

The Gospel of Mark

Teaching Disciples: Part 1

Lesson #7 for August 17, 2024

Scriptures: Mark 8:22-9:50; Matthew 20:29-34; John 12:25; Luke 9:30-31; Malachi 4:5-6.

1. We have come to the dividing line in the Gospel of Mark. What we have studied so far has focused on **who Jesus was**. The disciples, especially Peter, said: “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” Shouldn’t that have been obvious long before that occasion?
2. But, after Christ, the Messiah, the anointed One, had reasonably settled in the minds of His disciples that He was the Son of God, He needed to begin teaching them about **what was coming**. He also needed to teach them about what their future lives would be like and what it really meant to be disciples of Jesus Christ. These lessons are very important even today.
3. The section of Mark from the middle of Mark 8 through the end of Mark 10 is bookmarked by two incidents in which Jesus healed blind men. Is this also a challenge to us to understand what Jesus was going to teach about His future life? And death? And our roles as disciples?
4. There are, in fact, a number of recorded incidents in which Jesus healed blind people. Blind Bartimaeus was healed as recorded in Mark 10:46-52, and the man born blind was healed as recorded in John 9. Let us look at the healing of the first blind man.

Mark 8:22-26: ²² They came to Bethsaida, where some people brought a blind man to Jesus and begged him to touch him. ²³ Jesus took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village. After spitting on the man’s eyes, Jesus placed his hands on him and asked him, “Can you see anything?”

²⁴ The man looked up and said, “Yes, I can see people, but they look like trees walking about.”

²⁵ **Jesus again placed his hands on the man’s eyes. This time the man looked intently, his eyesight returned, and he saw everything clearly.**

²⁶ Jesus then sent him home with the order, “Don’t go back into the village.”—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., Mark 8:22-26). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].^{†‡}

5. There is something interesting about this story of healing told in Mark 8. First of all, it is only in Mark that this story is told; it is not in any of the other Gospels. Secondly, it is the only miracle in which Jesus took two steps to bring the blind man to perfect vision. Why was that?

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] **But why two touches?** As this is the only miracle in which two actions are involved, it is not likely because of any lack of power on Jesus’ part. **Instead, it is more likely an acted parable, illustrating how spiritual insight sometimes takes time to unfold.** That is what is happening for Jesus’ disciples. The entire section, Mark 8:22–10:52 begins and ends with the healing of a blind man. **In this section of Mark, Jesus is especially teaching his [sic] disciples about His coming death. They have trouble grasping it even though He tells them numerous times. Just like the blind man, they need “two touches” to see clearly. Restoring of sight becomes a metaphor for insightful discipleship.**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sunday, August 11.^{†‡}

6. This is the crucial point at which Jesus turned from the first half of the Gospel of Mark which identifies Him as the Messiah to the second part which begins talking about His death and His resurrection. Readers of this Gospel, of course, already know from earlier in the book that the crucifixion was coming.

Mark 8:27-30: ²⁷ Then Jesus and his disciples went away to the villages near Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, “Tell me, who do people say I am?”

²⁸ “Some say that you are John the Baptist,” they answered; “others say that you are Elijah, while others say that you are one of the prophets.”

²⁹ “What about you?” he asked them. **“Who do you say I am?”**

Peter answered, “You are the Messiah.”

³⁰ Then Jesus ordered them, **“Do not tell anyone about me.”**—*Good News Bible*.^{*†} [This happened while they were in Caesarea Phillipi which was full of pagan temples and pagan idols.][‡]

7. Peter said aloud that Jesus was the Messiah. What did that mean?

[BSG:] **Teachers love questions.** They are often the key to unlocking a student’s understanding. **In this passage in Mark 8, the turning point of the book has arrived.** Three characteristics confirm this assertion. **First,** Jesus questions His disciples about His identity, something He has not done before this point. **Second, Peter is the first person not demon-possessed who declares that Jesus is the Messiah.** **Third,** immediately following this revelation of who Jesus is, He begins to explain where He is going—to the cross.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*^{*} for Sunday, August 11.^{†‡}

8. ***When you read Peter’s “confession” about Jesus being the Messiah, the Son of the living God, as recorded in Mark 8:27-29 or Matthew 16:16, how would you have responded? Do you think Mark in writing Peter’s Gospel has convinced you that Jesus is indeed the Messiah?***

9. Are there times when we should not speak about even important things like the gospel? Or, about the crucifixion of Christ? And His resurrection? And being Messiah?

[BSG:] Why does Jesus tell His disciples to tell no one that He is the Messiah? It seems counterintuitive to establishing the kingdom of God. However, in Jesus’ day, **“Messiah” had political overtones of overthrowing Roman rule.** Jesus did not come to be that kind of messiah; **hence His call for silence on His identity.**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*^{*} for Sunday, August 11.^{†‡}

10. In most of the stories that we have discussed so far in Mark, although the disciples were present, they were not involved. But, when it came to deciding about who Jesus really was, they were directly involved. When Peter said: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,” Jesus commended him. Unfortunately, when Jesus moved on to start talking about what was going to happen to Him in the future, Peter tried to stop Him.

Mark 8:31-33: ³¹ **Then Jesus began to teach his disciples:** “The Son of Man must suffer much and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the Law. **He will be put to death, but three days later he will rise to life.**”

³²**He made this very clear to them.** So Peter took him aside and began to

rebuke him. ³³But Jesus turned round, looked at his disciples, and rebuked Peter. **“Get away from me, Satan,”** he said. “Your thoughts don’t come from God but from human nature!”—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

11. Why did Jesus immediately rebuke Peter even apparently calling him *Satan* when he tried to contradict Jesus’s teaching about the crucifixion?

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] ... Peter’s words were not such as would be a help and solace to Jesus in the great trial before Him. They were not in harmony with God’s purpose of grace toward a lost world, nor with the lesson of self-sacrifice that Jesus had come to teach by His own example.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 415.4.‡

[\[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p130.2026&index=0\]](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p130.2026&index=0)‡

12. Jesus could not permit anything to get in the way of His assigned path to His crucifixion and resurrection. It was His knowledge of God’s plan for His life that kept Him going.

13. Then, Jesus talked about a cross.

Mark 8:34-38: ³⁴ Then Jesus called the crowd and his disciples to him. **“If anyone wants to come with me,” he told them, “he must forget self, carry his cross, and follow me.** ³⁵For whoever wants to save his own life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. ³⁶Do people gain anything if they win the whole world but lose their life? Of course not! ³⁷There is nothing they can give to regain their life. ³⁸**If a person is ashamed of me and of my teaching in this godless and wicked day, then the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.**”—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

14. What did Jesus mean by the term *carry his cross*? What do you think the disciples thought when Jesus mentioned *the cross*? And why would one choose to carry a cross?

15. Was it harder for the disciples to accept the idea that Jesus was not going to be the king of the Jews? Or, to accept the idea that He might die in the hands of the Romans on a cross? What did the other disciples think when Jesus turned to Peter and said: “Get behind me, Satan”?

16. What do you think the disciples thought when Jesus mentioned *the cross*? And why would one choose to carry a cross?

17. Look around you in the world and ask yourself what people are working for or towards? How many are working for fame? Fortune? Or, power? How many are seeking to follow Jesus?

[BSG:] Followers of Jesus are called to have the same goal He has—to take the cross and to follow Him. Crucifixion was the most cruel, humiliating, and intimidating method of execution that the Romans had. **Everyone wanted to avoid the cross. So, why would anyone want to take up the cross as a symbol of their devotion to Jesus?**

Jesus explains not only the cost of discipleship but also its great value. In the paradox of Christian faith, losing one’s life becomes the way to find it. **In contrast, gaining the whole world but forfeiting eternal life is nonsensical.**

As missionary Jim Elliott put it so eloquently in his journal of October 28, 1949: “He is no fool who gives away what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.”

[See <https://sharperiron.org/article/jim-elliott-was-not-first-to-say-it>.]

“ ‘He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life’ ” (John 12:25, NKJV). How have you experienced the reality of these words?—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Monday, August 12.^{†‡§}

John 12:25: [Jesus said:] “Those who love their own life will lose it; **those who hate their own life in this world will keep it for life eternal.**”—*Good News Bible.*^{*†‡}

18. **What does it mean “to take up the cross” in our society in 2024?**

19. Read **Mark 9:1-13** about the **transfiguration**.

20. The idea that some people standing there near Jesus would live to see “the kingdom of God come in power” (Mark 9:1) has puzzled a lot of people. The obvious answer is the transfiguration which happened six days later is that to which Jesus was referring.

[*SDA Bible Commentary* quoted in BSG:] “It is significant that all three Synoptic Gospels record the narrative of the Transfiguration immediately following this prediction . . . and furthermore all three mention the fact that the Transfiguration occurred about a week after this statement, implying that the event was the fulfillment of the prediction. The connection between the two sections of narrative seems to preclude the possibility that Jesus here referred to anything but **the Transfiguration, which was a miniature demonstration of the kingdom of glory.**”—*The SDA Bible Commentary*. vol. 5, p. 436 [in the comment regarding Matthew 16:28].—[as quoted in *Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 95].^{†‡§}

[BSG:] A comment by R. Alan Cole may be helpful at this juncture: “The verse [Mark 9:1] must, therefore, refer either to the transfiguration which follows immediately after, which seems reasonable; or to later events, still within a human lifespan, such as Christ’s triumph on the cross, confirmed by the resurrection (Col. 2:15); or to the coming of the Spirit; or to the later extension of the blessings of the kingdom to the Gentiles.”—Cole, *Mark: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 2 (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1989), pp. 213, 214.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 95-96.^{†‡§}

[BSG:] Elijah and Moses appear from the heavenly realm and converse with Jesus. Luke notes that they were talking about Jesus’ departure (Greek *exodos*) that He was about to accomplish in Jerusalem (*Luke 9:30, 31*). Thus, this scene of glory is tied to Jesus’ coming death on the cross (*compare with Mark 9:9*). **It would give hope when the disciples see Him crucified.**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Tuesday, August 13.^{†‡§}

21. What did the three disciples see at the transfiguration? What did it represent?

Luke 9:30-31: ³⁰**Suddenly two men were there talking with him. They were Moses and Elijah,** ³¹**who appeared in heavenly glory and talked with Jesus** about

the way in which he would soon fulfill God's purpose by dying in Jerusalem.—*Good News Bible*.*†

[BSG:] **The Transfiguration was, figuratively speaking, “a preview” of the magnificent event at the end of the days: the Second Coming.** Such a glorious event filled the disciples with amazement. Before their eyes, Moses and Elijah appeared and talked with Jesus (*Mark 9:4*). According to Ellen G. White, both Moses and Elijah represent the redeemed. **Elijah represents those who will not taste death, and Moses represents those who will rise from the dust.**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 96.†‡§

[EGW:] ... **Upon the mount the future kingdom of glory was represented in miniature,—Christ the King, Moses a representative of the risen saints, and Elijah of the translated ones.**—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 421.4.†‡ [<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p130.2055&index=0>]‡

[EGW:] ... The disciples are confident that Moses and Elijah have been sent to protect their Master, and to establish His authority as king.

But before the crown must come the cross. Not the inauguration of Christ as king, but the decease [death] to be accomplished at Jerusalem, is the subject of their conference with Jesus.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 422.1-2.‡ [<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p130.2058&index=0>]‡

22. How do you think you would have responded if you had been on that mountain with Jesus when God the Father spoke about Him? The disciples were terrified! (*Mark 9:6*)

Mark 9:6: [After the transfiguration:] He [Peter] and the others were so frightened that he did not know what to say.—*Good News Bible*.*†

23. Why do you think Jesus took three but only three of His disciples when He climbed up the mountain that night? Jesus was desperately hoping that at least His closest disciples—Peter, James, and John—would digest the information about the transfiguration and not lose hope through the upcoming events. Did those three disciples tell the others about the transfiguration at the time of the crucifixion?

Mark 9:9: As they came down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, “Don't tell anyone what you have seen, **until the Son of Man has risen from death.**”—*Good News Bible*.*† [What did the disciples think He was talking about?]‡

24. Coming down the mountain when Jesus told the three disciples that Elijah had already come, (*Mark 9:10*) was He telling them that just as John had been killed, so He would be killed? However, He would rise again after three days?

Malachi 4:5-6: [The LORD Almighty said:]⁵ “But **before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes, I will send you the prophet Elijah.** ⁶He will bring fathers and children together again; otherwise I would have to come and destroy your country.”—*Good News Bible*.*†‡

25. When is “the great and terrible day of the LORD”? Isn't that the second coming? And who is the “Elijah” that is to come just before the second coming? **Aren't we supposed to be that “Elijah,” spreading around the world the truth about the three angels' messages?**

26. As we have mentioned, we are at the dividing point between the first half of Mark and the second half. In the first half, Mark tried to establish the Messiahship of Jesus and His Sonship

to God. In the second half, Jesus was preparing the disciples for His crucifixion. Do you think that the transfiguration on the mountain was an adequate exclamation point to that first half?

27. While at the top of the mountain, Jesus and the three disciples had seen a vision of heaven. When they reached the bottom, they saw almost a foretaste of “hell.”

Mark 9:14-24: ¹⁴ When they joined the rest of the disciples [after the transfiguration], they saw a large crowd round them and some teachers of the Law arguing with them. ¹⁵When the people saw Jesus, they were greatly surprised, and ran to him and greeted him. ¹⁶Jesus asked his disciples, “What are you arguing with them about?”

¹⁷ A man in the crowd answered, “Teacher, I brought my son to you, because he has an evil spirit in him and cannot talk. ¹⁸Whenever the spirit attacks him, it throws him to the ground, and he foams at the mouth, grits his teeth, and becomes stiff all over. I asked your disciples to drive the spirit out, but they could not.”

¹⁹ Jesus said to them, “**How unbelieving you people are!** How long must I stay with you? How long do I have to put up with you? Bring the boy to me!”

²⁰They brought him to Jesus.

As soon as the spirit saw Jesus, it threw the boy into a fit, so that he fell on the ground and rolled round, foaming at the mouth. ²¹ “How long has he been like this?” Jesus asked the father.

“Ever since he was a child,” he replied. ²² “Many times the evil spirit has tried to kill him by throwing him in the fire and into water. **Have pity on us and help us, if you possibly can!**”

²³ “Yes,” said Jesus, “if you yourself can! Everything is possible for the person who has faith.”

²⁴ The father at once cried out, “**I do have faith, but not enough. Help me to have more!**”—*Good News Bible*. *††

28. It is interesting to note Jesus’s response to the father’s statement, “If you can.” (Mark 9:23) Suddenly, the father realized that he also had a problem; it was not just his son who had a problem. He pleaded for more faith, and Jesus healed his son.

29. Have you ever had an experience in which you felt it was necessary to cry out for more faith?

30. Turning back to the story in Mark 9:

Mark 9:25-29: ²⁵ Jesus noticed that the crowd was closing in on them, so he gave a command to the evil spirit. “Deaf and dumb spirit,” he said, “I order you to come out of the boy and never go into him again!”

²⁶ The spirit screamed, threw the boy into a bad fit, and came out. **The boy looked like a corpse**, and everyone said, “He is dead!” [Did the boy have a convulsive seizure and then a post-ictal or post-seizure state of being unconscious and motionless?] ²⁷But Jesus took the boy by the hand and helped him to rise, and he stood up.

²⁸ After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, “Why couldn’t we drive the spirit out?”

²⁹ **“Only prayer can drive this kind out,” answered Jesus; “nothing else can.”—Good News Bible.*††**

31. The forces of Satan can have great power over a person if s/he has allowed that.

[EGW:] Some poor souls who have been fascinated with the eloquent words of the teachers of spiritualism, and have yielded to its influence, **afterward find out its deadly character, and would renounce and flee from it, but cannot.** Satan holds them by his power, and is not willing to let them go free. He knows that they are surely his while he has them under his special control, but that if they once free themselves from his power, he can never bring them again to believe in spiritualism, and to place themselves so directly under his control. **The only way for such poor souls to overcome Satan, is to discern between pure Bible truth and fables. As they acknowledge the claims of truth, they place themselves where they can be helped.** They should entreat those who have had a religious experience, and who have faith in the promises of God, to plead with the mighty Deliverer in their behalf. It will be a close conflict. **Satan will reinforce his evil angels who have controlled these persons; but if the saints of God with deep humility fast and pray, their prayers will prevail. Jesus will commission holy angels to resist Satan, and he will be driven back and his power broken from off the afflicted ones. Mark 9:29: “And He said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.”—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*,* vol. 1, 343.2-343.0.††**

[\[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p116.1655&index=0\]](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p116.1655&index=0)†

32. Satan’s power over beings was present with Adam and Eve, and even before that with the fallen beings that had been in heaven.

[EGW:] The angels warned them [Adam and Eve] to be on their guard against the devices of Satan, for his efforts to ensnare them would be unwearied. **While they were obedient to God the evil one could not harm them; for, if need be, every angel in heaven would be sent to their help.** If they steadfastly repelled his first insinuations, they would be as secure as the heavenly messengers. **But should they once yield to temptation, their nature would become so depraved that in themselves they would have no power and no disposition to resist Satan.**—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets** 53.2.†† [\[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p84.161&index=0\]](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p84.161&index=0)†

[The tree of knowledge of good and evil was **intended to be a protection** for Adam and Eve. **Satan could only have access to them at that tree.** All they had to do was to stay away from that tree! See *Patriarchs and Prophets* 53.3. See <https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p84.162&index=0>.]†

33. As we turn again to Jesus talking about His death, what was it that had prevented the disciples from understanding what Jesus was talking about?

[BSG:] When Jesus first called the disciples, He said He would make them fishers of men (*Mark 1:17*). There was no talk of trouble. But now that they really know who He is, He unfolds to them the goal of His mission—that it is necessary for Him to suffer many things, to be rejected and killed, and then to rise again after three days. [They had thought that they along with Jesus were

to become rulers of the people after Jesus drove out the Romans!]*—Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Monday, August 12.^{†§}

34. It is interesting to note that Jesus spoke definitively about His coming death on three separate occasions in Mark 8-10: (1) The first time we mentioned earlier is recorded in **Mark 8:31-33**; Matthew 16:21-28; and Luke 9:22-27. (2) Then, where we are now reading, Jesus spoke a second time about His death. (See **Mark 9:30-32**; Matthew 17:22-23; and Luke 9:43-45.) (3) Later, Jesus spoke a third time about His death. (See **Mark 10:32-34**; Matthew 20:17-19; **Luke 18:31-34**.) This was just a few days before the crucifixion. The people who were travelling with Him planned to make Him king when they arrived in Jerusalem.
35. Imagine Jesus's thoughts about what to say and what not to say as He gradually unfolded to His disciples what was coming. How could He tell them about the crucifixion?

[BSG:] **In the first prediction [of His coming death and resurrection], Jesus refers to those who will reject Him and kill Him. [He would be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the Law.] In the second prediction, Jesus refers to the fact that He will be betrayed.** The betrayer is not pointed out at this time, but the reader already knows who it is because of the identification of Judas (see *Mark 3:19*). **Again, the Lord refers to being killed and then rising after three days. But the disciples seem even less interested in the details of this prediction than in the first. Unwelcome news does not garner discussion.***—Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Wednesday, August 14.^{†§}

Mark 3:19: And Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus.—*Good News Bible*.*

36. But, unfortunately, the disciples had not yet grasped the significance of Jesus's statements about what was coming. They were still arguing about who was going to be the greatest when Jesus would overthrow the Romans and set up His kingship in Jerusalem! On this occasion as well as on others, Jesus made it very clear that the greatest in the kingdom of heaven is the one who is a servant of all. And He added that we must be willing to welcome even a small child in His name. Jesus finally made His point by washing their dirty feet!
37. There are other passing references to His death. We, of course, do not know how many times Jesus talked about this subject which were not recorded.
38. Next is the story of John, trying to stop someone who was casting out demons in the name of Jesus. But, Jesus assured His disciples that "anyone who is not against us is for us." (Mark 9:38-41)
39. Jesus did what He could to stop the discussions about who would be first in the kingdom!
- [BSG:] Jesus responds to the problem in two steps. **First**, He utters the clear statement that to be first (greatest), you have to become a servant. **Then** Jesus illustrates His meaning by an action. Evidently a child was standing nearby listening. Jesus takes the child and places him in the midst of the group. That would be intimidating for the child. But then Jesus takes the child in His arms, relaxing the scene. He teaches that if you receive the child, you receive Him. And if you receive Him, you receive His Father. Thus, the lowest child is linked to God Himself.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Wednesday, August 14.^{†‡}

Mark 9:42-50: ⁴² “If anyone should cause one of these little ones to lose his faith in me, it would be better for that person to have a large millstone tied round his neck and be thrown into the sea. ⁴³So **if your hand makes you lose your faith, cut it off!** It is better for you to enter life without a hand than to keep both hands and go off to hell, to **the fire that never goes out.** ⁴⁵And if your foot makes you lose your faith, cut it off! It is better for you to enter life without a foot than to keep both feet and be thrown into hell. ⁴⁷And if your eye makes you lose your faith, take it out! It is better for you to enter the Kingdom of God with only one eye than to keep both eyes and be thrown into hell. ⁴⁸There ‘the worms that eat them never die, and the fire that burns them is never put out.’ [See Isaiah 66:24.]

⁴⁹ “Everyone will be purified by **fire** as a sacrifice is purified by salt.

⁵⁰ “**Salt** is good; but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? “Have the salt of friendship among yourselves, and live in peace with one another.”—*Good News Bible*. *†‡

40. Cutting off one’s hand or foot or taking out one’s eye seems extreme. What was Jesus trying to suggest? Surely, Jesus was using hyperbole! We would think it to be a disaster to lose a hand or foot or an eye. However, how much greater would the disaster be to lose eternal life! And every time we sin, we are choosing death!

41. It should also be noted that Jesus was not teaching the idea of an “eternally burning hell.”

[BSG:] At first, this passage may seem to be a collection of disparate teachings of Jesus thrown together without any rhyme or reason. However, a closer look reveals that **each successive teaching has a catchword connection to the previous one.** The passage revolves around three main terms that move the instruction forward step by step—“causes to sin,” “fire,” and “salt.”

The first teaching is about “little ones,” referring to new believers. Teachers and leaders are tasked in the kingdom of God with the responsibility to care for these new converts with special care, similar to the Old Testament ethic of caring for those weakest in ancient society—widows, orphans, and foreigners. Jesus speaks in hyperbole that it would be better to be drowned in the sea than to cause one of these “little ones” to sin.

The catchphrase “causes to sin” leads to the longest teaching in this passage. Two conundrums confront the reader. First, is Jesus really teaching people to cut off a hand or foot or pluck out an eye? Second, is He teaching an eternally burning hell? The answer to the first question is no, Jesus is not teaching mutilation—that [mutilation] was rejected in Judaism (compare with Deut. 14:1; 1 Kings 18:27, 28). The Lord is using hyperbole to make His point. If losing a hand, foot, or eye is terrible, how much more a disaster should it be for the Christian to sin!—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide for Thursday, August 15.†‡§**

42. Who do we consider to be the greatest in our day?

[EGW:] **Before honor is humility. To fill a high place before men, Heaven chooses the worker who, like John the Baptist, takes a lowly place before God. The most childlike disciple is the most efficient in labor for God. The**

heavenly intelligences can co-operate with him who is seeking, not to exalt self, but to save souls. He who feels most deeply his need of divine aid will plead for it; and the Holy Spirit will give unto him glimpses of Jesus that will strengthen and uplift the soul. From communion with Christ he will go forth to work for those who are perishing in their sins. He is anointed for his mission; and he succeeds where many of the learned and intellectually wise would fail.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 436.3.^{†‡}

[<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p130.2127&index=0>][‡]

43. As Seventh-day Adventist Christians, do we owe anything to our neighbors and friends?

[EGW:] ... By all that has given us advantage over another,—be it education and refinement, nobility of character, Christian training, religious experience,—we are in debt to those less favored; and, so far as lies in our power, we are to minister unto them. If we are strong, we are to stay up the hands of the weak. Angels of glory, that do always behold the face of the Father in heaven, joy in ministering to His little ones. Trembling souls, who have many objectionable traits of character, are their special charge. Angels are ever present where they are most needed, with those who have the hardest battle with self to fight, and whose surroundings are the most discouraging. And in this ministry Christ's true followers will co-operate.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 440.1.[‡]

[<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p130.2149&index=0>][‡]

44. Can we learn to take sin so seriously that we would rather be maimed than to sin? On the cross, Jesus noted that being separated from His Father was so awful that it led to His death. It is sin that separates us from God, (Isaiah 59:2) and it is sin which will lead to the final destruction of the wicked. Do we want to be among that group?

45. Do we recognize that the first half of Mark is to establish His Sonship and His Messiahship? Do we acknowledge that the transfiguration occupies a very important point in Mark's Gospel—by it the Sonship of Jesus Christ is cemented in their minds? It is important also to notice that when the Father was speaking about His Son, He said *listen* to Him. (Mark 9:7, NASB) As we have noted on other occasions, **listening is a synonym in the Bible for the obedience that comes from understanding.** Such obedience or listening involves a daily surrender to Jesus Christ. So, each day we need to learn more about Jesus Christ and practice following Him.

46. Are we prepared to take up the challenge of discipleship and of avoiding sin, as far as possible, in preparation for the second coming? Is avoiding sin easy to do?

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