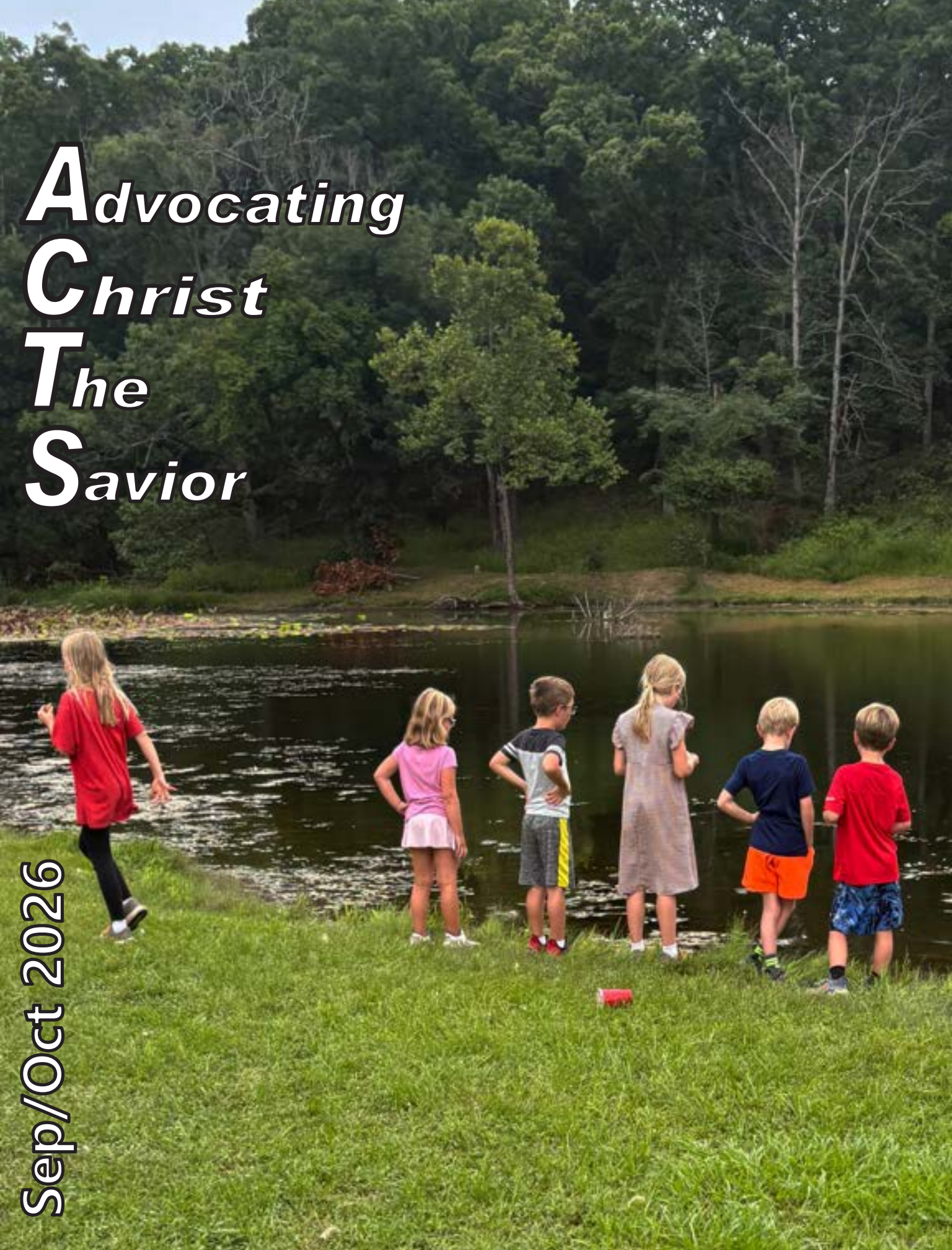




Advocating Christ The Savior

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Since the Church of God, (Seventh Day) is in a state of constant growth and we all have different backgrounds, it is possible that your views may differ somewhat from those of the authors. We pray these articles may be used as a point of entry for your own study.
"Test all things; hold fast what is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

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"Advocating Christ the Savior"

President's Letter

September 2026

Greetings brothers and sisters in Christ!

Because of an event that happened at a specific place and on a specific date in history over 2,000 years ago, we are among “those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints.” The Apostle Paul reminds us of this in 1 Corinthians 1:2. And so, we give thanks to God for “the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children’s children, to such as keep His covenant, and to those who remember His commandments to do them” (Psalm 103:17-18).

It is a privilege and honor to write to you as President of the General Council. I was elected to this position during the annual meeting of the General Council in July. I am a member of the Marceline Church of God Seventh Day in Marceline, Missouri, USA, where I serve as pastor. My wife, Joyce, and I have been married 45 years and have been blessed with six children and, as of August 5, with 9 grandchildren. We are grateful for each member of our family. They are all a blessing from God.

I want to acknowledge and extend a huge thank you to Earl Rice for his fine leadership of the General Council for the past six years. His presidency was term-limited under the Council bylaws because he has served two consecutive three-year terms. Under his leadership several important issues were addressed, and many positive improvements were made to the General Council facilities. Many of those improvements were completed thanks to the hours and hours of work personally invested by Earl. Please join me in extending thanks to Earl for his leadership and service. It is greatly appreciated! We are privileged to have Earl continuing to serve on the Board of Directors as Vice President. In that role, he will continue to provide valuable leadership to the General Council Board of Directors.

As we begin a new year, it is good for us to review the goals and purpose of the General Council organization. We are organized to unite the independent congregations and members of our faith throughout the world. Our stated goal is to encourage the spread of the gospel and to promote the general welfare of the church.

Individual churches within the General Council operate under a local autonomy government. Local autonomy is where each congregation governs itself without outside control, selecting its own leaders and managing its affairs under the granted authority of our Savior, Jesus, who is head of the universal church. Prayerfully, each local church body and its leadership submit to His leading through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, I would describe the General Council as a group of affiliated churches and individuals that rely on each other for support and strength. Each member and congregation within the organization supports the other members and congregations. We receive strength from these combined efforts as we share our God-given talents and resources. Together, we work to glorify God, support individual churches and spread the Gospel message to the world.

My challenge to each of us this year is to ask ourselves, "How can we support the work of the General Council." We can be praying for the LORD’s guidance for the members of the various boards that make decisions for the General Council. We can be praying for the Publishing House team members that work every day to carry out those decisions. We can volunteer to use our God-given talents to serve and assist. We can provide financial assistance to support the work of the Publishing House. Please prayerfully ask how you or your congregation can be a part of this work. May God bless each of us in His service.

Steve Boone, President
General Council Churches of God, (Seventh Day)

RiseUp:

The Call to Stand Firm Before God

by Paulo Kaniak

There are moments in life when God calls us to do more than simply believe. He calls us to rise.

In the Gospel of Luke, we encounter a powerful moment in which Jesus said to a man with a withered hand, *“Arise and stand here”* (Luke 6:8). The man stood in the midst of the people, and Jesus restored the withered hand. The immediate context is a remarkable act of healing. Yet the scene also presents us with a timeless spiritual picture: there are moments when God calls us to leave a place of discouragement, fear, passivity, or spiritual weariness and stand in His presence.

We are living in decisive times. The world around us is changing rapidly and the pressures upon God's people are increasing. More than ever, the Church needs believers who are awake, steadfast, obedient, and willing to stand firm before the Lord. But what does it really mean to stand before God?

Standing before God is not primarily about physical posture. It is a position of the heart. It means living in fellowship with Him, walking in the light, and allowing the cleansing power of Christ to continually shape our lives. As John reminds us, *“If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another”* (1 John 1:7).

It means remaining connected to Christ. Jesus said, *“Abide in Me, and I in you”* (John 15:4). A branch does not produce fruit by its own strength. It bears fruit by remaining connected to the vine.

And it means remaining spiritually awake. Paul wrote, *“Let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober”* (1 Thessalonians 5:6). To stand before God is to remain available to Him, to listen when He speaks, obey when He calls, endure when the road becomes difficult, and trust Him when we cannot see what lies ahead.

WHY MUST WE STAND FIRM?

Scripture repeatedly calls God's people to stand. Paul told the believers at Ephesus to put on the whole armor of God so that they would be able to *“stand against the wiles of the devil”* (Ephesians 6:11). A few verses later, he repeats the command: *“having done all, to stand”* (Ephesians 6:13). Standing firm is therefore not passive. It is an act of faith.

**Standing firm
is therefore
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Because We Are Chosen Vessels

After Saul encountered Christ on the road to Damascus, the Lord instructed Ananias, *“Arise and go”* (Acts 9:11). Saul had been brought low—physically and spiritually. Yet God was not finished with him.

The Lord told Ananias, *“He is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel”* (Acts 9:15). Saul would rise again, not simply to return to his former life, but to enter a new calling.

This is an important reminder for us: our past does not have the final word over our future when our lives are surrendered to God. The Lord can take someone who has fallen, restore him, and give him a purpose greater than he could have imagined.

Because We Are Soldiers of Christ

The Christian life is not a life without conflict. Paul instructed Timothy to *“Endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ”* (2 Timothy 2:3). A soldier must be awake, prepared, disciplined, and ready to obey.

Likewise, believers are called to remain spiritually alert. We do not stand in our own strength. We stand in the strength that God provides through His Word, His Spirit, and His grace. When difficult days come, the question is not whether the battle exists. The question is whether we will still be standing when it comes.

FIVE CALLS TO RISE UP

Perhaps today you feel weary. Perhaps disappointment has left you discouraged. Perhaps you have been spiritually asleep, uncertain about the future, or simply exhausted by the journey. Throughout Scripture, we hear the same gracious call: Rise up. Not because you are strong enough on your own, but because God is still at work.

1. Rise Up to Eat and Be Strengthened

Elijah reached a point of profound exhaustion. After an extraordinary spiritual victory, he became discouraged and fled into the wilderness. He lay down beneath a broom tree and slept. Then an angel touched him and said, “*Arise and eat*” (1 Kings 19:5). Later, the angel came again and told him, “*Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you*” (1 Kings 19:7). Notice the tenderness of God. Before giving Elijah another assignment, God gave him what he needed for the journey.

There are seasons when the most spiritual thing we can do is receive strength from the Lord. We cannot walk faithfully on empty hearts and exhausted souls. God's Word is nourishment for the journey. Jesus said, “*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God*” (Matthew 4:4).

If you are weary, do not give up. Rise up. Eat. Receive strength. The journey may be long, but God's provision is greater than your weakness.

2. Rise Up to Call upon God

During a violent storm at sea, Jonah was asleep below deck while everyone else was terrified. The ship's captain found him and said, “*What do you mean, sleeper? Arise, call on your God*” (Jonah 1:6). Jonah had been running from God's presence, but even in the middle of his disobedience, he was being called to wake up and respond.

Prayer is one of the ways God awakens the human heart. Sometimes we sleep spiritually while storms rage around us. We worry, struggle, and try to solve everything ourselves. But God calls us to wake up and call upon Him. Rise up and pray.

Prayer does not mean that every circumstance will immediately change. It means that, in the midst of our circumstances, we turn again toward the One who holds our lives in His hands.

3. Rise Up and Step into Faith

The man with the withered hand stood in the midst of the synagogue because Jesus told him to do so. He could have remained in the shadows. He could have been embarrassed by his condition. He could have allowed the opinions of others to keep him where he was. But Jesus called him forward.

Then He said, “*Stretch out your hand*” (Luke 6:10). The man's obedience became the place where he experienced restoration. The lesson is not that every physical difficulty will disappear simply because we stand up. Rather, it is that faith responds when Jesus calls.

Sometimes the first step of faith is simply getting up. Getting up from fear. Getting up from discouragement. Getting up from shame. Getting up from spiritual passivity. And standing where Christ tells us to stand.

4. Rise Up to Hear the Voice of God

The prophet Ezekiel experienced a similar call. The Lord said to him, “*Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak to you*” (Ezekiel 2:1). Ezekiel stood, and the Spirit entered him and set him upon his feet (Ezekiel 2:2). There is something beautiful in this sequence: God calls, Ezekiel responds, and God empowers him.

God does not call us to stand because we are already strong enough. He calls us to stand so that we may depend upon the strength He supplies.

When we position our hearts before Him, we become ready to hear. The world is filled with voices. Opinions surround us. Fear speaks. Culture speaks. Anxiety speaks. But the people of God must learn to recognize the voice of their Shepherd.

Jesus said, *“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me”* (John 10:27). Rise up. Be still. Listen. And obey.

5. Rise Up and Go to the Potter's House

God told Jeremiah, *“Arise and go down to the potter's house”* (Jeremiah 18:2). There Jeremiah watched the potter working at the wheel. The vessel he was making became marred, but the potter did not simply throw the clay away. He worked it again and made it into another vessel, as it seemed good to him.

What a picture of God's grace. Sometimes we feel that because something in our lives has been broken, our usefulness is over. But the Potter is still working. Our failures do not frighten Him. Our weaknesses do not surprise Him. Our broken places do not place us beyond His reach. The clay must remain in the Potter's hands.

That is why sometimes God's call to “rise up” is also a call to go where He wants to shape us. We may want immediate restoration, but God is often more interested in transformation. He does not merely want to repair our lives. He wants to shape us according to His purpose.

THE CALL IS STILL GOING OUT

Throughout Scripture, God's call is remarkably consistent:

- * Arise.
- * Arise and eat.
- * Arise and pray.
- * Arise and obey.
- * Arise and listen.
- * Arise and allow God to shape you.

The call to rise is not a call to self-reliance. It is a call to dependence upon God. We stand because He strengthens us. We endure because He sustains us. We obey because He leads us. We remain faithful because His grace is sufficient.

And when we have done all that He has called us to do, Scripture still says: “...having done all, to stand” (Ephesians 6:13). There will be moments when standing feels difficult. There will be seasons when the answer does not come quickly. There will be battles we never expected and valleys we never intended to walk through. But God's command remains: Stand firm.

Not because the world is stable. Not because circumstances are easy. Not because we understand everything. But because God is faithful.

Rise up today. The Lord still wants to speak to you, strengthen you, shape you, and use your life for His glory.

Amen.

Paulo Kaniak is a Deacon at the Church of God (Seventh Day) in São José do Rio Preto, São Paulo, Brazil.



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Children's Corner



by Lois Smith

Lucy Ball lived with her mother and father in a large, beautiful home. She had pretty clothes, plenty of good food, and many nice playthings; but she was not happy. More than anything else, she wished for a playmate.

"What good are all my pretty dresses and nice toys if I have no one with whom I can share them?" she complained. "Half the fun of playing is the sharing."

One rainy morning when she was more lonely than ever, something began to happen at the big house next door. A large, red moving van pulled up in front of the house. Three men jumped out of the truck and began to carry chairs, tables and barrels into the house.

"Oh, Mother, someone is moving into the house next door!" she shouted excitedly. "I hope there is a girl about my age. Do you think there is, Mother?"

"I do not know, dear," answered Mother. "We'll have to wait and find out."

Lucy did not have long to wait. Soon a car stopped in the driveway. A man and woman jumped out. Then one, two, three, four, and even five children tumbled out. They seemed to be all ages. Some were girls; some were boys.

"Mother, there are lots of them," said Lucy, dancing around. "May I go over to visit them?"

"Not yet," answered Mother. "Wait awhile, and I'll go with you to welcome them to our neighborhood. Come help me, and we'll make a batch of cookies to take over."

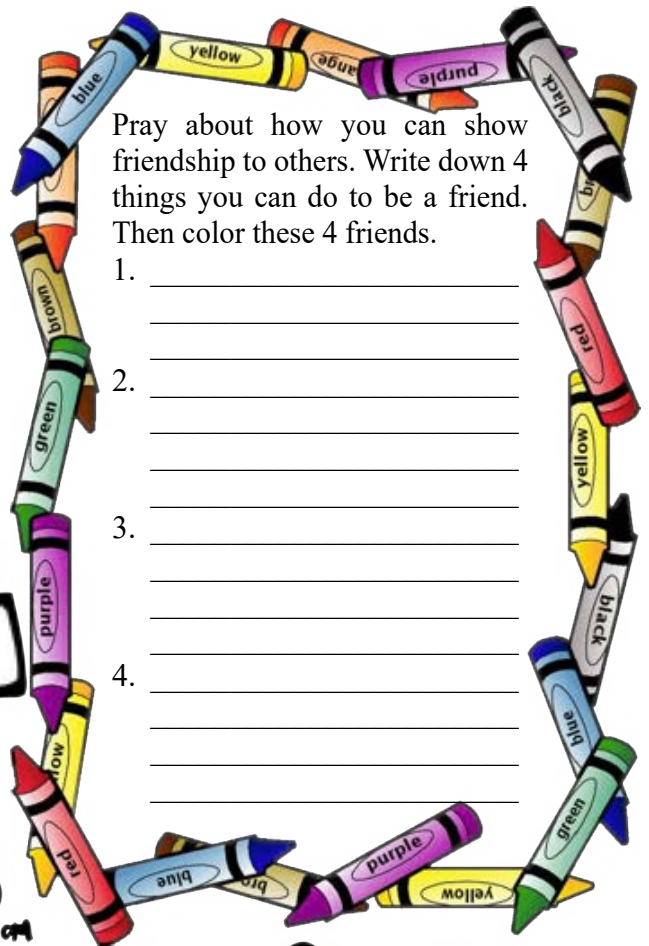
Mother and Lucy found the new neighbors to be a happy, friendly family. The twins, Fred and Ed,

were ten years old; Mary was eight, one month younger than Lucy; Robert was six, and little Helen was three.

Lucy and Mary soon became good friends and spent many happy hours playing together. Mary enjoyed playing with Lucy's dolls, and Lucy loved to swing in the big swing Mary's father had put up under the tall oak tree. Both girls had many happy hours playing with baby Helen.

On her first visit to the new neighbors, Lucy's mother had invited them to go to church with her the next Sabbath. They went gladly. From that time on the entire family was in church every Sabbath. Since Lucy and Mary were in the same Sabbath School class, they became even better friends. It seemed to Lucy that she had suddenly found a sister. When she said her evening prayers she never forgot to thank God for granting her dearest wish.

♥ Life is Better with Friends! ☆



Pray about how you can show friendship to others. Write down 4 things you can do to be a friend. Then color these 4 friends.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

**Two are better
than one,
because they
have a good
reward for
their labor.**

**For if they fall,
one will lift up
his companion.**

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10



fellow man of our presence. Jesus gives more meaning to the command when he says that whosoever says to his brother, “*You fool! shall be in danger of hell fire*” (Matthew 5:22). This commandment then prohibits slander and gossip, where we wish death on someone else by our words or thoughts.

Lesson Questions:

1. Genesis 1:27 says that mankind was made in the image of God. In what sense are we made in the image of God?
2. Who was the first murderer? John 8:44; 1 John 3:8
3. Envy is defined by Webster as discontent at another's possessing what one would like for himself. What was God's view of Cain's attitude? Genesis 4:6-7; 1 John 3:12. Cain's sin of envy led to what two other sins? Genesis 4:8-9
4. What is the source of murder? Matthew 15:19; Galatians 5:19-21
5. Does this commandment negate the death penalty? Genesis 9:6; Romans 13:4; but see Ezekiel 33:11
6. Life is God's most precious gift to man. Who, only, has the right to take it? Deuteronomy 32:39; Psalm 68:20
7. Many people who would not think of harming another believe suicide is justifiable. Why is taking one's own life a sin? Genesis 1:27; Ezekiel 18:4
8. Do we break the sixth commandment when we choose not to use medical intervention to prolong the life of a loved one who does not have a great chance of survival? Genesis 3:19; Ecclesiastes 3:1-2; Psalm 103:14-16; Hebrews 9:27
9. Discuss the broader application Jesus gives to the commandment in Matthew 5:21-22.
10. How does John describe a person who hates his brother? 1 John 3:15; 4:20

Lesson 5: The Fourth Commandment

“Remember the Sabbath day; to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.” Exodus 20:8-11

Scripture Reading: Exodus 16:4-30

Memory Verse: *So the people rested on the seventh day.* Exodus 16:30

Introduction:

In Romans 3:19-20, the Apostle Paul explains that by the law of God all the world becomes guilty and by the law is the knowledge of sin. The law is a mirror to shine light on the sins of the world. By the deeds of the law nobody will be justified or be accepted by God. In Romans 3:21-22, we find that righteousness comes by faith in Jesus Christ unto all that believe. With this faith comes a freedom, not to do what we want, but to do what the law requires (Romans 8:2-4). We are to bow before our God and humbly ask Him to teach us from the Scriptures how to be obedient.

And so, as the redeemed of the LORD, we come to the fourth commandment where God tells us to remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. The LORD is concerned about the sanctity of the seventh day. This is one of the Ten Commandments; it cannot be excluded. It is to be obeyed from the heart.

A person's outlook on Sabbath observance tells much. Is the Sabbath day an observance of custom or is it an internal conviction? If the view of the Sabbath is based on an internal conviction, then that guides our perspective. Some people might say about Sabbath observance, “Who do they think they are! It is my time, and I will use the day how I please!” They say that the modern world is too complex to set aside a whole day for rest and worship.

Others recognize that every breath they breathe is a gift from God. Their perspective is that the God who created time has said that our use of time will bear testimony that we are His covenant children. Therefore, from that heart conviction, they bow down and follow the command to sanctify the Sabbath day. They take care to make the Sabbath different because God distinguished the seventh day from the rest.

In this lesson, we will look at the principles of the Sabbath day. The next lesson will look at the details of Sabbath day observance.

Lesson Questions:

1. Did God create time? Did God create the seven-day week? Genesis 1:5, 14-15; 2:2-3. How does this knowledge about God affect our observance of the Sabbath?

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2. In the fourth commandment, God also said “Six days you shall labor and do all your work.” Genesis 1:26-28; Exodus 20:9. Do I have a biblical attitude towards work? 2 Thessalonians 3:10-11

3. What is to be our attitude towards the Sabbath day? Isaiah 58:13-14; Psalm 92:1-5

4. From creation, we know that Saturday was the seventh day of the week. What was one way God helped the Israelites remember the seventh day Sabbath while in the wilderness? Exodus 16:4-5, 21-30. How do these verses in the New Testament affirm a seventh-day Sabbath? Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1-2; Luke 24:1

5. Why did God command us to remember the Sabbath day? Exodus 20:11; 23:12; 35:1-2; Deuteronomy 5:13-15

6. Review the context of Hebrews 3 and 4. How does it affirm the need for a Sabbath day to Christians? Hebrews 3:11, 18; 4:1, 3, 5, 9

7. How does Jesus saying He was “*Lord of the Sabbath*” and that “*the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath*” affirm a Sabbath observance to us? Mark 2:27-28; Matthew 11:25-30; Hebrews 4:9

8. Discuss the different reasons God said to keep the Sabbath in Exodus 20:8-11 and Deuteronomy 5:12-15. How do these reasons affirm that we should keep the Sabbath?

Lesson 8: The Sixth Commandment

“You shall not murder.” Exodus 20:13

Scripture Reading: Genesis 4:3-15

Memory Verse: “*You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire.*” Matthew 5:21-22

Introduction:

Man was created in the image of God. We honor God by protecting His image. And so, the commandment, “*You shall not murder*” challenges us to value our fellow man and to preserve life.

God is our creator. Psalm 139 speaks of mankind as being “*fearfully and wonderfully made*” (Psalm 139:14). It also speaks of God knowing the length of our days on earth before we were even born (Psalm 139:16) and knowing “*my sitting down and my rising up*” (Psalm 139:2). Even the very hairs on our head are numbered (Matthew 10:30); all 8 billion of us. How great is our God! That God knows each of us this well expresses His love for us. He cares for each person and desires the best for us. The life of each person is a precious gift. Each day of our life is to be appreciated as a gift from the Heavenly Father.

God also made a distinction between man and animals. The creation account in Genesis 1 makes this distinction. From the beginning, man was to have dominion over the animals. The Bible describes this by saying that men have one kind of flesh and animals have another (1 Corinthians 15:39). Man was created by God, and also man was created “*for Him*” (Colossians 1:16). Only man, not animals, has this higher purpose.

The Bible is very clear that God spoke, and the world came into being. Man did not evolve through time and chance. Understanding and believing this provides the foundation for the commandment, “*You shall not murder*” (Exodus 20:13). Since the sin of Adam, man is controlled by his sinful nature and does not like to recognize the God that created the universe. The view of the world that all life has evolved and that discounts the truth of the first 11 chapters of Genesis, diminishes the value of life. It leads to drive-by shootings, abortion, and even suicide.

The words, “*You shall not murder*.” (Exodus 20:13) are speaking of intent. The laws of Moses describe what it means to “murder.” This command protects the weak from the strong. It protects the unborn in the womb. By this command, suicide is prohibited, we do not have the right to rob our

How do we teach children to honor their parents? The Hebrew Shema in Deuteronomy 6:4-9 comes to mind. We teach children to be respectful by showing them courtesy and respect. We teach honor by showing genuine love. We teach honor by demonstrating honor and care of our own parents.

Lesson Questions:

1. What was Jesus' example of showing honor to parents? Luke 2:51
2. What was the penalty for disrespect to parents in the law of Moses? Leviticus 20:9. Why should disrespect to parents be considered a sin?
3. What does Solomon say about honoring father and mother? Proverbs 6:20, 22; 13:1; 15:5
4. How had the Pharisees elevated their traditions above the commandments in Matthew 15:1-9? What was Jesus' view of the commandment here? Note: It was a tradition of the Jews that a son or daughter might pay a sum of money known as "corban." They were then freed from any further obligation to help their parents.
5. Discuss why it is inconsistent to say we are Christian when our life reflects that we are not devoted to honoring our parents?
6. What does Paul say about obedience to parents? Ephesians 6:1-3 What about those children whose parents are not Christian? Are children to obey those parents and in what circumstances?
7. What is the parents' duty to their children? Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:11. How can parents cultivate genuine love in their relationship with their children?

* H3513 - kôḅad - Strong's Hebrew Lexicon (kiv), ð Blue Letter Bible. Web. 20 Jun. 2023. <<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/H3513/kiv/wlc/0-1/>>.

** G5091 - timá - Strong's Greek Lexicon (kiv), ð Blue Letter Bible. Web. 20 Jun. 2023. <<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/G5091/kiv/tr/0-1/>>.

Lesson 6: The Fourth Commandment (Continued)

"For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." Matthew 12:8

Scripture Reading: Matthew 12:1-13

Memory Verse: *"Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."* Matthew 12:12

Introduction:

Have you ever had a discussion about what are appropriate activities for the Sabbath day? Can you think of past arguments by sincere believers about whether this or that activity should be done on the Sabbath? As we read the Ten Commandments and seek to follow them, the Sabbath commandment is one of the more controversial commandments about what actions are appropriate for believers.

As we ask ourselves questions about Sabbath observance, the key is the internal heart conviction of the individual. Are we convinced in our hearts about the distinction and sanctity of the Sabbath? If so, our conversation, our use of time, and our focus on the Sabbath day will all bear testimony that we are His covenant children. Proper observance of the Sabbath comes from a strong belief that God set apart this day for our good and for His glory. It then becomes a privilege to make the day different.

The rest God has ordained is a rest from labor and to Him. Study of Scripture, acts of mercy, fellowship, acts of kindness, charity, and worship are all ways to spend our Sabbath day. God has provided this day for us to devote to Him.

At the same time, let's guard against an attitude where Sabbath observance becomes a custom or tradition. It must not be legalistic, nor should we provide pat answers to every question of behavior down to the smallest detail of right and wrong. This is especially important as we teach our children about Sabbath.

Why do we have the Sabbath? The Sabbath is not intended to be a burdensome or restrictive commandment. Isaiah said that the Sabbath was to be a delight. Jesus said, *"The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath"* (Mark 2:27). The Sabbath was made to supply something that we as human beings need. It is to help us, not to hinder us. We think that we have too much to do to take time to rest, but really, we need what the Sabbath provides and will not do our work effectively without it.

The word, "Remember" refers to the past, all the way back to creation. The command to observe the Sabbath day was from creation, as we see by the words in Exodus 20:11, *"For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth...and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."* The Sabbath existed from the first week of this world. It will continue to exist until the end of the age as a weekly celebration of God being our God.

Lesson Questions:

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1. What was the issue with the merchants in Amos' day and their observance of the Sabbath? Amos 8:4-6
2. In Isaiah 58:13-14, find the phrases describing actions that show how we can make the Sabbath day holy. Will those actions then lead to the delight in the Sabbath day that Isaiah describes? Why or why not?
3. What types of activities did Jesus describe as being lawful on the Sabbath day in Matthew 12:1-13? Hosea 6:6; Micah 6:6-8
4. Why did Jesus heal on the Sabbath day? John 9:1-7
5. In Matthew 12 and elsewhere, we find Jesus condemning the Pharisees' observance of the Sabbath. How can we obey the Lord's command to observe the Sabbath without falling into this trap of legalism and self-righteousness? Zechariah 7:5-10
6. Who is Lord of all? Ephesians 1:20-21; Philippians 2:9-11; 1 Peter 3:22. What is His relation to the Sabbath? Matthew 12:8; Mark 2:27
7. How does Matthew 24:20 show that Jesus was expecting His disciples to keep the Sabbath after His ascension?
8. Some say that because the law of Moses has specific laws dealing with the Sabbath that this one commandment does not fit in with the other nine. For example, see not lighting a fire on the Sabbath in Exodus 35:3. How would you answer that statement?

Lesson 7: The Fifth Commandment

"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you." Exodus 20:12
Scripture Reading: Mark 7:1-12

Memory Verse: *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."* Ephesians 6:1-3

Introduction:

The fifth commandment directs us to honor our parents. It is most certainly deserving of this place in the commandments. God knew that the welfare of mankind depended, among other things, upon order, respect for authority, respect for equals, and respect for those under our authority. The father is to be the head of the household and the wife is to submit to his leading. In order to learn reverence to God, children must first learn reverence for their parents. The intent of the commandment is to teach respect for authority beginning with respect for parents. This is in opposition to the view of many.

The rebellion of children against parents is very prevalent in our modern world. Those restless, uncontrollable youth protest authorities of all kinds and their rebellion takes many forms. They indulge themselves in the things that even society once considered off-limits. They delight in disrespect for the law and for our great heritage of justice. They show a lack of honor to parents and a lack of respect for all that is good and wholesome. At the heart is a reaction against the authority of God and His authority over our lives.

The commandment says to honor our parents *"that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you."* Ephesians 6:3 says to honor your parents *"that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."* This certainly had application to the Israelite people, but it goes beyond that to all mankind. Yes, this is not to be considered a motive for keeping the command. In other words, we don't honor our parents so that we will live long. There are many parent-honoring children who die young and others that have not honored their parents who live a long life. Regard this statement in a general way, applying to our society, rather than individually.

The word "honor" in Hebrew is from the word, "kabad*." It is a verb with the definition of, "to be heavy." In other words, to regard as worthy of a weight of respect. The Greek word for "Honor" is "timao**" which means to fix a right evaluation of their worth.

Daughters of the King

To all my church Sisters, Hello!

Blessings to you from Missouri, USA! I am Joyce Boone and, while I wait for the pizza crust I've made to rise, I will tell you a bit about me and then talk about an idea that the board of the Daughters of the King talked about and are eager to begin. This idea involves you (we hope). I will explain it later in this letter!

I write this to introduce/reintroduce myself. I am greatly blessed to be a member of the Marceline Church of God Seventh Day, mother to six children and a grandmother of nine (as of August 5, when our youngest grandson was born!).



*The Steve Boone family November 2025
(minus two; our son Kevin and newest grandson Samuel)*

I struggled some when, as a young mother, I felt the pressure to care for our growing family. Then, as the kids were older, it was my work away from home that I struggled to balance with home duties. I worked 21 years for two school districts before retiring, moving to a new level of being busy with church, home and community activities. Too soon our kids moved on to their own families. Now my husband and I live on a small rural farm home where we love to be. Steve and I just passed our 45th anniversary of marriage this month, a milestone I appreciate as a gift from God.

I grew up in the Seventh Day Church at Cedar Rapids and was baptized in my early teens. Sometimes I felt my home church was isolated, like we were standing alone, except when we went to Campmeetings each summer. Now I know we were not really alone. I see the Church of God Seventh Day is made up of more people than in my small home church. Scripture too tells me, "...the body [of Christ] is one and has many members... for in fact the body is not one member but many" (1 Corinthians 12:12, 14) and that we are "...fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19).

My church, the Church of God Seventh Day, has been in Marceline since the 1970's. It was started by two families who dedicated themselves to building the current church we have. Our women's group has nine women, and several young women who join us in events. Our group meets as often as we can to share our lives, the Word and to plan events for our church body. We have a potluck meal at the church each week and prepare a meal every quarter for our town's Celebrate Recovery group. Our group this year, also planned and coordinated a church-wide month of prayer and fasting prior to the Lord's Supper. Last of all, I was also added to the Daughters of the King board as vice-president at this year's Meridian Campmeeting! Which leads to The Idea...

Most Church of God Seventh Day churches are small groups and on their own. We don't want any sister to experience the feeling of being alone, without connection to others. The Daughters of the King are calling for letters like mine to become a feature of every issue; a woman introducing herself, sharing about her church and life. Or, maybe a church group of sisters who share their activities and goals. There is not a limit on the times anyone can contribute a letter either.

The other members of the Daughters of the King board will be introducing themselves in upcoming issues but we need more articles and letters coming from you to the ACTS publishing house. We are not alone! The only question: What will you write about yourself, your life, or your group at your home church?

Looking forward to "meeting" you in the ACTS! In Christian love,

Joyce

Midwest Family Camp 2026

Midwest Family Camp this year was held from July 27 through August 1, 2026. It is a family camp because the entire church family participates. During each day, the schedule includes children's activities (choir, recreation and classes); morning worship and classes for adult, youth and young adult age groups; a choir for youth and adults; an evening worship service; and recreation. I appreciated the theme this year, which was "Finding Strength in Struggle," based on James 1:2-4. We enjoyed good messages on this theme throughout the week from the following speakers: Don Gibson, Jonathan Carson, Clement Nwadozi, James Hassen, Dylan Gates, Andy Hassen, Dalton Sylva, and Ora Miller. The evening worship service was a highlight for me. Connie Hicks and team led the children's classes. Erica Gates and Brittany Day led the children's choir. Craig Moore led the adult and youth choir. Tom Kendrick led Morning Worship for adults and young adults. David Moore, Norman Boone, Randy Day, and Sean Moore led classes each day on the Armor of God based on Ephesians 6. The Camp board this year added some extra time for prayer and worship in the schedule, which was well received. A highlight for many this year was the Unpong tournament on Thursday afternoon. However, the children might say a highlight was the time spent swimming and boating on the lake or possibly the many games of Gaga Ball played during the week. A big thank you goes to the many unnamed volunteers who worked to make Camp a success. It was certainly a team effort, with Christ as our head!





Who Am I, That I Should Go?

by Glen Palmer

All Scripture in this article is taken for the KJV.)

As we look upon the harvest fields of the earth today; our hearts are made to yearn and cry out to God for the salvation of the multitudes of souls that travel the face of the earth every day without the peace and assurance that we have in our hearts; yet our efforts so often appear to bear so little fruit. Why is it, in the day when knowledge is at its greatest height, the harvest of souls and obedience to the will of God is at one of its lowest ebbs? Is it because all the grain of the earth is already harvested and only the tares remain, or is it the failings of the saints of God, that have brought about this decrease in yield? Think it over before you read on and let God speak to your heart.

It makes no difference what era of history you wish to review in the Bible, you will discover it was usually the lack of spiritual leadership by men of God caused the nations to decline into the depths of sin.

As you hear the Word of the Lord penned by the prophet Isaiah *"Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"*, I urge you to prepare to answer that call with a *"Here am I! Send me"* (Isaiah 6:8). May I first warn that if you wish your efforts to be fruitful you must realize that it will take much more than just your zeal and determination to produce your desired results. It may cost you the greater part of yourself.

May I take you to an outstanding example from the Word of God.

As we view the baby Moses being drawn from the water and taken by the daughter of Pharaoh, we can begin to see the hand of God extending toward the heavy burdened Israelites to deliver them. As the years go by and Moses becomes a man we begin to realize how the very best that Egypt could offer in the fields of education, leadership, and social poise, were given unto him to prepare him for a position in the government of the nation of Egypt. This great man had FORTY years of the benefits of Egypt, during which time, the writer of the book of Hebrews tells us, he *"Esteem[ed] the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt"* (Hebrews 11:26) and was forced to flee from Pharaoh for his life.

Upon first seeing Moses flee, one would think that God's plan to deliver the children of Israel had failed. Had Moses dealt a fatal blow to the plan of God?

The next forty years we find this "Prince of Egypt" roaming the deserts tending sheep in solitude. No doubt those forty years were crowded with thoughts of his father, mother, brother, sister and all his brethren left in slavery, while he, a prince of Egypt, was exiled in a desert.

What Egypt could not teach Moses, the solitude of the desert and communion with God could; and God's plan continued on.

***'Here am I!
Send me.'
(Isaiah 6:8)***

It was the great day, when Moses *"turned aside"* (Exodus 3:4) to see the bush that burned, but was not consumed--that God spoke to Moses and told him he was to go unto Pharaoh and then lead the children of Israel out of Egypt to the promised land. It was in response to this that Moses stated

"Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" (Exodus 3:11).

"Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Numbers 12:3).

The desert had removed from this "Prince of Egypt" the royalty of Egypt, the confidence, and had utterly taken from him any hope of deliverance for his brethren. He was now in a position to be used by God in the greatest of all plans designed by the creator of man himself.

Those forty years and the meeting of God face to face had (As Isaiah declared, *"Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts"* Isaiah 6:5) made him feel utterly worthless and unusable in God's service. It was in this state of unworthiness that God took the coal from the altar and touched him! It was also in this same state that God commanded Moses to go and lead his people out of Egypt. As a sign, God declared that Moses would again worship Him in that same mountain after He had delivered the children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt. Moses answered the command and God kept His promise.

Have you been trying, as Moses did for the first forty years of his life, to bring about the will of God and the salvation of souls by your own devised plans and in your own strength? Has your failure to

accomplish your estimated obligations to God been driving you to a desert far from the real needs of those bound by the slavery of Egypt?

May I suggest a careful searching of your heart and desires, but even more, a searching for the face of God that you might receive from Him the way of life and the strength to continue therein.

Remember, it took Moses EIGHTY years of his life to become useable to God with only forty years of service to him in return. How long will it take you?

"Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields: for they are white already to harvest" (John 4:35).

"The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, and he will send forth labourers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:37, 38).

Reprinted from the February 1968 and April 1975
ACTS

Ripple Effect

by Earl Rice

Every day we make decisions that affect our lives. Throughout our lifetime, many of those decisions have shaped the course our lives have taken. One of the biggest decisions we make every day is how we choose to act.

There is a saying, "Actions speak louder than words." This means that what we do each day is often more visible than what we say. If we speak about God's grace but fail to show grace to others, then our actions contradict the message we are sharing. When that happens, people may stop listening because they no longer believe what we are saying.

This is part of the ripple effect we, as Christians, have on the world around us. We need to live our lives in a way that reflects what we believe. Our actions should be consistent with our faith.

Jesus Christ showed compassion to everyone He encountered. Matthew 9:10–13 says:

Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" When Jesus heard that, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

Jesus chose compassion over condemnation. He looked beyond people's pasts and saw their need for

God's love, mercy, and forgiveness.

Our actions toward other people affect what they see. If we show loving kindness instead of judgment, they are much more likely to listen to what God has to offer them.

Too many times we judge someone by what they look like, how they dress, or the choices they have made. As a church, we should welcome people from every walk of life. We do not know what they have experienced or the difficult roads they have traveled. A simple act of love and kindness can make a lasting difference in someone's life.

Perhaps God has led them to our church so they can experience His love through us. We have the privilege and responsibility of reflecting Christ to everyone who walks through our doors. When we welcome others with grace, compassion, and love, we become part of the ripple effect that God uses to change lives.

If we fail to show God's grace, we may miss an opportunity to point someone toward Christ. That is why our words and our actions must work together. Every smile, every kind word, every act of compassion, and every expression of God's love has the potential to create a ripple effect that reaches far beyond what we can see. We may never know how God will use our faithfulness, but we can trust that when we reflect the love of Christ, He can use even the smallest act of kindness to touch a heart for eternity.



Headquarters Happenings Sep-Oct 2026

By Sophia Fleming
G.C. Administrator/General Manager

Greetings from Idaho!

This year the Lord has put a word on my heart and that word is: Connectivity.

One of the main goals of the existence of the General Council is to connect like-minded believers with other like-minded believers. Our vision statement states we are “An International Center for **Fellowship** and Learning” (emphasis added). The Bible teaches us that from the time of creation we were not meant to be alone. From God creating a helpmate for Adam in Genesis, to the chapter ten admonishment of the writer of Hebrews to not forsake the gathering together of the saints, the importance of connectivity, or fellowship, has been emphasized by the Word of God.

So, what does that look like for the General Council? Campmeeting is our annual in-person opportunity for fellowship, and the ACTS magazine has been sent out for decades to connect us via print. Over the years we have been working on other avenues to help with connectivity. Online we have our website, ACTSforGod.org, which has a variety of Bible Study materials and children’s activity sheets that can be used in large or small group settings. Our events page currently shows upcoming events hosted by the General Council, but we are open to adding events from our affiliated ministers and congregations so that we can announce more opportunities for fellowship in their local area. In addition, we have created a WhatsApp community where announcements, doctrinal discussions, and more can be hosted. Also, we are working on our own cellphone app that will host many of these Bible Study materials, and will include a prayer wall, announcements, and a chat feature (we will keep you posted on its release.)

Another major component to connectivity is the creation of a database of those interested in getting announcements, updates, prayer requests, and other information. We have opted to do this through a church management software called Breeze. Through this program you will be able to update your contact information and create and edit your online giving profile. This is the same platform we have used to email some of our recent communications. In the future, we will also have the option to send out group texts. This software has also allowed us to create online forms such as this year’s Campmeeting registration and the surveys we sent out after camp.

If you would like to be added to our mailing list for updates, prayer requests, and other information, please contact our office. You can go to our ACTSforGod.org website and click on the “Member Login” in the upper right corner on the menu bar! You can also join our WhatsApp group by sending us your phone number, and we will send you a WhatsApp invite!

We are so blessed by this fellowship, and we look forward to continuing growth through our connected faith as we unite to encourage one another and to work together to bring God’s love to those around us!

Blessings, sf

Cash Flow Analysis as of July—2026	Beginning Balance	Ending Balance
Designated Funds	May 31 st	Jul 31 st
Building Fund	0.00	0.00
Campmeeting Fund	2,766.64	2,297.26
Memorial Fund	450.00	450.00
Missions	14,560.45	17,095.57
Park Fund	3,960.00	3,960.00
Funds for Operating Expenses		
General Fund	1,821.48	13,086.79
Repairs Fund (5% of Rent)	692.85	226.28
Average Monthly General Operating Expenses for Fiscal Year 2025/2026 = \$10,332.17		

Summary of Our Statement of Belief

THE BIBLE

God has revealed Himself through the Bible. Divine guidance of the writing, preservation, and translation of the Bible makes it the most accurate, complete, reliable, and divinely inspired revelation of God.

GOD

God, called I Am (YHWH) in the Old Testament and called Heavenly Father by Jesus in the New Testament, has always and will always exist. God created earth with all of nature and controls it for His purposes. God created people with free choice to live on earth in relationship with Him and gave people capabilities designed for living according to His purpose.

JESUS

Jesus is the divinely born Son of God, and is the Son of Man, who is the divinely anointed Messiah. He was sent to fully reveal the Heavenly Father to mankind and to die an atoning sacrifice. He created the path to reconcile individuals into God's family. Today Jesus is the head of God's Kingdom on earth and the intercessor to God for each of God's children.

HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is the power of God recorded working at creation and throughout the Old Testament. God worked by His Spirit through God's chosen leaders, His children, and governments on the earth to accomplish His plan and purposes. In the New Testament God's Spirit worked the divine birth of Jesus and empowered Jesus for ministry. God's Spirit guided the development of the early church and the spreading of the Gospel to known lands. Today the work of God's Spirit includes convincing people of sin, righteousness, judgement, and enabling people to accomplish God's will beyond human limitations.

CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

Jesus prophesied that He would be buried in the grave for three days and three nights to provide a sign that He is the begotten Son of God. From prophecy and the many timing references about activities around Jesus, we believe that He was buried on Wednesday evening and resurrected Saturday evening.

STATE OF THE DEAD

Death of this mortal life is a condition of "unconscious" waiting until the return of Jesus Christ at His second coming. During the end time, mortal bodies will be resurrected. Members of God's family will become immortal and those who have rejected God will be destroyed at their appointed time.

MAN'S CONDITION

Since creation people have naturally chosen rejection of God's sovereignty and pursue self-interest as their guide for living in God's creation. This has resulted in death for all. The result is that earth is a place of difficult labor and lives of hardship for the duration of separation from God. People cannot on their own reverse this separation.

MAN'S SALVATION

God shows his extreme love for people, His creation, and His design for life on earth by His provision to reconcile people into His family. God sent Jesus, who in love, became the reconciling sacrifice for everyone who believes in the reality of God and accepts inclusion to live in God's family. God's family will live eternally.

A HOLY LIFE AND SANCTIFICATION

God created people to live as members of His family, which includes pursuing His design for living on earth. God is holy and desires His family to live lives differentiated from those who pursue serving self and natural earthly desires. Focus on Godly living becomes the primary purpose of life. This purpose not only leads to pursuing the reality of God but also His desire that people love each other more than desire for self. The ability to achieve this purpose starts with reconciliation into a relationship with God when the Spirit of God becomes part of the inner person. Experiencing the reality of God's continual presence and activity enhances one's day to day living.

THE CHURCH

God designed creation for people to live in connected communities. This increases people sharing their love for God and experiencing Him. It also increases their love for other

people. The church is the primary community designed by God outside of family units. The name "The Church of God" is commonly used in the Bible to identify communities of Jesus's followers. The church is not only the local believer communities but also a collective community of all individuals that follow Jesus. The Spirit of God enables the church to accomplish God's work. Individual church communities are human organizations that need Godly leaders. God's Spirit directs the local group and enables it to do God's work. Such local churches are each responsible for their own teachings and activities. Degrees of fellowship, unity, and pursuit of common objectives establishes connection between individual churches.

ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH

Jesus initiated practices of the church to strengthen the relationship of individuals to God:

Baptism by immersion is a declaration by a child of God expressing their acceptance of God's reconciliation into His family. This celebration by believers receives them into the church community.

The Lord's Supper/Christian Passover commemorates the sacrifice of Jesus to bring reconciliation to the children of God. Jesus instructed His followers to eat unleavened bread and to drink the fruit of the vine to remember His body and blood that was sacrificed. And to do this as they had commemorated the Jewish Passover.

The washing of feet ceremony at the Lord's Supper/Christian Passover is for the church, as a community, and for individuals to recognize and remember Jesus's instruction to serve each other.

THE TEN COMMANDMENT LAW AND THE SABBATH DAY

The Ten Commandments, given by God, are to teach righteous words and actions to all mankind. This standard of acceptable behavior reflects the necessary personal inward experience that leads people to know God and accept reconciliation into his family.

God established the sunset to sunset Seventh Day Sabbath as a gift to mankind to break from work, responsibilities, and burdens for one day a week. This gift not only rejuvenates but calls for remembrance of God who set it apart and of His love for creation.

When God established Israel as His personal people, Moses handed down civil laws to govern the lives of Israelites. When the resurrection of Jesus the Messiah instituted the New Covenant, God's nation became internalized by all believers located in all nations.

PRAYER AND DIVINE HEALING

Prayer is the opportunity to connect to God in spiritual communication, to worship and praise Him for His love and work on earth. It is the way to approach Him with needs and to express concerns for the needs of others. Prayer is to God, recognizing Jesus as mediator, and seeking to know and accept God's will in life. We believe in the "laying on of hands" of the elders and the prayer of faith for divine healing.

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

We believe that Jesus the Messiah will return to earth to set up the physical Kingdom of God, to rule in place of earthly nations that withstand God and His righteousness. His return will initiate the resurrection of the dead, the reward of the righteous, the earth made new and become the eternal home of the children of God. Afterwards the earth will be free from sin and the curse of death.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

We believe that Bible prophecy has indicated the seasons of events that will occur near the return of Jesus. Those times will include increasing rejection of God and increasing calamities facing mankind. The current challenges that nations are facing are likely the work of God moving towards the soon return of Jesus. As such, more diligence is required to reach out to those around and to stand on the truth of God's existence and His offer of reconciliation to all.

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Join us for the next Ministerial Council Quarterly Forum

October 25, 2026,
9:00am MDT

Via Zoom



To learn more use this QR code or go to:
ACTSforGod.org/why-baptism-october-2026/

Why

Baptism?

*Then peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be
baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins;
and you shall receive the gift of the holy spirit."*

Acts 2:38

It's more than getting wet!

This time of fellowship and learning is brought to you by the Ministerial Council of the General Council Churches of God, (Seventh Day).

Watch classes and
sermons from
Campmeetings 2018-



2026 on the
[ACTSforGod](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)
YouTube
channel.

**Video DVDs or Audio
CDs of classes and
sermons are available
to order. Contact the
office to place an order.**

Go to ACTSforGod.org to
find the Campmeeting
Archive page and listen
to sermons
from previous
years.

