

Ellen G. White Estate

MY JOURNEY TO LIFE

CHRISTIAN LIFESTYLE

How should we live as Christians?

STEP 19 OF 28



My Journey to Life, Step 19

Foreword

My Journey to Life will give you the keys for finding peace of mind, harmony of body, and success in relationships. Every step will transform your outlook as you unpack each lesson. We pray they will help you to fall in love with the greatest Teacher this world has ever known. So together, let's walk the pathway step-by-step to a new life in Jesus.

Preface

Christian lifestyle fosters the restoration of the image of God in humanity. This is the purpose of our redemption, to be transformed in character to God's holiness, and thus brings glory to His name. This work God performs in and through us, as we submit our will to His.

Step Nineteen—Christian Behavior

How shall we live as Christians? "We are called to be a godly people who think, feel, and act in harmony with biblical principles in all aspects of personal and social life. For the Spirit to recreate in us the character of our Lord, we involve ourselves only in those things that will produce Christlike purity, health, and joy in our lives. This means that our amusement and entertainment should meet the highest standards of Christian taste and beauty. While recognizing cultural differences, our dress is to be simple, modest, and neat, befitting those whose true beauty does not consist of outward adornment but in the imperishable ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit. It also means that because our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, we are to care for them intelligently. Along with adequate exercise and rest, we are to adopt the most healthful diet possible and abstain from the unclean foods identified in the Scriptures. Since alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and the irresponsible use of drugs and narcotics are harmful to our bodies, we are to abstain from them as well. Instead, we are to engage in whatever brings our thoughts and bodies into the discipline of Christ, who desires our wholesomeness, joy, and goodness." — *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, p. 317

Bible Discovery: Genesis 7:2; Exodus 20:15; Leviticus 11:1-47; Psalm 106:3; Romans 12:1, 2; 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20; 10:31; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 10:5; Ephesians 5:1-21; Philippians 2:4; 4:8; 1 Timothy 2:9, 10; Titus 2:11, 12; 1 Peter 3:1-4; 1 John 2:6; 3 John 1:2

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 198.1

1. An entire Bible study on Christian behavior? Isn't that legalism? I've been told all I need to do is love Jesus! Yes, loving Jesus is the most important thing, for sure. But Jesus says, "If you love me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). When we discover how much Jesus paid for our salvation, our hearts want to respond with grateful obedience to all He asks. Christians who love Jesus *will* adopt a different lifestyle, not for the sake of being different, but because the

behavior to which He calls us will enable us to reach our full potential as His creation. Christian behavior, then, is a natural fruit of salvation.

This Bible study focuses on God’s principles for living, not as a means of salvation, but as a response to His incredible grace!

Bible Discovery: John 15:5; 17:15, 16; Romans 12:1, 2; Galatians 5:4, 13; Hebrews 11:4; 12:1, 2; James 2:17

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 312.1; *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 396.2; *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 127.1

2. Since we are saved by grace, does what we eat and drink matter to God? Definitely. The Bible says, “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31). To be clear, we are not saved by our dietary choices. It is a choice given us by God to honor Him. The choice to be temperate is twofold: 1. God is perfectly temperate, and a Christian should seek to be like Him, 2. Our bodies are the temples, or dwelling places, of the Holy Spirit; therefore, we seek to keep our body and mind as healthy and strong as possible.

Bible Discovery: Deuteronomy 14:1-29; Proverbs 4:17; 23:29-35; John 10:10; 3 John 1:2

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 59.3; *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 296.1; *Counsels on Diets and Foods*, p. 425.3; *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 153.4; *Health Reformer*, November 1, 1871, par. 22

Read Also —Influencers of Health

3. What are some general principles of living healthfully? Here are eight basic health principles that enable anyone to enjoy life at its best:

- **Regular exercise**—especially in the open air—is the simple formula for increased energy, toned body, stress relief, healthier skin, more self-confidence, improved digestion and regularity, and reduced risk of depression, heart disease, and cancer.
- **Getting plenty of sunlight, safely. Sunlight** is not only essential to life, but it also improves heart health, helps alleviate depression, improves sleep quality, and triggers the body’s production of vitamin D. Vitamin D can strengthen the immune system, improve brain function, and protect against inflammation.
- **Drinking fresh water.** Water helps boost energy, skin health, and kidney function. It supports digestion and delivers oxygen through the body. Drinking 6-8 glasses of pure water a day promotes well-being and is useful for effective weight control. External use of water is not only valuable for cleanliness and relaxation but also for restoration. Hydrotherapy reduces the chance of contracting disease by stimulating circulation in the body.

- **Breathing fresh air.** An environment of impure air, in or outside the home, causes the blood to carry less oxygen than is required for the optimal function of every cell. This tends to make a person less alert and more prone to disease. Wherever possible, sleep with windows open and secure fresh air throughout the day.
- **Enjoying plenty of rest.** Sleep is essential for a healthy body as well as mind. Lack of sleep can reduce the body’s ability to fight disease. Periods of rest provide quietness for communion with God. God stressed our need for rest by setting aside the seventh day of every week as the day of rest.
- **Exercising temperance.** Temperance simply means abstaining from everything harmful and using what is good in moderation.
- **Choosing proper nutrition.** A Christian who eats a plant-based diet, who does not ingest harmful drugs, narcotics, or other stimulants—such as caffeine—promotes optimum health. As Christians, we are to respect our bodies and take good care of them. We should be living witnesses of good health principles, as this brings honor and glory to God.
- **Trusting divine power.** Gratitude, giving, trust in God’s love and care are health’s greatest safeguards.

Bible Discovery: Genesis 1:3, 29; Exodus 20:8-11; Proverbs 3:5, 6; 17:22; Isaiah 55:2; Daniel 1:8; Mark 6:31; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *The Review and Herald*, December 5, 1899, par. 5; *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 63.3; *The Health Reformer*, May 1, 1873, par. 5

***Read Chapter 8: “[Grow up into Christ,](#)”** from *Steps to Christ*, by Ellen G. White, and learn practical aspects of living a Christian life.

4. What about recreation? Christians can have fun in many ways! Think of adventures in God’s creation like hiking, camping, walking, gardening, swimming, snorkeling, canoeing, skiing, bicycling, horseback riding—the list is endless! Also consider the joy of inspiring books, music and creative arts.

Perhaps the recreation that brings the most meaning, however, is reaching out to help and encourage those who are lonely, marginalized, hungry, sick, or suffering from spiritual or tangible poverty. Christians will pursue forms of recreation and entertainment that strengthen their bond with Jesus and refresh their physical, mental, and spiritual natures.

Bible Discovery: Psalm 101:3; Isaiah 33:14-16; Matthew 5:8; 19:21; Romans 13:11-14; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Peter 2:11; 2 Peter 1:5, 6; 1 John 2:15-17

Further Reading: Ellen White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 103.1, 3; *Education*, p. 207.1

5. What biblical principles guide human sexuality? God Himself invented sex (Genesis 1:28)! God intentionally created two persons of different gender to be in the image of God, neither inferior to the other, with the capability of sexual intimacy within the lifelong marriage of one man to one woman. Sexual expression, then, is a beautiful gift from God. He intended it to increase the spiritual, emotional, and physical bonding between husband and wife. Cohabitation of sexually active couples who are not married has no biblical support and is termed adultery or fornication.

The principle of sexual purity stands against all forms of perversions or abuses of human intimacy. This would include prostitution, extramarital sexual relations, incest, rape, sodomy, transvestitism, pedophilia, voyeurism, and sexual activity between persons of the same gender.

Bible Discovery: Genesis 1: 27, 31; 2:24, 25; 4:1; Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Song of Solomon; Romans 1:26; 1 Corinthians 5:1, 2; 6:15-20; Hebrews 13:4

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 252.1; 380.2-381.1; *The Desire of Ages*, p. 219.3

6. Can pornography be an innocent way to heighten married sexual pleasure or provide sexual release for a young person not ready for marriage? Pornography is a powerful, addictive instrument in debasing manhood and womanhood to a mere sex object. Because sexual self-gratification becomes the main goal of sexual activity in pornography, sexuality becomes a matter of fantasy rather than mutual connection based on emotional, spiritual, and physical communication and intimacy.

Christians will not only reject all forms of pornography, but they will also act and speak decisively against its use, while pointing to Jesus as the power that enables us to gain victory over all inherited and cultivated sinful temptations.

Bible Discovery: Genesis 39:1-20; Psalm 26:1-7; 139:23, 24; 51:10; Proverbs 23:7; Matthew 12:33-35; 1 John 3:3

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home*, p. 403.3; *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 47.2

7. Are there Biblical principles to guide the Christian in his or her dress? God provided the first clothing for Adam and Eve and knows that we need suitable clothing today. We can choose our clothing on the principles of simplicity, modesty, practicality, health, and attractiveness (Matthew 6:25-33). Our choice of attractive and modest dress demonstrates to the world that we are Christ's.

As pilgrims about to enter heaven's "Canaan," we will put away jewelry that may not only prevent God's blessing in these urgent times, but also be an unnecessary expense. If we lift the Savior up in the way we speak, act, and dress, we become like magnets, drawing people to

Him and not ourselves. Also, abstaining from self-adornment by not wearing any jewelry could be a statement of our dedication and commitment to God, by living a modest Christian life.

Bible Discovery: Genesis 35:2, 4; Exodus 33:5, 6; 1 Timothy 2:9, 10; 1 Peter 3:1-4; 1 John 2:16

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 248, par. 1-4; *Messages to Young People*, p. 351.1-3; *The Ministry of Healing*, p 287.2-3

8. How can a Christian live both in the world and separate from it? The best example of how to live out this dichotomy is the life of Jesus. In His incarnation, He chose to be very much a part of the world in which He lived. At the same time, Jesus refused to engage in any immoral cultural elements, such as racism, elitism, nationalism, misogyny, or caste. Since there are good as well as corrupt elements in every culture, we must pray for the Holy Spirit’s wisdom to know how we can live in harmony with the will and mind of Christ in the place where we live.

Bible Discovery: John 10:10; 1 Corinthians 2:16; 10:33; 2 Corinthians 6:17; Galatians 5:22, 23; 1 John 2:6

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 668.3; *The Southern Work*, p. 13.1; *Gospel Workers*, p. 122.1

9. How should a Christian behave in the areas of stewardship? God is the Creator, Sustainer, and ultimate Owner of everything; we are the “steward” or manager of His property. Faithfulness is the basic and overarching principle of stewardship.

Biblical stewardship includes:

- **Stewardship of life** is the most sacred of assets God has shared with human beings. Life was devalued when humans first fell into sin. For that reason, God offered the life of His Son to redeem humanity from destruction. The principle of life preservation (Exodus 20:13) excludes abortion, except in extreme circumstances. Christians will also be proactive in preserving the life of the marginalized, such as immigrants, people of color whose life might be threatened, or persons living in debilitating poverty.
- **Stewardship of nature.** The earth with its beauty and richness of life and resources was entrusted to human dominion (Psalm 8:6-8), not to exploit and mismanage, but to care for and preserve. The Christian will refrain from careless destruction of the environment, reject consumer mentality and practice simplicity in lifestyle.
- **Stewardship of wealth.** The principle of gratitude (Deuteronomy 8:17, 18) helps prevent condescending and arrogant attitudes toward the poor and brings humility and caring response to the needs of others. The principle of generosity (Proverbs 11:24) urges Christians to imitate the great Giver who shares His riches with humankind. The principle of honesty (Exodus 20:15) protects from corrupt and unscrupulous ways of

making profits. The principle of dependence on God alone (Exodus 20:2, 3) warns against placing our trust and devotion in riches instead of God.

- **Stewardship of time.** The principle of rest (Exodus 20:8-11) calls us to worship and refreshment. Were it not for God’s call to rest, humans might only work and sleep. God’s invitation to enter a deeper friendship with Him on the seventh-day Sabbath helps us transcend time and think instead of eternity. The principle of diligence (Exodus 20:9) reminds us that industriousness and honest hard work is an integral part of Christian behavior. The principle of timeliness (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8) calls for the careful use of time, including punctuality.

Bible Discovery: Deuteronomy 10:18; 23:12-14; Psalm 24:1; 90:10-12; Ecclesiastes 5:10, 11, 18; 1 Corinthians 4:2; 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12; Revelation 11:18

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 37.2; *The Adventist Home*, p. 390.1

10. What other Christ-like virtues will be seen in a Christian’s behavior? Jesus came to deliver us from the vicious cycle of sin and death and establish a cycle of righteousness and life. Here are some practical ideas of what His love will look like within the context of human relationships.

- **Integrity.** The virtue of integrity consists of character, attitudes, actions, and words that stand in complete harmony with truth and reality. A person of integrity will be honest. His or her speech will be true and pure and free from profanity or verbal abuse.
- **Courage.** When obedience to God’s commandments calls for a course of action different from the world’s, the Holy Spirit gives us the courage and fortitude necessary to persevere, even under great pressure. Our courage will grow as we resist temptations and face trials through faith in Jesus.
- **Forgiveness** is the only way to restore broken relationships or eliminate resentment against someone who has wronged us. Genuine forgiveness cannot be conjured up by will power; it is a gift of God gained through prayer. As Jesus has forgiven us, we must forgive others.

Bible Discovery: Matthew 6:14, 15; John 1:12, 13; 3:16; 8:44; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Colossians 3:12, 13

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 57.3; *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 336.2

11. Becoming holy like God is a tall order! How is it achieved? We can’t just trust innate human goodness to guide our ethical choices, because our sinful human consciences are

untrustworthy. We may consider ourselves to be good, moral, ethical persons, but without Christ, we are inherently selfish.

But the same God who calls us to holiness is the One who made us. He promises to re-make us in His image, through the new birth experience. He who began the work in us will finish it (Philippians 1:6). Regardless of our background, education, and culture, Jesus can give us a new heart that will respect everyone's identity and value, regardless of age, race, gender, or status.

Bible Discovery: Leviticus 11:44; Ezekiel 36:26; Luke 14:28-33; John 3:1-36; Galatians 3:28, 29; Philippians 3:13, 14; 4:13

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 175.1

12. How can I find motivation and strength to make these changes to my thinking, and incorporate these principles into my life? Some of the ideas in this study are completely foreign to me and the worldview I have held my entire life. In considering God's call on our life, it helps to recognize the great conflict between Christ and Satan over our souls. Jesus wants us saved for eternity. He wants to restore us to full harmony with heaven and its principles of love, purity, and joy. Satan, on the other hand, wants to see us self-destruct and forfeit eternal life. Satan hates Jesus and all that He represents. Therefore, the enemy of our souls will do all in his power to prevent us from accepting the message of freedom from the slavery of sin. He will put conflicting ideas, ideologies, philosophies, and agendas in our path to detour us from the way of righteousness that leads to eternal life.

As we recognize the depth of Christ's love for us, our appreciation for Him deepens. We want His friendship, His protection, His approval. Crossroads come into the life of every follower of Jesus. Satan beckons us to the transient baubles of power, popularity, instant gratification, and ease. Jesus beckons us to a narrower path, that at first may appear steep and difficult to ascend. But if we look beyond the present obstacles, we see the beautiful and welcoming face of Jesus. He invites us to partner with Him on the narrow path, for "His yoke is easy, and His burden is light" (See Matthew 11:30).

It will be worth it all to see Jesus when He comes again!

Bible Discovery: Genesis 12:1-3; Matthew 7:13, 14; 11:29, 30; 1 Corinthians 1:9; Philippians 3:14; Colossians 3:1-17

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *Medical Ministry*, p. 255.4; *The Great Controversy*, p. 665.3

Reflection...

When we fully give our hearts to Jesus, the Spirit and the Word of God convicts us of our need to make lifestyle changes that can be accomplished through the strength that Jesus imparts.

Next Step...

Following Jesus is not just about our own growth in Him, but also helping others grow in their knowledge of God and His Word. In our next step, we will discover how God empowers us to take up this special calling.

Discussion Questions

1. Why does a Christian's behavior matter?
2. What health habits would you like to improve?
3. Can dressing modestly mean different things in different cultures?

Further Reading

Official Adventist Website: <https://adventist.org/christian-behavior>

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Request a personal Bible study: <https://www.bibleschools.com/en/personal-studies>

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Online prayer room: <https://www.wepray.mobi>