



## 2026 2Q Growing in a Relationship with God Lesson 12: Share Him

by Tim Jennings

### SABBATH

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The title of the lesson is Sharing Him.

Why do we share Jesus with others?

- Is it, as the lesson says in Sunday's lesson, because "Jesus gave us a mandate to share His message with the world." Must we follow orders, the mandate of Jesus lest we will be bad, disobedient, and sinful and therefore get into legal trouble and be subject to punishment?
- Is it because we work for the church and have baptism goals to meet?
- Is it to make people members of our denomination?
- Is it because we are afraid that if we don't we will hear these words Jesus spoke about the Master speaking to the servant who buried their talent:
  - "His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.'" Matthew 25:26–27 NIV84.
- Is it because we love God and have come to know Him, and having applied His methods to our lives we have found life is better, more rewarding, and we are in reality healthier and happier people and our hearts overflow with love for Him and we can't help but share it?
- Is it because we love people and want them to share in the joy of knowing Jesus?

Does it make a difference why we share Jesus with others? What difference does it make?

Did you read my blog for this week on tithe and methods?

What difference does it make to pay tithe blindly, out of a rule to an organization you were raised in and told you had an obligation to pay it to, versus in a loving covenant relationship with God whom you eagerly are cooperating with for the fulfillment of His mission, so you seek to intelligently return the tithe to the channels where you understand the gospel is being advanced?

Wouldn't the latter require one to think, reason, study, pray and actively participate in understanding the gospel and wouldn't that impact the worshiper in a positive way for God's kingdom? And wouldn't that result in them not only personally coming closer to Jesus, but also being more effective in their ability to share Jesus with others?

So, our reasons for sharing Jesus make a huge difference, why are we sharing Him?

Why does this ministry exist? Because we want to share Jesus, in truth, in reality—because only reality, only God’s truth and love restored in hearts has the power to save, to set free, to restore, as Paul wrote:

- I am not ashamed of the **gospel**, because it is the **power of God** for the salvation of everyone who believes... Romans 1:16 NIV84, emphasis mine.

What kind of power is this? Is this physical power? Is this legislative power? Is this judicial power? Is it police power? What kind of power is gospel power? It is the power of good news—okay, what kind of power is good news?

It is the power of truth and love, “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit says the Lord.” Zechariah 4:6.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth and love—how does truth and love have power? This is the power of God to heal, transform, and save sinners from sin—because where does sin happen? In hearts and minds, and what is sin? A breakdown of love and trust as Paul wrote “whatever is not of faith is sin” Romans 14:23.

So the gospel is the power of God and notice what Paul says in the very next verse the gospel or good news reveals:

- For **in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed**, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last. Romans 1:17 NIV84.

A righteousness from God is revealed—what does that mean?

What is righteousness? Rightness, correctness, order, cosmos, perfection, God’s structure for life, God’s design and protocols, the way God built and constructed life to operate, the design laws of life and reality—the life-giving operating code for life!

The gospel is the rightness, perfection, reality, trustworthiness, reliability, righteousness of God Himself. God is the source of all reality. He spoke reality into existence, He created life and He sustains life. Only in union, harmony, alignment with God is there life and health and thriving and happiness.

- “For in him we live and move and have our being.” Acts 17:28 NIV84.

Sin is deviation from God, from His design, from His structure, from His protocols for life, it is encoding into our being, our brains, our minds, hearts, characters corruption, falsehood, error, that directly causes decay cascades of fear, selfishness, guilt, shame—and it takes us away from our Creator, Him in who we live, and move, and have our very existence.

God is infinite, we are finite, the only way for finite beings to advance, grow, mature, develop without encoding error is if we are aligned and connected to God and keep God as supreme in their minds and hearts as the standard of reality. The moment a finite being replaces God as the standard with anything else, including self, because of how reality works, we will necessarily encode error about reality into our being and corrupt ourselves.

This is what Lucifer did in heaven when he became proud and made self supreme rather than keeping God supreme.

This is Satan's method today; he seeks to get people to either make self supreme or to worship a false god who is functionally no different than self, so that their standard of right, truth, reality is corrupt and even as they try to do right they encode more error.

The war is over the knowledge of God, thus the gospel, the good news, is the truth, righteousness of God Himself and that truth is supremely revealed in and through Jesus. And this knowledge is not cognitive knowledge, not fact knowledge, it is experiential knowledge, what we know by experience—this was the purpose of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil—what would they choose to know and encode into their being as the motivational principles and operational protocols for their being? Would they choose to know good, love, trust, truth, loyalty, devotion—life; or would they choose evil, lies, fear, guilt, shame, distrust, decay and death?

They chose to know evil because of that we are all born wired, encoded, motivated, animated by a spirit of fear and distrust that leads to more encoding errors, thus we must receive the gospel—the eternal good news about God and know it, not know about it, not know it cognitively, but know it in heart, in motive, in principle, in internalized methods that God is trustworthy, God is righteous, and we encode that trust through choices to live His principles and trust Him with how life turns out.

And that is why God says:

- This is the **covenant** I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will **put my laws in their minds** and **write them on their hearts. I will be their God**, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because **they will all know me**, from the least of them to the greatest. Hebrews 8:10-11 NIV84, emphasis mine.

The truth, good news about God and His design laws for life, truth and love, are encoded, written, upon the substrate of our brains as we choose truth and then choose to surrender self in trust and love, we open our hearts and our spirits are changed, we die to fear and selfishness and are reborn with the life of Christ, and that new animation, motivation, empowers us to continue to trust, to love, and to choose truth and we heal, mature, grow, are transformed, and we come into ever-increasing intimacy with God. We know Him and we bear His image again. His name is written upon our foreheads.

## WEDNESDAY

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The lesson is about the wandering child, the child that walks away from what they were taught.

The lesson focuses on the book of Hosea and Ephraim as a representation of the children of Israel.

Read Hosea 4:17:

- Ephraim is joined to idols; leave him alone! Hosea 4:17 NIV84.

Read Hosea 7:1-2:

- “Whenever I would restore the fortunes of my people, whenever I would heal Israel, the sins of Ephraim are exposed and the crimes of Samaria revealed. They practice deceit, thieves break into houses, bandits rob in the streets; but they do not realize that I remember all their evil deeds. Their sins engulf them; they are always before me. Hosea 7:1-2 NIV84.

What do you hear? God wants to heal and restore them, but He cannot why?

Because they are continuing to choose sickness, disease, fear, selfishness, to actively break God’s laws of life, the design laws of health, what the Bible calls sins, and thus they continue to encode into themselves false beliefs, false practices, methods, standards, solidifying defiant attitudes, motives, and fear, guilt, shame, and selfishness.

God is the God of reality, of truth, and thus what they are doing is always before Him, He sees reality, He sees their terrible corrupt, decaying, sick, condition for what it is, and He sees that their choices to reject truth, reject love, reject Him necessarily and consequentially cause them to deteriorate and decay, their sins engulf them. Thus He remembers it all, like any loving physician would be aware of all the cancer they need to remove.

There is nothing penal legal going on, it is reality—God is like a doctor who has a child who is dying of endocarditis from using dirty needles to shoot up heroin. Despite the doctor’s pleas, willingness, and love, despite the doctor/father providing the antibiotics that will cure, and a rehab program of truth and love that will transform the child’s heart and free them from addiction, the child persistently refuses to trust, to take the antibiotics, to surrender self, to engage in treatment and instead chooses to daily inject more heroin with dirty needles injecting more bacteria worsening their infection.

But despite this, God will not give up on them:

- “How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? Hosea 11:8 NIV84.

Love doesn’t want to let go but wants to save, heal, and set free.

Read third paragraph,

- Through Ephraim's story, we learn that there is always hope, because God doesn't give up. Although He rebukes His wayward people time and time again, God's compassion never fails, and His message in this chapter continues (see Jer. 31:20). *Adult SS Guide 2<sup>nd</sup> Q 2026, Growing in a Relationship with God*, p. 100.

It is true that God is love, He is constant, always for us, always pouring out truth and love, always providing everything for our salvation, is it true that God never gives up? Or is there a time when God does release, let go, surrender people to their choice to reject all healing, all truth, all love, and let them reap what they have chosen?

And what is the criteria for what causes God to stop holding back sin's devastation and allow sinners to reap what they have chosen, for Him to let go and stop intervening to heal? When the individual sinner has destroyed within themselves the capacity to respond to truth and love. God doesn't stop ever, if there is a shred of possibility for a sinner to be healed. God only stops when the sinner has sealed themselves in rebellion, sin, death, where truth and love is experienced by the sinner exclusively as torment and torture and every ray of truth and love causes the sinner to encode more lies, more selfishness, more fear, and decay even more. We see glimpses of this in the evil spirits who speak to Christ,

- “What do you want with us, Son of God?” they shouted. “Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?” Matthew 8:29 NIV84.

Jesus only ever blessed, healed, restored, used power to uplift, cleanse, free. Jesus never coerced, forced, punished, never tortured. But the mind that has rejected all truth and love that has solidified in lies, fear, selfishness, has encoded such distortion that their encoding errors become filters through which they process events, facts, data, and thus even when they see Jesus forgiving sinners without payment, without punishment, they do not extrapolate that Jesus would forgive them, instead they see a being who will torture and abuse.

There is nothing God can do for people who choose to destroy themselves in this way. So, whenever a person comes to the point of destroying their capacity to respond to truth and love, God's sadly lets them go.

And if anyone listening has worry, fear, concern, guilt, afraid “have I committed the unpardonable sin? Am I beyond saving? Have I done this?” If you are having those thoughts and feelings, those very thoughts and feelings are evidence that you have not done this. Those who have done this hear truth and don't feel guilt, shame, fear, inadequate, a desire for anything better—they feel hate, anger, like life isn't fair, resentment, bitterness, and desire to hurt others.

God provides everything for our salvation—except....our choice!

God cannot choose for us. God cannot cause us to stop running, to stop hiding, to stop interpreting His actions through false lenses that keep us afraid, thus while He continues to pursue, we are free to

continue to reject, and if people reject truth long enough they so change themselves that they solidify themselves in fear and selfishness, destroy the faculties that respond to truth and love and no amount of truth and love or opportunities would do any further good. The lost are lost not because God ever stops being willing to heal or closes the door of His heart, but because the wicked cut themselves off from Him, from life, from truth.

But we can never judge when that happens in a person's life. We need to understand this process so that we recognize reality and God's trustworthiness, that the wicked are not lost because God stops caring, closes the door, reaches a preset timeline and calls it quits or any other arbitrary or legal reason. No, the wicked are lost only because they have chosen to encode within their being lies and selfishness so deeply, so fully, so completely that they prefer it totally and hate truth and love and any further truth and love is rejected and hated.

Thus, there is nothing God can do for them, so He stops using His divine power to hold at bay what they have chosen and dispels the artificial bubble of reality He has held planet Earth in since Adam's sin and His life giving glory traverses everything again, and the wicked hate the fires of truth and love and choose for themselves that they would rather not live than live in truth and love. God takes no life from the wicked, but they choose to die rather than be corrected, healed, perfected, and restored. They beg for the mountains to fall on them and hide them from Him.

So we need to recognize the truth of how reality works so we don't encode a lie about God that keeps us from trusting Him, but we cannot tell if any person has passed that line—only God knows that, so we keep people in prayer, we continue to be agents of Jesus, guided by the Holy Spirit seeking to plant seeds of truth and love into the lives of those who have wandered away. We daily stand like the father to the Prodigal Son, looking for the wayward child to turn toward home, toward health, toward God so we can run out to meet them and wrap them in our arms of love and restore them to the family of God. But that requires their turning around.

And that turning around, when someone has walked the path of rebellion, requires something of significant enough value to them to enter their life that it introduces enough energy into their system, into their brains, specifically into the substructures of their neurons where they have encoded their distortions, to cause those systems that have encoded error to enter a state of uncertainty where new truth can be chosen, and when chosen it encodes, which structurally changes the molecules in the brain and in real time changes the spirit—the animating motivating energy.

This is why the father left the prodigal in the pig pen, because it was that distress that finally broke through the long held distortions, denial, beliefs that it wasn't so bad, and caused him to be willing to swallow pride, humble self, and seek a better way—this is the alcoholic hitting rock bottom.

And because the father met the child with truth and love the child was able to encode truth and love and was transformed, healed, saved.

However, if the father would have sent the child pizza every day, and put him up in a cheap motel so his son wouldn't have to sleep and eat with the pigs, that comfort measure would insulate the child

from the consequences of his own choices, and thereby decrease the intensity of the situation, blunting the energy and either delay or prevent the child's brain from reaching the point of distress where enough energy was introduced to put the system back into a state of uncertainty where an **opportunity** exists for truth to be encoded and their life changed.

Distress in that situation is one method—another possibility is when a person living with the pigs meets someone who shows them genuine love, accepts them as a person, and knows them—that sense of being seen in one's greatest shame and still loved and valued can also provide the energy input necessary to put the system into a state of uncertainty where real change can be made—this is the woman caught in adultery. And we know many stories of addicts who have been reached in this way as well.

My point, is if you have a child who is wayward, don't give up, keep praying, keep asking God to intervene and bring opportunities for change, but I want to tell you reality—God will bring those opportunities, moments when truth is presented with sufficient energy to provide a real opportunity for change, but those moments DO NOT determine the choice of the individual.

If, when those moments occur, the individual instead of choosing truth, choose to cling to lies and previous held distortions, they don't simply stay in the position they were in, no, they worsen. Why? Because the situation that created the opportunity for real change put their system into uncertainty, which is necessary to consider new possibilities, to be able to encode truth.

But if the truth is rejected, they don't end up in the same place, but worse off why? Because they don't merely reencode their brains with the same lies and distortions, they had to process new truth, and rejecting it results in expansion within their own brain, their own tubulin system of the distortion, these systems are reinforcing and expanding.

So if instead of choosing the truth they double down on the lie, not only does the previous circuit collapse back into the corrupt conformation but it recruits new microtubules and the distortion, the error, the false belief spreads further within the brain and the person becomes more solidified into their distortion. This is the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. It hardened because he was given situations that created opportunity for real change, but he chose the lies and error over and again thus hardening himself.

But this is the only option for real healing, so we pray, and ask God for these moments and again, we don't give up even to the very end of their life why? Because they might still be reachable, consider the thief on the cross who finally was reached right before his death.

I want you to consider the following parable:

- Patience and Prudence are members of the same church. They grew up in the same community, attended the same church schools, and both married Christian men. They are members of the same congregation and both have sons near the same age—Patience's son is named Rob and Prudence's son is named Jude.

Jude from an early age is a good boy, obedient, on time, always dressed nicely, speaks politely, gets good grades in school, helps the teachers and is noted for his sharp and quick mind. He was elected class president, served on the debate team, helped with mission trips, and worked closely with school and church leaders. He is often called upon to read Scripture in church, as he is well spoken, bright, and well liked. Eventually, he graduates college and becomes a member of the general conference committee and is involved in forming church policy.

Rob, on the other hand, struggles from an early age. He is talkative in school, plays tricks on other students, skips classes, doesn't do his homework, and his grades are very poor. He gets in arguments and fights occasionally. His mother prays and prays, talks with him, and disciplines him but it doesn't seem to help. In adolescence he begins drinking, drops out of school, hangs out with the wrong crowd and is soon burglarizing homes and stealing as a profession. He is eventually caught and as a repeat offender is imprisoned for his crimes.

Back at church Patience frequently runs into Prudence, who never fails to mention how wonderful her son is, his latest accomplishments and then, with contrived concern, always asks about Rob's latest troubles and expresses how sad she is that Rob has caused her so much grief.

Which mother would you rather be? Which of these two children would you rather is yours?

Now, as Paul Harvey would have famously said, for the rest of the story:

Jude is better known as Judas, and Rob is better known not as "The Robber" but as "The Thief on the cross" who accepted Jesus as his Savior—now which child would you prefer is yours?

What is the point of this story?

- Man looks on the outward appearance the Lord looks on the heart
- Just because someone is struggling with sin in this world does not mean they are beyond salvation, and they may be more reachable than those indoctrinated into religious dogma and ritual—why?

Because those living like the thief don't have any sense of peace, they know something is wrong. But the legalistic, religionist, Pharisee, is often filled with such pride that they think they are rich and full of righteousness and don't realize their own terminal sinfulness.

Another point on wandering children, have you ever heard this Proverb?

- Raise a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6

This proverb has caused perhaps more distress than any I have known, why? Because this rendering of the verse does not make the truth easily understandable for most people, and most people encode a misunderstanding from the way this is translated.

This rendering leads to the false idea that if you do a good job in parenting you are guaranteed a good outcome. But this is a bad translation, a better translation is:

- Raise a child *according to his way* and when he is old he will not depart from it.

The Hebrew allows for both, so why should we believe mine is the more accurate one?

Consider a test case of a perfect, sinless, flawless parent raising children—as in God raising Lucifer and the angels and Adam and Eve, what happened? Did God not raise them right? Of course not, the proverb isn't a promise if you do a good job you are guaranteed a good outcome but if you do not job, let the child dictate its rearing, you are guaranteed a solidification of fear, selfishness, narcissism and there will be nothing sown into their heart that will counter that.

There is also another possible meaning which is true:

- Raise a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will *remember* it.

This doesn't mean they will turn back, but that they will remember what they were taught, say to themselves, "I was taught better than this. I knew better."

I think that is a very strong understanding of the text—and fits with,

- “ ‘As surely as I live,’ says the Lord, ‘every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.’ ” Romans 14:11 NIV84.

When Satan and the lost confess Jesus is Lord, they acknowledge reality, the truth, “yes I was taught better than this, but I still prefer this.”

So, the proverb can also represent a promise that if we teach our children right, while we don't get a guaranteed good outcome, we can know that they will take with them truths that will be present in their memories and that will be opportunities for them to choose truth and repent.

One other caveat about the wayward child—what of the child who wanders away from what a parent taught them because what the parent taught them was wrong?

Consider all those we evangelize around the world. Don't we want them to walk away from wrong teachings their parents taught them? Consider if Saul of Tarsus' father was Caiaphas, wouldn't Caiaphas think Saul had become a wandering child?

And within Christianity, it is often the case that someone walks away not from Christ, but from denominational dogmas—what then?

Is there a place to look past “they walked away from what they were taught” to how are they functioning? What is the result of their walk? If they are walking the path of Jesus, of truth and love, then they will grow, mature, heal, become ever more like Jesus, kind, patient, loving, gracious, forgiving, seek to be a blessing to others. They will have more internal peace with self, less fear, less worry, less unhealthy life practices.

But if they are walking away from what parents taught into error, then their life will reveal ever increasing chaos, distress, pain, suffering, conflict, problems.

So if a parent has a child who walked away from what was taught, look at their life, see the fruit, and if they are objectively growing more like Christ, then consider, have they advanced in some truth that I haven't yet seen and embraced?

## **TUESDAY**

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The lesson is about tips on how to share Jesus:

- Pray the Holy Spirit will work on the person's heart.
- Look for natural ways to share your faith in conversation.
- Find ways to connect them with other church members.
- Pray about specific needs they might have and how you might be able to help them.
- Share Bible wisdom.
- Ask if they would like to engage in Bible study

Thoughts about any of these?

I skipped the first suggestion they made, which is:

- Get to know someone and build a friendship with them over time.

Thoughts about this one? When I read this one I thought, I need to ask the class, how do we balance this suggestion with:

- Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.”

“Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.” 2 Corinthians 6:14–17 NIV84.

This is not speaking only of marriage—it is speaking of making relationships, friendships. Paul also wrote to the Corinthians that:

- Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character” 1 Corinthians 15:33 NIV84.

So what is the balance here? Are we to make friendships with non-believers? Or are we to be friendly to non-believers, but not make friends with them—to keep certain boundaries?

What are the dangers of becoming friends with non-believers?

- They will introduce ideas, concepts, values, beliefs, distortions—error into your mind that you will have to process and decide upon.
- They will exert an influence beyond the ideas they themselves present through the attitudes, moods, emotional responses, the things they get excited about.
- They will introduce media, books, movies, games, music that will be antagonistic to the Spirit of God and these will exert an influence upon you.
- They will introduce other people into your life who are also not aligned with God and who will bring ungodly influence upon you.
- They will normalize the ungodly and unhealthy, and that normalization will increase your willingness to go along.

And all of this will happen when we associate with non-believers, but here is the big danger and often critical piece on whether we are corrupted by their influence, or perhaps matured and sharpened by their influence—and that is whether we have, in our hearts and minds, made them our friends or not!

If we have made them our friends, then within us they now occupy a position of trust, a position of value, a position of importance, and we are less critical of what they bring, less willing to offend, more willing to accept, more tolerant, less willing to walk away, and thus their errors and negative values and perspectives are more easily accepted and internalized and corrupt us.

If however we are friendly, but we do not allow them into our hearts as friends, then we will be more vigilant, we will hear their ideas, their perspectives, what they bring with suspicion, when they bring forth something that is counter to our values, our beliefs, we are more likely to dig in and study and pursue truth than to accept their distortion, so we may be sharpened.

I have seen and experienced this very thing in my life and many of you have as well in this situation:

- When I attended a public university and was associating with those who do not believe in God, my atheist professors and other students, and they would present ideas that were counter to what I believe it drove me to study deeper and clarify my beliefs. Their challenges led me to

identify things I was taught that didn't make sense and remove them, but it did not lead me away from God, but to a deeper relationship, and a more solid reality-based understanding of God and His designs for life.

- But when I attended a Christian University I perceived my students as fellow Christians and allowed them into my circle of friends and many of them were not converted Christians, but legal Christians—something I did not appreciate at the time. And they were able to introduce ideas, concepts, music, media, into my life that I was not as critical about and worked to cause me problems.

Has anyone else experienced this?

I read the following in the book *Prophets and Kings* this week:

- **Never can we afford to compromise principle by entering into alliance with those who do not fear [God]...**

It is **not** the open and avowed enemies of the cause of God that are most to be feared. Those who, like the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin, come with smooth words and fair speeches, **apparently seeking for friendly alliance** with God's children, **have greater power to deceive**. Against such every soul should be on the alert, lest some carefully concealed and masterly snare take him unaware. And **especially today, while earth's history is closing**, the Lord requires of His children a vigilance that knows no relaxation. But though the conflict is a ceaseless one, none are left to struggle alone. Angels help and protect those who walk humbly before God. *Prophets and Kings* p. 570, emphasis mine.

So I do not think it is wise to suggest our members, and especially our young people seek out non-believers to make friends with. I think we should tell them the opposite, do not become friends with those who are living based on the spirit of fear and selfishness and who have not been reborn with the Spirit of Christ. That does not mean we are not friendly, or that we do not associate, it means we do associate, but we keep proper emotional and relational boundaries—we do not let them into our hearts as friends until they can be trusted.

And what is it that establishes actual trust?

There are three measures of trustworthiness or counter, untrustworthiness.

- First measure—We don't trust those who are plotting evil, or who have in their heart to harm us, the criminal, the one who intentionally wants to exploit. So first measure is that the other person must have **love in the heart for you more than for self**. If they love self more, and their love for you is actually that they love what you provide and do for them, but they don't love you, then they will eventually harm you, deny you, sacrifice you to protect themselves. This was Peter when he denied Jesus—he loved Jesus, but he still loved himself more and that is why Jesus could not trust Peter when Peter said that even if everyone else ran away he wouldn't. Peter wasn't lying, he meant it, but he still loved self more than Christ, and thus

when his life was threatened he betrayed Christ to protect self, that moment is when Peter realized the spirit of fear dominating him and went out and wept bitterly and was fully converted, and Christ then trusted him. Peter didn't have evil in his heart that was plotting against Jesus, he still had evil in his heart that was hidden from Peter himself.

- Second measure of trust—the person must have some level of maturity. Even when we have a person who really loves us, and would run into harm's way to help us, like our 5 year old child who sees us in danger, would you trust your five year old to take your paycheck to the bank? Why not? Because they would steal it? No, because they would get distracted on the way, at the playground, with the dog, and set the check down and it blows away and they come home crying, "Mommy, I am sorry, I didn't mean to lose your check."
  - And this is where many people get exploited in relationships, they only evaluate whether the person loves them. And don't evaluate whether they are mature. And thus they get into a relationship in which the person breaks trust, and then that person weeps, cries, "I didn't mean to hurt you. I am sorry," and they mean it, because they do love you, but they are not mature enough to handle the position and or responsibilities you have shared with them.
  - For instance, a person who you have shared private matters that gossips and shares those matters with others. And then they are sorry, didn't mean to hurt you, and they really didn't, but they are not mature enough to know when to keep things confidential, so if you share more with them they will break trust again.
- Third measure—wisdom and understanding for the role you are trusting them with.
  - Do they have wisdom in the things of God to be trusted with whatever role or responsibility you are inviting them to occupy in your life.
  - I have seen Christian husbands who love their wives, who have maturity and self-control, but who have been raised in a religion that taught them foolishness—that husbands are to rule over their wives in an authoritarian way restricting the wife's freedom. If you are dating a person like this—they are not trustworthy to be a husband until they become wise in God's design for marriage and how love actually functions.

So, when it comes to friendships, assess their attitude, is the non-believer interested in truth, are they inquiring, searching, and hungry for truth? And is that demonstrated by their attitude, their openness, and then their willingness to apply what they are learning? Do you see in your interactions with them growth and movement toward health, spiritual and relational health or not? Or do you observe they are put off by truth, they denigrate godly things, they are accusatory, they fail to apply any truth even when they acknowledge it and say they believe it?

## MONDAY

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Read third and fourth paragraphs,

- However, when we share God with others, we should never try to force someone to accept God or His Bible truth. Coercion goes against the very heart of God’s character. God didn’t force Adam and Eve to stay away from the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:16, 17). He didn’t force people into the ark to be saved from the Flood (Gen. 7:1). He didn’t force the Israelites to remain in their covenant with Him (Deut. 4:29–31). Instead, He met their needs (Matt. 4:23–25) and then invited them to follow Him. Jesus never forced anyone to follow Him or His truth, but He never gives up on us (Matt. 23:37).

As we witness, our approach should always mirror Jesus’ approach. Ellen G. White says, “It is no part of Christ’s mission to compel men to receive Him. It is Satan, and men actuated by his spirit, that seek to compel the conscience... There can be no more conclusive evidence that we possess the spirit of Satan than the disposition to hurt and destroy those who do not appreciate our work, or who act contrary to our ideas.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 487. *Adult SS Guide 2<sup>nd</sup> Q 2026, Growing in a Relationship with God*, p. 98.

This is very well said, why? Why is it that God does not compel?

What is it God wants? Our love, trust, loyalty, devotion—and none of that can be obtained by force, threat, coercion—in fact to use such methods causes the opposite, it causes fear, distrust, and rebellion.

This is reality—love requires freedom. Then why does so much of Christianity, including these very lessons, often depict God doing this very thing?

Can you think of doctrines that are taught that make God out to compel or coerce?

All the ways people teach that God is the source of inflicted pain, torture, and death and just punishment for sin. The moment people teach God is the source of inflicted death as punishment for sin they have a false god who is compelling and coercing—“Do what I say or I will kill you.”

And of course, we understand that these fraudulent theological constructs are the result, the fruit, of the deeper and often hidden lie that God’s law functions like human law, and once people accept that lie, then they always end up distorting God into a being who uses power to kill.

Read last paragraph,

- We must allow ourselves to be a conduit for God’s service. We live in a world that hates the truth, but that reality shouldn’t prevent us from sharing it in thoughtful, loving ways. Remember that it’s often our own personal testimony that will carry the most weight, particularly in the early stages of witnessing (Rev. 12:11). *Adult SS Guide 2<sup>nd</sup> Q 2026, Growing in a Relationship with God*, p. 98.

I think the lesson is right, we live in a world that hates truth—why?

Because truth exposes the comforts they have attached to self. Truth is not experienced by the unconverted as helpful, but as threatening. Those who have encoded the lies that God is unsafe, that sin is doing bad, that justice is punishment, that they deserve punishment, who have encoded fear, distrust, filter reality, events, facts, through the distorted lens and thus they fear truth, they fear exposure, fear rejection, guilt, shame, fear punishment.

- There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. 1 John 4:18 NIV84.

What does this text mean?

Why does fear have to do with punishment? What punishment? What is the punishment for sin? Eternal death—and from where does eternal death come?

- Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and **free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.** Hebrews 2:14-15 NIV84.

How is it Christ's death frees us from the fear of death? And how is love related to being freed from punishment and the fear of death?

What is the natural result of encoding lies and breaking trust with God?

Lies believed break the circle of love and trust and cause fear and selfishness.

The encoded lies cause the spirit to change from love and trust to fear and selfishness.

This spirit of fear and selfishness runs from God, is not subject to God, does not submit to God—but has replaced self as the center and looks to our feelings, our beliefs, our understandings, ourselves as the source—and we are finite, so we will only continue to internalize more errors (form new beliefs, understandings, and practices that are out of harmony with life. We will unavoidable decay, degrade, our minds become more suspicious, more fearful, more guilt ridden and shame filled, we inside ourselves have no peace, because our system internal is decaying, fragmenting, falling apart.

Truth and love will set the system right, heal, restore, correct, the system, but it will also expose all the errors and that causes the self to feel bad, guilty, transiently worthless, no good, ashamed, and thus the spirit of fear causes us to create mental constructs, defense mechanisms that function to hide ourselves from reality—including the penal legal theologies that do this very thing.

But true salvation is praying as David did, search me and see the wicked way in me, created in me a clean heart O God!

But we will not surrender and open our hearts to God if we don't believe we can trust Him, so Christ came and part of His mission was to reveal the truth of God's character, His methods, His design laws, and expose and reveal the true cause of the pain, suffering, and death, which is sin and separation from God, so that we can be won to trust, surrender our life of fear and be reborn with His sinless life and be reanimated with the Spirit of love and trust built upon truth.

## SUNDAY

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Read first paragraph,

- Jesus gave us a mandate to share His message with the world: “Go therefore and make disciples.” The mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to make disciples, who can then make other disciples. That way we are all proclaiming the everlasting gospel and the three angels' messages (Rev. 14:6–12) to prepare our world for Jesus' soon return. *Adult SS Guide 2<sup>nd</sup> Q 2026, Growing in a Relationship with God*, p. 97.

Given what we have just talked about, what is the everlasting gospel? And how is the everlasting gospel connected with the message of the three angels?

What is a disciple? Do we mean a student? So, when we say disciples of Christ, do we mean people who become students of Christ, people who are learning of and following Jesus? Or do we mean something else?

Do we mean that making disciples means making church members, and by church members, I mean joining a particularly denominational organization?

Are they the same?

Can a person be a disciple of Christ and not agree with another disciple of Christ—and both be loyal disciples of Christ? Did Peter and Paul have a disagreement on a matter of theology and practice and yet they were both loyal followers of Christ?

And what was the resolution to that disagreement? Peter, who was in error, acknowledged his error and embraced and applied truth—why? Because he was a disciple, meaning a lover a truth, and a lover of truth is not a person who knows all truth, we do not, but people who are humble and willing to be corrected by the truth.

Read third paragraph,

- However, true witnessing is often the result of being an eyewitness to what God is doing in your life, of noticing what He is teaching you as you grow in Him, and then simply sharing your experience with others. God is so good, and what He has done for us is the best news that

this world can hear. We cannot and should not be silent! He has redeemed you; He has called you by name—you are His. Could there be any better news for anyone anywhere? *Adult SS Guide 2<sup>nd</sup> Q 2026, Growing in a Relationship with God*, p. 97.

I have heard wonderful stories of God's grace in people's lives and how coming to know God in truth transforms the person, heals broken hearts, relationships, removes bitterness and anger.

What is required to give such a witness? Don't we have to know the truth for ourselves?

If we have been raised in religion, with a God who is threatening and who will punish us if we sin, what is our witness? What do we tell people?

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

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**The God of Reality: Separating Truth from Fiction Seminar:** August 13-16 2026 Orlando, Florida—More information coming soon. First 500 get five free meals. Our outline of program topics:

**1. Who Decides What's True?**

How do we know what's actually true in a world full of competing voices? This session examines the foundation of truth—what authority can be trusted and how to discern reality from deception.

**2. Did Life Happen by Chance ... or Design?**

What does science really reveal about the origin of life? This session examines the evidence behind life's beginnings and what it suggests about our purpose, meaning, and design.

**3. What Kind of Power Runs the Universe?**

What kind of power sustains the universe at its foundational level? This session explores what reality reveals about worshiping a Creator whose power operates through truth and love rather than force—the quantum power upon which Newtonian power is built.

**4. What If Sin Isn't What You've Been Told?**

What if sin is something other than breaking rules? This session examines why God allowed sin to exist, how it began, and how being out of harmony with reality in our beliefs and actions reshapes the mind.

**5. Genesis: History... and What It Reveals About Reality**

What does the book of Genesis reveal about the operating design of our reality? This session explores how God and the human mind intersect in the physical world.

**6. What Did God Really Do After Human Sin? (Part 1)**

Were God's actions after sin acts of punishment—or something else? This session reexamines key moments after the fall to uncover what they reveal about God, salvation, and the nature of reality.

**7. What Did God Really Do After Human Sin? (Part 2)**

What does death reveal about God's response to sin? This session explores how death relates to God's mercy and what Christ's life and sacrifice accomplished in reality.

**8. Spiritual Warfare: The Battle for Your Mind**

How do truth and lies shape the direction of your life? This session examines how our thoughts get encoded within the substructure of brain changing the motivational energy that moves us to action and why truth and love are the powers that, in reality, bring healing.

**9. Are We Misreading the Old Testament?**

Why does God sometimes appear harsh or angry? This session examines how truth, love, and freedom help us better understand God's actions in the Old Testament.

**10. The Bible: History... and How Reality Works**

What kind of book is the Bible, really—and how should we relate to it? This session explores how Scripture records real events that reveal truth, conflict, and the principles that govern life.

**11. The Opus of Jesus: The Opening Movement**

The Sermon on the Mount: A Quantum Masterpiece

*How Jesus revealed a kingdom built on truth, love, and transformation—not power and force*

**12. The Opus of Jesus: The Final Movement**

Revelation and the 3 Angels—The Quantum Finale

*How the final message of the Bible restores the truth about God and brings everything full circle*