

The Spirit:

1. Show me Your ways, O Lord; Teach me Your paths. –Psalm 25:4

When I allow God to show me His ways and to teach me the paths He wants me to follow, I am filled with “God confidence” that whatever circumstances I face, they have been approved by Him for my life. I can live in peace when I know that He loves me and will only allow things to happen to me that are for my growth or the good of others who need to see my relationship with God.

When I am living according to this text it is a humbling experience. When I realize that every good thing I do comes from Christ and that every step I take is Him directing me, there is no place for self glorification. When people affirm me or praise me, I know in my heart that it was not me; but rather Christ in me. Besides, every gift I have is a loan from Christ to be used for His glory. That leaves no room to talk about me.

Prayer: Father, I come to you in the name of Jesus today. Please help me to recognize that everything that happens to me today has been pre-approved by You. Show me “Your ways” in every decision I need to make. “Teach me your paths,” as I follow through on the decision You guide me to, and let me rest in the assurance (God confidence) that I am doing what You would have me do. If I step off the path You are leading me down, please let Your “still small voice” be loud enough for me to hear. Thank you for hearing and answering my prayer. Amen

2. The Lord is my light and my salvation Whom shall I fear. –Psalm 27:1

Light defined: That which makes it possible to see. It is the Lord working in me that enables me to see: 1) who my Father is, 2) how much He loves me, 3) who I am, 4) the purpose He has for my life, 5) that I bring Him great joy, 6) why intemperate living is so damaging (It dulls my ability to understand all of the above), 6) If the Lord is my light, then separation from the Lord is darkness. The Bible says that “Sin is separation from God.” Any time I control my life I am living in Sin –separation from God. This means that I will not be able to see the things listed above, even though I think there is nothing wrong with my vision. The only time I can see (spiritual eye sight) is when I have chosen to live in the Light Who makes it possible for me see.

Prayer: Father, I need more and more and more of Your light in my life. I need You to give me a much greater passion for Christ and to have “THE MIND OF CHRIST” (MB, p. 143) over riding the mind of Garry Sudds each day. Not only do I want to be able to see the things in my life that need to be submitted to You; but then I need the power of the Holy Spirit at work to win the victory over the battles with self that will follow understanding. Take charge of all parts of me today and fill me with Christ that I may

truly see what You have done for me, what You are doing for me, what You are doing in me, and what You are doing through me. I pray this in Jesus name. Amen

**3. *Wait on the Lord; Be of good courage,
And He shall strengthen your heart;
Wait, I say, on the Lord. –Psalm 27:14***

“Wait” is a verb. The work of waiting on the Lord is very difficult. By nature, we are wired up in such a way that we want to solve any problems that come into our lives. Here we are told not to solve our problems; but rather to wait, commit them to God and watch how He solves our problems (by using us and guiding us, or, by not using us). “Be of good courage.” What encourages me to be of good courage while waiting is a long line of answers I have seen God provide for my problems in the past. As I reflect back on how His past solutions have been so much better than mine, I am filled with courage to continue waiting for His solution in the immediate problem. “And He shall strengthen your heart:” When I am trusting God with my cares, perplexities and sorrows and I’m waiting for His solutions, I’m am in a position to have my heart strengthened even more as I see Him working in my behalf to resolve whatever I have given to Him. Through the “waiting” experiences, God continues to grow me. Through this process, my heart connection with the King of the universe grows stronger and stronger.

Prayer: Father, I pray that your Spirit will continually remind me to bring each day’s problems to You and then quietly wait for your promptings as to what I should or should not do. Lift me above my carnal mind set of, “What am I going to do,” and lead my first reaction to be, “I must commit this to my Father. Now what is He going to do.”

**4. *And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying,
“O, that You would bless me abundantly,
and that you would enlarge my territory,
that Your hand would be with me,
and that You would keep me from evil,
that I may not cause pain!”
So God granted him what he requested. -1 Chronicles 4:9,10***

Note: In applying the prayer of Jabez to my spiritual life, I would interpret it as follows:

O, that You would bless me abundantly in terms of: 1) victory over gluttony and indulgence (TV viewing), 2) a deeper passion to know Jesus and what He has done and continues to do in me and through for me, 3) my ability to be a witness for You, Father, 4) My desire to be controlled by the MIND OF CHRIST, and, 5) In being a tool in God’s hands each day and knowing what He accomplishes through me, 6) my ability to walk in peace and joy (along with the other Fruits of the Spirit) through every day.

And that **You would enlarge (expand) my spiritual territory** as far as: 1) knowing and carrying out the vision You are giving me (sharing the essentials of Adventist education & educating pastors regarding their role in projecting and protecting Adventist education), 2) Giving advice that comes from You to help others, 3) Ministering to the needs of Joanna, my children and grand children, 4) Your influence on others through me, 5) drawing my heart closer and closer to Your heart.

That **Your hand would be with me** in: 1) completing this dissertation in such a way that the process will lead me to a deeper level of relationship with You, 2) To continue to guide me in my eating, drinking and exercise, so that I see this as my spiritual offering to You 3) In leading me to the spiritual topics and materials You want me to focus on this year, 4)

And, that **You would keep me from the evil one** in his attempts to: 1) discredit or embarrass or distract me, 2) harm me or those close to me in any way, 3) take my focus off You and possessing the Mind of Christ in my struggle with gluttony and indulgence, 4) Create a state of busyness that prevents me from completing the things You want me to complete, 5)

Prayer: Father, You have seen the long lists noted above. I give each one of these areas to You this day. (read each list individually and give it to Him). I thank You and praise You for not only hearing each point; but assuring me that it will come to pass in my life today. Let the answer to each point above bring glory to You, Father. Please glorify me, that I may glorify Thee. And then, let me hear Your voice saying, "Well done, My child! You have brought Me great joy this day." I pray in Jesus name. Amen.

5. Be careful! Watch out for attacks from the devil, your Great enemy. He prowls around like a roaring lion Looking for some victim to devour. -1 Peter 5:8 (NLT)

The day after I recorded my belief that God was preparing me for a great work to do for Him with the dissertation (for His schools) and in speaking appointments (the most essential learnings in Adventist schools) I found that all kinds of little annoyances came into me life. Example: Joanna's car wouldn't start, her mother moved and with a change in medication she became much more despondent, which means we had to go see her every day and sometimes twice a day, having to drive Joanna to work early and I didn't have time for regular devotions, etc. God woke me up early this morning at 5:00 am and I asked Him to help me get control of these annoyances so they would not cause me to "come down" from the important work God was preparing me to do. The text that popped into my mind was 1 Peter 5:8. In this chapter, Peter is giving advice to church elders. Preceding this verse he admonishes them: **6** So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and in his good time he will honor you. **7** Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about what happens to you. God gives us the solution to dealing with Satan's attempts to distract and then warns us to be continually watching for his attempts to keep us from spending time with Him and keep us from the "important work" God is intending to do through us. I am called to:

1) **Humble myself under the mighty God:** quietly submit to his will; patiently bear every affliction without murmuring, repining, or replying against him; be still under the rod, and despise not the chastening of the Lord; mourn over sin as the cause, acknowledge my vileness and unworthiness, and stand in awe of his majesty, considering myself as *under the mighty hand of God* ,

and to,

(b) **Give ALL my worries and cares to God for He cares for you:** The words are taken out of, or at least refer to ([Psalms 55:22](#)) , where, instead of "cast thy burden upon the Lord", the Septuagint has it, "cast thy care upon the Lord"; the care of the body, and of all the affairs of life, concerning which saints should not be anxiously thoughtful, but depend upon the providence of God, ...and also the care of the soul, and the spiritual and eternal welfare of it, which should be committed into the hands of Christ. ("Here's my heart oh, take and seal it. Seal it for Thy courts above.")

Note: "**You have an adversary**": the word here used is a forensic term, and signifies a court adversary, or one that litigates a point in law, or opposes another in an action or suit at law. The Jews ^{F3} have adopted this word into their language, and explain it by (Nyd leb) , "a law adversary", or one that has a suit of law pending against another. Satan accuses men of the breach of the law, and pleads that justice might take place, and punishment be inflicted, and which he pursues with great violence and diligence.

Note: *as a roaring lion*;

so called, both on account of his strength, and also because of his rage, malice, and cruelty, which he breathes out against the saints, who, though he cannot destroy them, will do all he can to terrify and affright them;

walketh about;

to and fro in the earth; see ([Job 1:7](#)) as a lion runs about here and there, when almost famished with hunger; and it also denotes the insidious methods, wiles, and stratagems Satan takes to surprise men, and get an advantage of them: he takes a tour, and comes round upon them, upon the back of them, at an unawares, so that they have need to be always sober, and upon their guard:

seeking whom he may devour;

this is the end of his walking about ...that so he might have something to accuse them of, and they fall a prey into his hands. This is the work he is continually employed in; **he is always seeking to do mischief, either to the souls, or bodies, or estates of men**, especially the former; though he can do nothing in either respect without permission.

Prayer: Father, thank you for waking me up at 5 this morning, giving me a clear mind, and prompting me to spend time with You. Thank you for prompting me regarding what I should reflect on this morning (Satan's attempts to distract) and Your solution. Father, I pray to be filled with Your Spirit this day. I pray to have the MIND OF CHRIST, because I am not capable of defending myself against Satan's attacks. I ask that You will protect me from evil

(the evil one and his associates) this day and keep me on task physically, mentally and spiritually... Now I pray for my cares and worries Father. I give you the need to get Joanna's car repaired. Please resolve that in a way that I can see You working in the process. I need to know what you would have me preach on this Sabbath. Please lead me in that. Joanna needs another less stressful job, please save her from any further physical damage from stress. Please resolve the demands of her mother and give Joanna peace of mind. Work out my schedule so that I can have time with You in the morning and time to work on Your dissertation in the evening. I come to You in Jesus name, and bring my needs to You this day. Please give me the faith to leave them with You and not allow them to distract me from You. Amen

6. Let us love each other as God loves us. Such love can only come from Him. Everyone who has a genuine love for others has been born again and knows God. Anyone who doesn't love others doesn't really know God, because God is love. -1 John 5:7,8

When I pray for those who appose me or my views it replaces any possible build up of resentment with a sincere love for those people. That love is not natural to my nature. It comes from God as a gift to bring healing and restoration to me. (He restores my soul.) The end result: I am able to see those people as God sees them even while they are making my life difficult. I am led to see that my life is not about me, it's about Him working in and through me to accomplish His will.

Prayer: Father, give me the heart of Jesus today. Inspire me with the knowledge that this day is not about me, it is about You working in and through me. Give me some tiny glimpses of that work and let me praise You when Your Spirit pops them into my head. I love You, Father, Jesus, Holy Spirit and guardian angel. And I pray this in Christ's name. Amen

***7. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands.
Serve the Lord with gladness: come before His presence
with singing. -Psalm 100: 1,2***

David was passionate about His relationship with God. He had seen the miraculous working of God in his behalf to such a great extent that he couldn't help but show exuberance when it came to worshipping the One he loved. There was nothing hidden when it came to praising God. Psalm 95-100 are all praise Psalms. Psalm 100 is the one of greatest praise and most popular. To me it reflects the joy of an adult child returning back to the home and parents. The anticipation builds until he/she is standing in the presence of the loving parents. That is how it should be when we come into our Father's presence. We can't wait to get there and begin communing with Him.

8. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world. -John 16:33

Trouble (adversity) in my life can come from one of three sources – God tests me to grow me, Satan tempts me to destroy me, or I bring trouble on myself by poor choices. No matter

what the source of the trouble, the best solution is always the same. I bring it to Jesus and trust Him to do what is best for me according to His time-table. When this becomes my natural mind set, I, like Christ, will live in peace no matter the trouble I face. I must come to the place where I trust Christ implicitly to care for me. I must come to the place where I believe that everything that touches my life must first pass through the hands of God before it reaches me, and, believe that all things that do touch my life are part of God's pattern for good. (Rom 8:28)

Prayer: Father, so much of the trouble I face in life comes either through my wrong choices or through Satan's temptations. In either case they leave me feeling separated from you, feeling like I am a failure, and feeling hopeless. That is exactly where Satan would have me dwell, because if I stay in this position long enough, I will feel discouraged and eventually depressed. I thank you this day that you anxiously wait for me to come to you asking to be forgiven. When I do my part (the asking) You have promised to do Your part (the forgiving) with the assurance that you will cleanse (clean me up) me from all unrighteousness. That gives me reason to "take heart!" Thank you, Jesus. I pray this prayer in Your name. Amen

9. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in My love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. –John 15:1,5,9-11

The focus of my daily battle is not to be good, it is to remain and grow in my faith relationship with Christ. If I remain focused on this, His promise is that my life will be filled with His joy and I will be satisfied no matter the circumstances that surround me.

“If we ever attain unto holiness, it will be through the renunciation of self and the reception of the **MIND OF CHRIST**. –MB, p. 143

The process to follow in the renunciation of self and reception of the mind of Christ is:
(a) to tell Satan audibly each day that you are taking your will, your power of choice, from him, and,
(b) inform Jesus that you are asking Him to take your will. That you are choosing to live a life submitted totally to Him. “Here's my heart, oh, take and seal it, seal it for Thy courts above.”

“No mere external change is sufficient to bring us into harmony with God...Our first work is with the heart.” –COL, p. 97

...“the reception of the MIND OF CHRIST” means that if I surrender my will to Christ, He WILL offer His mind to me; but I must choose to receive it. My Elder Brother and my Father know what is best for me, but they leave the choice, the control of our relationship, in my hands. That is because they love me.

It is by continually remaining in Christ's love that we are able to live a life of total trust (faith) in Him. When I am living my life “In Christ” and not allowing self to raise its ugly head, I will be dead to self. The fuller my relationship with Christ, the greater will be His

control over my thoughts, my words and my actions. My goal is to so closely united with Him that I will have “the mind of Christ” in me.

Prayer: Father, I know the difference in my life when I am in a loving relationship with Christ. There are times when His love burns within my heart. But then I slip back to taking control of little parts of my life and the love for Him is slowly extinguished. Father, I want to have a passion for Christ every day. I want His love to fill me. Then as a by-product of my life full of His love, give me the “mind of Christ” so that I will be filled with His thoughts, and motives, and desires and affections and not my own. Let the mind of Christ stand on guard against the return of my selfish nature, I pray in Jesus name. Amen

10. Know that the Lord is God. It is He who made us, and we are His; We are His people, the sheep of His pasture. –Psalm 100:3

The first thing I am to remind myself of each day is that the One I choose to be Lord over everything in my life is my Father – God. If I don’t deliberately choose Him, Satan will overpower my mind and I will be motivated and prompted in all I think and do by him. Next, I must remember that I belong to the One who made me. I am a “child of the King.” I belong to Him. Lastly, I must remind myself that He is the Shepherd and I am His sheep. When David wrote this psalm, his frame of reference in understanding God’s love, and power and protection was that of a shepherd. He knew how important his sheep were to him. He would risk his own life in their behalf. The Shepherd, not only risk His life, He willingly gave it up so that I may be reunited with my Father, restored in the image of my Elder Brother, and redeemed to a life with both of them in heaven.

It is also important to remind myself each day that the Lord is God not only over my life; but in my life as well. I am not the god of my life, He is. My role each day is to be a lamb under His watchful eye. Lambs and sheep are very needy animals. They are completely dependent on the shepherd for food, shelter, protection – everything. I must remember that I am not called to be a god over my life or anyone else. I am called to submit to Him and allow Him to guide me as He sees best.

Prayer: Father – God, I pray that you will remind me throughout that You are God in me and over me throughout this day. Please protect me from myself. Shelter me from the little god of self who is always pushing to take over my life. Remind me today that You made me and that I belong to You. Give me the assurance that nothing can touch my life today unless it first passes through Your hands and that all things that are permitted are for my ultimate good. I pray this in the name of my Lord, Savior and Brother, Jesus. Amen

11. Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise Him, my Savior and my God. –Psalm 42:5

It is impossible to be downcast and connected to Christ at the same time. Whenever I am downcast (discouraged, depressed) the remedy is to spend quiet time with my Father until I sense that I am back with Him, and that I am living out His wishes for my life. To put my hope in God at times of discouragement is a choice I make. And to praise Him takes the

focus off being down cast (internal) and places it on Him (external). I cannot lift my spirit by introspection. Freedom comes only by Christ when I am abiding IN Christ.

Father, I come to You in the name of Jesus, my Elder Brother. I pray that your Spirit will lift my thoughts to You continually through this day. May I not be discouraged by my own weaknesses; but rather, when I am tempted by the evil one, please let the MIND OF CHRIST lead me to respond through reason and not my feelings. Restore unto me the joy of my salvation, I pray. Amen

***12. He (God) has promised us a pure inheritance that will never fade away, kept for us in heaven. The Father will continue to watch over you and protect you until Jesus comes and you receive ALL He has promised to give you. So keep your minds focused on this hope and be glad for it, even though you are somewhat disheartened by all the troubles you have been having.
-1 Peter 4,5,6***

There is a reason for “all of the troubles you are having.” Christ tells us that the only way to heaven is through the door of suffering. All of His children will suffer and be joint heirs with Christ in suffering. Since my Father oversees all that touches my life, I can conclude that ALL suffering I go through has been permitted by Him and all things permitted are for my ultimate good. A loving parent would never inflict suffering on their child. But a loving parent would, for the good of the child, discipline him/her. All that our Father does is based on love. When I am faced with suffering, I can be assured that He is in the process of refining my character so that I will be transformed into the image of His Son. Suffering is the common road that all God’s children will travel. But the rewards of: 1) having a character that has been restored into the image of God, and 2) living out that character for eternity in the presence of my Father and my Elder Brother will make whatever suffering I go through minor in comparison.

Prayer: Father, when I must go through times of suffering, help me to see the expression on Your face and know that You are going through this with me. When these difficult times come, prompt me to look to you with a spirit of peace and be able to say, “If You want me to go through this, I will gladly do it for You, Abba.” I pray this in Jesus name. Amen

***13. And when your faith is tested and tried, it will bring glory and honor to Christ. When He comes, you will share His glory.
-1 Peter 1:7***

As followers of Christ, we are called upon to be His witnesses to the universe. We are to show that no matter the test or trial, we will continue to live a life of faith (trust) in Him. We are to “discern the glory of the purpose that we are fulfilling as co-workers with Him.” For this to happen, I must be growing daily in my relationship with Him. The stronger my connection to Christ, the more my normal response to the trials of life will change from, “What am I going to do,” to, “What is He going to do as I wait patiently on Him.” An example of this text would be the life of Grover. His faith (trust in God) has been tested and tried to the maximum; but he continues to cling to Him.

Prayer: Father, today I pray that you will fill my mind with thoughts of who You are and who I am. Show me that through You, I can do all of the things You want me to do. Send Your Spirit into my life, that I can be controlled by the mind of Christ this day. And I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

***14. Better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feasting, with strife. –
Proverbs 17:1***

Of John the Baptist it is said, “John was to go forth as Jehovah’s messenger, to bring to men the light of God... Such a messenger must be holy. He must be a temple for the indwelling Spirit of God. In order to fulfill his MISSION, he must have a sound physical constitution, and mental and spiritual strength. Therefore it would be necessary for him to control his appetites and passions. He must be able so to control all his powers that he could stand among men as unmoved by surrounding circumstances as the rocks... All who would perfect holiness in the fear of God must learn the lessons of temperance and self-control.” (DA p. 100, 101) John received a mission, a purpose, a vision for his life from God. From that point on, his whole life was centered around preparing himself to do God’s mission and doing it. Everything in his life was based on carrying out God’s mission for him. The same was true of Christ’s life on earth. His focus was only on what God had sent Him to do and every day He remained in such close contact with His Father, that He heard clearly what His Father wanted moment by moment. Christ had a God given mission; but he never proclaimed His vision. That is because he did not have a vision, He simply carried out His Father’s vision.

“From childhood his mission had been kept before him.” (DA p. 101) John knew what God had called him to do. He sought the quietness and solitude of the desert so that he could be away from all the influences of the world and be alone with God. He continually heard God reminding him of his mission – his purpose in living. The same is true in my life. God has given me a mission and He calls me to life above the influences of appetite and passion which pull me down from God’s high calling for me. I must continually put myself in a position of quietness and freedom from the attempts of Satan to appeal to my desire to indulge self. I must put myself in a position to hear God’s constant reminder to me of who I am and what He has called me to do. That only happens in an environment of simplicity and self-denial. God’s plan for my life is that I live simply with my focus on Him and not participate in all the worldly pleasures of life that create additional complexities.

Prayer: Father, The key to John being faithful to the mission you gave him was for him to be a clean temple for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. I pray for the same in my life. Cleans me from all unrighteousness and fill me with Your Spirit this day. I pray that you will remind me of the mission you have called me to. That you will keep me centered on that mission each day. That I will see little glimpses of Your work in me and through that bring glory to You. Please create in me a clean heart and renew in me a right Spirit and don't allow me to be side tracked from my mission calling by the things of this world I pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen

15. You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is steadfast (stayed upon You), because he trusts in You. –Isa. 26:3

The best defense against a life of stress and anxiety is my relationship with Christ. The more quantity and quality time I spend with Him, the closer my life will be to His. When I am totally focused on Him, I will live in perfect peace. My role each day is to spend time getting close to Him each morning, then to think about Him and turn to Him with each decision I must make throughout the day. Then, at the end of the day, I am to reflect back on His working in my life and other thoughts He prompts me to think before going to sleep. The more emphasis I place on this formula for my life, the more my life will reflect contentment, peace and joy. If I do my part, the promise is sure that Christ will, “keep me in perfect peace.”

Prayer: Father, this day I desire to live a life of peace through Your workings in me and then through me. I am open to Your promptings. Please show me something about You that will draw my heart closer to You. Then prompt me with this understanding at various times throughout the day. Let me see what you have for me to do this day, and continually remind me that joy does not come in trying to experience things that will make my selfish nature happy. It comes in knowing that my life is a delight to You. I pray for this in Jesus' name. Amen.

16. O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and He will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if He does not, we want you to know, O King, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up. – Daniel 3:16-18

“Even if He does not (save us from death)” This shows the level of relationship the three young men had with God. They would continue to trust that God knew what was best for their lives. If He felt this was the time for a good nights sleep, so be it. In my daily activities, I have not been called upon to make this statement when the stakes are a matter of life or death. But, in smaller matters, I do have the choice to try to protect self, or to stand up for what God prompts me to do and say. Often, it is harder to take a life or death stance for God in little matters that seem so inconsequential. It is to easy to conclude, “that’s no big deal. It’s such a small thing. Don’t worry about standing up for God and making a scene. Just comply with the group.”

“We do not need to defend ourselves before you:” What a wonderful thing when I am so closely connected to my Father that I am not anxious to defend self and am willing to trust God to take care of my reputation. I’m no longer concerned with what people think of me; but only concerned what they will think of God because of me.

Prayer: Father, guide me to think the little things through very carefully regarding when to stand up for You and be counted and when not to. When You prompt me to stand up against the crowd, give me the peace and assurance to know that what I do meets with your

approval while it does not meet the approval of those around me. I pray this in Christ's name. Amen

17. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. –Phil. 4:6,7

Petition: a solemn, earnest request to a superior. When I commune with God in prayer and with earnestness bring my needs and the needs of others to Him, I am to leave them with Him and by faith trust that He will do what is best, and at the right time, with each one. When I deliberately choose to trust Him to work out each petition, I have chosen not to be anxious. The reason for this is that I have chosen to put my trust in God and to focus on Him, rather than to focus on my list of petitions. Without Him, I must solve my own problems which are reason for me to be anxious. When I give each one to God and leave them with Him, He gives me a level of peace which comes from “God-confidence” as opposed to self-confidence. When I am filled with God-confidence, it will protect me so long as I remain focused on Christ and submitted to His control over my thoughts, motives, and affections.

Prayer: Father, I come to You this morning in the name of Jesus. Please see me through His righteousness and not through my sinfulness. Today, as I bring you my list of petitions, I earnestly present them to You, and ask that You now give me faith enough to leave them with You to resolve. I ask to be filled with all of the fruit of the Spirit this day, but especially the fruit of peace. Fill me with Your Spirit so that I may share with the world a true reflection of Christ this day. Thank You, Father, for hearing and answering this prayer. Amen (may it be so!)

18. The joy of the Lord is my strength. –Nehemiah 8:10

(Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the **joy of the LORD** is your strength.")

This joy begins when I come to God seeking repentance. After being confronted by Nathan the prophet, David prayed for forgiveness in Psalms 51: 7-12. After seeking forgiveness, David prayed, “Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. **Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation.** This joy comes as a result of coming back into a close walk with God. It is the joy expressed by the prodigal son when He returned to his father. When I am once again experiencing that kind of closeness with my Abba (heavenly Daddy), my heart is full of His joy. This joy becomes to me my strength. I don't want to lose the joy that comes from a heart in heart relationship with the Lord of my life. Fellowship with God and with Christ brings me great joy. The thought of losing that joy becomes my strength.

Prayer: Father, I pray David's prayer to You this morning. Have mercy on me, O God. Purge me with hyssop (this was the plant that was used as a brush to sprinkle blood on the doorposts at the first Passover when Moses was speaking for God to Pharaoh, “let my people go.”) that I may be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow... Create in me a

clean heart, O God, and renew within me a right spirit. Take not Your presence from me, and cast not Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore in me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit.” I pray this in Jesus name. Amen

19. On this occasion, Martha was extremely rushed, trying to get food on the table for all the hungry men...Martha” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better.” –Luke 11:40

Note: Even in times I am rushed, I must remember what Christ told Martha. He said, “But only one thing is needed.” That one thing is to remember that He is in charge of everything I face and that He will work out what is best if I remain focused on walking closely with Him. Martha was not doing a bad thing. She was doing all in her power to make supper for Jesus and His hungry friends and she needed help to meet their physical need. But Jesus helped put things in perspective. Time spend with Him learning about their heavenly Father was much more important than meeting the need for a meal. Martha was on a mission to meet the physical needs of others, Mary was on a mission to meet the spiritual needs of her self. That is why Jesus told Martha, “Don’t worry about having supper on time, come and learn of me and we can eat supper later.”

Prayer: Father, please help me to realize that the rush of daily circumstances are one way Satan attempts to separate me from Thee. In times of stress, I pray that You will impress me to turn to You and allow You to work out what is best. At those times, fill me with the “peace that passes understanding.” I pray this in Jesus name. Amen

20. But God said to him, “You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then you will get what you have prepared for yourself.”...“This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God.” –Luke 12:15-21

What am I storing up treasures in? What will my reward be when this life ends? When I subtract all the time and energy invested in things like my home, recreation, entertainment, my job, my degree, etc. what will I have left to bring before my Father. None of the things above are bad in themselves. They only become earthly treasure when I promote them to a position above knowing my Father and knowing what He wants me to do. Peggy Lee wrote a hit song in 1969 that said, “Is that all there is? Is that all there is? If that’s all there is, my friend, let’s keep on dancing.” The work of the Holy Spirit is to continually prompt you that there has got to be more to life than what you are experiencing. Remember my experience as a college freshman awake in bed thinking “There has to be more to life than this.” When you find out what that “more to life” is – an understanding that you are a favored child of the King of the universe, and that His Son is your personal trainer in charge of re-creating you in the image of God, then you have discovered the meaning of life. The most important part of your day will become the hour or two you spend one on One with Him each morning. From that time spent, you will go forth ready to live for Him and to allow Him to use you as a tool in His hands.

As a Seventh-day Adventist educator, what are the things you are storing up treasures in for the students in your classroom? Years from now, when they reflect back on the most

important thing they learned from you, what will that be? Will they say things like, I learned more about writing, or I learned more about mathematics or reading or social studies or science- that is where I got my passion for any of these things. Or, will they say, “That’s where I learned about Christ. That’s where I learned that life is not about earthly treasures, it’s about doing what my Father wants me to do. It’s about being a faithful tool in His hands to bring others to him.” What will they say my friend? Will they say that you taught them to “keep on dancing” in this world. Or, will they say that you taught them to get ready to dance for joy in the eternal home of their Father.

21. I have learned to be content in every situation... I can do all things through Christ who gives me His strength. –Phil. 4:11-13

The reason Paul could say he had learned to be content in every situation was because his focus was totally on God and what God wanted for his life. When my focus is internal – on self, I will become discontent with every little obstacle that confronts me. But if I am walking hand in hand with Christ and realize that everything that touches my life must first go through the hands of God before it gets to me, then I will be content in every situation. For Paul, contentment was found in: 1) knowing what God wanted him to do, and, 2) doing it with all his heart. So long as these two things were in place, Paul was content no matter the living conditions that surrounded him. His life was a life of faith, trusting completely in God for watch, care and protection over him.

Prayer: Father, I come to You in the name of Your Son. I pray that You will increase my level of trust in You today by increasing the closeness of my heart to Yours. Let me see the purposes You have for my life this day and then, through the power of Your Spirit in me, let me do these things in a way that will honor and glorify You. I ask these things in the name of Jesus. Amen

22. And the peace of God which passes all earthly understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. –Phil. 4:7

The peace of God is conditional. God gives it as a gift to those who choose a close walk with Him. When you are close to God, you live in the assurance that He oversees all things that touch your life and will only allow those things that are needed. When life’s storm clouds surround you, there is no better place to be than to be resting in the arms of Jesus. And it is when you are experiencing His peace that your heart is strengthened and your mind steadfast. You know Who you believe in, and that He is able to keep you under His wing.

23. I wait patiently for the Lord; He turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit (of gluttony and indulgence), out of the mud and mire; He set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord. –Psalm 40:1-3

The new song has to do with the “joy of my salvation” that comes when I am living in a right relationship with God and allowing Christ to be Lord of my life.

Christ is always ready and anxious to lift me “out of the slimy pits” that I find myself in. Whenever I find myself running my life and not deliberately submitting to Christ’s authority over me, I’m heading for another slimy pit. But as long as I am humbly submitting to His authority He is able to give me a firm place to stand. The key is for me to live my life “In Christ” all day long.

***24. Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me for I am gentle and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your soul.
–Matthew 11:28-30***

“Weary” refers to being weary of sin. “Burdened” refers to the bondage of sin that you can’t seem to get away from. But the answer to the sin problem is found in Christ’s words, “Come to me.” If I am willing to submit to His authority over me (that is His yoke) and learn from His example, the promise is that I will find peace, and joy, and contentment for my life.

25. Live in harmony with one another...Do not repay evil for evil...If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. –Romans 12: 16-18

The only way I will not repay evil for evil is if Christ is in charge of my life. If I am in charge, I am easily offended by others and ready to defend self. When Christ is in charge, His motives control me and I am then able to see the need of the one who makes my life difficult and not become resentful. Resentment is a feeling of displeasure from a sense of being injured or offended that repeats itself in my mind over and over and over again. I become a slave to this thought and cannot stop it. But when Christ is in control of my life, He takes my focus of self and places it on Himself. That is when I am able to live in harmony with others. That is when I am able to experience genuine peace in my life.

***26. Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.
–James 1:2-4***

The only way for me to grow up in Christ is through all kinds of trials. Trials and adversity keep me coming back to Christ. He tells me, “Come unto Me and you will find rest for your soul.” The more I come to Him, the better I know Him and the more I trust Him. Perseverance in knowing Him leads to perfection of faith in Him. When I come to the place where I trust Him with everything pertaining to my life, then I will be a mature, complete Christian. Prior to that time, I need to consider it pure joy whenever I face life’s trials for those trials are an indication that God is working to grow this boy into the likeness of Christ. Also, trials are an indicator that I am doing what Christ would have me do. The Bible tells us that in this world we will have trials and tribulation. If we are following Christ and doing His will, Satan will attempt to change our focus to a life of ease or a life of discouragement and depression.

27. Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. –Lamentations 2:22, 23

I think this must be the verse that led to the wonderful hymn, *Great Is Thy Faithfulness*. The words to the song say: Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father, There is not shadow of turning with Thee; Thou changest not, Thy compassions they fail not; As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be. Great is Thy Faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness! Morning by morning new mercies I see; All I have needed Thy hand has provided, Great is Thy faithfulness! Lord unto me!

God continually offers me what is best and what will best prepare me for a life of eternity in His presence. My battle is with my feelings. Self likes to do what makes self feel good. That is why I struggle with diet etc. But God does not give up on me. He continually draws me to choose His best for my life through His presence in me. When I am allowing Him to win the victory over my feelings and I know I am living a life that honors Him, I feel like shouting out the words to this song – Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord unto me!

28. You hem me in –behind and before; You have laid Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. –Psalm 139:5,6

When we are living in close relationship with Christ – living “In Christ,” He encircles us completely. Nothing can touch our lives that He is not aware of. We cannot escape from His presence. He knows our every word and action even before they happen. And when God lays His hand upon us it is like the hand of a parent that touches a child. The touch of that hand brings assurance that everything is fine. It brings understanding of the purpose He has for me that day. And, it brings obedience when I remember that He is close by. That obedience is not out of fear, it is out of understanding that when I am obedient to Him, it brings Him great joy. In turn, the understanding that I have been faithful to Him also brings me great joy. That is the key to victory in Jesus. When I live according to this process, it is “too wonderful.”

Prayer: Loving Father, today I pray that You will create in me a deeper passion to know Jesus and what He has done for me. When my life is so centered on Him, I am aware of His presence encircling me and guiding my thoughts, words and actions at each step of the way. Let me feel the touch of Your hand on me this day, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen

29. Blessed is the man who does not fall away because of Me. –Luke 7:22,23 (Message Jesus sent back to doubting John)

When John was locked up in a dirty, filthy dungeon day after day and month after month, he began to doubt that Christ was the Messiah. He sent two of His disciples to ask Jesus if He was the One that scriptures prophesied. Jesus didn't give John a direct answer to the question. He told the disciples to watch Him. He then spent the day healing the sick and pointing each one to a loving God. At the end of the day, Jesus told the disciples to go back and tell John what they had observed. Then He told them to tell John, “Blessed is the man who does not fall away because of me.” Translation: “Blessed is the man or woman who continues to cling to me even when I don't answer their plea the way they would like to see it

answered. Blessed is that person when they continue to trust Me no matter what happens.” When John heard the report of what Jesus had done all day and the words to continue trusting, it was enough. He went to His death knowing that Christ was his redeemer and that one day he would be brought back to life to live for eternity in the presence of Jesus and his Father. When my prayers are not answered according to what I think is best, I need to remember this story of John and, by faith, trust that God knows best for my life as well.

Prayer: Father, I believe that You are working out what is best in my life, help my unbelief when I begin to doubt You and Your ultimate plan for me and others. I pray this in the name of Jesus, who also died by faith trusting in You. Amen.

**30. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.
–Ephesians 2:10**

It is easy to fall into the trap of looking at others and forgetting why I am here. When I say to myself, “Others are much wiser,” God says, “That is not what I’ve called You to do, child.” When I say, “Others know so much more about curriculum,” God says, “That is not what I’ve called You to do, child.” When I say, “Others are much more gifted in administration,” God says, “That is not what I’ve called You to do, child.” In my mind I can go on and on about what I see in others. But God says, “That is not what I’ve called You to do, in all these things. Child, what I have called you to do is to be my “heart warmer” in ministry to others, and to be my voice in restoring my educational system to my original intent – revival (for those in My church) and restoration (for those who don’t know Me).” That is why we have an Adventist educational system. And we need to return to God’s original plan for it.

**31. Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet
And a light unto my path. –Psalm 119:105**

“The Lord is my light and my salvation ...” (–Psalm 27:1) The primary place I go to find the Lord is in His Word. The Word allows me to live above the darkness Satan plans for me to reside in. Colleges and universities for the most part are centered on the thoughts of man. My great need is not outward instruction from fellow human beings; but rather inward instruction from the Lord from His Spirit.

When I walk somewhere in total darkness it is very risky and makes me very apprehensive. But, when I have a light (lamp) to shine on the ground before me, I am save and secure. That is what Christ does for me as I spend time in His Word. When I am in His Word, the Holy Spirit speaks to me by what I see and what I hear (His promptings regarding what I am reading). If I am to have clear direction regarding how to live and what to do, I need to make sure I have turned the light on.

Prayer: Father, I thank You for providing the Bible as a way I can know You and Your plans for my daily life. I thank You that Your Word is a wonderful place for me to meet and commune with You through the promptings of the Holy Spirit. I pray for the outpouring of Your Spirit on this journal. Inspire me to put down your thoughts after each verse & make

them come alive with meaning as I reflect back on them in the future. I pray this in the name of Jesus, who is Lord over my thoughts, words, motives, desires and actions. Amen

**32. *This is the day the Lord has made,
I WILL rejoice and be glad in it. –Psalm 118:24***

The reason God admonishes us to praise Him all through the day is not because of a super ego. God does not struggle with the dysfunctional emotions that we struggle with. The reason we are to praise Him is because by so doing, we are placing our focus on Him and His control over our lives and not our own. Praise is the antidote for fear, worry, stress, pride, selfishness, anxiety, My deliberate choice to rejoice and be glad no matter what the day brings can only happen when I have submitted completely to Him and am convinced that He knows best (no matter what comes into my life that day). God made this day and if He is big enough to make not only the day, but also the universe and everything in it, He is certainly big enough to control everything that can possibly touch my life. Peace and joy come into my life when I know in my being that my Father loves me and that He is directing all that is allowed to impact my life.

Prayer: Father, I am asking You (through the promptings of Your Spirit) to make me aware of things throughout this day that I am thankful for. Let this day be to me a treasure hunt for blessings. As you reveal each blessing to me, let me see You – the Blessing Giver. May I bring joy to Your heart, Father, as I commune with You during these mini-“time out” sessions. I ask this in Jesus name. Amen

**33. *And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray Thee,
Open his eyes, that he may see.
And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man;
And he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of
Horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.
-2 Kings 6:17***

There are times when I feel like it's just me, all alone, fighting a battle. When those times come, I need to read this text and then ask God to show me, in some tangible way, that He is there. And if He is there, I can be assured that all of heavens agencies are at God's disposal should He choose to use them. In this case, Elisha's friend needed a dramatic show of force and God met his need with such a show. The fact of the matter is that God could have used any of the resources He has at His disposal to watch over and protect Elisha's friend. But he met the need according to what the person needed to strengthen his faith.

Prayer: Father, it is when I wander from spending time with You each morning that I begin to see the problems rather than You as the solution. Please come close to me this day that I may have the assurance that You love me, have a purpose for me, and are watching over all that affects me this day, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen

34. O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him. –Psalm 34:8

Imagine Jesus saying to you, “When others say that I am just a man, what will you say?” When it comes to the bottom line, our answer will be taken from this text. This question can’t be answered according to earthly reasoning. It has to be answered from the heart relationship we have with Christ. And that relationship was formed by tasting and seeing that the Lord was indeed good. That is why we trust Him implicitly no matter what we have to face in life.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, loving Father, sweet Spirit, I pray that you will fill my mind with those experiences that have led me to see that You can be trusted at all times. Plant them in my memory as benchmarks. And when I’m called to tell others who you are, please bring back those benchmarks to my memory and You share them, through my voice with others. I pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen

**35. All flesh shall see that I the Lord have kindled it:
It shall not be quenched. –Eze. 20:48**

Note: Ezekiel has been instructed to go to Judah and Jerusalem which are so populated that the area is like a forest) and to prophesy against this “forest of people” who are empty of fruit. God tells Ezekiel to do as He has asked with the assurance that the fire he starts will not be quenched.

Note: God is calling me to do my part in witnessing for Him. The same assurance is given to me. If I do my part for Him, He will make sure the witness is not quenched. For me to live out the vision He has for my life, I must remain in close relationship with Him. If I do my part, His promise is that the vision will be re-kindled and that it will not be quenched.

Prayer: Father, purify me of self and then fill me with the Holy Spirit that I may remain dead to self each day. This is the only way Your vision will be lived out in my life. Then Father, I pray that with this vision, You will broaden my territory. That Your hand would be with me. And that You would save me from the evil one. I pray this prayer in the name of Your Son, my Elder Brother, Jesus. Amen

**36. He restoreth my soul; He leadeth me
In the paths of righteousness
For His name’s sake. –Psalm 23:3**

Note: I don’t restore my soul. My part is to come to my Father and plead for forgiveness. His part is to clean me up and give me the joy that comes when I am restored to a right relationship with Him. There is nothing I can do; but to keep coming back to Him over and over again. Once He has restored my soul, He then must take me from that point and lead me in the path of His righteousness. His part is to do everything except coming to Him, confessing my sin (separation from Him) and submitting to His leadership of my life in everything.

Prayer: Father, I come to You in the name of Jesus. Please see me through His merit and not my own sinfulness. I want to praise You for the thousands of time You have restored my soul in the past and brought me back to the path You have chosen for me to travel. Please lead me this day in Your path of righteousness. Continually prompt me when I am at risk of taking over my life. Give me a picture of Your work in me and through me to others. Amen

37. To the pure all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. –Titus 1:15

In Mark 6:42 Jesus stated that you can clearly see others only when your eyes are unobstructed. If your vision is hindered by sin, you will not be able to see others the way Christ sees them. If your heart is connected with God's heart you will always look for the good in others (even in those who cause you problems). If you are critical of others or judgmental, ask God to purify your heart. Then you will be free to see them through the eyes of Christ.

Prayer: Father, help me to realize that when I am focusing on the faults of others, I am not able to see Your vision for my life. Please forgive me for this and draw my heart close to Yours so that I will be motivated by the mind of Christ at work in me. I pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen

38. Whoever abides in Him does not sin. -1 John 3:6

That makes it pretty clear. I can't spend quality time on a regular basis studying about Christ and communing with Him and be living a life with cherished sin. The two are not compatible. When I find myself falling back into sinful habits, even things as simple as negative thoughts or words about others, I have taken back the control of my life from the Holy Spirit. The Spirit has quietly vacated the premises of my heart. When I find this has happened, or I find that I have fallen back into sinful habits, the antidote is to return to Christ in repentance. To restore my relationship with Him is the key to once again living in victory and freedom.

Prayer: Father, I pray that you will give me a burning passion for Christ and an intentional desire to follow His vision for my life. "Take not Your Holy Spirit from me." "Return to me the joy of my salvation." I pray this prayer in the name of Jesus. Amen

***39. But if from there you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your **heart** and with all your soul.
–Deuteronomy 4:29***

The heart is where God meets with each of His children. It is the soul temple. While Satan may ravish your body, he cannot touch your heart. That is the special place where Christ resides and communes with each child of God. Your heart is your sanctuary (defined: a holy place; a place set aside to worship God. Or, a place of refuge or protection). A lesson Grover learned was that he would remain full of peace and joy so long as he lived in his soul temple.

That is where he and God spent hours together each day. As long as he remained focused on spending time with God, he was able to live above the circumstances of life.

The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth,
and his **heart** was filled with pain. -**Genesis 6:6**

The verse prior to this one says that “Man’s heart had become wicked continually.” That is why God’s heart was filled with pain. His own children had no time for Him and preferred to dwell in the presence of Satan. When I chose to do my own thing, I am not only hurting my heart; but the heart of my Father as well. Only when I, like the prodigal son, come humbly back asking for forgiveness does my heart and the heart of God rejoice again.

*Above all else, guard your **heart**, for it is the wellspring of life.*
-*Proverbs 4:23*

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