

Sabbath School Lesson #4 – When Alone – 20-26 April 2019

Christ inspired Ellen White to write: “After the creation of Adam every living creature was brought before him to receive its name; he saw that to each had been given a companion, but among them ‘there was not found an help meet for him.’ Among all the creatures that God had made on the earth, there was not one equal to man. And God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.’ Man was not made to dwell in solitude; he was to be a social being. Without companionship the beautiful scenes and delightful employments of Eden would have failed to yield perfect happiness. Even communion with angels could not have satisfied his desire for sympathy and companionship. There was none of the same nature to love and to be loved” {PP 46.1}.

Sunday: Companionship – If the unmarried ask God to choose for them, or the married ask God to transform them, all may experience true companionship. Adam and Eve were in a companionship ordained by God. As for Adam’s companion, we are told, “God Himself gave Adam a companion. He provided ‘an help meet for him’ – a helper corresponding to him – one who was fitted to be his companion, and who could be one with him in love and sympathy. Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him. A part of man, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, she was his second self, showing the close union and the affectionate attachment that should exist in this relation. ‘For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it.’ Ephesians 5:29. ‘Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one.’” {PP 46.2}. We read on: “God celebrated the first marriage. Thus the institution has for its originator the Creator of the universe. ‘Marriage is honorable’ (Hebrews 13:4); it was one of the first gifts of God to man, and it is one of the two institutions that, after the Fall, Adam brought with him beyond the gates of Paradise. When the divine principles are recognized and obeyed in this relation, marriage is a blessing; it guards the purity and happiness of the race, it provides for man’s social needs, it elevates the physical, the intellectual, and the moral nature” {PP 46.3}.

Monday: The Unmarried Life – It is sad that the Lesson writer conflicts Jesus not being married with us His creatures not being married, and then seems to promote celibacy. It reminds us of the work of Anna Phillips, which Ellen White warned us of: “The work of Anna Phillips does not bear the signature of heaven. [In a “Testimony” written on August 10, 1892, Anna Rice Phillips stated, “The time has come of which Paul spoke when he said, ‘But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none.’ ... Satan will make you feel that you cannot give up this one thing, that it is yours by right my brother, but is it when God has spoken?”—White Estate Document File No. 363.] I know what I am talking about. In our first experience in the infancy of this cause we had to meet similar manifestations. Many such revelations were given, and we had a most disagreeable work in meeting this element and giving it no place. Some things stated in these revelations were fulfilled, and this led some to accept them as genuine” {TSB 109.1}.

“Young, unmarried women, would have a message for married men, and in no delicate words would tell them to their face of the abuse of the marriage privileges. Purity was the burden of the messages given, and for a while everything appeared to be reaching a high state of purity and holiness. But the inwardness of these matters was opened to me. I was shown what would be the outcome of this teaching.” “Those who were engaged in this work were not a superficial, immoral class, but persons who had been the most devoted workers. Satan saw an opportunity to take advantage of the state of things, and to disgrace the cause of God. Those who thought themselves able to bear any test without exciting their carnal propensities, were overcome, and several unmarried men and women were compelled to be married. I am afraid of those who feel so great a burden to labor in this direction. Satan works upon the imagination, so that impurity is the result, instead of purity.” “Jesus did not enforce celibacy upon any class of men. He came not to destroy the sacred relationship of marriage, but to exalt it and restore it to its original sanctity. He looks with pleasure upon the family relationship where sacred and unselfish love bears sway” {TSB 109.2 to TSB 110.2}.

Tuesday: When Marriage Ends – “God gave only one cause why a wife should leave her husband, or the husband leave his wife, which was adultery. Let this ground be prayerfully considered. Marriage was from the creation, constituted by God, a divine ordinance. The marriage institution was made in Eden. The Sabbath of the fourth commandment was instituted in Eden, when the foundations of the world were laid, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. Then let this, God's institution of marriage, stand before you as firm as the Sabbath of the fourth commandment” {Lt8-1888.6}.

“Your ideas in regard to the marriage relation have been erroneous. Nothing but the violation of the marriage bed can either break or annul the marriage vow. We are living in perilous times, when there is no assurance in anything save in firm, unwavering faith in Jesus Christ. There is no heart that may not be estranged from God through the devices of Satan, if one does not watch unto prayer” {AH 341.3}. “My heart is sick when I see the loose way that the marriage vows are held. We are nearing the judgement. I ask you to consider carefully, candidly, your position. There is, perhaps, upon more thorough acquaintance, a dislike of your husband's ways and manners. Will not many people find the same, after the marriage novelty has passed? But when you made your vow before God and holy angels, you knew you were not perfect and your husband was not perfect; but this is no excuse for breaking your marriage vow. There is a need of training your mind and heart that you shall bear with one another, to be kind to one another, and not to allow distrust and hatred to come in” {Lt57-1888.3}. “Now, I tell you that you cannot break your marriage vow and be guiltless before God. Unite your interest with your husband. Love him and bear with him and work with him. Bid the evil advisers depart. The case is between you and your husband and your God. It is a pride of heart that shuts your eyes that you cannot and do not discover the justice and righteousness in the case of fidelity to your husband. Adhere faithfully to your marriage vows because you are upright of heart, and will you regret this keeping of your vows when you shall be clothed in the garments of Christ's righteousness?” {Lt57-1888.6}.

“A woman may be legally divorced from her husband by the laws of the land and yet not divorced in the sight of God and according to the higher law. There is only one sin, which is adultery, which can place the husband or wife in a position where they can be free from the marriage vow in the sight of God. Although the laws of the land may grant a divorce, yet they are husband and wife still in the Bible light, according to the laws of God” {Ms2-1863.11}.

Wednesday: Death and Loneliness – Let God guide His people if they should remarry. For Ellen White, she said: “Since twenty-one years ago, when I was deprived of my husband by death, I have not had the slightest idea of ever marrying again. Why? Not because God forbade it. No. But to stand alone was the best for me, that no one should suffer with me in carrying forward my work entrusted to me of God. And no one should have a right to influence me in any way in reference to my responsibility and my work in bearing my testimony of encouragement and reproof.” “My husband never stood in my way to do this, although I had help and encouragement from him and oft his pity. His sympathy and prayers and tears I have missed so much, so very much. No one can understand this as myself. But my work has to be done. No human power should give the least supposition that I would be influenced in the work God has given me to do in bearing my testimony to those for whom He has given me reproof or encouragement.” “I have been alone in this matter, severely alone, with all the difficulties and all the trials connected with the work. God alone could help me. The last work that is to be done by me in this world will soon be finished. I must express myself plainly in a manner, if possible, not to be misunderstood” {Ms227-1902.6}.

Thursday: Spiritually Single – If non-Adventists marry, one converts to Adventism, they should stay together, but it is no licence for an already Adventist marrying a non-Adventist. “He who has entered the marriage relation while unconverted is by his conversion placed under stronger obligation to be faithful to his companion, however widely they may differ in regard to religious faith; yet the claims of God should be placed above every earthly relationship, even though trials and persecution may be the result. With the spirit of love and meekness, this fidelity may have an influence to win the unbelieving one. But the marriage of Christians with the ungodly is forbidden in the Bible. The Lord's direction is, ‘Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers’ 2 Corinthians 6:14, 17, 18.” {PP 175.1}.