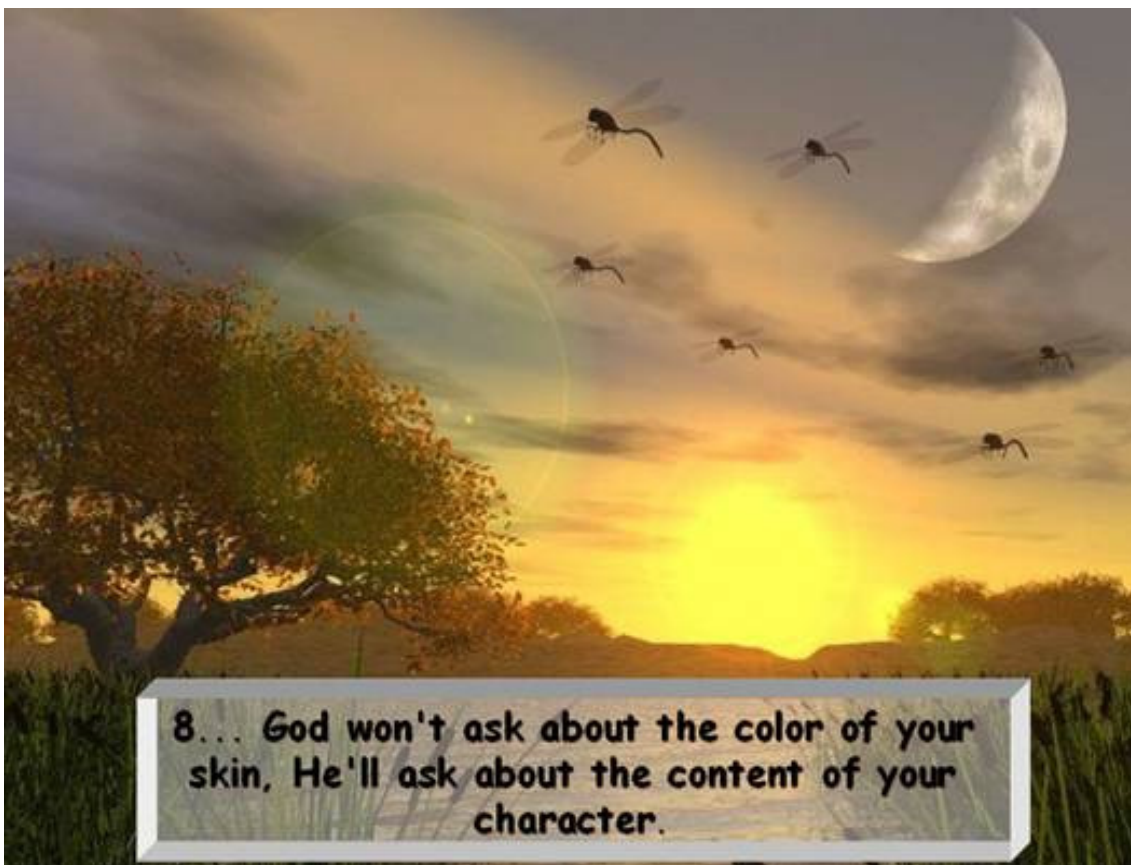


1

# Strong in the Lord

2  
3

## Graham F. Watts, Sr.

4

5  
6 **VISION:** To hear the midnight cry, “The bridegroom comes, go out to meet Him” (Matthew 25:6) and  
7 become like Him when I see Him as He is (1 John 3:2).

8

9 **MISSION:** Purify myself even as Christ is pure (1 John 3:3) to be glad, to rejoice, give honor to Christ  
10 and be ready for the marriage of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7).

11

12 **VALUES:** Follow the Lamb wherever He goes (Revelation 14:4), be without fault before God  
13 (Revelation 14:5), be perfect even as my Father in heaven is perfect (Matthew 5:48), wear the Lamb’s  
14 fine, clean and white linen (Revelation 19:8) do righteously (1 John 3:10) and walk humbly with God  
15 (Micah 6:8).

16

17 **OVERALL AIM:** Studies presented here unveil Bible knowledge to inquiring minds to prompt the  
18 following inquiries: “Are our feet on the rock of ages? Are we one with Christ as He is one with the  
19 Father” (John 10:30 in Evangelism, {Ev} 199.1)? Am I crucified with Christ (Galatians 2:20)?

## 20 PURPOSE/REASON FOR/WHY

21  
22 “[To remind God’s people] ...that they have a **constant work before them** to develop forbearance (i.e.,  
23 patience, self-control and mercy), sympathy (kindness, compassion and understanding), charity,  
24 conscientiousness (awareness, perception and realization) and fidelity (loyalty, faithfulness and  
25 dependability)...” (1 Peter 1:13, 2 Peter 1:5-7, Romans 5:3-4 in Counsels on Health, {CH} 258.3).

## 27 OBJECTIVE/WHAT WE WANT TO ACCOMPLISH

28  
29 At the end of this study, participants can state from memory specific steps that promote ...spiritual  
30 growth... (CH 258.3) relative to forbearance, sympathy, charity, conscientiousness and fidelity.

## 32 SIGNIFICANCE – SO WHAT

33  
34 A scarcity of nobility exists in the land. “...We have ...few [people] of ...stability and solid worth  
35 [because] they think to find greatness while disconnecting from Heaven” (Messages to Young People,  
36 {MYP} 256.1). “...God is not feared, God is not loved [and] the **principles of religion are not carried**  
37 **out in the life as they should be** (Fundamentals of Christian Education, {FE} 165.1). “[Christ does not  
38 abide in your heart] if you harbor pride, self-esteem, a love for supremacy, vainglory, unholy ambition,  
39 murmuring, discontent, bitterness, evil speaking, lying, deception [and] slandering.... You may have  
40 good intentions, good impulses [and] can speak truth understandingly, but you are not fit for... heaven”  
41 (Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, {TM} 441.2). Hence, a constant work is before us.

## 43 BACKGROUND CONTEXT

44  
45 Every soul has the opportunity to make advancement (Christian Service, {ChS} 25.1). Peter reminds of  
46 this when he said, “...grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ...” (2  
47 Peter 3:18). Yet, “...there is too little of the spirit of love among Seventh-Day Adventists...” (Counsels  
48 on Sabbath School Work, {CSW} 86.1). “Our love is frequently selfish, [because] we confine it to  
49 prescribed limits...” (Testimonies for the Church, Volume 3, {3T} 529.2). Those on the outside our  
50 inner circles are frequently overlooked. “...Pride, unbelief and selfishness, like a foul cancer, are eating  
51 out vital godliness from the heart of many a professed Christian” (Reflecting Christ, {RC} 368.3).  
52 Religious men and women delight in a form of godliness that [lack the power of the Holy Spirit] (2  
53 Timothy 3:5). Some of us “...Promise liberty, [while simultaneously we] are the servants of  
54 corruption...” (2 Peter 2:19). Of this class, who “...appear righteous unto men...” (Matthew 23:28),  
55 Jesus will say, “[You have a lot of religion but] have **NOT** [My] word abiding in you...” (John 5:38).  
56 The conditions described above cry loudly for “[being]... perfect, even as [our] Father... in heaven is  
57 perfect” (Matthew 5:48) and demand “...a thorough reformation...” (ChS 42.1), preceded, only by “a

58 revival of true godliness among [us]...” (ChS 41.4). The gap between who we are and who we ought to  
 59 be motivated the study question.

60

## 61 STUDY QUESTION

62 What will remedy the pride, unbelief and selfishness of nominal Christians?

63

## 64 ANSWER SOURCES: HOLY BIBLE

65

66 1. “And looking upon Jesus as He walked, [John] said, ‘**Behold the Lamb of God**’” (John 1:36).

67

68 2. “But we all, with open face **beholding** as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are **changed into the**  
 69 **same image** from glory to glory, [even] as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:18).

70

71 3. “All **Scriptures** are given by **inspiration of God** and is profitable for doctrine, reproof,  
 72 correction, instructions in righteousness that the [person] of God might be **perfect**, thoroughly  
 73 furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

74

75 4. **Study** to show thyself approved unto God, a [worker] that need not be ashamed, **rightly**  
 76 **dividing the word of truth** (2 Timothy 2:15).

77

78 5. “Whereby are given unto us **exceeding great and precious promises** that by these [we] might  
 79 be **partakers of the divine nature...**” (2 Peter 1:4).

80

81 6. “The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant, seeking **goodly pearls** (Matthew 13:45), who, when  
 82 he finds one **of great price...** **[sells everything] and [purchases] it**” (Matthew 13:46).

83

84 7. Set your **affections** [inclinations] on **things above**, not on things on the earth (Colossians 3:2).

85

86 8. “In the morning, rising up a great while before day, [Christ] went out and **departed into a**  
 87 **solitary place** and there prayed” (Mark 1:35).

88

- 89 9. **“Pray without ceasing”** (1 Thessalonians 5:17). “Peter was kept in prison, but **prayer was**  
90 **made without ceasing** of the church unto God for him” (Acts 12:5).  
91
- 92 10. “...God... [works] in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13).  
93
- 94 11. “...He that **believes** on me, **the works that I do he [will] do also**; and greater work than these  
95 shall he do...” (John 14:12).  
96
- 97 12. “The Spirit of the Lord [is] upon me, because he has anointed me to **preach the gospel to the**  
98 **poor**; he hath sent me to **heal the brokenhearted**, to **preach deliverance to the captives**, and  
99 **recovering of sight to the blind**, to **set at liberty them that are bruised**” (Luke 4:18).  
100
- 101 13. “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who **went about doing**  
102 **good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil**; for God was with him” (Acts 10:38).  
103
- 104 14. **Put on the whole armor of God** (1 Samuel 17:37) that you may be able to stand against the  
105 wiles of the devil (Ephesians 6:11) for we wrestle... against principalities, against powers,  
106 against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places  
107 (Ephesians 6:12).
- 108 a. Gird, [i.e., surround], the loins (Ephesians 6:14), ...with **truth** (John 17:17);  
109 b. Put on the breastplate of **righteousness** (Ephesians 6:14; 2 Peter 1:1; Philippians 3:9;  
110 Romans 10:4 & 6),  
111 c. [Dress the] feet with the preparation of the **gospel of peace** (Ephesians 6:15; Acts 10:38;  
112 Luke 4:18),  
113 d. Take the shield of **faith** to quench, i.e., suppress completely, all the fiery darts of the  
114 wicked (Ephesians 6:16) and  
115 e. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the **word of God**  
116 (Ephesians 6:17).  
117

118 SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS: Scriptures present a treatment calculated to remedy pride, unbelief  
 119 and selfishness among those who claim Jesus Christ as Savior. That treatment is beholding Christ, the  
 120 substitutionary Lamb of God, through the pages of Scripture. We behold Christ by making Bible study,  
 121 prayer, training the affections; memorizing the exceeding great and precious promises and being  
 122 disinterestedly benevolent, i.e., having no self-centered purpose or hidden agenda behind our giving for  
 123 the benefit of others. Moreover, when we fulfill our part of the divine-human covenant (agreement),  
 124 God, through the Holy Spirit, will work in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure. The remedy  
 125 for the moral and spiritual cancer among us seems too good to be true! Let us explore commentaries  
 126 that explain the Scriptures we just reviewed.

127  
 128

## 129 ANSWER SOURCES: SACRED WRITINGS

130

131 We are pursuing answers to the question: “What will remedy the pride, unbelief and selfishness of  
 132 nominal Christians?

133

134 1. **“If the Bible were read more, if its truths were better**  
 135 **understood, we should be a far more enlightened and intelligent**  
 136 **people. Energy is imparted to the soul by searching its pages”**  
 137 (Child Guidance, {CG} 507.2).

138

139 2. “No **church** can **advance in holiness** unless its **members are earnestly seeking for truth as**  
 140 **for hid treasure**” (Matthew 13:45-46 in GC 521.3). **”...Give time to study of the Scriptures**  
 141 **and to prayer** [and] the mind will be established, strengthened and settled (Mark 1:35 in 1MCP  
 142 324.1). In regards to settled, this is precisely what the seal of God in the forehead (Revelation  
 143 7:3) represents: **it “settles [you] into the truth... intellectually and spiritually...” (The Faith I**  
 144 **Live By {FLB} 287.7).** “[Once settle into the truth] we come into close union and fellowship  
 145 **with Christ [and] our love, sympathy and works of benevolence will ...deepen, ...widen and**  
 146 **strengthen with exercise**” (Testimonies for the Church, Volume 3, {3T} 529.2). **“If you will**  
 147 **only watch, continually watch unto prayer, if you will do everything as if you were in the**  
 148 **immediate presence of God, you will be saved from yielding to temptation, [including pride,**  
 149 **unbelief and selfishness] and may hope to be kept pure, spotless and undefiled...” (The**

- 150 Adventist Home, {AH} 338.2). Pride, unbelief and selfishness have their roots in a spiritual  
 151 problem, resolved only by connection with Christ.  
 152
- 153 3. **“...Knowledge of truth is not enough. We may possess this, but the tenor of our thoughts**  
 154 **may not be changed”** (Christ’s Object Lessons, {COL} 97.2). “[Therefore] **...train the mind to**  
 155 **focus on Scriptures and [on] noble themes** (Colossians 3:2 in 1MCP 95.3) ...”and when...  
 156 [Bible study occurs] with **earnest supplication for the [Holy] Spirit’s guidance** and a **full**  
 157 **surrender of the heart** to be sanctified through the truth...” (John 17:17 and 2 Timothy 2:15 in  
 158 1MCP 95.5), the [Holy Spirit] will:
- 159 a. Stimulate understanding...,
  - 160 b. Awaken sensibilities ...,
  - 161 c. Sensitize... conscience...,
  - 162 d. Purify... sympathies and sentiments...,
  - 163 e. Create a better [internal] moral atmosphere... and
  - 164 f. Impart ...power to resist temptation (1MCP 96.1).
- 165
- 166 4. **“...Constantly [we are] to pray to the Savior to heal the disorders of [our] sin-sick soul.**  
 167 **[WE HAVE] NOT THE WISDOM OR THE STRENGTH TO OVERCOME; THESE**  
 168 **BELONG TO THE LORD, AND HE BESTOWS THEM ON THOSE WHO IN**  
 169 **HUMILIATION AND CONTRITION SEEK HIM FOR HELP”** (1 Thessalonians 5:17 in  
 170 The Acts of the Apostles, {AA} 532.1). Through the Spirit, God works in His people "to will  
 171 and to do of His good pleasure. Only to those who wait humbly upon God, who watch for His  
 172 guidance and grace, is the Spirit given. ...He is ready to supply every soul according to the  
 173 capacity to receive” (Philippians 2:13 & Isaiah 40:31 in Christian Service, {ChS} 253.1). “...If  
 174 Christ [is] within us, we shall crucify the flesh with [its] affections and lusts” (The Adventist  
 175 Home, {AH} 338.2).  
 176
- 177 5. **[No satanic legions] can injure you unless you open your soul to the arts and arrows of**  
 178 **Satan**. Your ruin can never take place until your will consents. If there is not pollution of mind  
 179 in [you], all the surrounding pollution cannot taint or defile you (Mind, Character and  
 180 Personality, Vol. 2, {2MCP} 710.1). Therefore, we must believe, think and act on a higher level  
 181 such as:

- 182
- 183 a. “Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...”
- 184 (Romans 12:12);
- 185 b. “Consider ourselves dead to sin but alive to God through Jesus Christ” (Romans 6:11);
- 186 c. “Let not sin reign—as in set up headquarters and mission control—in our mortal body
- 187 that [we] should obey it in the lusts thereof” (Romans 6:12);
- 188 d. “Walk in the Spirit and [we] will not fulfill the lust of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16);
- 189 e. “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit” (Galatians 5:25) and
- 190 f. “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,
- 191 meekness and temperance (Galatians 5:22-23).
- 192
- 193 6. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for
- 194 correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly
- 195 furnished unto all good works. God has provided abundant means for successful warfare against
- 196 the evil that is in the world. **The Bible is the armory where we may equip for the struggle.**
- 197 **Our loins must be girt about with truth. Our breastplate must be righteousness. The shield**
- 198 **of faith must be in our hand, the helmet of salvation on our brow; and with the sword of**
- 199 **the Spirit, which is the word of God we are to cut our way through the obstructions and**
- 200 **entanglements of sin”** (The Acts of the Apostles, {AA} 502.2).

201

202 **SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS:** We must earnestly seek truth as we would seek hidden treasures if

203 we would advance in holiness. Bible study and prayer are imperatives. Earnestly seek the Holy Spirit’s

204 guidance and a full surrender of heart when you study the Bible. Ask for a spirit of humility and

205 contrition so that God can bestow wisdom and strength upon you. God is ready to supply every soul

206 according to that soul’s capacity to receive His Holy Spirit.

207

## 208 **CONCLUSION: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

209

210 “There must be thorough conversions among those who claim to believe the truth, or they will fall in the

211 day of trial. God’s people must reach a high standard. They must be a holy nation, a peculiar people, a

212 chosen generation—zealous of good works” (TM 441.3). “By conversion, we join our weakness to

213 God’s strength, our ignorance to His wisdom, our unworthiness to His merits, our poverty to His

214 boundless riches [and] our helplessness to His enduring might” (HP 248.3). **By thorough conversion,**  
 215 **we remedy pride, unbelief and selfishness.** This work of thorough conversion is an absolute necessity  
 216 in this waiting time because “Satan hopes to involve the remnant people of God in the general ruin that  
 217 is coming upon the earth. As the coming of Christ draws nigh, he will be more determined and decisive  
 218 in his efforts to overthrow them. Men and women will arise professing to have some new light or some  
 219 new revelation, whose tendency is to unsettle faith in the old landmarks. ...This spirit will not always be  
 220 manifested in an open defiance of the messages that God sends, but a settled unbelief is expressed in  
 221 many ways” (Testimonies, Vol. 5, pp. 295, 296 in Counsels to Writers and Editors, {CW} 49.3).

222

### 223 **CALL TO ACTION: WHAT SHALL WE DO?**

224

225 It is time to move beyond talk religion! **Biblical discourses alone will not cure us of pride, unbelief**  
 226 **and selfishness.** “[A] great and glorious work [was] committed to us in acting a part in the plan of  
 227 salvation....” [Therefore, let us] ...pray with the apostle Paul that we may... “Comprehend, with  
 228 all saints, [its] breadth, length, depth and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passes  
 229 knowledge” (Ephesians 3:18). ...Let the mind dwell upon ...the character [of Christ] until ...[we]  
 230 become changed into the same image” (In Heavenly Places, {HP} 248.2). Let us pursue “a spirit of  
 231 humility, the spirit of Christ; [and this] will help us to know Him who has called us to glory and virtue”  
 232 (HP 248.4). “[Experience helplessness, for in doing so we achieve invincibility when we] rely wholly  
 233 on the merits of the Savior” (Testimonies, vol. 7, p. 17 & Colporteur Ministry, {CM} 111.1).