

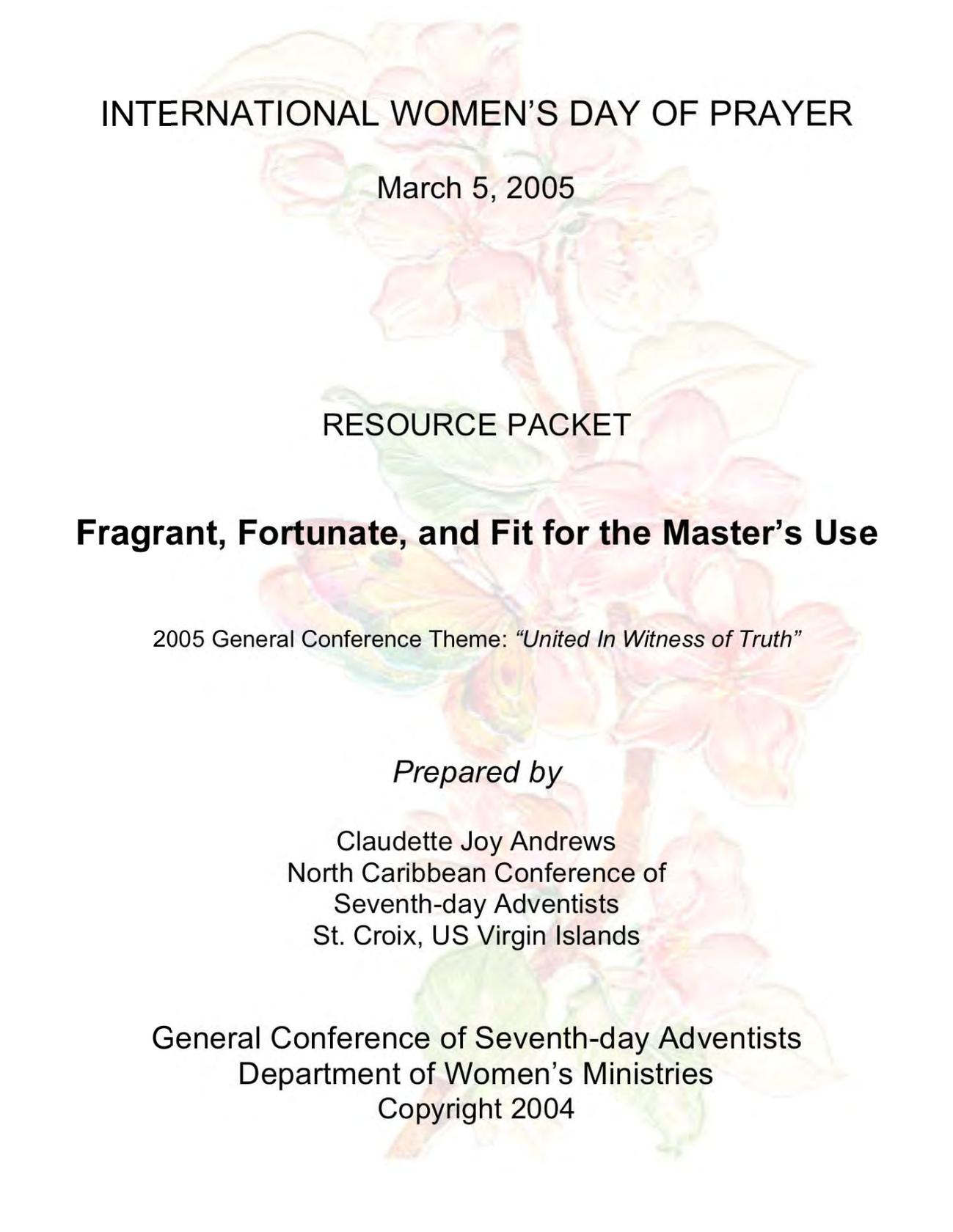
Women's Day of Prayer

**Fragrant,
Fortunate, and
Fit for the
Master's Use**

by Claudette Joy Andrews



Women's
MINISTRIES
NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION
of INTERNATIONAL ADVENTISTS



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY OF PRAYER

March 5, 2005

RESOURCE PACKET

Fragrant, Fortunate, and Fit for the Master's Use

2005 General Conference Theme: *"United In Witness of Truth"*

Prepared by

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North Caribbean Conference of
Seventh-day Adventists
St. Croix, US Virgin Islands

General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
Department of Women's Ministries
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Claudette Joy Andrews was born on the Caribbean island of St. Kitts. She is married to Pastor Maurice Andrews and is the delighted mother of three sons. Presently, she serves as Women's and Children's Ministries Director and Shepherdess coordinator of the North Caribbean Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Claudette is a theology graduate of Caribbean Union College, a psychology graduate of Andrews University and a Nationally Certified Counselor. Her interests include reading, hiking, and entertaining. Her philosophy of life is encapsulated in her motto: *"Living to Please Him."*

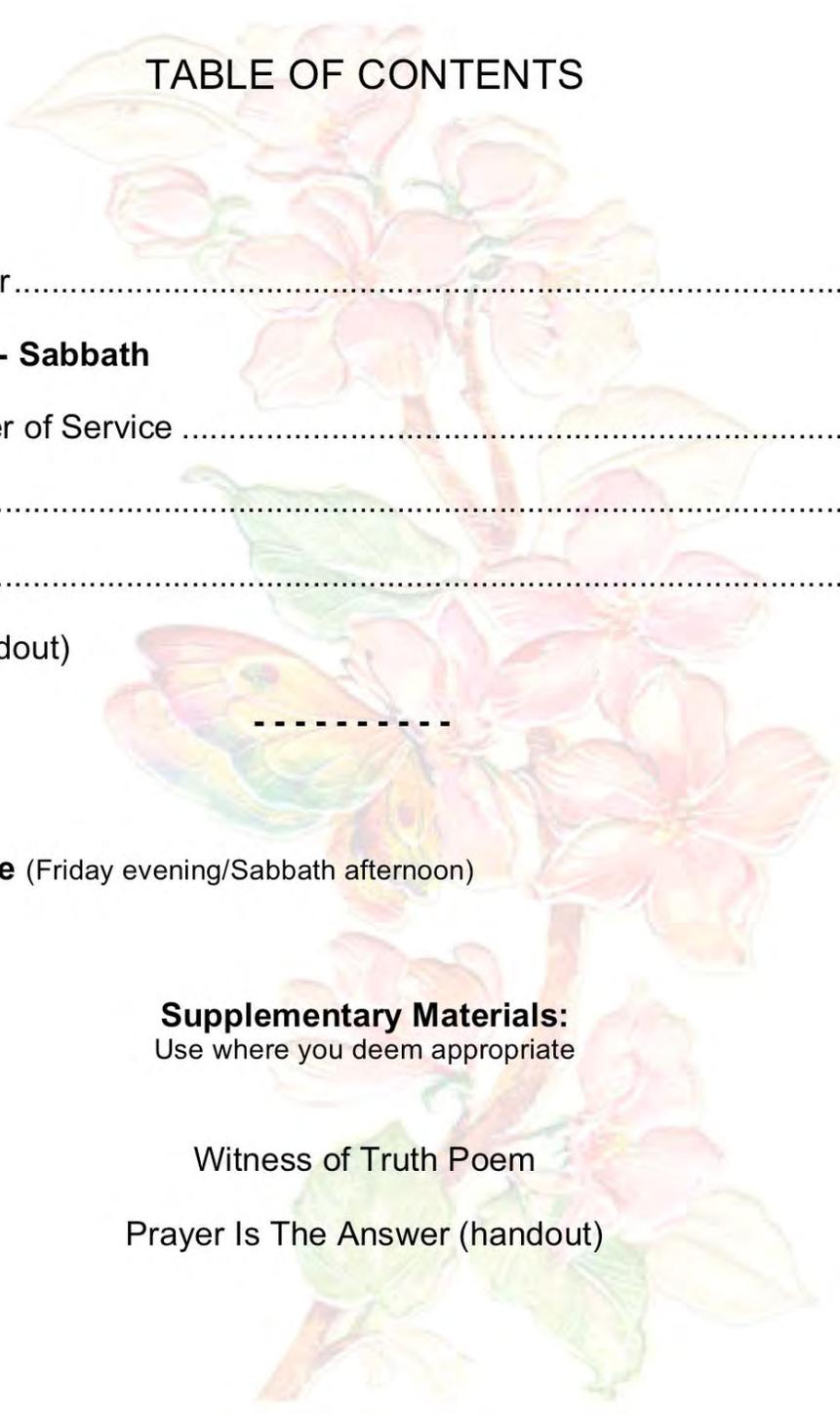


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My Pledge (handout)

A.C.T.S. Service (Friday evening/Sabbath afternoon)

Supplementary Materials:
Use where you deem appropriate

Witness of Truth Poem

Prayer Is The Answer (handout)

SUGGESTED ORDER OF DIVINE SERVICE

Musical Prelude

Processional

WE PRAISE

Welcome

Call to Worship (Psalm 95:1 - 3)

Doxology

Invocation

Hymn of Praise (Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal #10)

Scripture Reading (Psalm 145:1 - 10)

WE GIVE THANKS

Intercessory Prayer

Musical Selection

Offertory

Children's Story

WE SERVE

Musical Selection

SERMON

Hymn of Affirmation (Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal #371)

Benediction

SERMON

Fragrant, Fortunate, and Fit for the Master's Use

Let me begin by asking two questions:

Firstly - What is Truth?

(Have congregation pair and share for one minute, then take two responses)

That was the million dollar question the wily Pilate asked Jesus during the farce of His trial. Sadly, Pilate never waited for an answer. Had Pilate waited, and had he been sincere in his quest to know truth in its most authentic form, perhaps he would have made two discoveries:

1. Truth is a person
2. That person is Jesus Christ Himself

Second question -How can we effectively communicate truth?

(Have congregation pair and share for one minute, then take two responses.)

The Word of God gives several answers. We'll look at that penned in Ephesians 4:25 - 32: (allow congregation to locate text)

- Put away anger
- Speak the truth
- In anger, do not sin
- Do not let the sun set while you are still angry
- Stop stealing; work
- Do not give the Devil a foothold in your life
- Speak wholesome, uplifting words
- Do not grieve the Holy Spirit
- Get rid of bitterness and rage, slander and malice
- Be kind and compassionate to one another
- Be as forgiving as God is

(Prayer for Divine guidance)

Today, I confidently declare that Jesus, the second person of the Godhead is Truth. He announced in John 14:6 "I am the way, the truth and the life."

Yes, ladies and gentlemen, children and young people, if we would know truth in a world that is fraught with error, we must know beyond the shadow of a doubt that we know Jesus.

Illustration

- Pharmaceutical companies are now subject to more intense regulations, because some of them have been diluting the composition of the medicines they are marketing.
- In some countries, a bottle of apple juice now can legally have up to 30% pear juice in it and still be labeled as 100% apple juice.
- I was taught in elementary/primary school that 16 ounces equals 1 pound; now I go to the supermarket and pick up some one pound packets of goods with only 14.5 ounces

I am glad, I am delighted that there is one standard of truth that I can put my full trust in and that is Jesus! Hallelujah! For the Word of God emphatically states in Hebrews 13:8 “Jesus is Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever.”

His words, like His character, are “Yea” and “Amen.”

He is “the Lord, He does not change.” Malachi 3:6

With Him “there is no changeableness or shadow of turning.” James 1:17

He is the epitome of truth!

He is the sum total of truth!

He is TRUTH!

If you still have questions in your mind...

Ask Abraham and he will tell you, “He promised me an heir and even though I was an aged senior citizen long past desire, He was true to His Word and I begat Isaac.”

Ask Moses and he will tell you, “Yes He is Truth; He promised to bring me to a goodly land, a land flowing with milk and honey. I messed up and missed out on the earthly Canaan, but true to His Word and His character, He brought me to the heavenly Canaan.”

Ask David and He will tell you, “I sinned greatly; but because He is Truth and true to His Word, He forgave me of my iniquity and cleansed me from my sin.”

Ask Rahab and she will concur, “Yes Jesus is the perfect expression of truth. For, I feared Him and true to His Word, He delivered me and my household when Jericho was conquered.”

Yes saints, Jesus is the embodiment of truth in its fullness. As Ephesians 4:21 succinctly states:

“...the truth is in Jesus.”

Today, the clarion call goes out to you and you and you:

- Be a witness for Truth, i.e. Jesus
- Demonstrate by your lifestyle that you have an experience with Truth, i.e. Jesus
- Let Truth—Jesus be the summon bonum of your existence.

To illustrate the importance of this command, let's turn to Philippians 4:2 NKJV “I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord.”

Here were two influential female church leaders (compare Acts 16:13 - 15 and 17:12 with Philippians 4:2). Euodia's name means “fragrant” and Syntyche's name means “fortunate.”

They were co-laborers with Paul in the promulgation of the gospel. We are not privy to the source of their variance, but from the insistence of Paul to get the matter rectified, we get the notion that the conflict between these two church sisters negatively impacted the work of truth as it is in Jesus.

We can safely say that the fragrance of Euodia's life was unpleasant and Syntyche's actions demonstrated misfortune to the church.

The situation was so grave to the cause of truth that Paul not only wrote to them in a public letter, but he also solicited the assistance of the church leaders in quelling this agitation that affected the body of Christ.

Notice Paul's request to the sisters, “agree with each other in the Lord.”

Because in Christ there is no division,

Because in Christ there is unity,

Because in Christ there is no discord,

Because those who name the name of Christ are His witnesses to a lost and dying world,

Euodia and Syntyche were urged to reconcile their differences. Paul's aim was that truth as it is in Jesus Christ would suffer no harm.

We believe that Euodia and Syntyche adhered to the counsel of Paul and that sweet fragrance returned to Euodia's life as did goodness to Syntyche's experience.

Illustration

It happened about ten years ago. Leona and Holly (names have been changed to

protect identity) lived in the same neighborhood, worked at the same institution, and were members of the local Seventh-day Adventist Church. Both Leona and Holly held leading offices in the church, but very few members knew that they were at variance with each other. They had not spoken to each other for years and were holding on to a grudge known only to the two families involved.

The new pastor led out in the quarterly communion service. His sermonette was entitled, *“Keep My Name Lord.”* His scriptural focus was Philippians 4:2 & 3. He spoke of Euodia, Syntyche and Clement. He encouraged the members of the church to cooperate with the Holy Spirit so that no breach in relationships would mitigate against their names being in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

The members left the main sanctuary of the church and separated for the foot washing ceremony. When it was time for the members to return, it was observed that both Leona and Holly were in the main sanctuary in a heated discussion. They had not left for the foot washing ceremony. All—pastor, elders, deacons, and deaconesses—remained outside in silent prayer and contemplation as these two sisters agonized to reconcile with each other. Eventually, they hugged, cried, and came out of the church triumphant. They had come together *“in the Lord.”* Praise God!

God’s Word declares:

“For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope.” Romans 15:4 (NIV)

Based on our study this morning, I present you with a threefold charge:

1. Make your life fragrant with truth as it is found in Jesus.

You ask me, “How can I make my life fragrant with truth?” ANSWER: Purpose in your heart to study God’s Word daily. What the Psalmist says is still true: “The entrance of Thy Word gives light, it gives understanding to the simple.” Psalm 119:130

“How can a young man [(young woman)] cleanse his [her way]? By taking heed according to Your Word.” Psalm 119:9

John 17:17 “Sanctify them through Thy Truth, Thy Word is truth.”

Yes, ladies and gentlemen, children and young people; when truth as it is in Jesus touches our lives, we are transformed. We experience a metamorphosis just as an ugly caterpillar is changed into a beautiful butterfly. The aroma of lives that experience truth as it is found in Jesus and His Word is pleasant. It is attractive. It is inspiring. My prayer for all of us today is that we accept the challenge to make our lives fragrant

with truth as it is found in Jesus.

2. Secondly, I charge you to: Recognize how fortunate you are to be a co-laborer with Christ

Hebrews 1:14 speaks of angels as "...ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation."

Account after account could be given here of angels in human form, communicating with people and leading them to proclaim God's will.

Ellen G. White in Manuscript 29, 1900 tells us, "Holy ministering agencies of heaven are cooperating with human agencies to lead into safe paths all who love truth and righteousness. The angels of God will make effectual the work of men."

Again in *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, July 4, 1899 we discover, "Divine help is provided for men and women. They have the opportunity of cooperating with the heavenly intelligences of being laborers together with God."

Hallelujah! Just think how singly blessed of heaven we are, that the Godhead would choose us, puny human beings to make effective the work of salvation. As the songwriter says, "We're blessed, we're blessed, we're blessed! We don't deserve it, but yet we are blessed."

This knowledge should illuminate our countenances, energize our steps and propel us to be intentional and definitive in our witness. Yes, we are fortunate to be co-laborers with Christ.

3. Thirdly, I charge you to: Seek for the Holy Spirit to fit you for the Master's use.

As mentioned earlier, we are not privy to the cause of disagreement between Euodia and Syntyche. But we do know that Paul's counsel to them was for them to be reconciled for the Lord's sake.

One humorist pens: "To dwell above with the saints we love, that would be glory; but to live below with the saints we know, well, that's a different story."

The Apostle Paul counsels in Romans 12:18: "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men [people]."

I would like to acknowledge that sometimes it is very, very difficult to live with the saints and sinners. However, the Word of God stands firm.

Genesis 18:4 "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Then there is Philippians 4:13, "I can

do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

Praise to Jesus! He has left us the Comforter, One like Himself who not only equips us for heaven but also fits us for the work of being messengers of truth to others.

Note carefully the experience of the early church in Acts 2:1 - 4.

- Differences were put aside
- There was unity
- The believers humbled themselves
- For ten days they petitioned God for the outpouring of His Spirit
- They exercised strong faith

We know the results. “More were converted by one sermon the Day of Pentecost than during all the years of Christ’s ministry.” (Ellen White, Manuscript 85, 1903)

I ask you, “Is not His grace as mighty now.”

Let us shake off spiritual lethargy

Let us repudiate indifference

Let us eradicate indolence

Let us instead seek the Spirit

Let us believe the Spirit

Let us be desperate for the Spirit

For it is only as we have the spirit can we accomplish the task and be effective witnesses of truth.

You might not be Euodia or Syntyche, but your life can be fragrant with God’s love and your life can reveal the gratitude of being avored of heaven. Yes, you can be fitted for holy use by the indwelling of the Spirit of God.

When I remember how Jesus left the splendor of heaven, the adoration of the heavenly hosts, and the Holy presence of His Father; when I remember the anguish of Gethsemane; the agony of Pilate’s judgment hall, the treachery of the priests and cruelty of the Romans; when I remember His excruciating suffering to ransom me from death and eternal destruction, my only rational response is:

“Jesus, take my life and let it be fully consecrated to Thee. Make me, by your Spirit, a fit, grateful, fragrant servant of Yours.”

How about you? (Pause) If this is your desire, please stand.

(Have soloist sing: “With All My Heart I Want To Serve You Lord” or “Take My Life and Let it Be.” (Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal #330)

The ushers will give you a pledge card to “make a memory” of this commitment.

Prayer of consecration

Hymn of Affirmation, Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal #371

SERMON OUTLINE

“Fragrant, Fortunate, and Fit for the Master’s Use”

I. INTRODUCTION

A. What is Truth? (*congregation to pair and share, accept two responses*)

1. Pilate’s question to Jesus
2. Truth is a person
3. That person is Jesus

B. How can one Effectively Communicate Truth?
(*congregation to pair and share, accept two responses*)

1. Ephesians 4:25 – 32

(Prayer)

II. JESUS’ DECLARATION OF JOHN 14:6

A. Illustration on Errors/Falsehoods Prevalent in Today’s Society

1. Jesus the epitome of truth (Hebrews 13:8; Malachi 3:6; James 1:17)
2. Reference to Bible characters that authenticate the veracity of Jesus’ claim to truth (Abraham, Moses, David, Rahab)
3. Appeal to all to accept and experience truth—(Jesus)

III. COMMUNICATING TRUTH EFFECTIVELY

A. Philippians 4:2

1. Role of Euodia and Syntyche in Philippian Church (compare Acts 16:13 - 15 and Acts 17:12)
2. Meaning of Euodia - “fragrant”
3. Meaning of Syntyche - “fortunate”

B. Contrast the meaning of their names with the conflict created in the church

C. Paul’s request to reconcile in the Lord

D. Illustration of modern-day Christian reconciliation and its positive effects

IV. APPLICATION OF LESSONS OF PHILIPPIANS 4:2, 3

- A. Romans 15:4
- B. Threefold charge
 - 1. Make your life fragrant with truth as it is found in Jesus
 - A. Psalm 119:130; 9
 - B. John 17:17
 - 2. Recognize how fortunate you are to be a co-laborer with Christ
 - A. Hebrews 1:14 (collaborative work between angels and people – *Adventist and Sabbath Herald*, July 14, 1899, *Manuscript 29*)
 - 3. Seek for the Holy Spirit to fit you for the Masters' Use
 - A. Romans 12:18
 - B. Genesis 18:4
 - C. Philippians 4:13
 - D. Acts 2:1 - 4

V. CONCLUSION

Condescension of the Incarnation; suffering of the crucifixion should propel to total consecration and service.