

# Escape From the Evil Ways of This Life



## SABBATH—JANUARY 20

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Psalm 119:11; Ephesians 6:18; Romans 8:5, 6; Hebrews 11:1–6.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Riches are of no use in the day of God’s anger, but being right with God saves [us] from death. . . . He who trusts in his riches will fall [be ruined], but those who are right with God will grow like [in the same way as] a green leaf” (Proverbs 11:4, 28, NLV).

**SATAN FAILED** to defeat Jesus. But Satan succeeded with everyone else. He will continue to ruin us if we do not fight against his lies. How do we do that? We must put on “all of God’s armor [battle suit]” (Ephesians 6:13, NIV) and fight in His power against a love for riches. God alone offers to set us free from the power of loving the things on this earth.

So, God must remain at the center of our thoughts. He is the One who provides for us. He will help us understand the true value of life. David learned about the true value of life. He wrote about it in his psalms. He says, “The lions may grow weak and hungry. But those who look to the LORD have every good thing they need” (Psalm 34:10, NIV). Solomon also saw that wisdom and understanding were worth more than silver and gold (Proverbs 3:13, 14). Solomon learned that true happiness and right living come from turning our eyes from the things we own and looking to the living Christ. He is the One who owns us.

A love for the things of this life will try to pull us into sin. Our only hope of escape from this power is staying connected to Jesus. This week, we will study what we need to make our connection to Jesus a success.



“The lions may grow weak and hungry. But those who look to the LORD have every good thing they need” (Psalm 34:10, NIV).

## HAVING A LIVING CONNECTION TO JESUS (Colossians 3:2)

Loving the things we own can “chain” us to the things on this earth. But what if we do not have many things in this life? The desire for riches can trap even those who do not own much. Wanting more riches and things can become an awful curse. So, we must bring this desire under control. Or it will lead us away from Jesus. Satan knows that riches can lead us away from Jesus. So, Satan uses our love for the things on this earth to trap us.

What is our only protection?

**How do we do what Paul tells us to do in Colossians 3:2? (Read also Psalm 119:11 and Ephesians 6:18 for hints.)**

**Read Philippians 4:8. As this verse shows us, what should we fill our minds with?**



**There is only one way to stop loving the things of this earth more than we love God. We must love and serve Jesus with all our hearts, every minute of each day.**

There is only one way to stop loving the things on this earth more than we love God. It is to love and serve Jesus with all our hearts, every minute of each day (Psalm 34:1). Life will have its good and bad times. But we must continue to serve God even after we fail to do what is right. And we must not forget Him when we have success. Moses understood this truth (read Hebrews 11:26). Jesus must be number one in our lives. We must serve Him because He is God and He died for us. But we must not think that serving Him will make us rich.

We must give our lives to Jesus. Then His plans become ours. True loyalty to God means turning away from anything that gets in the way of our service to Him. As Jesus says, “Anyone who begins to plow a field but keeps [continues] looking back is of no use in the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62, ICB). So, we must give up everything for Jesus. Then He will break the grip that riches have on our souls. He will raise us up to be all we were meant to be in Him. How do we make that happen? We must put Jesus at the center of our lives. He must be in control. Not self. Jesus will fill the empty feeling in our souls better than anything on this earth ever can fill us.

**Think about a time when you got something you wanted very badly. How long did the joy you felt in owning it last until you felt empty again? How does knowing that help us understand that the things on this earth never can make us happy?**

## STUDYING THE BIBLE (John 5:39)

More than 6 billion Bibles have been given out all over the whole earth. That is a lot of Bibles! But how many people who have those Bibles believe that the Bible is the real Word of the living God? And how many people read those Bibles with sincere hearts that are open to knowing the truth?

How do we learn the truth? We learn it by studying the Bible in the right way. Studying the Bible will help us to avoid ideas that are both false and unclear. The Bible is a Living Book. God is the starting point for the whole Bible. The Bible comes from Him (Hebrews 4:12). The Bible points us to truths that we cannot find anywhere else. The Bible is our map to God. The Bible shows us how to live our lives each day. It teaches us. It causes the powers of our mind to grow stronger and larger. Daily Bible study changes us. We start to think, feel, talk, and act the same as Jesus.

**The clearest and most correct information about Jesus is found in the Gospels. The Gospels are the first four books of the New Testament. They include the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Read John 5:39; John 14:6; and John 20:31. What do these verses in John say about Jesus? What reason do they give us for why He is very important to us and to all we believe?**

We study the Bible because it shows us the Truth [God]. Jesus is the Truth. In the Bible, we find Jesus. In the Old and New Testaments, we read about Jesus and everything He has done for us. Then we fall in love with Him. We give our lives and souls to Him. He puts us under His protection forever. So, we must follow Jesus and obey His words as shown to us in the Bible. Then we will be free from the slavery of sin. And we will stop loving the things of this earth too much (John 3:36).

**What does Romans 8:5, 6 warn about? How can Bible study help us in this fight for the control over our minds?**

Love for the things of this life can pull us away from God. So, we need to be careful. That is why we must continue to study the Bible. It points us to everlasting life and to spiritual truths that we need for success in the Christian life.



The Bible is our map to God.

## THE LIFE OF PRAYER (Hebrews 11:1–6)

John 17:3 shows why Christians often say faith is about knowing God. Knowing God means having “life that lasts forever” (John 17:3, NLV). We can find that life when we connect with God. Of course, a main part of our connection with God is good communication. Yesterday, we learned about one of the ways God talks with us. God uses the Bible to talk with us. Prayer is the way we talk with God.

Prayer points our hearts and minds to heaven and away from earth. But we must be careful. It is easy to pray in a selfish way. So, first we need to give ourselves to God. We must pray for what God wants, not only what we want. Then our prayers will honor God’s holy plan for our lives.

**Read Hebrews 11:1–6. As these verses show us, what must we add to all our prayers? Also, what does it mean to come to God in faith and to pray in faith?**

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**The Bible is one of the ways God talks to us. Prayer is the way we talk to God.**

We must add faith to our prayers. What happens when we pray without faith? Then we expect God to do things He never promised to do. This faith is false faith. Satan uses false faith to take the place of real faith. “Prayer and faith are joined together in a close way. So, they need to be studied together. The prayer of faith includes important truth from God. We must learn what this truth is. Then we will have success in the work God gives us in this life. . . . Jesus makes it clear that we must “ ‘ask for things’ ” that support God’s plan for us [Mark 11:24, ICB]. We must ask for the things God has promised us. We must use the things we get to bring God honor and praise in this life. Then God’s promises to us will come true.”—Ellen G. White, *Prayer*, page 57, adapted.

**Look at your own prayer life. What do you pray for? What do your prayers say about the things that are important to you? What other things do you need to pray for?**

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### THE LIFE OF WISDOM (1 Kings 3:14)

1 Kings 3 contains one of the most beautiful stories in the Bible. In this story, Solomon asks God for wisdom. He prays, “ ‘So I ask that you give me wisdom. Then I can rule the people in the right way. Then I will know the difference between right and wrong. Without wisdom, it is impossible to rule this great people of yours’ ” (1 Kings 3:9, ICB).

**What important words did God say to Solomon in 1 Kings 3:14? Solomon did not follow these words. But how could these words have saved Solomon from the ruin that his love for riches and the things on this earth caused him? Why are God’s words to Solomon so important for all of us? Read also 1 John 5:3 and 1 Peter 4:17 for more hints.**

Solomon had great wisdom. But wisdom must be obeyed. If not, wisdom is nothing more than good information. Many people know plenty of correct information. But these people will not be in heaven. Why? Because they did not follow what they knew was right. It does us no good to know the truth and not follow it. Solomon did not obey what he knew was right. His disobedience caused him to leave the paths of goodness the Lord wanted him to follow. Later in life, Solomon understood that he did not act wisely. He writes, “Wisdom is more precious than rubies. Nothing you want is equal to it” (Proverbs 8:11, ICB).

Wisdom means using knowledge and understanding in the right way. Knowledge is a collection of facts. Understanding is the skill to know clearly what is going on around you. Wisdom helps us use both our understanding and knowledge. So, we must be wise managers of the knowledge God gives us. Wise managers need to use both knowledge and understanding. But wise managers also need experience that grows out of obeying knowledge and understanding.

Solomon’s example shows us how easy it is for even the wisest people to get pulled into the trap of a love for riches and owning things. The only safety we have against this trap is to obey the knowledge God gives us.

**Read 1 Corinthians 3:19 and Proverbs 24:13, 14. What is the difference between the two types of wisdom talked about in these verses? Share your answer on Sabbath.**



**Solomon asked God for wisdom to help him know the difference between right and wrong. We can ask God for this same wisdom too.**

## THE HOLY SPIRIT (Ephesians 3:16, 17)

The war between good and evil is real. Two sides are battling for our souls. One side is trying to pull us to Jesus (John 6:44). The other side is trying to pull us away from Jesus and to the things on this earth. The power of the Holy Spirit in our lives can and will pull us to Jesus. But we must surrender our lives to Jesus first.

“‘But when the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth’” (John 16:13, NIV; read also John 14:16). The Holy Spirit gives us the power to live by faith and obey God’s law. Then we no longer live by our feelings or wishes as we did in the past. People who do not belong to God live to make themselves happy. But we live to make God happy. The Holy Spirit prepares God’s people on this earth to live in heaven with God.

Paul tells us this faith is from God. “You do not have faith in Christ because of the wisdom of men. You have faith in Christ [Jesus] because of the power of God” (1 Corinthians 2:5, NIV). Loving the things on this earth pulls us away from God. But the Spirit works to pull us toward Jesus.



“The Holy Spirit speaks to our minds when we read the Bible. He plants the truth deep in our hearts.”

—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 671, adapted.

**Read Ezekiel 36:26, 27; John 14:26; and Ephesians 3:16, 17. As we can see from these verses, it is possible for us to have success in the fight against loving the things on this earth. But the power comes only from the Holy Spirit, not from us. We must let the Spirit take full control of us. When that happens, what will God do to make sure we win the battle?**

“The Holy Spirit speaks to our minds when we read the Bible. In this way, He plants the truth deep in our hearts. He shows us what is false. Then He removes it from our souls. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth. Jesus works by His Spirit of Truth while we read the Bible. Then, Jesus leads us to give our lives fully to Him.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 671, adapted.

The Holy Spirit tells us what is true. He shows us God. The Spirit is the best gift Jesus gave to us after He went to heaven. Jesus sent His Spirit to give us power to win the war we fight against our love for things.

**The Holy Spirit alone can give you power to stop loving the things on this earth more than you love God. What can you do right now to surrender your life to Him?**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** God asks us to be good stewards. Stewards for God are managers over all the gifts, things, and riches God gives them in this life. A good manager follows the laws of duty and love. “Remember that Duty has a twin sister. Duty’s twin sister is named Love. What happens when Love and Duty meet? Then the two together can do almost anything. But what happens if they are separated? Then they cannot do much good alone.” —Ellen G. White, *Testimonies [Messages] for the Church*, volume 4, page 62, adapted. Duty is love in action. We need only to think about Jesus’ death for us on the cross. Then love for Him will help us know our duty.

But the twin laws that control this earth are not duty and love. The twin laws that control this earth are hate and war. The law of war means fighting against God’s law. War against God is hate in action. Lucifer fought against God (Ezekiel 28:16, 17). And Satan never will stop fighting until God destroys him. Satan turned the power of love into the love for power. The religious leaders of Israel also hated Jesus’ power (Matthew 22:29). They ran away from Jesus’ power in the temple and refused to look at His eyes. But in the end, they did not change their behavior.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1 Think more about the laws of love and duty. What does Ellen G. White mean when she says that duty with no love, or love with no duty, cannot do “much good alone”? What happens to love without duty? And duty without love? Why must they both be together?
- 2 The memory verse for this week is really two verses in one. What do these verses mean? What do they say about riches? What do they *not* say?
- 3 Why did Solomon go so far away from God? Solomon wrote the book of Ecclesiastes in the Bible. What verses can you find in Ecclesiastes that show how a life full of stuff is really an empty life? What have we learned this week about prayer, Bible study, and our connection with Jesus that can help us to stay close to God?
- 4 Some people may not own many things. But how can they get caught in Satan’s trap of loving riches and the things on this earth anyway?



“Duty’s twin sister is named Love. What happens when Love and Duty meet? Then the two together can do almost anything.”  
—Ellen G. White,  
*Testimonies [Messages] for the Church*, volume 4, page 62, adapted.