

# More Lessons From *the* Master Teacher




---

## SABBATH AFTERNOON

**Read for This Week’s Study:** *Gen. 3:1–11, Rom. 5:11–19, Gen. 28:10–17, John 1:1–14, Matt. 15:21–28, Mark 10:46–52.*

**Memory Text:** “Then Jesus said to him, ‘Go your way; your faith has made you well.’ And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road” (*Mark 10:52, NKJV*).

Who among us has never been ashamed of himself or herself? Who among us hasn’t done things that pain us to think about, and that we would recoil in horror at the thought of others knowing? Most likely, we’ve all been there, haven’t we?

Imagine, then, what it was like to be Adam and Eve after they ate fruit from the forbidden tree. Or when Jacob tricked his father into favoring him over his elder brother and then had to run away from his brother’s anger. How did he sleep at night? And imagine being the woman caught in adultery, “in the very act” (*John 8:4*). David had been there, too, and Psalm 32 was his poignant expression and confession of what it had been like.

Of course, that’s one reason the gospel is universal, and Christ’s death was for all humanity. Whatever our differences, surely one thing unites us: our general sinfulness.

Hence, true Christian education must be about pointing us to the only solution for our rather dismal state. This week we’ll look at our only solution, our Master Teacher.

\* Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, November 7.

## Instead of Hiding

**Read** Genesis 3:1–11. Why would God have asked Adam, “Where are you?”

---

---

Typical stories of the Fall depict the fruit as an apple. But that’s not what the text says. It was simply the “fruit of the tree” (*Gen. 3:3*). The kind of fruit doesn’t matter. Eating from this tree was forbidden because the tree *stood for something*. It stood for the temptation to push God aside and to declare, “I can be the measure of my own life. I can be God to myself. I have authority over the Word of God.”

And, sure enough, when the snake, or “serpent,” got Adam and Eve to eat the tree’s fruit, their lives skidded off course. And then, when they sensed God nearby, they tried to hide “among the trees of the garden” (*Gen. 3:8, NKJV*).

How strange that God would ask Adam, “Where are you?” God certainly knew where he was. Perhaps the Lord asked the question to help Adam and Eve realize just what they were doing—hiding—as a result of what they had done. That is, He was helping them see the sad results of their actions.

**Read** Romans 5:11–19, where Paul, many times, directly links what Adam did in Eden with what Jesus did on the cross. What should this tell us about how Jesus came to undo what Adam did?

---

---

One could argue that the plan of salvation is God’s response to Adam and Eve’s answer. They were hiding from God in the shame and the guilt of their sin, and God came to rescue them. In our own ways, we, too, have done the same thing, and Jesus has come to rescue us. Hence the question “Where are you?” could be asked of us, as well. That is, where are you in your sin and guilt, in relationship to Jesus and what He has done to rescue you from it?

**Whatever else Christian education entails, why must it entail, even emphasize, the fact that our natural state is to hide from God, and then point us to Jesus as the solution?**

---

## On the Run

**Read** Genesis 28:10–17. What is the context of this story, and what does it teach us about God’s grace for those who, in a sense, are on the run from their sins?

---



---



---

In his dealings with the rest of the family, Jacob, with his mother’s help, had fallen into cruel deceits, and now he’s paying for it. His brother is breathing violent threats against him, and he’s become a fugitive, headed toward his uncle’s place in Haran. Everything is unsettled and scary.

One day Jacob trudges into the dusk, and then the dark. He’s in the middle of nowhere, with only the sky for a roof. Finding a stone for a pillow, he falls asleep. But sleep’s blank unconsciousness is soon interrupted. The famous dream comes, and the ladder, or staircase, that he sees rests on earth and stretches to heaven. Angels are ascending and descending on it.

Then he hears a voice say, “ ‘I am the LORD, the God of Abraham’ ” (*Genesis 28:13, NRSV*). The voice goes on to repeat promises Jacob is familiar with from the family lore. Your offspring will become great. They will be a blessing to all the families of the earth. “ ‘Know that I am with you,’ ” the voice continues, “ ‘and will keep you wherever you go, . . . for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you’ ” (*Gen. 28:15, NRSV*).

Ellen G. White wrote of how Paul, much later, “beholds the ladder of Jacob’s vision, representing Christ, who has connected earth with heaven, and finite man with the infinite God. His faith is strengthened as he calls to mind how patriarchs and prophets have relied upon the One who is his support and consolation, and for whom he is giving his life.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 512.

Jacob awakens, and he says to himself: “ ‘Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it’ ” (*Gen. 28:16, NKJV*). What’s happened here is “awesome.” He’ll never forget the place, and he gives it a name. Then he vows lifelong loyalty to God.

**What can we learn from this story about how God, in Christ, is seeking to reach us despite our sins? Again, why must Christian education keep this principle at the forefront of what it teaches?**

---



---

## Rabbi Jesus

Of all the chapter beginnings in the New Testament, none is more famous than this: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (*John 1:1*). And John 1 soon takes you to the unforgettable verse: “And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth” (*John 1:14, NRSV*).

**Read John 1:1–14. What are these texts sharing about who Jesus was and what He was doing here? What should this tell us about Jesus as the great Example of a teacher?**

---

---

The same God who spoke to Adam and Eve in the Garden, and to Jacob in the middle of nowhere, now shows up *as a person*. God, says the New Testament, was *personified* in Jesus. Through Jesus, we can learn about God’s will and God’s way, because Jesus was God.

The chapter goes on to say how John the Baptist was so compelling a preacher that even religious leaders from Jerusalem suspected that he might be someone special. But he was preparing the way for someone greater than himself. Someone astonishingly special was about to appear, and he, John the Baptist, would be unworthy to “untie the thong of his sandal” (*John 1:27, NRSV*).

The next day he saw Jesus and declared that He was the “Son of God.” That day, and also a day later, he called Jesus “the lamb of God.”

Also, two of John the Baptist’s followers decide to follow Jesus themselves. And when Jesus asks what they are looking for, they call Him “‘Rabbi’ (which translated means Teacher)” (*John 1:38, NRSV*).

Jesus, then, is a rabbi, a teacher, but never has there been a human teacher like Him, because, again, He is God. In other words, God came down to humanity in the form of a human being, and in that form He functioned as a rabbi, a teacher. No wonder Ellen White called Jesus “the greatest teacher the world has ever seen.”—*Signs of the Times*, June 10, 1886. After all, this Teacher was God.

**Considering who Jesus was, why does it make sense to learn from Him the best ways of teaching spiritual truth? What can we learn from Jesus about why not only what we say is important for teaching but also what we do?**

---

## A Woman Talks Back

Jesus is the Master Teacher. God's true character shines through in His teaching, and also in His life. Thus, one gospel story is all the more remarkable for showing that when someone talks back to Jesus, He still listens.

**Read** the story of Jesus' encounter with a Gentile (or "Canaanite") woman from the region of Tyre and Sidon (*Matt. 15:21–28, Mark 7:24–30*). Notice that the men in Jesus' circle are impatient with her and that even Jesus appears to dismiss her. What do you make of the woman's audacity? What does this story teach us about how Jesus Himself taught others?

---

Jesus was near Tyre and Sidon. He had crossed into a place where strangers abounded and ethnic tension bristled. The Greek-speaking city dwellers looked down on Jewish farmers in the countryside, and the Jewish farmers looked down on them in return.

Not long before, Herod, the puppet governor of Galilee, Jesus' home territory, had executed John the Baptist. But John was a man whose vision Jesus largely shared, and the execution seemed ominous. Jesus came face-to-face with the danger of His mission.

Feeling the strain, Jesus entered a house, hoping, so Mark says in his account, that no one would know He was there (*Mark 7:24*). But the woman found Him.

In the culture of that time and place, a woman had no right to assert herself. What is more, this woman belonged to a culture and ethnic group the Jews had little time for, and this put her at a further disadvantage.

But the woman's daughter was sick. She wanted help, and she persisted in asking for it.

Jesus dismissed her. "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs," He said (*Matt. 15:26, NRSV*). The remark could have hurt her feelings.

And then something remarkable happened. She then responded. She was familiar with dogs—unlike the Jews, who would not have them as pets—and she said: "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table" (*Matt. 15:27, NRSV*).

Her remark makes a difference. It seems compelling. And Jesus heals her child.

**"Let it be to you as you desire" (*Matt. 15:28, NKJV*). How do we understand these words? How do we respond, though, when things do not happen as we desire?**

## A Student Who Gets It

Jesus and His followers had turned toward Jerusalem. As Herod had been concerned about John the Baptist, the authorities, including Herod, were now concerned about Jesus. His followers included the poor and other vulnerable folk hoping desperately for change.

Jesus wanted above all things to bring hope to the world. But He was sure, by now, that those with the most power and privilege were going to do what they could to nullify that mission. They did not want Him to succeed.

As for the inner circle of Jesus' students, the twelve disciples, they seemed eager to be on Jesus' side. But at the same time, they seemed baffled—or *blind*. For example, in Mark 8:31–33, the Master Teacher is challenging His students to *see* things hard for them to see. That is, in many ways they still were spiritually blind to what really mattered (see Mark 8:37).

All this is background for Jesus' encounter with someone who *does* see.

**Read** the story of Jesus and the healing of Bartimaeus, a blind beggar. (See Mark 10:46–52.) Notice the great mercy Jesus shows. Now consider how the blind man's desire to *see* leads to his decision to *follow* Jesus on the way, or road, to Jerusalem. Do you think Mark may be drawing a contrast between Bartimaeus and the other disciples? How does this story shed light on what it means for *you* to be responsive to the Master Teacher?

---

---

---

Bartimaeus had wanted to see the curl in a baby's hair and the color of wheat at harvest. But seeing includes more than just what's physical only. This story, in other words, is about seeing spiritually. It is about *getting it*—about catching on to what the Master Teacher is truly about. Physical sight is one thing. It's an important thing, and Jesus knows it. But Jesus also knows that every person's deepest wish is for a new and better life.

**Read Hebrews 5:12–14. What is this teaching us about true education?**

---

---

**Further Thought:** Read Ellen G. White, “The Test of Discipleship,” pp. 57–65, in *Steps to Christ*.

Ellen White tells us (among other things) that when we truly respond to the Master Teacher, “we long to bear His image, breathe His spirit, do His will, and please Him in all things” (*Steps to Christ*, p. 58). In the company of Jesus Christ, duty, she says, “becomes a delight” (*Steps to Christ*, p. 59). Now, from the Bible, consult Matthew 5–7. Here is the Sermon on the Mount, one of the great summaries of what the Master Teacher wanted His students to know and the keynote of the kingdom He came to establish.

### Discussion Questions:

- 1 As God addressed Adam and Eve, and also Jacob, so Jesus addresses us. He connects with our deep longings, and He startles us (as He did Bartimaeus) into reconsidering who we are and where we are going. In this light, think about how we teach the Bible to our children and to one another. What is the difference between mediocre Bible teaching and the compelling kind that really makes a difference in people’s lives?
- 2 Is the question of where you are on life’s journey purely *personal*, or might it be helpful to discuss this with people you trust? How does the idea of the church as the “body of Christ” (*1 Cor. 12:27*) suggest that conversation with others can be one way of getting in touch with what Christ wants you to know?
- 3 We learned on Thursday that as soon as Bartimaeus could see—as soon as he was rescued from his physical (and spiritual) blindness—he *followed Jesus* on the road to Jerusalem. On this road he heard, every day, the Master Teacher’s wisdom. Now, we may assume, he *wanted* to bear Jesus’ image, breathe His Spirit, do His will. Why would someone take “delight,” as *Steps to Christ* puts it, in following a standard as high as the one Jesus upheld in the Sermon on the Mount?
- 4 Dwell more on the question at the end of Thursday’s study. How do we learn to discern between good and evil? How do we define what is good and what is evil? And why is what we do with that knowledge perhaps even more important than having that knowledge itself?

## Miracle on an Indian Road

By DAISY JUNG

The other day, my husband and I traveled to the city to buy materials for the chapel that we are constructing in a village in India. We also needed supplies for the student volunteers who were helping us share the gospel in the area.

My husband bought electrical equipment for the construction project, and I found 15 guitars for the volunteers and 100 notebooks for their classes. It was 9:00 P.M. when we started the three-hour drive back to the village. As my husband drove, we chatted and listened to music.

About a half hour before reaching home, a strange sound startled us.

*Dadadadada. Pang!*

The noise was quite loud. We were not sure what had happened. My husband stopped the car and stepped outside to investigate. A tire was flat.

When we saw the flat tire, we looked at each other and laughed loudly for some time. “How many times have we had a flat tire like this?” my husband asked.

“Well, let me count,” I said. “If I include the bicycle, then it must have happened many, many times. Our life is really not boring, darling.”

We didn’t have a spare tire.

Stranded in the countryside in the middle of the night, we called Pastor Abishek for help. Music played softly in the disabled car as my husband calmly sat in the driver’s seat, waiting for the pastor. The car didn’t have a working air conditioner, and we soon began to sweat. I chased a mosquito around the car.

Suddenly lightning flashed across the dark sky, and thunder rolled. Raindrops splattered on the windows. “Honey,” I said. “This situation is quite unfortunate but funny. Life isn’t boring here in India.”

After some time, Pastor Abishek arrived to pick us up. We moved the 15 guitars, 100 notebooks, and electrical equipment into his small truck.

As we drove toward home, the pastor surprised us.

“When you called me, my cell phone was on silent mode,” he said. “Even the vibration function was turned off so I could sleep. I don’t know how it happened that I woke up at midnight and looked at my phone at the very moment that you called. I normally sleep soundly the whole night through.”

Our hearts trembled as he spoke. God had woken him in the deep of night and impressed him to check his phone. God knew that two of His children

were longing for home.

By now it was raining heavily. Lightning illuminated the road, and thunder roared. But we were happy because we were going home. Thank you, Lord! Thank you, Angel Abishek!



*Names have been changed to protect the work of volunteers serving in a sensitive part of the world.*



## ***Part I: Overview***

---

“Where are you? What are you doing?” (*Gen. 3:9, Gen. 3:13, paraphrase*). These are the last questions we want to hear while indulging in sin. And yet, at some point God has whispered to us, “Where are you right now?” As the lesson points out, the gospel is universal because, as humans, we all have sinful, fallen natures.

It is one thing to admit that we were born with sinful, fallen natures; quite another to feel convicted enough to seek a personal solution to the sin problem. The temptation is to concede, Yes, I “have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (*Rom. 3:23, NKJV*). But so has everyone else, right? The flip side of this cavalier attitude can undermine our reception of God’s love, as well. “Yes, God loves me, but He loves the whole world too. How personal and intimate, really, is that?” (*read John 3:16*). Somehow our awareness of both the wretchedness of our sinful nature and our deep need of the redeeming quality of God’s love must be sharpened to penetrate a heart numb from theology that ironically becomes diluted when applied across the board.

Jesus taught us the way (His teachings), showed us the way (His example), and made us a way (His death and resurrection). He is Teacher, Example, and Savior all at the same time. He doesn’t just expose sin—He conquers it.

As a time traveler goes into the past and changes it to affect the future, Jesus’ life and death reverse the historical consequences of Adam’s failure (*Rom. 5:12–21*). For the believer, grace, justification, and eternal life are present realities. Jesus is Someone we can trust—Someone we should listen to.

## ***Part II: Commentary***

---

### **Scripture: Jesus’ Worldview and the Downward Spiral**

As difficult as it is for the adherent to the evolutionary, progressive, humanistic worldview to admit, evil is real, and it proceeds directly out of the center of the human heart. We are not victims; we are perpetrators. Jesus, the Master Teacher, said it like this: “ ‘For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft,

murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within' ” (*Mark 7:21–23, ESV*).

In a sense, we are *all* victims, because everyone’s sins send out ripples that affect everyone else. Obviously some are more deeply affected than others. We acknowledge that. But even in the midst of our pain, it is helpful to remember that our sins have hurt others, lest we grab our fellow man “by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest” (*Matt. 18:28*) and forget that we ourselves have been forgiven “ten thousand talents” (*Matt. 18:24*).

When we study Genesis and capture the worldview depicted there, we are studying the primary sources that shaped and gave context to all Jesus’ teachings. This is crucial, because many of us live in secular cultures that disparage the notion of sin, or at least try to minimize it. This is counter to the Genesis account in which the speed and intensity of a single sin snowballs into an avalanche of wickedness. Adam and Eve commit a single act of disobedience, and the next thing they know, they are holding a dead son—from forbidden fruit to fratricide in a single generation. These are the Scriptures Jesus was raised on. This is why, though He was full of mercy, grace, and love, He never minimized the notion or consequences of sin. Notice the narrative flow of Genesis, the source of Christ’s worldview:

1. Everything starts “very good” (*Gen. 1:31*)
2. Forbidden fruit eaten (*Gen. 3:6*)
3. Hiding and blaming (*Gen. 3:8–13*)
4. Murder (*Gen. 4:8*)
5. Risk of murder and God’s seven-fold vengeance (*Gen. 4:14, 15*)
6. Murder/manslaughter and a call for seventy-seven-fold vengeance (*Gen. 4:23, 24*)
7. Global wickedness; thoughts only continually evil (*Gen. 6:5*)

Humankind is removed from Eden’s paradise in so many ways. Adam and Eve are cast out of Eden, presumably exiting the *east* entrance where a sentinel guards reentry (*Gen. 3:24*). When Cain is banished, he goes “out from the presence of the LORD . . . east of Eden” (*Gen. 4:16, emphasis supplied*). The tower of Babel, a monument to human arrogance and folly, is in the *east* (*Gen. 11:2*). Moving east is moving farther and farther away from Eden and the presence of God. Humanity’s downward spiral from its pristine condition initiates comprehensive judgments from God. He “uncreates” the world by returning it to its watery embryonic form (*see Gen. 1:2, Gen. 7:18*) and basically starts over, animals and all. In a fascinating combination of judgment and mercy, the *same appraisal* of humanity’s wickedness that motivated the Flood judgment is now given as the reason for extending mercy with a promise never to repeat the destruction (*Gen.*

6:5, *Gen. 8:21*). Hence, at the tower in Shinar, in keeping with His promise, God doesn't destroy wickedness; He disperses it (*Gen. 11:8*).

### Scripture: The Foundations

To appreciate the “sinfulness of sin” and to make sure God isn't getting the blame, it is important to go back to the beginning. God makes “good” stuff. He says so seven times in Genesis 1 (*Gen. 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31*). And that is just the first chapter of the Bible. With a careful reading of Genesis (and the rest of Scripture), it can be added that He makes *only* good stuff. Already we have the fundamental groundwork that releases God from the culpability that “He created the devil,” or is responsible for sin and suffering. The reason the skeptic or doubter is so quick to make this charge is because it is a blatant deflection from the source of where evil and suffering really come—and that is from the skeptic and doubter themselves and all the rest of creation, both human and angelic.

Whatever manufactured dilemmas one has about how a “good” Creation can turn bad are fairly easily resolved if one admits to a quality of the universe that is so ubiquitous it is virtually invisible. That quality is the potential for change. First, no one would choose a *changeless* universe (no movement, no enacted decisions, no self-determination, no growth, etc.) over a *changing* one. Second, with “change” in the paradigm, humanity celebrates its achievements (changes) in a million variegated ways, but would we celebrate them at all if change already were determined to go only in one direction? Do many celebrate the fact that balls roll downhill? If humans could “roll” only one way, it might be an occasion for observation, but never celebration. Words like freedom, morality, justice, kindness, love, and every other conceivable virtue of humanity would be drained of their significance. So, given the options of a changeless universe, a determined changing universe, or a freely changing universe, most would choose option three, though it opens the door to real changes that we deem evil or painful. So, it is no real paradox that a good thing can turn bad.

### The Skeptics: Which Way Is Down?

Chapters 3–11 of Genesis stand as a witness that following the serpent's suggestion has been a mistake. Things were “good,” but no longer. Humanity has not improved, become godlike, or escaped death (*Gen. 3:4, 5*). It is worth mentioning that humankind's downward trend in the biblical account is the opposite portrayal of that found in the Sumerian flood story. The difference is that the Mesopotamian literature

is optimistic about man's existence. In those accounts, man doesn't start perfect, but after the gods turn against him in the flood, he does better; he *progresses*. The biblical account goes the opposite direction, "and the ensuing pessimistic viewpoint could not be more different from the tenor of the Sumerian tale" (Thorkild Jacobson, "The Eridu Genesis," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 100 [1981], p. 529).

The irony here, of course, is that it has been standard fare for critical scholars and laymen to cast doubt on the biblical account because of Mesopotamian flood narratives. But if the details of those parallel narratives bring into question the validity of the biblical account, then does the optimistic progressive philosophy of these myths bring into question the progressive humanistic worldview? Another question: if the parallels cause skeptics to throw the biblical account into the myth category, do the antiparallels cause them to remove it from that category? Young people will be faced with anti-theistic and antibiblical worldviews the farther they ascend the educational ladder. Let's be sure that Seventh-day Adventist education is preparing them to step up to the challenge.

Throughout Scripture, God inspires hope that one day, things will be restored to their original perfection. Jesus, the Emmanuel son (God with us [*Matt. 1:23*]), "tabernacling" among His creation (*see John 1:14*) and announcing the return of the "kingdom of God"—this was the beginning fulfillment that once again humanity would step back into the presence of God, back into Eden to live with God forever (*Rev. 21:3*).

### ***Part III: Life Application***

---

When applying what we learn from the Scripture to our lives, it is helpful to ask: "How do I apply anything to my life?" We are applying a whole set of theories (about whatever) to our lives every day. How to apply the teachings of Jesus to our lives is probably not too much different from how and why we apply anything else to our lives. Here are some ideas that can push your students from mere theory to practice.

- 1. Ask class members to immerse themselves totally in the relevant literature: Encourage them to read, read, and read some more, until they are convinced that they have discovered an important truth.**
- 
-

---

---

---

- 2. Disciples are apprentices: Have you ever watched an apprentice? Students watch the master, they follow his strokes, and they imitate him in every way they can.**

---

---

---

---

---

- 3. Invite your students to share what they have learned. Two thousand years ago, Seneca said, "Men learn while they teach." Material gets ingrained when we teach it.**

---

---

---

---

---

Using these three principles as disciples of Christ, your students should prayerfully (1) immerse themselves in His teachings, (2) observe carefully how He lived and have those pictures in their heads throughout the day so that they act like Him, and (3) find a willing ear to share what they have learned and what their experience has been.