

Christian Education

More Lessons from the Master Teacher

Lesson #6 for November 7, 2020

Scriptures: Genesis 3:1-11; 28:10-17; Romans 5:11-19; John 1:1-14; Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 10:46-52.

1. Have you ever done something for which you were ashamed? Surely, that is a universal experience! Try to imagine how Adam and Eve felt, hiding, trying to cover themselves with fig leaves as God approached! Think about Jacob at the age of approximately 70 and not yet married, having tricked his father and gotten his father's blessing and birthright and running from his brother's anger. Think about the woman caught in adultery—"in the very act." (John 8:4) And think of David and Bathsheba as well! (See Psalm 32 and 51.)
2. So, we must admit that we are all sinners. (Romans 3:23)
3. Read Genesis 3:1-11. That is the story of the first sin on this earth. Eve trusted the serpent, ate the fruit, gave it to her husband who also ate it; and they both realized that they had lost the covering of light that had been around them. Then, they were embarrassed when God came looking for them.
4. What do you think happened in Eve's mind? Was she thinking: "I don't need to have someone tell me what to do"? Why would she stop trusting God and start trusting a talking serpent? Why didn't she consult with her husband? Or, even discuss it with God?
5. Why do you suppose God was asking them, "Where are you?" He knew, of course, exactly where they were. Maybe He asked that question just to focus on their problem and what they had done.
6. In the New Testament, Paul wrote about the contrast between what Adam did and what Jesus Christ did. See Romans 5:11-19.
7. Do we always recognize God's presence with us? When we are tempted to sin, do we ever wish we could hide from God's presence? That is the universal problem of sin and guilt. But, fortunately, we know that Jesus is the answer.
8. Think about the story of Jacob.

Genesis 28:10-17: ¹⁰ Jacob left Beersheba and started towards Haran. ¹¹At sunset he came to a holy place and camped there. He lay down to sleep, resting his head on a stone. ¹²He dreamt that he saw a stairway reaching from earth to heaven, with angels going up and coming down on it. ¹³And there was the LORD standing beside him. "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham and Isaac," he said. "I will give to you and to your descendants this land on which you are lying. ¹⁴They will be as numerous as the specks of dust on the earth. They will extend their territory in all directions, and through you and your descendants I will bless all the nations. ¹⁵Remember, I will be with you and protect you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done all that I have promised you."

¹⁶ Jacob woke up and said, "The LORD is here! He is in this place, and I didn't know it!" ¹⁷He was afraid and said, "What a terrifying place this is! It must be the house of God; it must be the gate that opens into heaven."—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., Genesis 28:10-17). New York: American Bible Society.

9. When reading this story for the first time or even after a number of times and unless you have done the math, you might think that Jacob was a teenager, or maybe in his early 20s. Why did he need his mother to tell him what to do? How old was Jacob when this story took place? He must have been about 70 years old!

Moses does not tell us the age of Jacob at the birth of Joseph, but he very neatly works it into the story (Genesis 41:46; 45:6; 47:9) so that by simple addition and subtraction we find it to be 91. We are expected to do the sum for ourselves.—(1984). *Evangelical Review of Theology*,* 8, 171.

10. So, in our passage, Jacob was running for his life from his brother who was threatening to kill him. He found a stone for a pillow, hopefully in a semi-comfortable shape, and laid down to try to get some sleep. Then, he had that vision of the ladder and God's voice telling him: "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham and Isaac." (Genesis 28:13, *NRSV**) Jacob must have remembered that kind of greeting from stories he had heard from his family. Then, God went on to promise him that He would never leave him.
11. Many years later, Paul:

... beholds the ladder of Jacob's vision, representing Christ, who has connected earth with heaven, and finite man with the infinite God. His faith is strengthened as he calls to mind how patriarchs and prophets have relied upon the One who is his support and consolation, and for whom he is giving his life.—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles** 512.1.

12. When Jacob awoke, how do you suppose he felt? The text tells us that he recognized that God was in that place. So, he named it Bethel—"house of God."
13. If we had time, we would review the life of Jacob. But, for now, let us ask the question: "Why should God bless Jacob with this dream and promise when he had just left home because of lying to his father and angering his brother?"
14. Review John 1:1-14. Matthew and Luke started their Gospels with the story of Jesus's birth. Mark did not bother; he just jumped into the story. But, John was determined that we have to go back and recognize the truth that:

John 1:1-3: ¹ In the beginning the Word already existed; the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²From the very beginning the Word was with God. ³Through him God made all things; not one thing in all creation was made without him.—*Good News Bible*.* [Compare Micah 5:2.][†]

15. What an introduction! We all should agree that Jesus was the greatest Teacher this world has ever seen. So, why do you think John was forced to say, "His own people did not receive him"? (John 1:11, *GNB**) What other factors were in play leading to that conclusion? Why did the people of Israel reject Jesus? He did not fit as their "messiah"!
16. Two thousand years ago, the God who had spoken to Adam and Eve as they walked in the cool of the evening and who appeared in a dream to Jacob, appeared as a Human Being. He lived that incredible life. When Jesus was about to begin His ministry, He traveled to the Jordan River near Jericho and asked to be baptized by John the Baptist, His predecessor. John had stirred up the entire nation, attracting people from all corners to hear his preaching. What do you think those people thought when seeing Jesus for the first time, John said: "Behold! The Lamb of God"? (John 1:29, *NKJV**)
17. What we know is that several of John's disciples soon began following Jesus. They called

Him “Rabbi” which translated means “teacher.” (John 1:38, *NRSV*) Imagine having God as your Teacher. We have already seen in previous lessons that when Jesus was a child, God the Father was His Teacher and so were the angels. In *Signs of the Times*,* June 10, 1886, par. 9, Ellen White called Jesus, “The greatest teacher the world has ever seen.”

18. So, wouldn't it be wise to do our very best to learn from His example?
19. After being baptized by John, Jesus went first to the wilderness where He was tempted by the Devil and, then, He returned to the Jordan. Finally, He went to Galilee, once again. When Passover came in the spring, He traveled back to Jerusalem and began His ministry in earnest. For the next year, He worked “under the radar” in Judea because He did not want to stir up animosity among the Pharisees and Sadducees. At the end of that year, John the Baptist was arrested and put in prison. Jesus felt it was appropriate, at that point in time, to move His ministry from Judea to Galilee. It is during that next year that most of the events occurred that are recorded in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. At the end of that year, John the Baptist was beheaded. After feeding the 5000 and then giving them that sermon about eating His flesh and drinking His blood, Jesus took His disciples out of Jewish territory, going northwest into the territory of Tyre and Sidon where God had directed Him to see that woman whose daughter was possessed with a demon. (See Matthew 15:21-28.)
20. During the next six months, Jesus focused primarily on teaching His disciples and spent most of His time outside of Jewish territory. It even seemed like He was trying to hide from all the people who would have liked to have been healed by Him.

Mark 7:24-30: ²⁴ Then Jesus left and went away to the territory near the city of Tyre. He went into a house and did not want anyone to know he was there, but he could not stay hidden. ²⁵A woman, whose daughter had an evil spirit in her, heard about Jesus and came to him at once and fell at his feet. ²⁶The woman was a Gentile, born in the region of Phoenicia in Syria. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter. ²⁷But Jesus answered, “Let us first feed the children. It isn't right to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.”

²⁸ “Sir,” she answered, “even the dogs under the table eat the children's leftovers!”

²⁹ So Jesus said to her, “Because of that answer, go back home, where you will find that the demon has gone out of your daughter!”

³⁰ She went home and found her child lying on the bed; the demon had indeed gone out of her.—*Good News Bible*.*†

21. Doesn't verse 24 suggest that Jesus was trying to stay out of the public eye?
22. Read the full story as explained by Ellen White in *The Desire of Ages* pages 399-403.
23. This woman belonged to the ancient group known as *the Canaanites*. These were the people who were supposed to have been driven out or destroyed by the children of Israel under Joshua 1400 years earlier. This area of Tyre and Sidon mostly contained Greek-speaking city dwellers. They looked down on the Jewish farmers from whom they purchased most of their food; in return, the Jews looked down on the Greek-speaking city dwellers!
24. When that woman approached Jesus, she received that strange response from Him which

we have read. Jesus was trying to show His disciples the contrast between the way most Jews would have dealt with her and the way He ultimately treated her. This woman did something remarkable. She had desperate hopes of finding help for her daughter; when Jesus appeared to rebuff her, she spoke back! The Jews were not in the habit of keeping dogs as pets in those days. But, when Jesus suggested that it was not fair to toss food intended for the children to the puppies, her comment was: “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs [puppies] eat the crumbs from their master’s table.” (Matthew 15:27, *NRSV*^{*†}) I have changed the word **dogs** to **puppies** because the Greek word means “little dogs” or “puppies.” We know, of course, that Jesus, having made His point, healed her daughter.

25. About six months after that story took place, Jesus began attracting large crowds, and they followed Him. He spent most of His time on the east side of the Jordan River, out of Jewish territory, so the Jewish rulers could not easily arrest 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*.^{*†}

26. Notice that Jesus told His disciples that He was going to be arrested, killed, and three days later would rise to life. In verse 32, it says, “He made this very clear to them.”
27. But, for those next six months with the crowds hanging on His every word and following Him wherever He went, the rumor began to spread that Jesus was going to go to Jerusalem and be crowned king. So, on that journey from Jericho to Jerusalem, Jesus called His disciples aside, and we have the following story.

Luke 18:31-34: ³¹ Jesus took the twelve disciples aside and said to them, “Listen! We are going to Jerusalem where everything the prophets wrote about the Son of Man will come true. ³²He will be handed over to the Gentiles, who will mock him, insult him, and spit on him. ³³They will whip him and kill him, but three days later he will rise to life.”

³⁴**But the disciples did not understand any of these things; the meaning of the words was hidden from them, and they did not know what Jesus was talking about.**—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

28. That large crowd accompanying Jesus was sure that they would be able to arrange for Him to be crowned king when they got to Jerusalem. And the disciples’ excitement was at a fever pitch. Jesus allowed all of them to join Him so that His death could not be hidden!
29. As they were leaving Jericho, blind Bartimaeus heard the crowd going by and learned that Jesus was among them. He shouted: “Jesus! Son of David! Take pity on me!” (Mark 10:47, *GNB*^{*} and Luke 18:38, *GNB*^{*})
30. See Mark 10:46-52; Matthew 20:29-34; and Luke 18:35-43. We do not know how long Bartimaeus had been blind; but, what is clear is that this man who was physically blind received his physical sight. There were many in the crowd accompanying Jesus to Jerusalem who were spiritually blind, and many of them refused to receive their spiritual eyesight.

Hebrews 5:12-14: ¹²There has been enough time for you to be teachers—yet you

still need someone to teach you the first lessons of God's message. Instead of eating solid food, you still have to drink milk. ¹³Anyone who has to drink milk is still a child, without any experience in the matter of right and wrong. ¹⁴Solid food, on the other hand, is for adults, who through practice are able to distinguish between good and evil.—*Good News Bible*.*

31. It is thought that the book of Hebrews was written by Paul, probably with the assistance of Luke, writing to a group of young men who were training to be missionaries to carry the gospel to the world. And why do you think they were so slow in learning the truth?
32. Why do we have all these examples of delays in getting the picture? Because the Devil was doing his best—his very best—to defeat the gospel story? How successful has the Devil been at delaying our preparation for the second coming? It has now been 176 years since the Great Disappointment in October of 1844.
33. Read the chapter entitled “The Test of Discipleship” on pages 57-65 in *Steps to Christ*.
34. Early in His ministry to the people in Galilee, Jesus gave that Sermon on the Mount. Few people would deny the fact that it is an incredible “charter,” if you will, for the Christian life. So, why are we so slow in getting ready for the second coming? What are the criteria for entrance into the kingdom of God?

The condition of eternal life is now just what it always has been,—just what it was in Paradise before the fall of our first parents,—perfect obedience to the law of God, perfect righteousness. If eternal life were granted on any condition short of this, then the happiness of the whole universe would be imperiled. The way would be open for sin, with all its train of woe and misery, to be immortalized.—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ** 62.1.

35. There is no question about the fact that God is waiting for us!
2 Peter 3:9: The Lord is not slow to do what he has promised, as some think. Instead, he is patient with you, because he does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants all to turn away from their sins.—*Good News Bible*.*
36. So, how can we make the message of Jesus compelling enough to arouse people's excitement and attention?
37. There is an enormous variety of people in our world in terms of education, language, culture, and habits. Paul helps us to realize that God knows that; but, all of us are Christ's body, and each one is a part of it. (See 1 Corinthians 12:27.)
38. As soon as he had recovered his sight, Bartimaeus was ready to follow Jesus. Shouldn't that be our experience as well? So, why are we delaying? God cannot admit to heaven anyone who is not ready to abandon his or her sins. If all do not, it would just lead to the great controversy starting all over again. The only safe criteria for entrance into the kingdom of God are those set forth by Jesus Himself in the Sermon on the Mount, for example, and in the rest of Scripture.
39. Is God calling out to us today as He did to Adam and Eve, “Where are you?” Or, “Why did you do this?” (See Genesis 3:9,13.)
40. It is one thing to admit that we are sinful and that we have a fallen nature. But, it is much harder to admit that we are part of the problem that needs to be fixed. Yes, I have fallen. I am sinful; but, so is everyone else, right? And, of course, the opposite side of that coin is that God loves everyone. He loves me. Can we just be comfortable in this crowd of

sinner?

41. Didn't Jesus teach us the way? Didn't He show us the way by His example? Through His life, His death, and His resurrection, didn't He make it possible for every human being to be saved? And the only way for us to succeed is to follow His example by focusing on His life and death and all that it means for us every day.
42. In considering this issue, Paul, in Romans 5:12-21, took a look back in time and compared the experiences of Adam and Jesus.

Romans 5:12-21: ¹² Sin came into the world through one man, and his sin brought death with it. As a result, death has spread to the whole human race because everyone has sinned. ¹³ There was sin in the world before the Law was given; but where there is no law, no account is kept of sins. ¹⁴ But from the time of Adam to the time of Moses death ruled over the whole human race, even over those who did not sin in the same way that Adam did when he disobeyed God's command.

Adam was a figure of the one who was to come. ¹⁵ But the two are not the same, because God's free gift is not like Adam's sin. It is true that many people died because of the sin of that one man. But God's grace is much greater, and so is his free gift to so many people through the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ. ¹⁶ And there is a difference between God's gift and the sin of one man. After the one sin, came the judgement of "Guilty"; but after so many sins, comes the undeserved gift of "Not guilty!" ¹⁷ It is true that through the sin of one man death began to rule because of that one man. But how much greater is the result of what was done by the one man, Jesus Christ! All who receive God's abundant grace and are freely put right with him will rule in life through Christ.

¹⁸ So then, as the one sin condemned all people, in the same way the one righteous act sets all people free and gives them life. ¹⁹ And just as the mass of people were made sinners as the result of the disobedience of one man, in the same way the mass of people will all be put right with God as the result of the obedience of the one man.

²⁰ Law was introduced in order to increase wrongdoing; but where sin increased, God's grace increased much more. ²¹ So then, just as sin ruled by means of death, so also God's grace rules by means of righteousness, leading us to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.—*Good News Bible*.*

43. Are we taking full advantage of the provisions that Jesus has made available to us?

As difficult as it is for the adherent to the evolutionary, progressive, humanistic worldview to admit, evil is real, and it proceeds directly out of the center of the human heart. We are not victims; we are perpetrators. Jesus, the Master Teacher, said it like this: " 'For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within' " (*Mark 7:21-23, ESV*).

In a sense, we are *all* victims, because everyone's sins send out ripples that affect everyone else. Obviously some are more deeply affected than others. We acknowledge that. But even in the midst of our pain, it is helpful to remember that our sins have hurt others, lest we grab our fellow man "by the

throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest” (*Matt. 18:28*) and forget that we ourselves have been forgiven “ten thousand talents” (*Matt. 18:24*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 80-81.[§]

44. **As loving as God is, He cannot minimize the impact of sin.** When we get to heaven, will Adam and Eve feel that they need to keep apologizing to all of God’s redeemed children for the mess they got us into? Adam and Eve will not have any idea how bad it has been until they become acquainted with the mess that we have created. Look at this sequence as modified from the *Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 81:

1. Everything starts “very good.” (Genesis 1:31)

Genesis 1:31: God looked at everything he had made, and he was very pleased. Evening passed and morning came—that was the sixth day.—*Good News Bible*.*

2. Forbidden fruit eaten (Genesis 3:6)

Genesis 3:6: The woman saw how beautiful the tree was and how good its fruit would be to eat, and she thought how wonderful it would be to become wise. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, and he also ate it.—*Good News Bible*.*

3. Hiding and blaming (Genesis 3:8-13)

Genesis 3:8-13: ⁸ That evening they heard the LORD God walking in the garden, and they hid from him among the trees. ⁹But the LORD God called out to the man, “Where are you?”

¹⁰ He answered, “I heard you in the garden; I was afraid and hid from you, because I was naked.”

¹¹ “Who told you that you were naked?” God asked. “Did you eat the fruit that I told you not to eat?”

¹² The man answered, “The woman you put here with me gave me the fruit, and I ate it.”

¹³ The LORD God asked the woman, “Why did you do this?”

She replied, “The snake tricked me into eating it.”—*Good News Bible*.*

4. Murder (Genesis 4:8)

Genesis 4:8: Then Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out in the fields.” When they were out in the fields, Cain turned on his brother and killed him.—*Good News Bible*.*

5. Risk of murder and God’s seven-fold vengeance (Genesis 4:14-15)

Genesis 4:14-15: ¹⁴ “You are driving me off the land and away from your presence. I will be a homeless wanderer on the earth, and anyone who finds me will kill me.”

¹⁵ But the LORD answered, “No. If anyone kills you, seven lives will be taken in revenge.” So the LORD put a mark on Cain to warn anyone who met him not to kill him.—*Good News Bible*.*

6. Murder/manslaughter and a call for seventy-seven-fold vengeance (Genesis 4:23-24)

Genesis 4:23-24: ²³ Lamech said to his wives,

“Adah and Zillah, listen to me: I have killed a young man because he struck me.

²⁴ If seven lives are taken to pay for killing Cain,

77 will be taken if anyone kills me.”—*Good News Bible*.*

7. Global wickedness; thoughts only continually evil (Genesis 6:5)

Genesis 6:5: When the LORD saw how wicked everyone on earth was and how evil their thoughts were all the time,...—*Good News Bible*.*

45. Traditional chronology suggests that there was about 1700 years between creation and the flood. During that time, did God just stand back and watch evil multiply?

46. In a relatively short period of time after the creation of a perfect world, God had to send a flood and, basically, start over by turning the world back into its embryonic form. But, then, with His incredible love, God did not destroy the next generation of sinners; He just scattered them out across the earth.

Genesis 8:21: The odour of the sacrifice pleased the LORD, and he said to himself, “Never again will I put the earth under a curse because of what people do; I know that from the time they are young their thoughts are evil. Never again will I destroy all living beings, as I have done this time.”—*Good News Bible*.*

Genesis 11:8: So the LORD scattered them all over the earth, and they stopped building the city.—*Good News Bible*.*

47. So, why did scattering people across the globe reduce the amount of wickedness?

48. Bible-believing Christians realize that God created a perfect world in the beginning. He said so as recorded in Genesis 1. (Genesis 1:4,10,12,18,21,25,31) But, because we have already read Revelation 12:7-12, we know that sin did not start on this earth; it began in heaven! Skeptics and doubters will try to blame God for all the evil on this earth—if they even admit that He exists. What they are really trying to do is to deflect the blame from themselves.

49. There is a great irony in comparing the biblical view of origins with other Mesopotamian flood narratives. The biblical view makes it clear that following the flood, things went from bad to worse. The Mesopotamian flood narratives suggest things were getting better and better. Which version of truth has proven correct?

50. One day, after the great controversy has ended, God plans to appear in the clouds and take His faithful people home so that after the millennium, He can come back and turn this world into the perfect Eden it was in the beginning.

51. What would happen if our Sabbath school class members decided to immerse themselves individually in the study of the life experiences of Jesus? We recognize that in trying to follow Jesus, we will not do a perfect job in the beginning. One way to improve the quality of our witness is to practice teaching others. Are we prepared to do that?

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