

PREFACE

I AM troubled, as you probably are also, when I read that we, as a people, are here for a reason; we have a special calling: “In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in this world as watchmen and light bearers. To them has been entrusted the last message of mercy for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the Word of God. What manner of persons, then, ought they to be?” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, November 23, 1905.

Yes, I know that at the time of the end the saints will be those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus (Rev. 12:17) but this brings the challenge closer; more personal don’t you agree? So I am troubled as we seek a way for us to fulfill our calling.

What was true over one hundred years ago is also true today: “Many are so absorbed in their worldly cares and perplexities that they have little time to pray, and feel but little interest in prayer. They may observe the form of worship, but the spirit of true supplication is lacking. Such have departed widely from the pattern. Jesus our example was much in prayer; and oh, how earnest, how fervent were his petitions! If he, the beloved Son of God, was moved to such earnestness, such agony, in our behalf, how much more need that we, who are de-

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pendent upon Heaven for all our strength, have our whole souls stirred to wrestle with God.” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, September 4, 1883.

If things were bad in 1883 when we think they had no pressures of modern-day living; imagine what Mrs. White would say today!

We need not ask because we already know.

Over the years I observed my parents’ generation run the church, and now my generation is in senior positions of responsibility throughout North America. This might seem like a good thing until I realize that we also are not doing a good job. In fact, we’re doing a rather poor job of it, and I believe the reason is because we aren’t spending time with God on a daily basis.

We are failing to do the one basic thing without which nothing else matters. Mrs. White emphasized this point many times over the years, and one of the things she counseled was “Let us follow the example of Christ, and daily consecrate ourselves to his service, that we may be one with Christ, as Christ is one with the Father; then we can bring glory to our Master.” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, March 24, 1896.

Earlier this year I was researching some material for another manuscript I’m working on, and discovered that Ignatius Loyola wrote a book in the early 1500’s called “Spiritual Exercises” for use in his new Roman Catholic order called “The Society of Jesus,” more commonly known as the Jesuits.

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His book outlined the specific steps that each novitiate was required to follow throughout the day. It consisted of various things to recite, and prayers to pray. It mandated the minimum amount of time that the monk was to spend in prayer and meditation.

About the same time I noticed that Ellen G. White also mentioned the key words “Spiritual Exercises” in several places, and that really sparked an interest in my mind.

I know very little about meditation, but I’m fascinated that the Jesuits and the Seventh-day Adventists have a similar set of rules; rules that you may not even know exist.

The “Spiritual Exercise” similarities are so great, that I decided that this book needs to be written. A book that culls the relevant comments from the *Testimonies for the Church* volumes 1-9, and other references from Mrs. White’s writings and presents them in a logical format for our benefit.

Mrs. White was a firm supporter of Spiritual Exercise, and she described and recommended it throughout her life, repeatedly pointing out the need for it to be performed on a daily basis with one exception.

She wrote in *The Review and Herald* on June 2, 1910: “Often your mind may be clouded because of pain. Then do not try to think. You know that Jesus loves you. He understands your weakness. You may do his will by simply resting in his arms.”

Isn’t that a wonderful thought? Jesus knows our needs, and our devotion to Him need not be a burden when we experience physical suffering.

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Aside from days when our health is poor we are encouraged to “Exercise your powers in spiritual things, till you can appreciate the deep things of God’s Word, and go on from strength to strength.” *Ibid.*

We are also advised to “Guard jealously your hours for prayer and self-examination. Set apart some portion of each day for a study of the Scriptures and communion with God. Thus you will obtain spiritual strength, and grow in grace and favor with God.” *The Review and Herald*, November 10, 1910.

In order for us to benefit from this manuscript, we must be willing students, for “There are many who make but little progress in the divine life, because they are too self-sufficient to occupy the position of learners. They are content with a superficial knowledge of God’s Word. They do not wish to change their faith or practice, and hence make no effort to obtain greater light.” *The Review and Herald*, August 31, 1911.

I’m sure as you read this book you will be impressed, and the material will influence you and strengthen your relationship with Jesus.

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