make. They will shun places of worldly amusement because they find no Jesus there,—no influence which will make them heavenly minded and increase their growth in grace. Obedience to

the word of God will lead them to come out from all these things, and be separate." —*Messages to Young People*, p. 376–377

There is no easy way out. You cannot cheat on your schoolwork, you cannot use your friends' accomplishments and claim them as yours, and you cannot find a great article somewhere and claim that you wrote it. You have to be honest in all your dealings with everyone. It is hard to do in this world of ours, where a lot is based on pretending.

Set your eyes on the goal. In the end it will lead to life—life eternal. If you have a goal in life, you can endure many things. While we are striving for the goal of eternal life we are also contributing to honesty in our society. Do you think the person responsible for using the wrong transmission in the Oldsmobile, or the one responsible for figuring out how to cheat on the emission tests on the Volkswagen diesel engines are happy and sleep well at night? How about all the others who have figured out how to take advantage of others, do you think they enjoy life? Imagine that you always have to think, "I hope nobody will find out what I did, because then I will be in trouble!" How many hit and run drivers are happy with themselves? There is nothing that will let you sleep better than if you can say

Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

to yourself when you go to bed, "With the help of the Lord, I have done my best today."

You may be rich or poor, you may live in a palace or a hut; if you have a good conscience, you can be happy. You may not have as many friends on the narrow way as you may have had if you had taken the highway. Not many are willing to take part in your struggles, but those that are willing to do so, will be true friends. Try to find friends who appreciate honest and good work.

The prodigal son had many friends as long as he was on the broad road. Many were willing to share his wealth and have a great time drinking and dancing. These kinds of friends are easy to find; but, how many helped him feed the pigs, a job he had to do all by himself. The way back to his father's house was a lonely road, but it ended in his father's arms with great joy. Do not choose the multitude of friends that will turn you towards the broad road that leads to destruction. Choose the few who will share your way of life to be honest and true to the Lord. "There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." Proverbs 18:24

How do I know if my friends are good friends? Do they encourage me to do the right things? Do they appreciate honesty and

truthfulness? Do they love the Lord? Do they come with me to church? Are they active in the Sabbath School? Do they take part in youth meetings? Are they willing to help with duties at church and other places? Are they obedient and respectful to their parents? If you can answer "yes" to these questions, I believe you have good friends. Enjoy their company and encourage each other on the narrow way. No human being is perfect. Do not expect this of your friends either, but work together. Set goals for yourselves. Work to help others, young and old. You can study together the things that are beneficial to you.

When I was young, I read an article that was called 6 to 9. It explained that for young people the most important time of the day is from 6 pm to 9 pm in the evening. Why? The day is most likely filled with duties, either school or work. After 10 pm in the evening, you go to sleep until you wake up in the morning. During the time from 6 pm to 9 pm in the evening, young people have to decide how they will spend these hours. Therefore, it is important how you spend this time. Do you waste it with foolish things, hanging out with friends, just sitting around, laughing and joking, or do you use this time to improve your life? Do you study something

worthwhile? In many cases, this time will determine whether your life will be successful or not.

I am not saying that you cannot have an evening to relax with your friends, but do not make it a habit to spend every evening without doing something that will benefit you and others.

Keep in mind that the broad way and the wide gate do not give you any satisfaction in the end; it only looks easy and great. There are no firm principles to live by. Everyone is his or her own judge. There are constant arguments, everyone is afraid of losing, because it is a game where the strongest is the winner. Psalm 73:1-28 gives us the true picture. Do not let the devil fool you; the happiness in this world is only for a very short time, then comes reality, the day of judgment. On that day you will be either accepted or rejected. If you want real joy, both in this world and in the world to come, there is only one choice. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: For this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

Why does Modesty Matter?

By Aines Abragan

Modesty and Life

In our society, often our identity and sense of belonging is reflected in the way we dress. Clothing can serve as a means of self-expression, signaling personal tastes, cultural heritage, or group affiliation. This is especially true for young people, who often use fashion to establish their individuality and connect with peers. Whether through trendy outfits, brand choices, or specific styles, clothing can communicate a sense of inclusion or differentiation.



As Christians, we also reflect our identity as followers of Christ through the practice of modesty. Modesty is a life governed by humility and self-denial. Since the time of Moses, God has urged His people to follow this course when it comes to the outward presentation of ourselves as His followers. In the Old Testament, God gave Moses an instruction. "Speak unto the children of Israel and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garment throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue." Numbers 15:38. By giving the Israelites a special way of dressing themselves, God was able to

Modesty and Men

Inward and outward transformation go hand-in-hand. Our testimony includes not only our words and actions but also our outward appearance. It is not the will of God to wear expensive and/or revealing clothing, colours, jewelry, and other fashion accessories that invite attraction to oneself. However, there is a common misconception in the world that modesty only applies to women. "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women

abstemious life and plain dress he was to rebuke the excesses of his time... He must impress them with the holiness of God's requirements, and their need of His perfect righteousness." -*The Desire of Ages*, p. 100

To create a path for the mind towards heaven, our outward appearance should not be a distraction nor an attraction but a representation of Christ's work in our hearts. The worldly patterns which glorify vanity and self-exaltation must be replaced with a complete transformation in Christ.

Jesus' life on earth was humble. He did not come with money, gold, and pearls, but with love and compassion for all. Where-

I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.

Isaiah 43:7

give them an identity—His peculiar people. This instruction was given to serve as a constant reminder to distinguish them from surrounding idolatrous nations and to serve as a constant reminder to uphold His commandments. It was intended to keep them mindful of their identity as God's chosen people and to deter them from adopting the practices of other nations.

The Israelites were "God's people", and God wanted them to be distinguished, separate from the idolatrous nations. God wanted the Israelites to be recognized, outwardly, as His followers.

professing godliness) with good works." 1 Timothy 2:9-10. This verse definitely talks about women and how they should dress. But if we read from verses 7 and 8, Paul was talking about how men should conduct themselves and then applying the same advice to women, which is why verse 9 starts with "In like manner *also*", indicating that modesty was already expected of men before applying it to women. When John the Baptist was born, God gave instruction to Zacharias how to raise him. "John was to go forth as Jehovah's messenger, to bring to men the light of God... John was to stand as a reformer. By his

ever He would go, He would be recognized, not by a costly and attractive appearance, but by His preaching. In reverence to God the Father, Jesus never points attention to Himself. He constantly points to the Father and His will in heaven. In Him there is no pride, vanity, extravagance or unnecessary attractions.

To follow God is to deny the world, the pomp and pride that is found in immodesty. When we choose modesty and simplicity, we are aligning ourselves with biblical principles that promote humility and self-denial, seeking to glorify God rather than drawing attention to ourselves.

Modesty and Expression

How we express ourselves depends on what purpose we are aiming for. If we are aiming for heaven, think of our Heavenly Father and for what purpose He created us. “Even every one that is called by My name: for I have created him for My glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.” Isaiah 43:7. We are created for the purpose of giving glory to our Creator. If we seek to glorify Him, He will lead our thoughts and actions to Him. “Should not the people of God, who are His peculiar treasure, seek even in their dress to glorify God? And should they not be examples in point of dress, and by their simple style

we belong to Christ, that we serve a holy and loving God. Our outward appearance serves as a reflection of the transformation God is working within us, showing the world that we live to honour Him. By dressing modestly and appropriately, we reflect a spirit of humility and a desire to honour God, aligning our hearts and actions with His will. By choosing to reflect humility, purity, and self-denial in how we dress, we demonstrate that our lives are dedicated to glorifying God in all aspects—inside and out. “Our appearance in every respect should be characterized by neatness, modesty, and purity.” *–Messages to Young People*, p. 358. Those who do

greatly needed elsewhere. Do not spend the Lord's money to gratify a taste for expensive clothing.” *–Child Guidance* p. 421

The goal of expensive clothing should be for longevity, comfort, and simplicity. If it is for the “taste of expensive clothing”, then you are on the wrong track. Living here in Canada, a \$100+ winter jacket will keep me warm and will last 10–20 years, compared to the ones I bought just for the sake of having something to wear. I only need one jacket so did it save me money at the moment of purchase? Not really, as I was working at a minimum wage job. But will it save me money in the long run? Ab-

A living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Romans 12:1

rebuke the pride, vanity, and extravagance of worldly, pleasure-loving professors? God requires this of His people.” *–The Health Reformer*, February 1, 1872

In Romans 12:1–2, Paul urges believers to present their bodies as “a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” He then warns against conforming to the patterns of this world but calls us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. This transformation is not only internal but also reflects outwardly in our behaviour, including how we dress. Our clothing, like every other aspect of our lives, should testify to the world that

this will show that they are continually seeking the higher, holier things of life.

Modesty, Practicality, and Health

Modest clothing is not only for the sake of appearance but also for the promotion of practicality and health. Is it okay to buy expensive clothing? Yes, but we need to think about the reason and the motivation behind it. “Practice economy in your outlay of means for dress. Remember that what you wear is constantly exerting an influence upon those with whom you come in contact. Do not lavish upon yourselves means that is

solutely. Imagine not buying anything for at least ten years! However, it is important to keep in mind that this does not apply to all types of clothing. I found that summer clothing can be cheap and long-lasting. This experience taught me that dressing myself should not be unnecessarily expensive. It is also true that we should avoid as much as possible, buying expensive clothing. We need to spend our money wisely. While it is true that good quality material is best, let us also understand that not everyone has the means to afford costly clothing. Ultimately and as much as possible, it is best not to buy expensive



clothes at all. Thrifting and minimalizing are one of the few ways for all to avoid overspending on clothing. It is a big mistake to submit to indulgence. “Gay or expensive apparel is not becoming to those who profess to believe that we are living in the last days...” -*Ibid.*, p. 420

Proper care and cleanliness is another way of saving money. If tender care is given to functional clothing, its usefulness will go a long way. “Neat, Attractive, Clean—The young should be encouraged to form correct habits

in dress, that their appearance may be neat and attractive; they should be taught to keep their garments clean and neatly mended. All their habits should be such as to make them a help and comfort to others. Let the attire be appropriate and becoming. Though only a ten-cent calico, it should be kept neat and clean.” -*Child Guidance*, p. 419

Jesus wore a seamless tunic, which was valuable but not extravagant (John 19:23-24). It was a simple garment, likely similar to what common people

wore, yet well-made—showing that modesty does not mean neglecting cleanliness or care in dress. Our goal is to serve others, we should not be occupied with how we look or what we should wear. “Many, in order to keep pace with absurd fashion, lose their taste for natural simplicity and are charmed with the artificial. They sacrifice time and money, the vigor of intellect, and true elevation of soul, and devote their entire being to the claims of fashionable life.” -*Ibid.*, p. 421

True modesty also takes care of our health. "The Body Should Not Be Constricted—The dress should fit easily, obstructing neither the circulation of the blood nor a free, full, natural respiration. The feet should be suitably protected from cold and damp. Clad in this way, we can take exercise in the open air, even in the dew of morning or evening, or after a fall of rain or snow, without fear of taking cold." *-Ibid.*, p. 425. If properly understood, modesty will not constrict but will improve our quality of life. Our clothing should not be tight in any part of the body. Men's fashion tends to tighten their upper body to show their muscular physique while women's fashion tends to tighten

Modesty and Salvation

In The Philippines, uniforms are a must in educational institutions. For a student to keep their good standing, they must follow this dress code. In my experience at my high school alma mater, a uniform inspection is done right at the entrance of the school with a teacher assigned. If a student is found with an incomplete uniform or not wearing a uniform at all, the teacher will ask to see if there is a valid excuse, otherwise entrance will not be permitted. This is done for the important reason that uniforms reflect the values and identity of the school. There is a reason why we choose to enroll

same. As students are expected to follow a dress code at school to maintain order and reflect the institution's standards, so too are Christians called to follow biblical principles of modesty—not as a means of earning salvation, but as an expression of reverence and obedience to Him.

This is to say that modesty *alone* is not the measure of our salvation. Just as wearing a school uniform does not guarantee academic success, dressing modestly is not a ticket to heaven. It is simply the working of the Holy Spirit in your heart. When your life is touched by the love of God, outward change follows the inward. "Dress is an index of the

Dress is an index of the mind and heart ... a sign of what is within.

Letters and Manuscripts, Vol. 15, p. 23

their waist, hips or chest for a more "defined" body. Obstruction of blood flow and poor blood circulation can cause many problems and can lead to diseases over a long period of time.

"Follow the customs in dress so far as they conform to health principles. Let our sisters dress plainly, as many do, having the dress of good, durable material, appropriate for this age, and let not the dress question fill the mind. Our sisters should dress with simplicity. They should clothe themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety. Give to the world a living illustration of the inward adorning of the grace of God." *-Ibid.*, p. 414

at a certain school. We understand which institution will help us achieve our goals for our future career. As Christians, our spiritual goal is and should be much higher. The way we dress is often a reflection of our values, our identity, and what we choose to represent. "The people of God are not now required to have a special mark placed upon their garments. But in the New Testament we are often referred to ancient Israel for examples." *-The Health Reformer*, February 1, 1872

Although *times have changed*, where fashion is no longer the same as in the Old Testament, the principle of God is still the

mind and heart. That which is hung upon the outside is a sign of what is within." *-Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 1, p. 289. If our identity is in Christ, should not our dress reflect that as well?

Therefore, dress reform is not about legalism or trying to earn salvation; it is about demonstrating the values of the Kingdom of God in our daily lives. It is a visible testimony of our commitment to live according to God's standards. Let us remember that our outward appearance, while important, is only a reflection of the inward change that God desires in each of us.

Amen.

Why is Music Reform Important?

By Mami Matsumoto

Introduction

Many people enjoy listening to or playing music. Music can reduce stress, provide comfort, and help people express joy, hope, sadness, or even cherished memories. However, not all music is beneficial. The impact of music depends on the *type of music* and the *purpose for which it is used*.

The Bible reminds us:

“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” 1 Corinthians 10:31

Music reform is important because music is strongly connected to both our physical and spiritual health. For the honour and glory of God, we have a responsibility to care for our body and mind. We choose healthy food to nourish the body and breathe clean, fresh air to protect our health. In the same way, music is an intake for the brain and has a powerful influence on our overall well-being.

The brain functions as the “conductor” of the body and produces the mind. When the brain is healthy, the rest of the body functions more effectively. Therefore, what we allow the brain to absorb—including music—matters greatly. Music is not merely a hobby or enter-



tainment; it has a crucial influence on our physical, mental, and spiritual life. As reformers, we must take music seriously for the honour and glory of God.

Beneficial Effects of Music on Health

Heavenly and Relaxing Music can be highly beneficial to our physical health. Research has shown that appropriate music can help relieve pain, anxiety, depression, dementia, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, cancer-related stress, COPD, autism-related symptoms, and more. This does not mean that music is magical, but rather that it works scientifically with the body.

When addressing disease, we must consider the *root cause*. Our bodies are designed to maintain a stable internal environment despite external changes—a process known as homeostasis. For example, when the temperature rises, the body sweats to cool itself, to prevent overheating.

Disease occurs when the body fails to maintain this balance. Music plays a role in this process because the brain and hormones are closely connected. When we listen to calming, orderly music, the body releases “happy hormones” such as dopamine, serotonin, and endorphins, while reducing cortisol, a stress hormone.

- **Dopamine** promotes pleasure and motivation
- **Serotonin** regulates mood, sleep, appetite, and digestion
- **Endorphins** act as natural painkillers

By supporting hormonal balance, appropriate music can help prevent illness and support healing. Thus, music is not only helpful for emotional well-being but also plays a meaningful role in maintaining physical health.

Adverse Effects of Music on Physical Health

Many people claim that there is no such thing as “bad” music. However, music is a powerful communicator that can influence us both positively and negatively.

Worldly music often has certain characteristics: use of drums, fast tempos, loud volume, and complex or chaotic compositions. When the brain processes this kind of music, it may interpret it as a threat, leading to overstimulation. As a result, the brain activates the sympathetic nervous system, commonly known as the “fight-or-flight” response.

This response releases stress hormones such as adrenaline, noradrenaline, and cortisol, which increase heart rate, tighten blood vessels, raise blood pressure, and elevate blood glucose levels.

While the body does require a small amount of stress hormones for balance, modern life already provides more than enough stress—through work, traffic, responsibilities, and daily worries. Adding additional stress through overstimulating music places unnecessary strain on the body. Over time, excessive stress hormones can exhaust the body's ability to restore balance, increasing the risk of diseases such as chronic pain, stroke, diabetes, and cardiovascular disorders.

Adverse Effects of Music on Spiritual Health

Worldly music not only affects physical health but also poses serious risks to spiritual well-being. Often, its influence is subtle and deceptive, suggesting ideas like “just once is okay.” This pattern is similar to other addictive behaviours.

Fast beats and rhythmic intensity can stimulate the brain in a way that feels temporarily relieving. However, once the stimulation stops, the brain craves it again, leading to dependency. This effect is not limited to secular genres such as pop or rock. Satan also attempts to weaken true worship by blending worldly musical elements—especially drums and rhythmic emphasis—into hymns, making believers mistake emotional excitement for the work of the Holy Spirit.

Ellen G. White warns:

“There will be shouting, with drums, music, and dancing. The senses of rational beings will become so confused that they cannot be trusted to make right decisions. And this is called the moving of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit never reveals itself in such methods, in such a bedlam of noise. This is an invention of Satan to cover up his ingenious methods for making of none effect the pure, sincere, elevating, ennobling, sanctifying truth for this time.... A bedlam of noise shocks the senses and perverts that which if conducted aright might be a blessing. The powers of Satanic agencies blend with the din and noise, to have a carnival, and this is termed the Holy Spirit's working.... Those participating in the supposed revival receive impressions which lead

them adrift. They cannot tell what they formerly knew regarding Bible principles." -*A New Life*, p. 49-50

Such practices confuse spiritual discernment and lead people away from biblical principles rather than closer to God.

Conclusion

The central question we must ask is: For whom is our music? Is it for self-gratification, or for the honour and glory of God?

Music is a precious gift from God, designed to uplift the mind and support health. When used according to worldly culture, it can bring harmful physical and spiritual consequences. But when used reverently, it becomes a

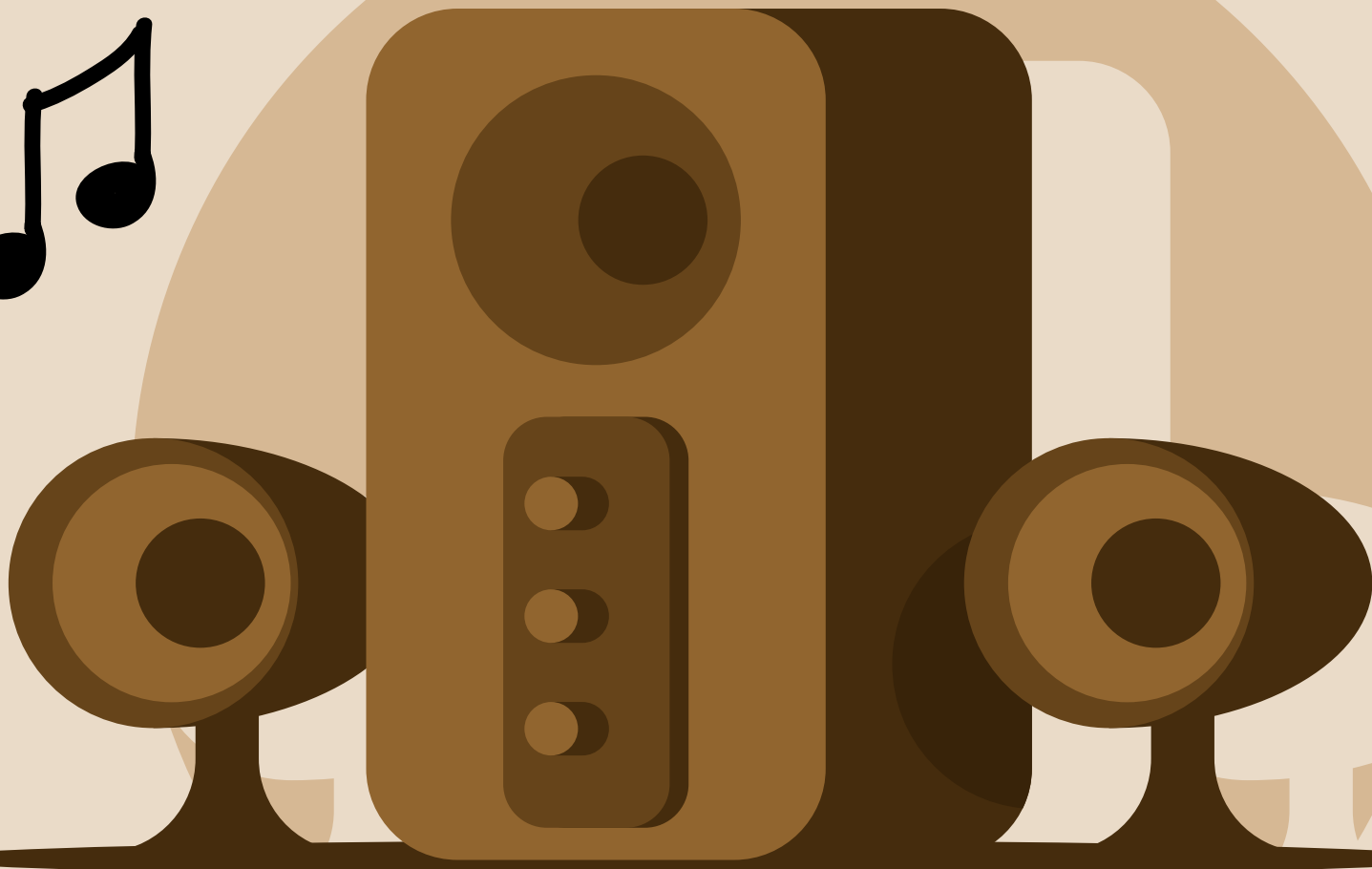
powerful tool for worship and a health benefit.

Ellen G. White writes:

"Music forms a part of God's worship in the courts above, and we should endeavor, in our songs of praise, to approach as nearly as possible to the harmony of the heavenly choirs. The proper training of the voice is an important feature in education and should not be neglected. Singing, as a part of religious service, is as much an act of worship as is prayer. The heart must feel the spirit of the song to give it right expression."
-*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 594

In conclusion, music is powerful in both beneficial and harmful ways. We must thoughtfully consider how we use music and what kind of music we allow into our lives. Dear youth and readers, let us remember that music should honour God and protect the body as His temple.

May God bless you, and may your heart be filled with true heavenly music. Amen.



Do Not Touch Do Not Taste Do Not Handle

By Ylenia Gallo

In a society where overconsumption and self-indulgence are praised, Christians, especially the youth, are often peer-pressured or feel alienated because of their life choices. Things like coffee, tobacco, alcohol, and sugar: Sister Ellen G. White devotes many paragraphs in her writings to the dangers associated with substances the world uses regularly and without moderation. For many, these habits are regarded as “normal”: a cup of coffee to wake up, an energy drink to study, a drink to relax, or a vape to cope with stress. Yet behind the trend and the peer pressure, there is a deeper question: Why are these sub-

stances so attractive that people cannot stop, even when they know that they are harmful? And, what does it mean to be a faithful, young Christian in the middle of all this?

The God-given reward system

God created the human brain with a sophisticated reward system intended to reinforce what sustains life and nurtures spiritual and relational well-being. When

a person eats nourishing food, invests in meaningful relationships, engages in purposeful work, worships, or serves others, the brain releases dopamine, a neurotransmitter associated with pleasure, motivation, and learning. Dopamine functions as a biochemical “well done,” encouraging repetition of behaviours that are beneficial physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Natural, authentic rewards elicit moderate responses that support a balanced mood, clear judgment, and self-control. This design reflects divine wisdom: human beings are meant to find joy in what is wholesome and to have minds capable of both delight and sober judgment, so that spiritual discernment is not clouded by artificial stimulation.



How addiction reshapes the brain

Addictive substances subvert this God-given design by producing dopamine surges far beyond what natural experiences provide, often two to ten times higher than ordinary rewards and in an unnaturally rapid, intense manner. Over time, repeated exposure induces measurable changes in brain structure and function, following a familiar pattern from experimentation to regular use, to risky use with emerging harm, and finally to dependence. In dependence, the brain has adapted so extensively that the person feels they need the substance to feel “normal,” and attempts to cut back provoke withdrawal, intense cravings, and distress. Biologically, the brain tries to compensate for repeated dopamine floods by downregulating its own dopamine production and decreasing receptor sensitivity. This results in tolerance: needing larger amounts to achieve the same effect, and a blunted response to ordinary, healthy pleasures. At the same time, cortical regions involved in judgment and impulse control are weakened, while subcortical circuits that drive habit and compulsion become more dominant. Addiction is therefore not merely a moral failing or a series of poor choices; it is also a chronic brain

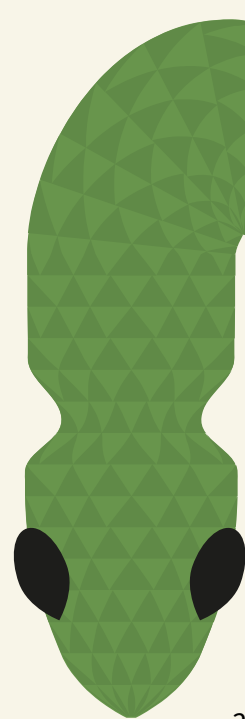
condition that erodes the very capacities, reason, self-control, and foresight that Scripture calls Christians to exercise.

Tobacco, alcohol, caffeine, and sugar

Ellen White describes tobacco as a substance that “weakens the brain and paralyzes its fine sensibilities. Its use excites a thirst for strong drink, and. . . lays the foundation for the liquor habit.” –*Child Guidance*, p. 404. Nicotine, a chemical widely found in tobacco leaves, reaches the brain within seconds of inhalation, binds to nicotinic receptors, and rapidly stimulates dopamine release, powerfully reinforcing use and producing cravings and withdrawal symptoms such as irritability and anxiety when it is absent. Tobacco smoke also contains carcinogens and toxic compounds that damage lung tissue, inflame the airways, and markedly increase the risk of cancers and chronic respiratory disease, turning what is often framed as a small comfort into a progressive assault on life and mental clarity.

Alcohol is socially embedded in many worldly contexts (from corporate events to family celebrations) and is often portrayed as a symbol of sophistic-

ation or relaxation. Yet its pharmacological and spiritual effects are deeply concerning. Alcohol acts through the same reward pathways as other addictive substances. It creates feelings of relaxation and eu-



phoria, which reinforce repeated use. Over time, this can lead to damage and shrinking of neurons in regions critical for memory, decision-making, and impulse control. Additionally, alcohol can cause toxic progression in the liver, from fatty change to cirrhosis. Ellen White warns in *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 561, that indulging the appetite for strong drink paralyzes reason, benumbs the intellect, and excites the animal passions, leading to acts of “the most debasing char-

“ Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

Genesis 3:3

acter,” a description that aligns strikingly with modern observations of alcohol-related violence and moral breakdown. Indulgence in alcohol is linked to the paralysis of reason and the excitation of animal passions, leading to actions that degrade those created in the image of God. For the Christian, this is not merely a health issue; it is a profound spiritual concern.

Caffeine occupies a culturally privileged place as a socially acceptable stimulant, associated

chronic heavy use, disrupting sleep, contributing to anxiety and cardiovascular strain. Sister White calls coffee “a hurtful indulgence” that briefly stimulates mental activity but leaves “exhaustion, prostration, paralysis of the mental, moral, and physical powers” and a permanently lessened activity of the brain if the habit is not overcome (*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 421).

Another substance many young people hardly question, be-

ibid., p. 327), drawing a line from disordered digestion to impaired mental clarity and irritability. She further observes, “I frequently sit down to the tables of the brethren and sisters, and see that they use a great amount of milk and sugar. These clog the system, irritate the digestive organs, and affect the brain. Anything that hinders the active motion of the living machinery affects the brain very directly. And from the light given me, sugar, when largely



with productivity, sophistication, and even church fellowship. Still, its physiological effects warrant sober consideration. Under normal conditions, a specific molecule called adenosine accumulates throughout the day, signalling the brain to slow down and prepare for sleep. Caffeine works by blocking adenosine receptors that signal sleepiness to the brain, suppressing the perception of fatigue, interacting with dopaminergic systems, and, in

cause it is everywhere, in snacks and drinks, and it feels so good in the moment that it is hard to stop, is sugar. Refined sugar and highly sweetened foods, although legal and socially encouraged, can also exploit the brain’s reward circuits in a way that promotes compulsive overconsumption. Ellen White notes that “sugar is not good for the stomach. It causes fermentation, and this clouds the brain and brings peevishness into the disposition.” (–

used, is more injurious than meat.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 369

Modern research echoes these concerns: high-sugar foods can trigger a robust dopamine release in the reward system, mimicking key features of substance dependence in experimental models. Large reviews also associate high intakes of added sugar with increased risks of obesity, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and

other chronic conditions, reinforcing the idea that habitual sugar excess is not simply a harmless preference but a serious issue of health and temperance. From a Christian perspective, the problem is not the existence of sugar itself, but the intemperate, culturally normalized patterns of use that cloud the brain, disturb the disposition, and pull the appetites away from the control of sanctified reason.

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.” Titus 2:11-12

Youth should be trained to say no to unhealthy cravings and to cultivate clear minds and disciplined bodies that can respond to God’s voice. Ellen White applies the same principle very concretely in *Christian Temperance and Bible Hy-*

forbidden items; it means embracing a positive vision of life where your body is understood as the temple of the Holy Spirit, your mind is guarded as a place where God can speak clearly, and energy, joy, and courage are sought from healthy habits and from Christ rather than from a can, a cup, or a chemical. In practice, it may look like choosing not to experiment with vaping or alcohol, even when friends insist “everyone does it,” avoiding caffeine and setting



A Christian ethic of temperance and freedom

The grace of God calls for Christians to live free from the control of substances that darken the mind and weaken self-control. For young believers growing up in a culture of stimulants, energy drinks, vaping, alcohol, and sugar overload, this is both a challenge and an invitation to a different, deeper kind of life.

No better conclusion to this article than the words of the Bible:

giene, p. 36, writing that, if people would “touch not, taste not, handle not, tea, coffee, tobacco, wines, opium, and alcoholic drinks, reason would take the reins of government in her own hands, and hold the appetites and passions under control,” explicitly linking temperance with restored clarity of judgment and moral strength.

My dear youth, I hope you understand that this message consists in more than just a list of

limits on sugary drinks to protect sleep and mood, and intentionally seeking better natural rewards instead of fake, artificial ones that leave you emptier and feeling more miserable than before.

Be sober.

Remember to bear the image of Your Creator.

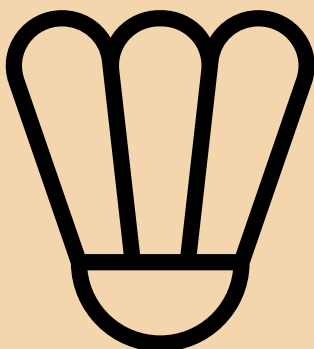
May God bless you,
Your sister in Christ.

Worldly Entertainment



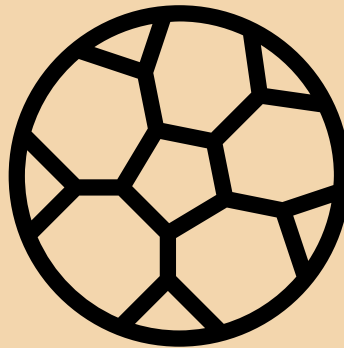
One must take a side when it comes to one's likes, hobbies, and passions. It is why it has always been said that everything must align—not only in marriage, not only in studies, but also in your beliefs.

When we look at the world of entertainment, which also includes sports, you can see that the fandom or the domain of such sports may be a little breathtaking or exhausting. For some people, certain sports are almost at the same level as a religion. And then we should ask ourselves: Is it something so deep also for us? Is it something that can really take away one's peace or one's focus?



Whether you play or watch, it should not be a big portion of your life—however, that is easier said than done. We enjoy it; we love the escape, or better yet, we would like to be part of the story. And so the question comes to us as well: What do us as reformers do? How do we deal with daily entertainment?

The world is daunting and increasingly entertaining. We must really ask ourselves: Is this taking over my life? And by taking over my life, is it grasping



most of my attention? Do I find myself thinking about this day and night, hour after hour—when I am at school, when I am at home with family, when I am in a meeting? To be clearer, has this gone from a normal hobby and enjoyment to an obsession?

If we are honest with ourselves, this obsession is leading us slowly away from what is truly important. It distracts us from doing our Father's will, and it hinders us from bringing more

people to know Jesus—not only through our words, but also through our actions.

We are warned about this very trap: “The desire for excitement and pleasing entertainment is a temptation and a snare to God's people, and especially to the young. Satan is constantly preparing inducements to attract minds from the solemn work of preparation for scenes just in the future. Through the agency of worldlings he keeps up a continual excitement to induce the unwary to join in worldly pleasures. There are shows, lectures, and an endless variety of entertainment that are calculated to lead to a love of the world; and through this union with the world, faith is weakened.” —*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 325

Don't get me wrong—participating in sports brings a lot of health benefits, not only physical but also mental. It is a place where you can not only interact but also learn. But letting that sport control your attention span or your emotions? That is when one should consider: It is not that deep.

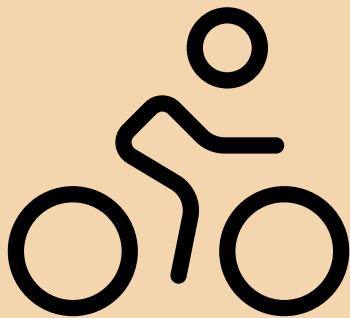
To be honest, yes, you could be frustrated by a game, but taking it to the next level—as the world already does—is both unhealthy and severely dangerous. I see it as a way of distracting us from the real purpose. Our purpose is

VS. Christian Recreation

By Juan Oviedo

to be a light in this world, not to join the world that is losing itself.

We must distinguish between worldly amusement and true recreation: “The Lord has



shown me that Sabbath-keepers as a rule labor too hard, without allowing themselves change or periods of rest. Recreation is needful to those who engage in physical labor, and is still more essential for those whose work is principally mental. It is not essential to our salvation nor for the glory of God to keep the mind laboring constantly and excessively, even upon religious themes. There are amusements, such as card-playing, dancing, theater-going,



etc., which we cannot approve, because Heaven condemns them. They open the door to great evils. By their exciting tendency they produce in some minds a passion for gambling and dissipation. All such amusements should be condemned by Christians, and something perfectly harmless should be substituted in their place. There are modes of recreation which are highly beneficial to both mind and body. An enlightened, discriminating mind will find abundant means for entertainment and diversion from sources not only innocent, but instructive. Recreation in the open air, and the contemplation of the works of God in nature, will be of the highest benefit.”—*Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 108

Ultimately, it is you who has the responsibility to decide. Look at the hobbies you engage in, the things you watch, participate in, and talk about. Has it taken over your life? Is that your identity? Because ultimately, I would pray and hope that we all have our identity in Christ. Yes, other things may be added, but what is your top priority at all times? Remember, we cannot serve two masters.

Be honest and decide: Do I need to abstain from this for a while and detox myself? It is far more beneficial to develop a character in harmony with Christ and a

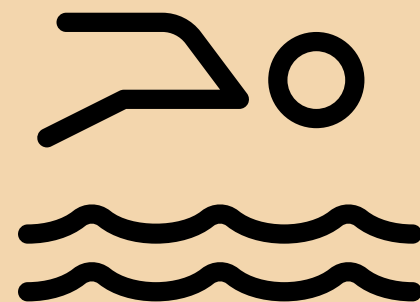


heavenly character than to know all the fine details of a sport.

Ultimately, remember: God created healthy amusements for us—the ones that bring us closer to Him.

“There are modes of recreation which are highly beneficial to both mind and body. An enlightened, discriminating mind will find abundant means for entertainment and diversion from sources not only innocent, but instructive. Recreation in the open air, the contemplation of the works of God in nature, will be of the highest benefit.” — *Christian Education*, p. 35

Amen.



CANADIAN REFORM YOUTH

LOUD CRY NEWS

WHAT HAPPENED, IS HAPPENING AND WILL HAPPEN



Food for Thought:
Turning Back the Clock

By Jason Climaco, Canadian Field Youth Department Leader

I wish I could turn back time sometimes.

To places, to people.

To moments that only exist in my memories.

I'm sure you've felt the same way too. Especially when you look at an old picture, hear a certain song, or even smell an aroma in the air that connects to an experience in your past. To those times when your family was still together. To when you were a kid. To when there were no fights. Or to when things felt different than they do now.

The desire to live in the past, and to relive moments in our head is a human experience. And yet, we are bound by time that moves forward, and not backward. This of course has no impact on our yearning of times past.

While the past can come with its waves of feel good memories, for some the past can trigger all sorts of emotions. Grief. Frustration. Sadness. Sadly, for many people the past comes with a haunting, rather than bliss. For many the past doesn't trigger a feeling a of satisfaction, but rather feelings of doubt, regrets, and "what if's".

What if I hadn't?

What if I had?

This experience of looking at the past was lived by people in the Bible too.

In Exodus 17:1-4 we read of the experience of the Israelites as they travel through the wilderness.

In their journey, they are met with several challenges, including thirst, hunger, and outright frustration.

A particular experience they have in Exodus 17 is a challenge of thirst. As they walk on and on in their journey they see that slowly all the privileges they had experienced in Egypt have now slowly slipped through their fingers. While they could be content with a nomadic lifestyle (living in tents), heat and even hunger, they are now faced with the challenge of dehydration.

Have you ever felt thirsty in your life? I'm not talking about just taking in your daily water intake, but a thirst that comes from inside, a thirst you can't shake off. It could have happened because you were engaged in being active, or maybe because it was very hot outside on a summer day?

The thirst that the Israelites experienced at that moment was true thirst! They needed water, and fast. Yet, in their desire for water they forgot about the One who had provided in the past. The One who had given them shelter, food, and even water (beforehand)! And so they complain, they argue, and they sulk.

Interestingly in Exodus 17:3 it reads "And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?"

Notice that they not only seek for water, but they also do something else. They look to their past. They compare the present with their past, glossing over completely what their past was really like! They don't think about the slavery, the lack of freedom, the pain, the suf-

fering, they only focus on water! In their minds, a past with material goods in slavery is better in their eyes than a present without material goods in freedom. Slavery over freedom.

In all of their arguing and complaining, the Israelites forget about the God of the present to focus on their gods of the past—in this case water, or material wealth.

Young person are you replacing the God of today with your dreams of yesterday? Have you decided to live in the What If's of your life forgetting about all of the good that God has given you today?

Do you want to know how their experience of thirst ends? I'm sure you can guess.

God provides for them. Just like He always had, and just like He always will.

God provided in the best way. God didn't send them back to Egypt to get water. To send them back to slavery. No. Instead God provided their need in the present. He taught them trust and provision right where they were. He remained their God in the present.

Youth, God can provide for you today. He can take away your What If's and your desire to turn back time if you let Him show you how good He can be in you today.

In your thirst, in your hunger, in your wilderness, cry out to Him and He will provide for you. Not only in giving you your need, in shaping your heart to trust Him even when the answer looks different than you expected.



“And be not conformed to this world:
but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind,
that ye may prove what is that good,
and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

Romans 12:2



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