**Women’s Ministries Emphasis Day**

**June 11, 2022**

Sermon Resource Packet

**Heroines of Faithfulness**

Written by Omobonike Adeola Sessou

Director of Women’s Ministries for West-Central Africa Division

Includes Activity and Seminar

**Developing a Fear of God**

Written by Omobonike Adeola Sessou

A drawing of a face

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Women’s Ministries Sermon Resource Packet

Prepared by the Department of Women’s Ministries

General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

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GENERAL CONFERENCE WORLD HEADQUARTERS

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WOMEN’S MINISTRIES

February 16, 2022

Dear Sister-Leaders,

Joyful greetings. It’s another Women’s Ministries Emphasis Day, and this year our focus is on you and me. Are we the kind of woman God wants us to be? Are we making compromises in our spiritual lives that we know pain the heart of our heavenly Father? Well, did you know that there are two women in the Bible who faced the wrath of an evil leader and yet still held fast to their conviction and faith in God? Enjoy hearing about these two amazing daughters of God and learning again what God expects of us and how we can maintain our integrity as Christian women.

We at General Conference Women’s Ministries (GCWM) have prayed over this packet of resources, and we thank God for guiding our writer of the packet this year. Omobonike Adeola Sessou is the women’s ministries director for the West-Central Africa Division. Omobonike is a daughter of God and committed to the ministry to our sisters. She is energetic, Spirit-led, dynamic, and filled with joy as she serves our sisters and keeps Jesus the focus of her ministry.

It is our prayer that as you and your women’s ministries team plan for this special day that you will not lose sight of who we are honoring on this special day. I know we have wonderful plans and ideas for our special day and that is good, nevertheless we need to keep Jesus woven through the fabric of all we create for this important Sabbath.

May God bless you as you plan for this special day and may He open heaven’s windows and pour out abundant blessings on all who sit at His feet on this day.

With love and joy,

Text, letter

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Heather-Dawn Small

Women’s Ministries Director

“I thank God for you….” Philippians 1:3-6

# Scripture References

Scripture verses quoted are from ESV, KJV and AKJV, NASB, NCV, NKJV, NIV, NIrV, TLB

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# Program Notes

Please feel free to translate, adjust, and edit the resource packet according to your division’s needs, including the best Bible version for your use. Also, you are free to adapt the packet according to your cultural audience. When your division has translated the assigned packet for French, Portuguese, and Spanish, please send us a digital file to share with our sister who need it.

# About the Author

Omobonike Adeola Sessou loves her work as women's and children's ministries director in West-Central Africa Division (Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire), a position she's held since 2010. She is currently a PhD candidate in organizational leadership and holds a master's degree in leadership with a background in religion and biology. She authored a book titled *Lord, Make Me a Virtuous Woman* ﻿and enjoys teaching and preaching, empowering women, and mentoring young ladies. She and her pastor husband, Sessou Kwasi Selom, love to spend time with their three children.

# Outline of Divine Service

**SUGGESTED ORDER OF SERVICE**

Call to Worship #705, *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*

“I Will Exalt You, My God the King”

*From Psalm 145, NIV*

Hymn of Praise #100 *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*

“Great Is Thy Faithfulness”

Pastoral Prayer

Scripture Reading Acts. 5:29

“We ought to obey God rather than men.” (NKJV) (sermon)

“We must obey God instead of people!” (NIrV) (children’s story)

Call for the Offering

Children’s Story

“Little Heroine of Faithfulness”

Hymn #101, *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*

“Children of the Heavenly Father”

Sermon

“Heroines of Faithfulness”

Hymn of Response #512, Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal

“Just When I Need Him Most”

Closing Prayer

# Children’s Story

**Little Heroine of Faithfulness**

Written by Omobonike Adeola Sessou

Women’s Ministries director of West-Central Africa Division

Happy Sabbath, boys and girls! (Allow for their responses.) Today is Women’s Ministries Emphasis Day. Do you know what Women’s Ministries Emphasis Day means? (Allow for children’s responses.)

Women’s Ministries Emphasis Day is a special Sabbath in our church. Sometimes stories are told about women helping others in faraway places, and sometimes stories are told about women helping others close by home—in their families, churches, and communities. On this special day everyone—not just women, but men and boys and girls also—everyone is encouraged to serve the Lord using their talents and resources.

Today, I will tell you a true story about an adolescent girl named Ayoka who learned to be faithful to God. Ayoka was born in a non-Christian family, but she learned about Jesus at the Seventh-day Adventist church near where she lived. She became an Adventist Christian at an early age and went to church as often as she could to go to Sabbath worship and Vespers and Wednesday night prayer meeting. Ayoka’s parents became upset with her going to an Adventist church. They sternly forbid her to attend any services at the church. Ayoka began sneaking out of the house to go to church. Very often when Ayoka came home from a church service, her parents would punish her.

Ayoka continued going to church and her parents continued punishing Ayoka for disobedience. One Sabbath when Ayoka came home from church, she found all her dresses thrown outside the front door… and the door was locked! Ayoka was no longer welcome at home because she didn’t stop going to church.

Not knowing what to do or where to go, she went back to the church. When church members heard what happened to Ayoka, they promised to take turns caring for her. Although she was alone, away from her real family, the church people became her new family, so she grew up living with God’s faithful people. She also learned today’s sermon text, and it became very special to her: **“We must obey God instead of people!” (Acts 5:29, NIrV).** Ayoka had chosen to obey God rather than her parents.

Ayoka continued to walk with God. Although she faced difficult situations in life, she always claimed God’s promise to bless those who are faithful to Him. When it was time for Ayoka to go to university, she didn’t want to go to public university, but she did not have money to pay for her school fees at the Adventist university.

First, she prayed to God to help her. Then she contacted the women’s ministries director who was leader of a large group of churches where Ayoka lived, and the woman said, “We do not have enough money to pay for all your school fees, but we do have this tiny little bit to give you. We will pray that God makes it grow into the amount you need for an Adventist education.”

This gave Ayoka hope. She had always trusted God would take care of her needs. She had seen how God helped the people of the church take care of her. Now she asked God to bless the tiny little bit of money given by Women’s Ministries for school fees. She also prayed that God would answer the prayers of everyone who prayed for her tiny little bit of money to grow—because Ayoka wanted everyone to see that God is faithful to His faithful children. Do you think God answered their prayers? Oh yes, He did! Ayoka always had just enough money to pay her school fees at just the right time.

Do you want to know what happened to Ayoka? She finished her education at the Adventist university and graduated…and she is not alone anymore! She married an Adventist pastor, and they are raising a family.

Ayoka continues to grow in her love for God, and He continues to bless her. Today she works for God as leader of Women’s Ministries for the large region of the worldwide Adventist Church called West-Central Africa Division. Ayoka wants you also to believe that God is faithful to bless you when you choose to be faithful to Him. You may suffer when you obey God rather than people, but God will always be with you and bless you.

Who among you would like to ask Jesus to help you obey and love and serve Him? Who wants to pray for Women’s Ministries to be able to help and support people who are in need? (Allow children to raise their hands). Let us pray together:

“Father in heaven, please help me to love You and to obey You, rather than people. Bless the women’s ministry in our church and help them to continue to help and support those in need. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.”

#End of Children’s Story#

# Sermon

**Heroines of Faithfulness**

By Omobonike Adeola Sessou

Women’s Ministries director of West-Central Africa Division

“We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29, NKJV).

**INTRODUCTION**

According to Cambridge Dictionary, a heroine is “a woman who is admired for having done something very brave or having achieved something great.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

The Bible presents many women who are well known for their courage and faith. They are heroines of the ages, who have inspired thousands in their pilgrimage to heaven; women like Deborah, Esther, Sara, Hannah, and Mary, just to mention a few. But we also find some less commonly mentioned women who nevertheless demonstrated their strong faith in God and left us with lessons of faithfulness to God. Today we will study the story of two less well-known women.

What happens when your profession gives you the unique opportunity to do an extraordinary assignment, whether for good or for bad?

What happens when obedience to God conflicts with obedience to man, and you are faced with life-threatening consequences?

What happens when you can simply rationalize being on the side of the multitude who prefer receiving the favor of men, but conscience calls for better choice?

What happens when standing for the right is the only test of faith?

In our study we will learn practical lessons of courage, faithfulness, and love for God through the action of Shiphrah and Puah that will help us as women to fulfill our God-given purpose in life.

Say this prayer with me as we learn from Shiphrah and Puah:

“Father, teach me your ways of righteousness and cause your spirit to open my eyes that I may understand your will for my life in Jesus’ name. Amen.”

**SLAVES IN EGYPT**

Joseph had died and the children of Israel who were still living in Egypt continued to multiply. The new Pharaoh chose to forget all the good deeds of Joseph who preserved the land of Egypt during a destructive famine. Instead, he planned to curb the exponential growth of the Israelites. They weren’t even Egyptians! He forced them into harsh slavery thinking that hard labor and suffering would diminish their fruitfulness. To his amazement, the more the Israelites suffered, the more fertile they became—because God was blessing them.

Here is good lesson for us all: the enemy cannot stop the blessing of God upon His people, so long as they remain faithful to Him. When the first plan failed, Pharaoh decided to try another strategy to achieve his baleful, death-bringing plan.

**PHARAOH’S POPULATION CONTROL STRATEGY**

The king’s strategy involved the service of midwives whom he expected to apply the birth control technique of exterminating male children as they were born. The plan would kill all the Hebrew boys and destroy any possibility of their growing up to become rebellious warriors and overthrowing Pharaoh and overrunning Egypt. We read Pharaoh’s strategy in Exodus 1:15, 16: “Then the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, of whom one was named Shiphrah and the name of the other Puah; and he said, ‘When you do the duties of a midwife for the Hebrew women, and see them on the birth stools, if it is a son, then you shall kill him; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live’" (NKJV).

This was a serious and urgent task given to midwives whose profession gave them the unique opportunity to carry out the mandate of the king. What was their reaction to Pharaoh’s order?

It is important to note here that the plan to exterminate the male babies was not merely a cruel plan of a tyrannical king but rather it came from the greatest mastermind, Satan himself, who is engaged in the great controversy with God. Ellen G. White writes, “Satan was the mover in this matter. He knew that a deliverer was to be raised up among the Israelites; and by leading the king to destroy their children he hoped to defeat the divine purpose” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 242.1). A spiritual battle was raging, and God needed faithful warriors to stand against the enemy, to defeat his purpose, and to honor Him through their faithfulness. Shiphrah and Puah, two midwives, took up the challenge.

**THE MIDWIVES’ DILEMMA**

Shiphrah and Puah obviously were not the only midwives working in Egypt but why were they specially addressed by the king? Maybe they served directly under the king as leaders of all the midwives to the Hebrew women. Perhaps by giving them this mandate, Pharaoh was sure his order would be carried out as they instructed and supervised other midwives. Whatever the case, these women of value were entrusted with a personal assignment from the Egyptian king.

Apparently, the king never considered the possibility the midwives might not obey him. An Egyptian Pharaoh reigned as a son of the gods. Through his divine right as king, his command must be obeyed without hesitation. By obeying Pharaoh, the midwives might even gain the favor of their monarch, even receive promotions, gifts, and popularity in his court.

Disobedience to a royal decree meant death. Shiphrah and Puah faced the real consequence of losing their heads if they did not obey Pharaoh. The midwives might have reasoned that they had no other choice but to carry out the merciless dictates of the king. Many reasons could be given to obey this royal decree of killing baby boys, but they chose to do otherwise. Why? We can learn the following lessons from their story.

**LESSONS FROM THEIR STORY**

1. **THEY FEARED THE LORD**

The Bible clearly reveals the underlying factor influencing Shiphrah and Puah’s decision was the fear of God. “But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the male children alive” Exodus 1:17, AKJV).

The fear of God is the only motivating factor that can make someone reject evil despite the consequences. The fear of God leads one to choose to glorify God, even with the cost and sacrifice of suffering. The fear of God is the only reason why one can say ‘no’ to what is wrong and ‘yes’ to what is right. The fear of God is a virtue shining forth amidst the darkness of this world. Proverbs 8:13 tells us, “The fear of the Lord is to hate evil;/ Pride and arrogancy and the evil way/ And the perverse mouth I hate” (NKJV).

A woman who fears God is a power for good. Proverbs 31:30 reveals the true beauty of a woman: “Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord shall be praised” (ESV). Beauty without the fear of God is a disaster. To fear God means to acknowledge God as Supreme Being and Lord of our lives who alone is worthy of our allegiance, obedience, and worship.

1. **THEY HANDLED THE SITUATION WITH WISDOM**

The midwives resolved to keep alive both the male and female Hebrew children, but they needed to find the best means of accomplishing this resolution. They expected the monarch would ask for an explanation if they didn’t carry out the order. And that is exactly what he did! “And the king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said unto them, ‘Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the male children alive?’” (Exodus 1:18, AKJV).

The next verse reveals Shiphrah and Puah’s secret plan. “The midwives said to Pharaoh, ‘Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women, for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them’” (Exodus 1:19, ESV).

So, it may have been possible that through the wisdom of God these midwives decided to delay their intervention for delivering Israelite women, allowing them to give birth before their arrival, thereby avoiding the killing of babies. The killing instructions specified the time was to be done during the delivery, while still sitting on the birthing stools.

Proverbs 9:10 says, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” (NKJV). God blessed Shiphrah and Puah with the best solution for obeying the Lord. The king could not contradict their response, and they could not be accused of disobedience. How did the midwives gain this wisdom? Perhaps as they sought to honor God, He communicated this plan to them.

Is wisdom available for us?

“For the Lord gives wisdom” (Proverbs 2:6, NIV).

“Wisdom is enshrined in the hearts of men [and women] of common sense” (Proverbs 14:33, TLB).

“The fear of the Lord—that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding” (Job 28:28, NIV).

When daughters of God choose to honor Him with their obedience, God blesses them with wisdom in handling complex situations. God promises to help us in all circumstances especially in the time of trouble like this one. Psalms 50:15 declares, “And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me” (KJV). Psalms 32:8 promises, “I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will guide you with My eye” (NKJV). Wisdom for finding our way through the labyrinth of life’s difficulties comes through the help and wisdom of God who is willing to communicate to all who seek him.

1. **THEY CHOSE TO OBEY GOD RATHER THAN MAN (HUMANS)**

Although simply choosing to obey the king was expected, although the command to kill came from the greatest king in history to that time, although the disobedience to the king’s orders meant death, Shiphrah and Puah chose to obey God rather than to obey Pharaoh. Their actions demonstrate that in life a choice can be made in every circumstance. It is incorrect to think we have no choice of our own, to assume that whatever is imposed on us, be it good or bad, leaves us with no choice. Life is all about making choices, and we are responsible for our own choices.

Ellen G. White states that “He who has God’s law written in the heart will obey God rather than men, and will sooner disobey all men than deviate in the least from the commandment of God. God’s people, taught by the inspiration of truth, and led by a good conscience to live by every word of God, will take His law, written in their hearts, as the only authority which they can acknowledge or consent to obey. The wisdom and authority of the divine law are supreme” (Counsels for the Church, 314.3).

The midwives refused to take the life of a human being, choosing instead to obey the Life Giver Himself. God’s law of life on earth was first seen when He breathed on Adam the breath of life. To take the life of another person, even a fetus, is to take away the gift of God’s breath of life. It is the privilege of every child of God to give the Life Giver glory through obedience to His law of life.

1. **THEY STOOD AGAINST INJUSTICE AND DEFENDED THE HELPLESS**

It is an act of injustice for anyone to seek to eliminate the life of another. It is our responsibility to defend those who are helpless and cannot do so for themselves. “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; Defend the rights of all those who have nothing” (Proverbs 31:8, NCV).

Shiphrah and Puah decided to stand against injustice done to the Hebrews by refusing to carry out the king’s order. They refused to kill the defenseless and saw it as their moral right to defend the helpless, preserving the lives of the innocents.

People who love God, especially women of God, must stand up like Shiphrah and Puah and with God’s wisdom protect the lives of the helpless and defend those who cannot defend themselves. This is true whether it concerns abortion, infanticide, child abuse, domestic violence, the way the disabled or the elderly are treated, etc. God longs for His people to be the voice for those who cannot speak, for them to defend the helpless in both private and public sectors.

1. **THEIR FAITHFULNESS SAVED THE ENTIRE RACE OF HEBREWS**

Little did the two midwives realize the extent to which their faithfulness would work out the fulfilment of God’s purpose and defeat Satan’s plan. Moses, who was used by God to deliver His people from their bondage, surely was saved by the midwives from death at his birth. Thus, Satan’s plan was defeated. God’s plan to raise up a deliverer from the slavery of Egypt flourished. The children of Israel multiplied and became numerous enough to form their own nation. Praise God that Shiphrah and Puah were at the right place at the right time. God could count on them to save His people. What a blessing to have such women in a time of crisis!

Can God count on you and me when He needs us to serve Him through our faithfulness in our professions and in the daily routines of life? Yes, we can be faithful in exercising our daily activities whether at home, in the church, in the community, or anywhere we are called to serve.

Ellen G. White writes, “Woman in her home, doing the simple duties of life that must be done, can and should exhibit faithfulness, obedience, and love, as sincere as angels in their sphere. Conformity to the will of God makes any work honorable that must be done” (*Adventist Home*, 24.2).

1. **GOD REWARDED THEIR FAITHFULNESS**

God approved the action of the faithful midwives and blessed them for honoring Him. Exodus 1:20 records, “Therefore God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied and grew very mighty.” That was read from the **New King James Version.**

Other versions throw more light on the phrase, “God dealt well with the midwives.”

**Good News Translation:** “Because the midwives were God-fearing, God was good to them and gave them families of their own. And the Israelites continued to increase and become strong.”

**New American Standard Bible:** “So [God](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=0430) was [good](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03190) to the [midwives](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03205), and the [people](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=05971) [multiplied](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=07235), and [became](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06105) [very](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=03966) [mighty](https://www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/strongs/?t=nas&ll=h&sn=06105).”

**New International Version:** “So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous.”

The different translations give us a picture of the depth of the blessings that God showered upon the faithful midwives who dared to honor Him at this time of crisis for God’s people. God’s kindness was extended to their families and, surely, they became living testimonies of God’s goodness.

As daughters of God, we may not see the instant results of being faithful to Him in the world full of injustice. We may wonder if we are doing any good by staying faithful in the world full of praise for wickedness. Paul encourages us in Galatians 6:9-10, “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (AKJV) He also gives counsel in 2 Thessalonians 3:13, “But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing” (AKJV)

**CONCLUSION**

Women can exert a positive influence for God in our little corners that will thwart Satan’s purpose and bless the world. Although Shiphrah and Puah have a short appearance in the Bible, just few verses of Exodus 1:15-21, they left a legacy of faithfulness and blessing to us all in the sacred pages. Let’s review what we’ve learned from them.

1. We learned from these humble women that the fear of God is the most important virtue, one which also beautifies the daughters of God.
2. We learned that God grants us wisdom needed to tackle every situation when we choose to do His will.
3. We learned that in every circumstance we always have a choice to obey God rather than Satan and his agents.
4. We learned to stand up against injustice wherever we are, to defend the helpless, and to offer whatever help is necessary to save lives.
5. We learned that when we remain faithful in obedience to God, He is faithful in blessing us.

After examining the great lessons from this life-changing story, we can safely call Shiphrah and Puah “Heroines of Faithfulness.”

God is calling each one of us to be Shiphrahs and Puahs standing against evil. In the world in which we live, we will be tempted to make compromises to our faith to please others. It could even be a situation in which we are asked to do something that is ethically wrong, but we fear losing our job or relationship if we do not conform. We have learned from this story today that God protects those who stand for what is right. God also blesses those who stand for what is right.

Today, we each have a choice. Shall we conform or compromise our beliefs? Or shall we stand firm? I pray that with God’s help you will decide to stand firm on the Rock, never turning to the left or the right, but always keeping our eyes on Jesus.

Is that your decision today? If so, will you stand with me to show our Father—stand to affirm visibly—that we choose to stand with Him always.

Let’s pray.

#End of Sermon#

# Seminar

**Developing the Fear of God**

By Omobonike Adeola Sessou

Women’s Ministries director of West-Central Africa Division

This year we are sending you a seminar and group discussion activity in one. First is the group discussion and second is the seminar. Our writer for the package has developed the theme of “What Is the Fear of God” in two sections – A and B.

Section A is the group discussion activity. Divide the women into small groups to discuss items I – VII. If you have time let the women share what they learned from the Bible verses about the fear of God.

Section B is the seminar. Choose someone to present the seminar.

**SECTION A:**

**Group Discussion Activity**

**DEVELOPING THE FEAR OF GOD**

1. **What is the fear of God?**

When we hear the word ‘fear’ it connotes the idea of being afraid but in this sense of the fear of God it has a positive meaning. The Bible teaches us what it means to have the fear of God. The meaning of the fear of God is well explained in the book of Proverbs, let us explore different meaning of the fear of God.

Proverbs 1:7

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.”

Proverbs 8:13

“The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the perverse mouth, do I hate.”

Proverbs 9:10

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”

Proverbs 15:33

“The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honor is humility.”

Proverbs 16:6

“By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.”

In summary, the fear of the Lord is about knowing God and choosing to do his biddings. It is refraining from evil and receiving God’s instruction and commandment. This is the true knowledge of God and it is the way of wisdom. It means reverence and awe of God’s majesty and power that comes from the true knowledge of God. It includes respect for God and willingly surrender to His leadership in our lives. It means giving God the priority in one’s life and seeking to please him in everything. The fear of God also includes lovingly serving God. Those who have the fear of God demonstrate love for God.

**Exercise 1**

Give 2 examples of men and 3 examples of women who you know had the fear God in the Bible.

1. **What are the benefits of having the fear of God**

The fear of God brings a lot of blessings to us as we live here on earth contrary to the notion that the fear of God is only for us to have eternal life. The book of Psalms gives us a lot of benefits one can receive if we fear God. Let us read few of them:

1. **They are guided in their decisions**

Psalm 25:12, 14

“What man is he that fears the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.”

“The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant.”

God teaches the person who fears him the right way to go. That is, God directs those who fear him by teaching them the right principles that will help them make right decisions without making mistakes. So as we seek to know God and to obey His instructions, we discover principles of life that guide our paths and safeguard us against evil and wrong decision making.

1. **They receive God’s goodness and blessing**

Psalm 31:19

“Oh how great is your goodness, which you have laid up for them that fear you; which you have wrought for them that trust in you before the sons of men!”

Psalm 33:18

“Behold the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy.”

Psalms 115:13

“He will bless them that fear the LORD, both small and great.”

Our heavenly Father is mindful of all his children who fear him. He shows them goodness and sets his eyes on them to do them good. Every promise of blessing in the Bible is the special gift that the Father has provided for the benefits of all those who fear him, we can safely hand our faith on them all and claim them for God is faithful who has promised. The blessings of the Lord rest upon those who fear him.

1. **God supplies all their needs**

Psalm 34:9

“O fear the LORD, you his saints: for there is no lack to them that fear him.”

Psalm 111:5

“He has given food unto them that fear him: he will ever be mindful of his covenant.”

Our Father in heaven knows all our needs and takes it upon himself to supply our need. Those who fear the Lord receives God’s supply to cater for their need for God is their Provider. With confidence we can call upon him and ask for both temporal and spiritual blessings, our loving Father is a responsible Father who truly takes care of his children, he will give us food and clothing and supply all the necessities of life according to his will for us. We do not need to weary ourselves out about how our need will be supplied, if we fear him, he is mindful of his covenant to provide for all our needs.

1. **They enjoy protection and deliverance**

Psalm 34:7

“The angel of the LORD encamps round about them that fear him, and delivers them.”

The Lord assigns his holy angels to take care of his children who fear him. The angels protect and deliver them from all harms and danger. If we fear the Lord, we do not need to be afraid of Satan’s power and attacks; we have a sure refuge in the Almighty God who sends his angels to camp round his own children and deliver them. What a privilege to be under a constant care of protecting angels.

1. **They obtain God’s mercy**

Psalm 103: 11, 13, 17

“For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.”

“Like as a father pities his children, so the LORD pities them that fear him.”

“But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children.”

God extends his mercy towards those who fear him. He has a tender pity towards them, understands their struggles and temptations that come their ways as they seek to obey him. Jesus knows by experience how weak we are and how much we need his divine help to overcome our weaknesses and to remain faithful to his commandments. He yearns with tender pity over all his children who live in this world where Satan reigns, and he chooses to extend his mercy to us. Although we will fall or fail, he does not throw us away, he forgives our sins, and gives us strength to stand up and continue our journey with him. In addition, He takes care of our children and hears our prayers over them as we seek to guide them in the fear of the Lord.

1. **God fulfills their desires**

Psalms 145:19

“He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them.”

Psalms 147:11

“The LORD takes pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.”

Those who fear the Lord seek to conform their lives to his principles, therefore their desires are in accordance with God’s will. In that case, their requests are granted because they concur with God’s desire for them. It is the pleasure of God to answer the requests of his children as they ask according to his will. He takes pleasure in them and he fulfils their desires.

1. **Eternal life awaits those who fear God**

The final and the most glorious of all the blessings is the gift of eternal life promised by our Lord to those who love him and fear his name. The benefits of the fear of God are not limited to this world alone but extend to eternity. Apostle Paul says,

1 Corinthians 15:19

“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most to be pitied.”

Friends, the good news is that we will reign eternally with our Lord when he comes to take us home, therefore Paul admonishes us,

1 Corinthians 15:58,

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, since you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

Likewise the following passages admonish us to continue in the fear of God because our reward will be eternal life.

Romans 2:7

“To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life.”

Jude 1:21

“Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”

Let us not grow weary in working in the fear of God because our labor is not in vain. We have the promise of eternal life, being forever with the Lord we have loved and served here on earth.

**Exercise 2**

Discuss the benefits of the fear of the Lord in the lives of the Bible characters you identified in Exercise 1 (Revisit exercise 1).

**SECTION B:**

**Seminar Presentation**

**HOW CAN WE DEVELOP THE FEAR OF GOD?**

Now that we are acquainted with the meaning of the fear of the Lord and the benefits we derive by having the fear of God, we are left with how to develop the fear of God so that we can also experience these benefits. Individually as a woman of value and collectively as a group of women in our church and in the community, we need to develop the fear of God and our lives should model what the fear of God is. In addition, we need to witness to the blessings that result from having the fear of God so that others may come to know our God and desire to fear him too. After all, we are the salt and the light of the world Matthew 5:13, 14). Christ has called us to be his witnesses to the world as well (Acts 1:8)

The following simple steps can help us to develop the fear of God:

1. **Seek God daily through the reading of Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy writings**

To know God is to love and fear him. Jesus has come to reveal the character of God to us and the only sure means of learning about his character is as we contemplate God through the life of Jesus Christ whom he sent in the Holy Scripture. The Bible is the true revealer of God. Daily we should spend enough time to search the pages of the Bible for the revelation of God and his character.

The Psalmist writes in Psalms 119:11 “Your word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against you.” As we store the word of God in our hearts, we fill our minds with the principles of God’s character, and this will gradually cleanse our soul temple from all filthiness. Wrong principles will be replaced with God’s everlasting principles and the fear of God will gradually take the place of our sinful habits.

In the same way, Adventists have been given a treasure house in the Spirit of Prophecy writings to help us understand the hidden truths of the Bible. Reading these writings will greatly increase our desire to read the Bible and to understand the fear of God which will bring immense blessings to us.

1. **Earnest prayer for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit**

It is only through the power of the Holy Spirit that we can be able to develop the fear of God. It is not enough to read our Bibles and the Spirit of Prophecy writings, but we also need the help of the Holy Spirit. Our human nature has been overcome by sin, therefore, we do not naturally possess the fear of God, neither can we possess it by our own strength.

The reality of our human nature and the only solution to this reality are explained in Romans 8:7-9.

“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

Our fallen human nature is the carnal mind which is in enmity against God. It does not love the law of God neither can it develop the fear of God. It cannot please God. Our nature loves sinful things and the deeds of flesh. But praise be to God for the Holy Spirit who dwells in us and produces the love and the fear of God in us.

Therefore, it is important to daily ask in prayer for the Holy Spirit to dwell in us and to give us the understanding concerning the character of God. God is willing to give us His Spirit to help and to inspire us than any earthly parent is willing to give gifts to their children. It is our privilege to claim God’s promises to receive the Holy Spirit.

John 14:16-18

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees him not, neither knows him: but you know him; for he dwells with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.”

Luke 11:13

“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?”

Ezekiel 36:27

“And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you shall keep my judgments, and do them.”

1. **Close the door of the heart against evil**

As we daily study the Bible, Spirit of Prophecy writings, and engage in earnest prayer for the Holy Spirit to dwell in us, we need to consciously close the door of our hearts against all evil. This simply means to collaborate with the Holy Spirit to run away from anything that will feed our human nature against God’s holy principles. The Bible admonishes us to guard our hearts against all evil.

Proverbs 4:23

“Keep your heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.”

Proverbs 22:5

“Thorns and snares are in the way of the perverse: he that does keep his soul shall be far from them.”

We must do away with all the books, social media contacts, and friendships that shut out the fear of God from our hearts. We must make a firm decision to only entertain things in our minds that can help us know more of God’s character and His love through Christ Jesus. As we do this, we will be feeding our spiritual nature which will grow in the fear of God.

1. **Be a Witness**

The fear of God obliges all human beings to love others as Christ loves us. This love is manifest through our unselfish labor for the good of others. As we share our treasures of the knowledge of God with others through our means, services, prayers, offering bible studies, visitation to the needy and invitation of sinners to Christ, we testify to the world that we love and fear God. Our deeds are the only witness to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The fruit of the Holy Spirit in us as found in Galatians 5:22 becomes evident to others that we truly fear God.

It is important to develop a life of witnessing to others about the love of God that has created in us the fear of God and hope of eternal life.

**Exercise 3**

Take a time out individually to reflect upon how to develop the fear of God personally, then pray to God to help you practice these 4 steps learned. Ask especially for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

**Exercise 4**

After the individual prayer, write the names of every woman in your group or church on separate pieces of paper, fold the papers, and place them in a basket. Ask each woman to pick a folded paper containing a name written inside. Each woman will pray for the name she picked for a period of at least one month concerning the lessons learned in this seminar.

My prayer is that God blesses us all as we develop the fear of God. Amen.

#End of Activity and Seminar#

1. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/heroine> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)