

Journey To

LIFE

"You have shown me the path of life."
Psalms 16:11

ADVENTIST
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MINISTRIES
NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION

9705 Patuxent Woods Drive
Columbia, MD 21046
www.nadhealth.org
Email: health@nadadventist.org

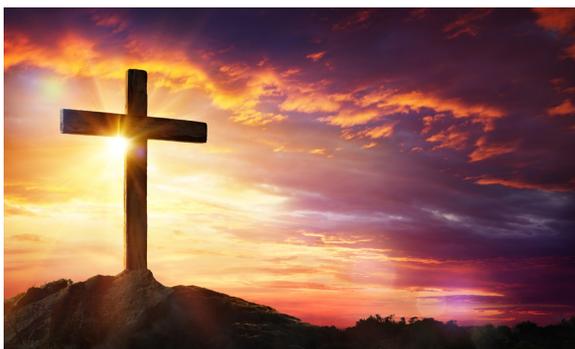
THE NEWSLETTER OF ADVENTIST RECOVERY MINISTRIES, sponsored by NAD Health Ministries

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2018 • Volume 7, Number 1

The Soul Temple

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who* is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:19-20, NKJV).

Participants in the Journey to Wholeness, Christ-centered 12 step program come face-to-face with the reality that their addictions have resulted in significant damage to their soul temple which includes, according to 1 Cor. 6:20, both our body and our spirit. As Pratt comments, "the Christian's body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit takes up residence in believers, making their bodies a holy place for the dwelling of God's special presence."¹ Ellen White comments that at death, "the spirit, the character of man, is returned to God, there to be preserved" (6BC1093). A basic understanding of the concept of the spirit is that it is the character. God's Spirit indwelling and thus sanctifying our characters will give us the experience of "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27, KJV). This experience of His glory in us is the antitype of His presence in the Shekinah glory. Since the essence of the character of God is that He is love, when His love fills us, His indwelling love is the antidote for sin in the human heart, the dwelling place of God.



1Thessalonians 5:23 expands this idea even more. "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." This wholistic approach to the human person goes beyond body and spirit to include soul. In a sense, these distinctions as we understand them in these times are artificial. Biblically, the person is integrated, not separated into distinct parts. Modern science demonstrates that what affects one part of us affects the other parts of us. The addict who indulges in excessive work, for example, certainly experiences physical effects such as fatigue, exhaustion, relationship stress and spiritual stagnation.

We are stewards of our soul temples. Our key verses above clarify that we are not our own. We were bought with the price of the blood of the Son of God. Most addicts, and indeed most Christians, understand this very poorly. "That the Holy Spirit resides in believers points to the new nature of believers' bodies. Believers' bodies are sanctified and holy, being in union with Christ. When a person in Christ engages in sexual immorality, that immorality runs contrary to the new nature and new identity of his body. The Christian has been redeemed for good works (Eph. 2:10), so he ought to use his body for good deeds and righteousness, not for sin.

Paul insisted, Honor God with your body. Having already given the negative warning to flee immorality, Paul gave positive guidance through the gospel. Rather than merely resist sin, believers must see themselves as temples of God purchased by Christ. Of course, this purchase refers to Christ's atonement. Because Christ died for and purchased believers, believers owe him obedience

and honor. They should search for ways to bring glory to God by using their bodies in the ways that God has commanded, and by refraining from using their bodies in ways God has prohibited."²

Turning to another aspect of the soul temple, the thinking of addicts is often described as "stinking thinking." This kind of thinking includes denial, minimization, rationalization, and projection. Addicts often deny or minimize their problem. They commonly believe that they can stop their addiction at any time which implies that they do not believe that they are addicts at all. This frequently takes the form of a behavior change such as a geographic cure where the addict moves to other surroundings to escape the circumstances that they believe are contributing to the problem. What they fail to understand is that they are taking themselves with them. Another denial strategy that communicates that "I'm in control of this. I can stop or change anytime I want to" is to modify the addictive substance, for example, changing from liquor to beer. Minimization says "It's not that bad." This implies that other persons are exaggerating their concerns. Examples of minimization would be "I only drink on weekends. I can't be an alcoholic." "I only smoke pot. That's not dangerous."

Rationalization is the use of one's reason to argue others out of their concern or position. Addicts frequently use rationalization to justify their continued addiction. "I'm celebrating (drinking) because it is my birthday." "I've had a hard day at work today. I deserve to let my hair down and relax." "It's New Year's Eve. Everyone drinks on New Year's Eve. I don't want to spoil the party." Addicts must override the "still small voice" of their conscience in order to use these rationalizations.

Projection of blame makes other people responsible for one's addiction. "I'm not getting

enough sex from her. It's her fault that I'm using pornography." "I wouldn't drink if you'd stop nagging me." "I wouldn't be so angry if you'd stop trying to control me." For lasting recovery, addicts must take responsibility for their own behavior and choices.

Most addicts are spiritually bankrupt. Humans were created for intimacy and connection. At a very deep level, they want to commune with God in their soul temple. In fact, Gerald May believes that addiction is essentially a search for God's love that has gone astray.³ However, not knowing the God who loves them so dearly that He gave His life for them, they find satisfaction in money, sex, food, chemicals or anything else that falsely claims to satisfy their inner longing for God. Praise God that He does not leave us to ourselves, but continues His dogged pursuit of us in order to save us. He allows us to "hit bottom" so that like the prodigal son, we might come to our senses and begin the path to recovery. He is a jealous God who does not want to share our soul temples with any competing god because He has our best interest at heart. Let Him have you fully.

¹Pratt, R. L., Jr. (2000). *I & II Corinthians* (Vol. 7, pp. 101–103). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

²Ibid.

³May, Gerald (1988). *Addiction and Grace: Love and Spirituality in the Treatment of Addictions*. New York, NY: Harper Collins

Editor's note:

David Sedlacek, PhD, Andrews University Seminary Professor and His wife Beverly, Andrews University Nursing Department Professor are co-authors of the book, *Cleansing the Sanctuary of the Heart: Tools for Emotional Healing*

normal amongst many of the professional people I mixed with. I also developed a taste for "recreational drugs" which although not as common, were surprisingly prevalent in some of those environments.

Around the age of 30 though, a series of personal events in my life, coupled with increasingly excessive drinking and drug-taking, left me with a deep feeling of depression. Despite now seeing clearly the effects that drinking and my other habits were having on me, I also found out that I seemed unable to stop for any sustained period, even if I generally had strong willpower in other areas of my life.

In desperation one day I visited an empty church alone at lunchtime - and even though I didn't know exactly what I was looking for, I felt God's peace and love enter my heart. I began reading the Bible and after some time found a church which I began attending every week. I also began attending Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and was struck by how the principles I learned there were so similar to those I was learning from the Bible.

I stopped drinking and was baptized some months afterwards and haven't felt tempted to drink or take drugs in the years since then. I did, however, have struggles with lust (e.g. pornography) and with controlling my appetite - but I found that by applying the same principles I'd learned through the Bible and using the structure of the 12 Steps of AA, and with the fellowship of those I met in similar recovery groups (such as the Journey to Wholeness) and the prayers of Christian brothers and sisters, I was able to overcome those problems too.

Steve E.

It is easy and obvious to see that we are not responsible for the inherited defects in us. However, we are responsible for allowing these defects to keep us from developing a Christ-like character. It is also true that we have many of our own defects of character. Before sharing any further thoughts on our defects of character - whether inherited or acquired, I will name just a few. Defects of character include: arrogance, conceit, dishonesty, domination, irresponsibility, being judgmental, prejudice, and sexism. All these and many more can and often do keep us from developing a Christ-like character.

Be sure to read the feature article, "The Soul Temple" by Dr. Sedlacek in this issue of the *Journey to Life*. You will be challenged by the thought that all the redeemed will take with them to heaven is their character. He concludes his article by asking us to "let Him (God) have you fully."

In conclusion, I am again reminded of the words of the following gospel song -

I Would Be Like Jesus

James Rowe

1. Earthly pleasures vainly call me,
I would be like Jesus;
Nothing worldly shall enthrall me,
I would be like Jesus.

Refrain:

- Be like Jesus, this my song,
In the home and in the throng;
Be like Jesus, all day long!
I would be like Jesus.
2. He has broken every fetter,
I would be like Jesus;
That my soul may serve Him better,
I would be like Jesus.
 3. All the way from earth to glory,
I would be like Jesus;
Telling o'er and o'er the story,
I would be like Jesus.
 4. That in Heaven He may meet me,
I would be like Jesus;
That His words "Well done" may greet me,
I would be like Jesus.

Ray Nelson, MDiv, MSPH
adventistrecovery@gmail.com



Editorial Perspective

Character defects negatively affect all of us to some degree. Some more than others. Many of these come from our heredity. None of us chose our parents and none of our parents chose theirs. It is apparent that we all have inherited the sin problem. This began with Adam back at the beginning of the history of humanity. "You know the story of how Adam landed us in the dilemma we're in—first sin, then death, and no one exempt from either sin or death." Romans 5:12 (The Message Bible).

The Bible and the 12 Steps Provide Ability to Overcome

My name is Steve and I'm a Seventh day Adventist Christian and a recovered alcoholic and addict. Twenty years ago, I didn't know what any of those things were. I had a good education and worked in the computing industry for several well-known organizations and universities in England and Europe. I was a "social drinker", which seemed

