

## ***Sabbath School Today*** **With the 1888 Message Dynamic**

### ***Health and Healing*** **Lesson 10: “Integrity: Wholeness and Holiness”**

What is it about the lure of sex that seems impossible to overcome? Society is addicted to it. There is a compulsive allure to see all its aberrations. Can the present truth, last-day witness of the good news found in the third angel’s message bring deliverance from this temptation?

Paul writes that “love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law” (Rom. 13:10). Only Christ is the source of *agape*, which is “the fulfilling of the law.” We are natural-born lovers of self, the opposite of *agape*. *Agape* can only be imported from God. Jesus can teach us *agape* so that we can accept it from Him.

There is not an individual on earth who is any better than another so far as our fallen sinful motivations. The potential exists for any earth-bound soul to commit the sin of another, except for the fact of much more abounding grace from above. Sex is so alluring that it’s almost like flypaper, a single contact with it and you’re caught for good. All the self-help programs in the world do no good to deliver from sexual addiction.

Since God’s love is the goal of the Ten Commandments, it follows that violation of the law is the opposite of His love. So you’re stuck! Disobedience to the commandment “Thou shalt not commit adultery” is total self-centeredness in the soul.

There are players who can be so convincing, acting like they really love and care for someone inexperienced. Young innocents are taken in because they haven’t had any experience and are vulnerable wanting a significant relationship. They don’t know the difference between true and false love. But when God’s true love is in the heart you won’t choose to defile another through an affair or by force. With God’s love within, it won’t happen.

So what’s the cure for the subtle allure of illicit sex? It has to be the revelation of the good news about Jesus. The gospel is easy enough for a child to understand, and yet Satan has made sure that it has been watered down by the counterfeit teachings which come from heathenism and are absorbed into “Christian” Babylonian religion. It is vital that we spend time with the Word so that we can be taught of God about the genuine, eternal good news. If you have discovered such a precious stone, wouldn’t you take everything out of the bank in order to buy it?

The gospel does not teach you to be good so you can have fun. The gospel shows you what true faith is in Jesus and His accomplishment on the cross and that produces true joy. So what did He accomplish? Jesus delivered you from the second death. That is what hell is. Hell is fire and brimstone at the close of the millennium; however, there is such a thing as burning embarrassment here and now.

John the Revelator writes, “Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame” (Rev. 16:15). If it’s white-hot embarrassment you’re itching for, just bring out the real you and the love of self and its desires so that everybody can see it, then your name, integrity, decorum, and trustworthiness is gone. Everybody at home, in the neighborhood, at your place of employ, your close associates will sense you are bogus. There won’t be any escape from it because you won’t be able to get away from yourself to some lonely outpost. You won’t be able to get rest at night. You’re exposed to the community and will have to endure the embarrassment.

Where’s the gospel? The Redeemer rescued all from going through this terrible experience. How can we see this? The Bible truthfully says, “There is none righteous, no, not one” (Rom. 3:10). The truth detector opens up our personality for what it really is by showing how it stands up to attractive enticements. Without a Redeemer we would be uncovered for all to see.

A small bush on the sheltered side of the meadow is ill advised to smirk at a large Ponderosa pine on the ridge-top when it topples to the ground in the blast of a wind-shear. The bush should be happy to confess, “It’s only God’s mercy that keeps me from falling.”

Those “clothes” covering you aren’t some innate goodness, rather they are Jesus’ robe given to you. They are not just to cover your dirty undergarments, but to replace them altogether. It is by faith that you receive His robe of righteousness. We have nothing with which to straighten ourselves out. The prophet Isaiah teaches, “their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord” (Isa. 54:17). You may experience the grace of the Saviour’s justification by faith.

“The purity, the holiness of the life of Jesus, ... possess more power to reform and transform the character than do all the efforts put forth in picturing the sins and crimes of men and the sure results. One steadfast look to the Saviour uplifted upon the cross will do more to purify the mind and heart from every defilement than will all the scientific explanations by the ablest tongue. This is my teaching of moral purity. The opening of the blackness of impurity will not be one half as efficacious in uprooting sin as will the presentation of these grand and ennobling themes. ... [Other approaches] create sensuality in place of uprooting it. The Bible, and the Bible alone, has given the true lesson upon purity” (Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White, The Australian Years*, vol. 4, pp. 131, 132).

Your natural-born heart which loves itself can appreciate the self-giving *agape* of God that rescued you. Jesus’ *agape* moved Him to choose the agony of eternal death so that you might never have to go there. This was the “curse” which He endured on the sinner’s behalf during those hours dying on Calvary. He died unclothed before the world for He wanted you to be robed in His righteousness. For that we can choose to lift our voices in praises to His name. It’s enough to keep us in a state of constant humility.

—Paul E. Penno