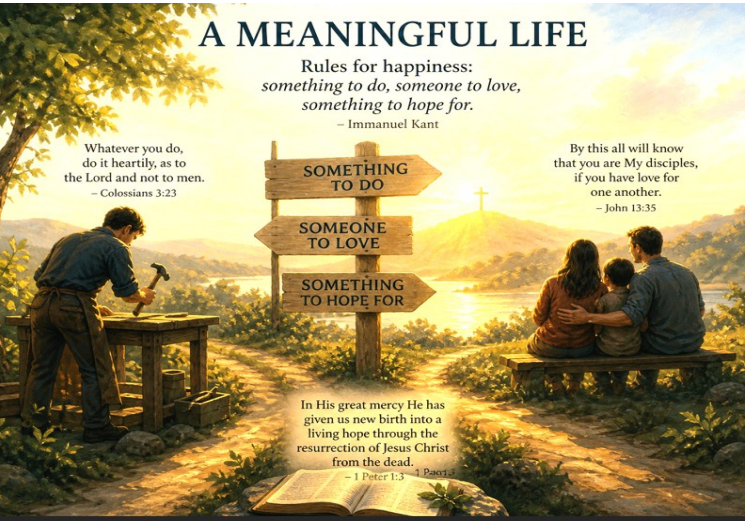


Sierra Vista SDA Church Newsletter

July August 2026 Edition



The German 18th-century philosopher Immanuel Kant once observed: “Rules for happiness: something to do, someone to love, something to hope for.” Though spoken from a secular perspective, these simple words echo a profound truth that Scripture has long affirmed. It is difficult to say whether the Bible directly influenced Kant, but his words certainly reflect biblical principles, truths that find their deepest meaning when anchored in a relationship with God.

Something to Do. From the very beginning, God gave humanity purpose. “Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it” (Genesis 2:15). Work was never meant to be a burden, but a blessing—a way to reflect God’s creativity and care. The apostle Paul reminds us, “Whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men” (Colossians 3:23).

Yet, like many of God’s good gifts, work has been distorted by sin. What was designed to bring us joy and fulfillment is often marked by stress, exploitation, and unfair employment practices. Still, God calls us to redeem our work by offering it back to Him. For believers, “something to do” goes beyond daily responsibilities. It includes serving others, sharing the gospel, and living lives that reflect Christ.

Purpose is not found merely in staying busy, but in being faithful with what God has placed in our hands.

Someone to Love. Love stands at the very center of the Christian life. Jesus declared, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:37–39). We were created for relationship—first with God, and then with one another.

In a world that often promotes self-interest, Scripture calls us to something higher: sacrificial love. “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35). Whether in family, church, or community, love is the evidence of a life transformed by Christ.

Something to Hope For. Perhaps the most powerful of Kant’s observations is the need for hope. The Bible presents hope not as wishful thinking, but as a confident expectation rooted in God’s promises. “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3).

This hope sustains us through trials, anchors us in time of uncertainty, and points us toward eternity. We are reminded that this world is not our final home. Christ’s return, the restoration of all things, and eternal life with Him—this is the believer’s great hope.

A Life Anchored in Christ

Kant identified essential elements of a meaningful life, but Scripture reveals their true fulfillment. In Christ, we find purposeful work, genuine love, and unshakable hope. Without Him, these may exist in part, but with Him, they are complete. As we go about our days, may we remember: God has given us something to do, someone to love, and something to hope for. And in Him, these are not temporary pursuits, but eternal realities.

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13).

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The Morning Hour with God



The first and chief need of every Christian is fellowship with God for we are totally dependent upon Him. Just like I need fresh air to breathe every moment, it is only in direct, living communication with God that my soul can be strong.

The manna for one day was corrupt by the next day. Just so I need fresh grace from heaven, and I obtain it only in waiting upon God Himself each morning. Take time to meet with God by beginning each day tarrying before Him, allowing Him touch you. "I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12)

To this end, let our first act of the day be sitting at the feet of Jesus, in prayer and worship. Everything depends on God having the chief place. The first angel proclaims, "Fear God and give glory to Him". I need to look forward every morning — bowing before Him in humble faith, expectancy, and adoration. God is, God is near, and God is love, longing to communicate Himself to me.

The first compartment of the earthly sanctuary contained the Bread, the Incense, and the Lamps of fire. All these things are important for my connection to Him. The Bread represents His Word. "Thy Words were found, and I did eat them, and they were unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Jer. 15:16 The Incense was always ascending, and represents the vehicle that makes my prayers acceptable. It represents the Righteousness of Christ, without which my prayers would be of no effect. "Jesus is the sweet smelling savour" (Eph. 5:2).

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Ladies...Are you out there?

Come on Sunday, July 12 at 9 am to a women's ministry think tank event at the BLC. All ladies are invited and encouraged to come with ideas about how you would like to see Women's Ministry operate in Sierra Vista.

Your input is vital to the programs we want to put together this church year. A morning snack, brief worship and idea session is planned to run no longer than 1 hour so that you can be on your way. Please plan to join us.

Janelle and Susan

What Really Makes a Good Life?

In 1938, Harvard University researchers launched what would become one of the longest-running studies of human life and well-being. Known today as the Harvard Study of Adult Development, it has followed participants and their families for nearly 90 years in an effort to understand what contributes to health, happiness, and a fulfilling life. After decades of research, the study reached a surprising conclusion: neither wealth, career success, nor social status

proved to be the strongest predictor of well-being in later life. Instead, the quality of a person's relationships stood out as the most important factor. Dr. Robert Waldinger, one of the study's directors, summarized the findings this way: "It was how satisfied they were in their relationships" that best predicted how well participants aged. Those who enjoyed strong, supportive relationships generally experienced better physical health and greater happiness as they grew older. While the study cannot prove that good relationships directly cause better health, the connection was strong and consistent throughout the research. The findings suggest that investing time and effort in family, friendships, and meaningful connections may be one of the most valuable things we can do. The study's participants were not fully representative of society, and its conclusions should not be viewed as a universal formula. Nevertheless, after nearly a century of observation, the message remains remarkably clear: lasting happiness is often found not in what we achieve, but in the relationships we nurture.

In a world that constantly emphasizes success, possessions, and accomplishments, this research offers a simple reminder: the people we love and the bonds we cultivate may matter more than we realize.

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"And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works..." — Hebrews 10:24



Flourish!

Choose well – Think well – Live well

Choose Purpose!

There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. 1 Cor. 12:4-6 NJKJV.

We need to know that what we do is valuable, and it is valued by God and others.

Start a project that you can enjoy working on for a few minutes every day.

● Make a list of all the things you enjoy doing well.

Choose to do one of the chores in your home in the best way possible. Find a way to make it fun!

Use one of your special skills to bring joy to someone else.

Make a timeline/history of one of your favourite skills to help you notice its development and all the effort you have put into it.

Work together as a family on a special project that blesses other people. Make soup, care for someone's garden, redecorate a room, pick up litter, etc.

Write each person's name on a different sheet of paper, pass the papers around the circle, and write on each person's sheet some of the things they do well.

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● Write a thank you note to someone who helped you to develop one of your skills. Who could you share the skill with?

Send a short note of appreciation to a family member, classmate, or colleague, for something they have worked hard at, and done well.

● Ask a member of the older generation to teach you a skill they learnt when they were young. Enjoy your time together.

This poster is part of the Trans-European Division project "Flourish!"
For more ideas to help you flourish, please visit the TED Children's Ministry Resource pages at www.ted.adventist.org

From the Pastor's Desk—Continued from Page 1

This is a faith journey for us, and the Lamps of Fire are representative of the Holy Spirit showing us Jesus. The Holy Spirit is the faithful teacher of God's word.

When we come to Jesus, pray that the Holy Spirit will reason with our spirit that we are His sons and daughters. This is an educational experience so that we learn to know Jesus, who to know is eternal life—all illustrated in the Holy Place. This is how we receive the "Mind of Christ" (Phil. 2:5)

What a provision for our sanctification! To consciously have this kind of fellowship with God brings us the spirit of humility. Of Elijah, it is said that he could stand before kings, because he had first bowed low before the King of Kings.

As the summer of 2026 begins, may this be our experience as day by day we come more and more into oneness with Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.

Alvin Schnell

Just Walk

The standard health recommendation of 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week sounds like a lot. It doesn't have to be. Research shows that a short daily walk is enough to meaningfully extend your life.



Studies published in JAMA Internal Medicine and The Lancet Public Health found that walking just 4,400 steps a day cuts mortality risk by 41%, and the biggest longevity gains peak around 7,000 steps, roughly 45–50 minutes of walking, all at once or spread throughout the day. If steps feel abstract, time works just as well: even 15 minutes of brisk walking daily has been linked to a nearly 20% reduction in total mortality, and doing it in a dedicated burst, rather than casual pacing around the house, cuts near-term heart disease risk in half. The goal isn't perfection. It's consistency. Ten minutes today becomes twenty next month. Walk while on a phone call or listening to a recording, then it stops feeling like exercise at all. The science is clear: you don't need a gym, a plan, or an overhaul. You just need to start moving, and the simplest way to do that is to walk out the door. AG

On May 24 we said goodbye to the Roberts



“We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to everyone who attended & helped make our farewell party so special. Your presence, kind words, prayers, and thoughtful gestures meant so much to our family. As we begin a new chapter in our lives, we are deeply grateful for the love & support we have received from our church family through the years. The friendships, memories, and spiritual encouragement we shared with all of you will always remain close to our hearts. Thank you for the wonderful fellowship, delicious food, & for making our send-off such a meaningful & memorable occasion. We truly felt loved & appreciated. Please continue to keep our family in your prayers as we transition to a new journey. We will also pray for each one of you & for God’s blessings upon our church family”
Randy, Juliebee, & Hannah



with love & laughter. Thanks to those who joined us!

In John Bunyan’s “The Pilgrim’s Progress,” Christiana compares her love for Christ to the sweetness of a strawberry. May we all strive to love Christ in the same way. The May 31 Strawberry Social was a “sweet” event filled

Angela Lee

When Technology Misidentifies: A Cautionary Tale



Imagine minding your own business when, without warning, your home is surrounded by law enforcement agents, there to arrest you for a crime you never committed. That is exactly what happened in July 2025 to Angela Lipps, a 50-year-old grandmother from Tennessee. Her story offers a sobering glimpse into the risks at the intersection of law enforcement and rapidly advancing artificial intelligence (AI), particularly facial recognition technology. Lipps suddenly found herself at the center of a federal investigation tied to crimes in North Dakota, a state she had never even visited. What followed was a six-month ordeal that exposed the vulnerabilities that can arise when automated identification tools are trusted without any human verification. The case began when Fargo police used facial recognition software to analyze surveillance footage from a series of bank fraud incidents. The system flagged Lipps as a match, and based largely on this digital conclusion, U.S. Marshals arrested her at her home. She was then held in a Tennessee county jail for four months without bail while awaiting extradition to North Dakota. It was not advanced technology, but simple, everyday evidence that ultimately proved her innocence. After being extradited and securing legal counsel, Lipps presented bank statements and receipts for routine purchases like pizza and Uber Eats, each precisely timestamped in Tennessee at the exact times the crimes were taking place in North Dakota. These ordinary records formed an airtight alibi that the authorities could not ignore and facial recognition system had completely overlooked. Although the charges were dismissed in late December and Lipps was finally released, the damage had already been done. Her life had been turned upside down. She received no financial support from the state for her return home and had to rely on her legal team for basic needs. Meanwhile, Fargo officials maintained that the warrant and her arrest met the legal standard for probable cause and that the investigation remains open. Lipps’ case underscores a deeper concern: the danger of the increasing use of AI in all aspects of our lives, and when a single digital error can lead to the loss of a person’s freedom.

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Best Cities for Living to 100



A recent international study ranked top 100 cities around the world based on their potential for longevity. Researchers evaluated factors such as life expectancy, quality of life, environmental conditions, smoking rates, obesity levels, food safety, and physical inactivity among older adults. Topping the list was Bergen, which earned the highest longevity score thanks to its excellent environmental conditions, access to healthcare, and outstanding quality of life. Norway’s national life expectancy is 83.76 years. The Top 10 cities for longevity were: 1. Bergen, Norway, 2. Canberra, Australia 3. Nantes, France, 4. Grenoble, France 5. Bern, Switzerland 6. Reykjavík, Iceland 7. Lausanne, Switzerland 8. Zurich, Switzerland 9. Basel, Switzerland 10. Quebec City, Canada European and Australian cities dominated the rankings, particularly in quality of life and life expectancy. Canberra, Australia, placed second with an impressive life expectancy of 84.34 years, while the French cities of Nantes and Grenoble secured third and fourth place. American cities, however, ranked much lower. Surprisingly, Sierra Vista did not make the Top 100 list. The highest-ranked U.S. city was San Jose, California at #36. Researchers pointed to America’s high obesity rate—currently around 42%. The US life expectancy is 79.76 years. The study also noted that unhealthy food culture, sedentary lifestyle and limited access to affordable healthcare make it more difficult for many Americans to live well into their 80s and 90s compared to those in many European and Australian cities.

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High-Fiber Fruits to Elevate Your Health



Apples have long been celebrated as a nutritional staple—and for good reason. A medium apple delivers nearly 5 grams of fiber. But if you’re aiming to meet the recommended daily intake of 25–35 grams, it may be

time to look beyond the familiar. A variety of flavorful fruits offer even greater fiber benefits, helping support digestion, heart health, and healthy weight management.

Tropical Powerhouses: For a true fiber boost, tropical fruits stand in a class of their own. Passion fruit leads the way, offering an impressive 24.5 grams of fiber per cup—nearly a full day’s requirement for some adults. Along with its vibrant, tangy flavor, it provides vitamins A and C to support immune and eye health.

Guava is another standout, delivering about 8.9 grams of fiber per cup—almost double that of an apple. Even more impressive, it contains more vitamin C than an orange. Best of all, it can be eaten whole, including the rind, making it both convenient and nutrient-dense.

The Berry Advantage: Berries are widely known for their antioxidants, but they also rank among the best sources of dietary fiber. Raspberries and blackberries top the list, with roughly 8 grams and 7.6 grams per cup, respectively. Blueberries also contribute meaningful fiber, especially the wild (lowbush) variety, which contains about 6.2 grams per cup—more than the standard cultivated type. Since berries tend to spoil quickly, freezing them is a simple way to preserve both their taste and nutritional value for smoothies, yogurt, or oatmeal.

Familiar Fruits, Smarter Choices: Some everyday fruits can rival—or even surpass the apple when eaten thoughtfully. Pears, for example, provide around 5.5 grams of fiber each. Choosing fresh over canned varieties helps avoid unnecessary added sugars. Kiwifruit is another hidden gem. While many people scoop out the inside, eating the skin can boost fiber intake by up to 50%, adding both texture and nutritional value. Grapefruit offers about 5 grams of fiber and is over 90% water, making it a refreshing, hydrating option. However, it’s important to note that grapefruit can interact with certain medications—especially some cholesterol and blood pressure treatments—so it’s wise to consult your healthcare provider if you’re unsure.

The Savory Standout: Avocado, though often treated like a vegetable, is actually a fruit, and a fiber-rich one at that. A half-cup serving provides about 5 grams of fiber, along with heart-healthy fats and vitamin E. Its mild flavor pairs well with salads, whole grains, or fresh salsas, enhancing both taste and nutrient absorption.

Next time you’re at the market, consider reaching beyond the apple bin—you may discover a new favorite that’s just as satisfying, and even more beneficial.

Reaching your daily fiber goals doesn’t have to feel repetitive. By expanding your choices to include berries, tropical fruits, and even avocado, you can nourish your body while enjoying a wider variety of flavors. AG

Handwriting Still Matters

In today’s digital world, typing has become the dominant form of written communication. Yet research continues to show that handwriting remains an important skill with unique benefits for the brain.

Italian scientists studying the neurological differences between handwriting and typing have found that writing by hand activates a much broader network of brain regions. Handwriting engages motor control, sensory perception, and higher-order thinking at the same time. In contrast, typing tends to involve fewer neural pathways and often results in more passive cognitive engagement. Writing by hand is a complex activity. It requires coordinating thought, vision, and fine motor movements while forming letters, controlling pressure on the page, and maintaining spacing and alignment. This multisensory process strengthens memory and helps the brain better recognize letters and words—an important foundation for reading and learning.

Although typing is faster and more convenient, the slower pace of handwriting encourages deeper focus and improves memory retention. Studies suggest that students who take notes by hand often understand and remember material better than those who type their notes.

Researchers also see potential therapeutic benefits. Because handwriting activates brain areas connected to memory, emotion, and self-awareness, it may help in cognitive rehabilitation after strokes or brain injuries and may support mental health therapies. For older adults, handwriting and typing can both stimulate the brain and may help maintain cognitive function.

Digital tools are now emerging that combine the advantages of both methods, such as devices that simulate handwriting while offering the convenience of technology.

The research suggests an important takeaway: while technology continues to transform how we communicate, handwriting still plays a valuable role in learning, memory, and brain health.

In a world that moves increasingly fast, the simple act of putting pen to paper may help our minds slow down, focus, and remember. AG

A Turning Point in American Life Expectancy



For much of the twentieth century, Americans could expect each generation to live longer and healthier lives than the one before it. Advances in medicine, improved sanitation, and better living conditions steadily pushed life expectancy upward. But new research suggests that this long-standing trend may have reached a troubling turning point.

A recent study published in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)* finds that the younger generation may be experiencing higher mortality rates than earlier generations did at the same age. Researchers describe people born in the mid-1950s as a pivotal group, the point where the steady decline in mortality that had characterized previous decades began to stall and, in some cases, reverse.

The findings are especially concerning for those born between 1970 and 1985. Compared with earlier generations, this group is showing higher rates of death from cardiovascular disease, drug overdoses, accidents, and cancers, particularly colon cancer. What alarms researchers most is that these conditions are emerging in people who are still relatively young, many in their 30s and 40s, raising questions about what their health may look like as they reach their senior years.

Why is this happening? The study points to a combination of social, economic, and lifestyle factors. Growing financial stress appears to play a significant role, especially for those with fewer resources. At the same time, unhealthy diets, rising obesity rates, and sedentary lifestyles are contributing to increased risks of heart disease and cancer. Researchers note that while humans may be nearing a biological ceiling for lifespan, the United States is still falling behind many other wealthy nations, suggesting that policy choices and social environments strongly influence public health outcomes.

Despite the sobering findings, the study also offers hope. Public health history shows that change is possible. Efforts to reduce smoking in the past decades dramatically lowered deaths from lung and heart disease. Similarly, researchers say progress today will require a comprehensive approach, addressing substance abuse, improving nutrition and physical activity.

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