

## ***Ephesians***

# ***Christ-Shaped Lives and Spirit-Inspired Speech***

Lesson #8 for August 19, 2023

Scriptures: Ephesians 4:17-32; Colossians 3:1-17; Zechariah 3:3-5; Zechariah 8:16; Isaiah 63:10; Romans 8:16,26-27.

1. What does a “Christ-shaped” life look like? How would Spirit-inspired speech sound?

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] Jose Antonio lived on the streets of Palma, Spain, as a homeless man for years. With gray, straggly hair and beard, Jose looked older than his 57 years. One day, Salva Garcia, the owner of a hair salon, approached Jose and proposed a complete makeover.

With Jose in the salon chair, a hardworking team cut, dyed, and styled the tangled bundles of hair and beard. Next, Jose then got new stylish clothes. Then came the reveal! As Jose sat in front of a mirror, tears came. “Is this me? I’m so different; no one is going to recognize me!” Later he would add, “It wasn’t just a change of looks. It changed my life.”—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* for Sabbath Afternoon, August 12.‡

2. As described in this lesson, Paul went into great depth discussing the changes that take place in the life of a Christian when he departs from his sinful past and is transformed by his relationship with Jesus Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit to become a true follower of God. Read Ephesians 4:17-32 and Colossians 3:1-17.
3. Notice specifically words like these:

**Colossians 3:3-4:** <sup>3</sup>**For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.** <sup>4</sup>**Your real life is Christ and when he appears, then you too will appear with him and share his glory!**—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation*\* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Colossians 3:3-4). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].††

4. Paul had already recognized the distinct differences between the lives of those who were practicing the multiple evils being carried on in the temple of Artemis/Diana in Ephesus and the lives of true Christians.
5. The transformation that took/takes place when one became/becomes a true Christian was/is remarkable. First of all, it erased any distinction between Jews and Gentiles.
6. In Ephesians 4:1-16, Paul laid out in a straightforward manner the differences between those who were true Christians and those who were following the old, Gentile, heathen ways. But then, in Ephesians 4:17 and following, he suggested that such a transformation is like a whole new life. Christians must completely abandon all their evil habits which they practiced in their former lives.

[BSG:] In Ephesians 4:17–24, Paul contrasts Gentile lifestyle, which he regards as undermining unity (*Eph. 4:17–19*), with truly Christian patterns of life that nourish it (*Eph. 4:20–24*). As we read Paul’s sharp critique of the depraved, Gentile lifestyle, we should recall his conviction that Gentiles are redeemed by God through Christ and offered full partnership in the people

of God (*Eph. 2:11–22, Eph. 3:1–13*). In Ephesians 4:17–19, then, he is offering a limited and negative description of “Gentiles in the flesh” (*Eph. 2:11*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Sunday, August 13.<sup>†§</sup>

7. Clearly, Paul was suggesting that no matter what one’s background, whether formerly Jewish or formerly heathen-Gentile, when s/he becomes a Christian, all are brothers and sisters of Christ. Try to imagine what a difference that would involve. How is that possible?

**Ephesians 2:11-18:** <sup>11</sup> You Gentiles by birth—called “the uncircumcised” by the Jews, who call themselves “the circumcised” (which refers to what men do to their bodies)—remember what you were in the past. <sup>12</sup>At that time you were apart from Christ. You were foreigners and did not belong to God’s chosen people. You had no part in the covenants, which were based on God’s promises to his people, and you lived in this world without hope and without God. <sup>13</sup>But now, in union with Christ Jesus, you who used to be far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ [footnote: or *by the sacrificial death of Christ*]. <sup>14</sup>For Christ himself has brought us peace by making Jews and Gentiles one people. **With his own body he broke down the wall that separated them and kept them enemies.** <sup>15</sup>**He abolished the Jewish Law with its commandments and rules, in order to create out of the two races one new people in union with himself, in this way making peace.** <sup>16</sup>**By his death on the cross Christ destroyed their enmity; by means of the cross he united both races into one body and brought them back to God.** <sup>17</sup>So Christ came and preached the Good News of peace to all—to you Gentiles, who were far away from God, and to the Jews, who were near to him. <sup>18</sup>It is through Christ that all of us, Jews and Gentiles, are able to come in the one Spirit into the presence of the Father.—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†§</sup> [**To Jesus, race did not matter!**]<sup>‡</sup>

8. ***How did Christ break down the barrier that separated Jews and Gentiles? How did Christ create one new people (Christians) out of two races (Jews and Gentiles)? How did His death on the cross destroy their enmity and bring them back to God?***

**Ephesians 2:19-22:** <sup>19</sup> So then, you Gentiles are not foreigners or strangers any longer; you are now fellow-citizens with God’s people and members of the family of God. <sup>20</sup>You, too, are built upon **the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets, the cornerstone being Christ Jesus himself.** <sup>21</sup>He is the one who holds the whole building together and makes it grow into a sacred temple dedicated to the Lord. <sup>22</sup>In union with him you too are being built together with all the others into a place where God lives through his Spirit.—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†</sup> [**In the church, everyone is equal.**]<sup>‡</sup>

9. In Ephesians 2:19-22, Paul said that if one is a new Christian, whether former-Jew or former-Gentile, s/he can be transformed to become a building block in the Christian temple, the foundation of which is Jesus Christ Himself.
10. Paul hinted at something else even more remarkable: Eventually, Christians will be elevated to a position beside Christ in heaven and into fellowship with all of God’s faithful beings throughout the universe. (Ephesians 1:7-10; 3:7-10; Colossians 1:19-20) Paul was contrasting a lifestyle that consists of abandoned sinning to the life of a Christian which

is remade in the image of Jesus Christ. Paul called the former condition “calloused spirituality.” Such people do not know how to live. They are separated from God and His saving grace, and they are in a downward spiral of sin and depravity.

11. What has been your personal experience, and those of the others around you, in this contrasting picture? Listen to the news. How are ordinary people treating each other?
12. In Ephesians 4:20-21, Paul said the true Christian actually “puts on” Christ. He does not just learn *about* Christ; but rather, he learns Christ.

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] **It is a law both of the intellectual and the spiritual nature that by beholding we become changed. The mind gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is allowed to dwell. It becomes assimilated to that which it is accustomed to love and reverence.** Man will never rise higher than his standard of purity or goodness or truth. If self is his loftiest ideal, he will never attain to anything more exalted. Rather, he will constantly sink lower and lower. The grace of God alone has power to exalt man. Left to himself, his course must inevitably be downward.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*\* 555.1.†‡

13. So, what happens to a person whose whole attention is on worldly things?

[BSG:] Paul tells us that the adoption of a Christ-shaped life requires three processes, which he expresses through clothing imagery: (1) to “put off” or turn away from the old way of life (*Eph. 4:22*); (2) to experience inner renewal (*Eph. 4:23*); and (3) to “put on” the new, Godlike pattern of life (*Eph. 4:24*). Paul’s metaphor reflects the use of clothing in the Old Testament as a symbol for both sinfulness (e.g., *Ps. 73:6*; *Zech. 3:3, 4*; *Mal. 2:16*) and salvation (e.g., *Isa. 61:10*; *Ezek. 16:8*; *Zech. 3:4, 5*).

In ancient times, men wore a knee-length tunic as an undergarment and a cloak or mantle to offer protection from the sun. Similarly, women wore a tunic and a robe. The cultures reflected in the Bible were subsistence ones. Garments were precious and expensive and were kept for a long time. It would have been unusual to own more than one set of clothing. The quality and style of those garments signaled identity and status markers about the wearer. To change one’s clothes, exchanging one set of clothes for another, was an unusual and important event (rather than the trifling occurrence it is in many cultures today). Paul imagines the change in life to be as noticeable as exchanging one set of clothing for another would have been in this first-century context.

**What is the difference, the *crucial* difference, between learning about Christ and learning to know Christ?**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* for Monday, August 14.†‡§ [This relationship with Christ is called *faith*. See Romans 14:23.]‡

14. In Ephesians 4:25-29, Paul specifically told them to stop some very common heathen Gentile practices: Lying, becoming angry, robbing, and using harmful words.

[BSG:] Paul repeatedly uses an interesting structure in Ephesians 4:25–32, which is illustrated by Ephesians 4:25 (*NKJV*): a negative command

(“putting away lying”); a positive command next (“let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor”); and then a rationale (“for we are members of one another,” which seems to mean “because we are members of one body and so related to one another as parts of that one body”). Paul’s exhortation to “speak truth” is not an invitation to confront other church members with a tactless recitation of facts. Paul alludes to Zechariah 8:16, which exhorts speaking the truth as a way of fostering peace.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* for Tuesday, August, 15.†§

**Zechariah 8:16:** [The LORD Almighty said:] “These are the things you should do: speak the truth to one another. In the courts, give real justice—the kind that brings peace.”—*Good News Bible*.\*†

15. Paul firmly believed in the transformative power of Christianity. He believed that thieves could become working benefactors of those in the church!

**1 Thessalonians 4:11:** Make it your aim to live a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to earn your own living, just as we told you before.—*Good News Bible*.\* [How would that go over in today’s society?]\*†

[BSG:] Paul imagines any negative expression not being just stopped, but replaced by a statement that exhibits three criteria: It (1) “is good for building up,” (2) “fits the occasion,” and (3) gives “grace to those who hear” (*Eph. 4:29, ESV*). If only all our words could be like that!—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* for Tuesday, August 15.†§

16. This kind of transformation might seem impossible to those first learning about Christianity. It would be impossible without a very special Help.

**Ephesians 4:30:** And do not make God’s Holy Spirit sad; for the Spirit is God’s mark of ownership on you, a guarantee that the Day will come when God will set you free.—*Good News Bible*.\*

17. Notice that when the Holy Spirit is grieved, He does not leave us; He is just sad. He wants Christians to believe that they belong to God through the work of the Holy Spirit.

18. How often do we grieve the Holy Spirit? In Ephesians 1:13-14, Paul had already said:

**Ephesians 1:13-14:** <sup>13</sup> And you also became God’s people when you heard the true message, the Good News that brought you salvation. You believed in Christ, and **God put his stamp of ownership on you by giving you the Holy Spirit he had promised.** <sup>14</sup>The Spirit is the guarantee that we shall receive what God has promised his people, and this assures us that God will give complete freedom to those who are his. Let us praise his glory!—*Good News Bible*.\*†

[BSG:] Paul underlines the full divinity of the Spirit as “the Holy Spirit of God” and highlights the *personhood* of the Spirit by portraying the Holy Spirit as *grieving*. (See also *Rom. 8:16, 26, 27; 1 Cor. 2:10, 13; 1 Cor. 12:11; Gal. 5:17, 18.*)—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* for Wednesday August 16.†§

**Romans 8:16,26-27:** <sup>16</sup>God’s Spirit joins himself to our spirits to declare that we are God’s children....

<sup>26</sup> In the same way the Spirit also comes to help us, weak as we are. For we do not know how we ought to pray; the Spirit himself pleads with God for us in groans that words cannot express. <sup>27</sup>And God, who sees into our hearts, knows what the thought of the Spirit is; because the Spirit pleads with God on behalf of his people and in accordance with his will.—*Good News Bible*.\*

[BSG:] **We must tread with care in discussing the mystery of the Godhead. The Spirit is both One with and distinct from the Father and the Son.** “The Spirit has His own will and chooses accordingly. He can be grieved and blasphemed against. Such expressions are not fit for a mere power or influence but are characteristics of a person. Is the Spirit then a person just like you and me? No, we use limited human terminology to describe the divine, and the Spirit is what human beings can never be.”—Paul Petersen, *God in 3 Persons—In the New Testament* (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2015), p. 20.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* for Wednesday, August 16.†§

[EGW:] We have been brought together as a school, and **we need to realize that the Holy Spirit, who is as much a person as God is a person, is walking through these grounds**, that the Lord God is our keeper, and helper. He hears every word we utter and knows every thought of the mind.—Ellen G. White, Manuscript 66, 1899, 4. (Talk, April 15, 1899 [to the students at the Avondale School]), *Manuscript Releases*,\* vol. 7, 299.2.† Compare *Evangelism* 616.5.

[BSG:] **It is “the Holy Spirit of God” who lives in such intimate contact with us that our actions are said to affect Him. We share life with a member of the Godhead committed to us in a durable relationship that seals us until the end of time. What should be our faith response to this amazing truth?**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* for Wednesday, August 16.†

[BSG:] **In the light of Christ’s return, what attitudes and behaviors, related to speech, should be discarded? What attitudes and behaviors should be embraced?** *Eph. 4:31, 32.*—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* for Thursday, August 17.†§

19. **Paul was trying to make it clear that there is a huge difference between the way true Christians live and the way followers of Satan live.**

20. Then, Paul went on in Ephesians 4:17-32, identifying six vices that must be completely removed from the lives of Christians. Christians should be kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving, completely stopping all bitterness, all malice, wrath, anger, clamor, and slander.

**Ephesians 4:31-32:** <sup>31</sup>Get rid of all bitterness, passion, and anger. No more shouting or insults, no more hateful feelings of any sort. <sup>32</sup>Instead, be kind and tender-hearted to one another, and forgive one another, as God has forgiven you through Christ.—*Good News Bible*.\* [Was this happening?]<sup>‡</sup>

[BSG:] The last of these translates the Greek word *blasphemia*, which English has borrowed as a technical term for demeaning speech against

God. However, the Greek term identifies speech that defames either God or other humans as “slander” or “evil speaking.” In the list, attitudes (bitterness, wrath, anger) seem to boil over into angry speech (clamor, slander). In essence, Paul demilitarizes Christian speech. The attitudes that drive angry speech and the rhetorical strategies that employ it are to be removed from the Christian’s arsenal. Christian community will flourish and unity of the church be fostered (*compare Eph. 4:1–16*) only where these things are laid aside.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Thursday, August 17.†§

21. Paul was telling Christians that through the transforming power of Christ and the Holy Spirit, all evil is to be abandoned completely.

22. Jesus suggested the same thing.

**Matthew 6:12,14-15:** <sup>12</sup> “Forgive us the wrongs we have done, as we forgive the wrongs that others have done to us....

<sup>14</sup> “If you forgive others the wrongs they have done to you, your Father in heaven will also forgive you. <sup>15</sup>But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive the wrongs you have done.”—*Good News Bible*.\*

[EGW:] Let your conversation be of such a nature that you will have no need of repentance. “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”... If you have love in your heart, you will seek to establish and build up your brother in the most holy faith. If a word is dropped that is detrimental to the character of your friend or brother, do not encourage this evil-speaking. It is the work of the enemy. Kindly remind the speaker that the word of God forbids that kind of conversation.—Ellen G. White, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*,\* June 5, 1888, par. 6.‡ Compare *TMK* 153.5 and *YRP* 76.3.

[BSG:] How would your congregation change if you and each member were to take and live a pledge consisting of such statements as the following?

1. I wish for my influence within the Seventh-day Adventist Church family and beyond to be positive, uplifting, faith-building, and morale-boosting (*Eph. 4:29*).
2. Recalling Christ’s calls for unity and love, I will expend more energy affirming those doing and saying things I believe to be good than in pointing out the failings of those I believe to be wrong (*John 13:34, 35; John 17:20–23; Eph. 4:1–6; 1 Thess. 5:9–11*).
3. When I do disagree with someone, I will make my respect for my fellow believer clear. I will assume his or her integrity and commitment to Christ. I will offer my differing opinion gently, not stridently (*Eph. 4:31, 32*).
4. I will live joyfully, looking for every opportunity to build up and affirm my fellow church members, as I await the return of Christ (*Eph. 4:29, 30; Gal. 6:2; Heb. 10:24, 25*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Friday, August 18.†§

23. Paul had made some strong points in this section of Ephesians. Notice some of them:

[BSG:] Review the 11 times in Ephesians that Paul describes the three members of the Godhead as working closely together for the salvation of humankind. How does this repeated emphasis inform our understanding of the Godhead? *Eph. 1:3–14, Eph. 1:15–23, Eph. 2:11–18, Eph. 2:19–22, Eph. 3:1–13, Eph. 3:14–19, Eph. 4:4–6, Eph. 4:17–24, Eph. 4:25–32, Eph. 5:15–20, Eph. 6:10–20* (where “the Lord,” *Eph. 6:10*, refers to Christ).

**How does Paul’s counsel about Christian speech (*Eph. 4:25–32*) apply in the age of “computer-mediated communication,” which is too often used for cyberbullying and anonymous, online character assassination?—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Friday, August 18.<sup>†‡§</sup> [Look at what is happening through social media.]<sup>‡</sup>**

24. Paul said that the transformation that takes place when one becomes a Christian should be obvious to all around us. It is not just like taking off an old set of clothes temporarily while we sleep at night and putting them on again in the morning. Paul says those old sinful behaviors need to be thrown away and removed permanently!

25. In summary, as quoted from the Bible study guide:

1. The Christian new life qualitatively contrasts with the old, worldly life.
2. A change of life and of identity is possible only in Christ and in the Holy Spirit.
3. The presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives leads to a transformation of our worldview, identity, lifestyle, conversation, attitudes, and relationships.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** 106. [How does living in a constant relationship with God affect one?]<sup>‡</sup>

[BSG:] Contemporary society values inclusivity, acceptance, preservation, and promotion of local cultures, lifestyles, and worldviews. The “old style” missionaries are being criticized for disregarding the local-national, or tribal-cultural, heritages and for modeling local or regional churches in the mission fields on “Western” interpretations of Christianity and their lifestyles. While a critical contextualization certainly has its place in missions, two very relevant questions are raised: What elements of the local culture could be celebrated and preserved, and what elements of the local culture are part of the “old self” and must be abandoned as sinful and of “this world”?

Several points could be highlighted here in answer to these questions. First, in Ephesians 4:17–32, Paul contrasts the world of sin, futility, ignorance, darkness, impurity, anger, slander, and deceit (*Eph. 4:17–22, 25, 31*) with the world of God’s grace, righteousness, knowledge, light, purity, honesty, kindness, compassion, forgiveness, and truth (*Eph. 4:25–29, 32*). Ultimately, the evaluating principle of a culture or lifestyle is not an ideology or philosophy, such as rationalism, empiricism, modernism, pragmatism, utilitarianism, or postmodernism. Rather, the biblical principle of evaluating any culture or way of life is “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption” (*Eph. 4:30, NASB*). This principle, when put into action, demonstrates God’s love for us and our love for Him, and reveals God’s righteousness.

Second and consequently, Paul does not discuss anthropology or the preservation of the world's cultural heritage. He does not engage in classifying world cultures and evaluating some cultures in the light of others. Rather, **he calls for all cultures, Jewish or Gentile, to be evaluated in light of the gospel of Christ Jesus and in light of the culture and the lifestyle of His kingdom.** In his epistles, Paul finds a lot to rebuke in the Jewish culture and calls them to repent. Similarly, Paul tells the Gentiles that God welcomes them into His kingdom, His covenant, and His church. But Paul does not shy away from characterizing much of the Gentile worldview (polytheistic, mythological, philosophical) and way of life as futile and sinful (*Eph. 4:18, 19*). Thus, if the gospel highlights sin in the lives of church members and in their cultures, they must confess it as sin and abandon it. **Otherwise, salvation is no longer salvation from sin, but a cultural justification for tolerance of a sinful lifestyle.**

True, we come to God as we are, in the filthy rags of sin, but we do not come to Him to remain in those rags; rather, we come to God to remove those rags, to be washed, and walk into the "newness of life" (*Rom. 6:4*). Without this understanding, Christianity will lose its power and message of salvation. Christianity is not a religion of affirming humanity in its sinful ways. Rather, the biblical message challenges all nations, tribes, tongues, and cultures to evaluate themselves in the light of Scripture and accept God's washing and working of the Holy Spirit to regenerate us. In Paul's gospel, we cannot afford to protect a sinful aspect of our lives by excusing it on the grounds that it is part of our cultural heritage or worldview. In fact, all that is sinful is eventually self-destructive; sin destroys cultures and nations rather than upholding or edifying them. [Compare Zechariah 3:1-10.]

Third, God celebrates diversity and cultural expressions in harmony with the gospel of His kingdom. For this reason, the gospel does not call for the complete uniformization of all cultures. When a culture builds on the values and lifestyle of Christ, it will only prosper and be enriched.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* 106-108.†‡§

[BSG:] In a 1992 article in *Ministry* magazine, Børge Schantz (1931–2014), a celebrated Seventh-day Adventist missiologist, proposed three guiding principles of contextualization for the Seventh-day Adventist approach to cross-cultural mission:

First, the cross-cultural missionary must correctly understand the biblical stories and teachings in their original context.

Second, the cross-cultural missionary must accurately distinguish between universal biblical teachings and their principles and his or her own cultural values and experience. Though these customs must be, or may be, contextualized, biblical principles, such as the Sabbath, cannot be compromised.

Third, the cross-cultural missionary must develop a genuine and profound interest in, and understanding of, the culture of the people whom he or she serves. [In this day, real missionaries need to learn the local language!]



When all these elements are taken into consideration, the ultimate contextualization principle is that, while demonstrating sensitivity to various elements of the local culture, the missionaries must allow the biblical absolutes to determine the new teachings and practices of the converts.

Schantz shared a “note of warning” to the leaders of Seventh-day Adventist mission and evangelism: “Christian churches are tempted to lose hold of pure doctrine and objective ethics when they accept uncritically that God’s Word is always and at all places culturally and historically related. The contextualization process definitely raises some problems. Adapting biblical teachings to the cultures of the world will bring the communicator into contact with elements that are false, evil, and even demonic. The sad result of going too far is a damaging syncretism, forcing opposing religious elements to coexist.” For this reason, Schantz concluded: “In all cultures, including our own, there are customs condemned by the gospel, and what is rejected by the Scriptures must be rejected by the missionaries and national leaders.” However, this principle does not need to make us more insensitive to the innocent culture of the local peoples. Rather, Schantz prayed that “the Lord of mission must grant us wisdom to differentiate between universals that must be proclaimed worldwide and the optional variables of Western culture.”—“One Message—Many Cultures: How Do We Cope?” *Ministry*, June 1992, p. 11.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* 108.†§

[BSG:] **The New Humans:** Throughout history, the espousers of philosophies, ideologies, and powers claim, or have claimed, the ability to radically change humanity. One example of such an ideology is Marxism, especially as promoted in the Soviet Union. Driven by the optimism of the 1970s, the Soviets promoted the idea that they, the Soviets, were in the process of advancing human evolution by bringing about the next upgrade in the human species: the Soviet people. The Soviet people would leave behind the old religious and ideological capitalistic baggage, and evolve, collectively, into the new, Marxist human. As history shows, this Soviet project ended in utter failure. Instead of creating a new and better type of human, the Soviet people, the story ended with the widely circulated pejorative phrase *homo sovieticus*.

Speaking of evolution, especially in the second half of the twentieth century, such theistic evolutionists as Pierre Teilhard de Chardin promoted the idea of the emergence of the new human, the spiritual human. While Teilhard de Chardin believed that humans are still engaged in the process of evolution from animal form, he envisioned an Omega moment in the future when humans would leave behind their old heritage of predatory behavior and evolve into new humans characterized by global consciousness and universal love.

These are only two examples of ideologies or philosophies that strove to drastically change sinful humans into “new humans.” Although these philosophies seem radical, in fact, all or most philosophies and sciences

operate on the assumption that they have the power to transform humanity and human society. This assumption reveals at least two important observations. On the one hand, all these movements highlight the deep-seated human desire for the new human, with all the profound renewal that ideal embodies. On the other hand, all these philosophies have ended in failure, even if some showed what seemed like initial success. The latest demonstration of this phenomenon is the rise of postmodernism, with its critique of modernism, which was completely trusted by the world as being capable of delivering the truth about our origin, development, and destiny of humanity and of the entire universe. While postmodernism is attempting to create the new man, it is already becoming increasingly clear to people that philosophy does not have the answer for the new humanity. The failure of humanity to re-create or reinvent itself under the aegis of philosophy or science stems from its lack of the proper model for new humanity and from a lack of the power to mold humanity after that model. **Biblical Christianity offers both: Jesus is the Model of the new humanity, and He is also the Source of power to transform us, to renew us according to His glorious image (John 1:12, 13).**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** 108-109.<sup>†§</sup>

[BSG:] Some people are skeptical about the possibility of human change. While Paul was aware of the enslaving power of sin that prevents us from being transformed, he is the staunchest believer in the power of the gospel to transform us in the most profound way. The apostle was fully confident in this change because he knew what the Holy Spirit could do. Ask ... [Bible students] to identify three practical steps that they can share with someone who wants to be transformed, who wants to leave the old self behind and walk in the newness of life in Christ—but despairs of being able to change or of sustaining that change....

Controlling or managing negative emotions, attitudes, or behavior became a major concern in the modern world. People appeal to special exercises, counseling programs, or even to clinical treatment to receive help in dealing with their emotions and behavior. While counseling and clinical treatment have their place and role in some cases, what does the study of Ephesians and of the Bible, in general, reveal about the change of behavior, emotions, attitudes, and lifestyle in the life of the Christian? Ask ... [Bible students] to identify three life-changing principles that they found in their study of Ephesians that could help themselves, other members in the church, or people in the general community.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** 110.<sup>‡</sup>

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