

# MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

PRACTICAL WAYS TO FORMING A RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST

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WRITTEN BY: RENEE RUSSELL

## Excerpt from: Watchman

What if it's not the way you thought it would be, not the way you saw it would be, but in actuality, a thin line separating you from now and eternity?

When they forecast peace and safety and sunny blue skies, then the Son of Man appears seated in His glory, in the sky.

Question, will you still act the same foolish ways you do today or would you spend more time to fast and pray?

Who is that wise and faithful servant, when the master comes, finds him working. Winning souls for the kingdom, ensuring that he himself is numbered with them, and not the lost looking in, trying to kill them!

Watchmen, why don't you wake up and blow your trumpets, because an inexperienced one is standing by, and if you fail to warn them, then their blood will be upon your shoulders when they die!

Written by: Stacy-Ann Brown

In this newsletter  
you can expect:

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Church Specific  
Updates

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Important Gems

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Health Nugget

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Religious Liberty  
Updates

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Department  
Highlight

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## FOUNDATIONS TO FOLLOWING CHRIST: HEART POSTURE

Welcome back to the Middletown SDA Church Newsletter. In our last newsletter, we learned about the importance of knowing God and developing a personal relationship with Him. In this issue, we will explore practical ways in which we can grow and strengthen our walk with God.

Before we examine these steps, however, let us establish an important foundation. In Matthew 22:37, Jesus tells us, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” In order to give ourselves fully to God, our hearts, our souls, and our minds must be submitted to Him. But if we truly want to love God the way we are called to, our hearts must first be prepared.

Ezra 7:10 says, “For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.” Before we can have that earnest love for God and fully submit ourselves to Him, our hearts must first be prepared. The question then becomes: How does one prepare the heart to receive God?

If we look at the meaning of the word prepared in this verse, it comes from the Hebrew word *kûn*, which carries the idea of being firmly established or securely determined. In other words, Ezra’s preparation was an act of decision. He determined in his heart that he would seek the Law of the Lord.

Have you ever desired something so deeply that you determined in your heart that nothing would stand in your way of obtaining it? You were willing to sacrifice whatever was necessary to achieve it. This is the same kind of burning desire we must have for Christ.

This was also the desire that Daniel had when he “purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king’s food” (Daniel 1:8). Like Ezra, he made a firm decision in his heart to remain faithful and obedient to the law of God.

Once we have determined in our hearts to follow and obey the Word of God, we must also ensure that our hearts are properly positioned to receive guidance from the Holy Spirit. Our hearts must be in the right condition—open, humble, and receptive—so that His direction can truly take root within us.

Scripture often illustrates this through the image of the potter and the clay, where Christ is the potter, and we are the clay. Just as a potter shapes clay, God desires to mold and form us into His perfect design. Clay that is hard, dry, or resistant cannot be shaped. In the same way, a heart affected by poor conditions—such as pride, stubbornness, or self-reliance—resists the work of the Holy Spirit. These conditions make it difficult for God’s guidance to take hold.

However, when our hearts are soft, surrendered, and willing, we become like workable clay in the Potter’s hands. It is through His gentle guidance and shaping that we are transformed into the person God has called us to be.

*Communication  
Team x*

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## PRACTICAL WAYS TO FORMING A RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST



Once our hearts are prepared and we have made the decision to seek God, the next step is to cultivate that relationship through daily practice. Just like any meaningful relationship, our walk with Christ grows stronger when we consistently spend time with Him.

**1. Devotion:** Many times, devotion is approached out of habit—something we do simply to check it off our daily to-do list. Yet devotion is far more than a routine; it is a sacred time to communicate with God and allow Him to speak to us. It is an opportunity to lay before Him the burdens of our hearts, present our desires, and earnestly confess the sins that so easily ensnare us.

Devotion is not merely about bringing our problems before God. It is a time to pray, seek His will for our lives, and learn to be still in His presence. It is a dedicated moment to grow in our relationship with Him. Like Ezra, may we come to know God's law and His character more intimately through prayer and devotion

**2. Living the Word:** Studying and understanding the Word of God is an essential first step in building a practical relationship with Him, but it does not end there. We are called to live the life that Christ has called us to live. Ezra sought the Word of the Lord and to do it.

Psalm 119:10–11 says, “With my whole heart I seek You... I have hidden Your word in my heart, that I might not sin against You.”

Daily devotion helps engrave the Word of God upon our hearts. With humble and penitent hearts, we can walk in the path that Jesus has set before us. Through Christ's power and provision, we are given the strength to live lives that honor Him.

**3. Sharing the Word:** Many times, we misunderstand the true purpose of service. At its heart, service is about sharing with others who Christ is and what He has done for us. The Word that God has entrusted to us is not meant to remain solely in our hearts—it is meant to be shared with those around us.

When we share God's Word, our own faith is strengthened, and others are encouraged to place their trust in Christ. By living in obedience to God's law, we become better equipped to guide and inspire others in their walk with Him. After all, it is always easier to teach what we have first practiced ourselves

Let us therefore prepare our hearts, seek God earnestly, and walk faithfully with Christ as we grow together in devotion, action, and service.

*Do the word,  
Live the word!*

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## HEALTH NUGGET!- DR JOCELYN DUMMETT MANAGING SCREEN TIME FOR CHILDREN

This is a topic of vital importance to raising children today. Too many of our children are being exposed to inappropriate content on various website- most of which many parents are unaware of. Try to follow the guidelines below to curb how much screen time your child is exposed to and what they are being exposed to.

American Academy of Pediatrics advises avoidance of screen to children 18 months of age and younger unless it is to video chat.

1. Choose appropriate content.
2. Use a TV for regular viewing instead of an Ipad or phone so that the whole family can watch together and narrate and participate in what the child is watching.
3. Keep headphones off to avoid inappropriate content.
4. Choose TV shows or movies instead of YouTube since the site has very few safety regulations and children can easily access addictive and harmful content.
5. Set clear limits around when screentime occurs and for how long (i.e., no school nights; time limits on weekends)
6. Communicate clear expectations of behaviors required to earn screentime such as completing chores first.
7. Avoid all screens within a hour of bedtime.
8. Balance minutes spent on a screen with time spent engaging in physical exercise.
9. No screentime during meals.
10. No TV's or screens in children's bedrooms. Phones should be placed in parents' rooms overnight to charge or for safe keeping.

### CHURCH SPECIFIC UPDATES

WOMEN'S PRAYER RETREAT  
APRIL 24TH-26TH



### CHURCH SPECIFIC UPDATES

VBS  
JULY 6TH-10TH



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## RELIGIOUS LIBERTY UPDATE

### THE FULCRUM OF CHOICE—LIBERTY, LEGISLATION, AND THE CREATOR'S REST

BY: CLAUDIA DOUGLAS

In the quiet perfection of Eden, before a single human law was etched in stone, God established the seventh-day Sabbath. . By "resting, blessing, and sanctifying" the Seventh Day (Genesis 2:2-3), the Creator set the ultimate precedent: True worship is rooted in the freedom to choose. God, who had the power to compel obedience, instead stood back and invited humanity to enter His rest. This is the "fulcrum of choice" upon which the Great Controversy turns.

As we participate in our GNYC "Prophetic Preparedness" circles, we must recognize that religious liberty is more than just legal protection; it is a divine principle. Yet, as Ellen G. White warned in Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5, we are entering a time when "liberty of conscience, which has cost so great a sacrifice, will no longer be respected" (p. 712).

#### **The Modern Counterfeit: Project 2025**

Today, we see the shadows of this prophetic warning in the "National Reform" language of Project 2025. Their Mandate for Leadership proposes a federal shift to "restore the Sabbath" by amending the Fair Labor Standards Act (p. 589). While the language sounds pious, the danger lies in the details: the document explicitly suggests the government should "default to Sunday" as the national day of communal rest.

#### **Prophetic Counsel for the Final Crisis**

Volume 5 of the Testimonies reminds us that the "National Reform movement" of the 19th century was only the beginning. White describes a "threefold union" (p. 451) where the wall of separation between church and state is dismantled. When the church uses the "arm of the law" to enforce its dogmas, it confesses a lack of spiritual power.

#### **Conclusion: A Call to the Watchmen**

As we establish our 200 holistic small groups, let our "Prophetic Preparedness" be centered on the character of God. He is a God of choice. The seventh-day Sabbath stands as a weekly reminder that we serve Him out of love, not legal mandate. We must "arouse the watchmen" to see that the "winds of strife" are being held only for a moment. Our mission is to defend the freedom to choose—for ourselves and our neighbors—before the state attempts to make that choice for us. The Sabbath of Eden was a gift of liberty; let us not allow the laws of men to turn it into a badge of bondage.

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# Department Highlight

## Children's Ministries



Our children at Middletown SDA Church celebrated **Children's Day** on March 21st, 2026, with the theme **"A Journey with Jesus."** This event was a beautiful reminder that our walk with Jesus is a daily journey—a path we choose to take each day. It also served as a meaningful lesson for our children on the importance of intentionally walking with God and growing in their relationship with Him.

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*Thank you for reading!*

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