

A Deeper Experience

DAY 4—THE VALUE OF SURRENDER

“I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance” (Luke 15:7).

He grew up in a logger’s home, the youngest of four children. His siblings were much older and had lives of their own; his father and mother were preoccupied managing a tavern in the small town where they lived. Eddie was often left to care for himself. The local movie theater was his babysitter on weekends, and many times he came home after the double feature to an empty house. Sometimes he sat in the family car well after other seven-year-old children were asleep in their beds and cried for his mother to come out of the tavern and take him home.

When Eddie was 14, his mother became a born-again Seventh-day Adventist Christian, and things dramatically changed. Instead of patronizing the tavern, his mother began attending prayer meeting and church services. Eddie joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church with his mother and enrolled in church school. By the time he was 17, however, he lost interest in church. Two years later, he was drafted into military service. His pastor encouraged him to get re-baptized before facing the dangers of battle. This sounded like a great plan, and Eddie agreed to do so when he came home on leave. He studied the fundamental beliefs of the Adventist Church for a second time. This provided head-knowledge, but he still didn’t know Jesus.

Eddie found that trying to meet church standards on his own was a challenge. He was tired of trying to be a Christian, playing church, trying to obey. He was powerless to maintain the Christian life and fell back into his old ways. What was wrong? “There are those who profess to serve God, while they rely upon their own efforts to obey His law, to form a right character, and secure salvation. Their hearts are not moved by any deep sense of the love of Christ, but they seek to perform the duties of the Christian life as that which God requires of them in order to gain heaven. Such religion is worth nothing. . . . A profession of Christ without this deep love [of Christ] is mere talk, dry formality, and heavy drudgery” (*Steps to Christ*, p. 44).

Eddie’s mother and sister attended an all-night prayer meeting at the church that New Year’s Eve. They prayed specifically for Eddie. They saw the answer to their prayers over the next few weeks when things started to go wrong for him. He lost his girlfriend, his job, and his car. *Why is my world falling apart?* he wondered. After a night of drinking with friends, Eddie came home in a drunken stupor. He cried out, “God, if you’re real, I need you! I know a lot about you, but now I want to know you!” A sweet, still, small voice made its way through the fog in his mind: “I AM real, and I love you.” This broke his heart. “How could You possibly love me after how I’ve lived?” he asked. “I’m so tired of my life the way it is. Please make me a true Christian. I want to serve You the rest of my life, but I can’t do it by myself.”

That night, Eddie surrendered his life to Jesus and accepted Him as Lord and Savior. He believed by faith that his sins were forgiven and that he was a new creature in Christ Jesus; old things were passed away. Through this simple act of believing the promise of God, the Holy Spirit began a work in his heart. A new life emerged, and Eddie did not turn back.

“Now that you have given yourself to Jesus, do not draw back, do not take yourself away from Him, but day by day say, ‘I am Christ’s; I have given myself to Him;’ and ask Him to give you His Spirit and keep you by His grace. As it is by giving yourself to God, and believing Him, that you become His child, so you are to live in Him. The apostle says, ‘As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.’ Col. 2:6, KJV” (*Steps to Christ*, p. 52).

Eddie began to read the Bible and learned to pray. As he studied the Scriptures and learned more about the love of God through the life of Jesus, his own life became transformed. The drinking, smoking, and other lifestyle choices that once made him happy were no longer part of his life.

Eddie's mother suggested he read the little book *Steps to Christ* to help him in his new journey. He found it difficult to read at first—his mind wandered many times—but as he persevered, taking one page at a time, the book became precious to him. He found in its pages the love of God, and by faith accepted that the promises of God were meant for him. He finally found peace.

SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR THE PRAYER TIME

Praise

- Lord, we praise You that You never give up on anyone.
- We praise You for Your marvelous works for the children of men.
- Lord, we praise You for the joy we find in Your presence and for giving us a hope and a future.

Confession

- Please, Lord, forgive us for holding onto things that separate us from You.
- Forgive us for when we try to live the Christian life on our own.
- We confess that we need a personal experience with you, not just head knowledge.

Supplication and Intercession

- Lord, we ask You to give us fully surrendered hearts to live in obedience to Your word.
- Please baptize us daily with the Holy Spirit and make us more diligent in our efforts to win people.
- We pray that our loved ones who have left the faith will remember what it was like to be in fellowship with You and will long to be reunited with You. Help them sense and accept Your love and forgiveness.
- Please fulfill your promise in Joel 2:25: restore the years the locusts [sin] have eaten in our lives and in the lives of our loved ones. Give us faith to believe You will keep Your Word.
- We pray for the 16 million people in the 6 least-reached cities of South Pacific Division. We pray for the daily baptism of the Holy Spirit on members as they reach out in love to the unreached.
- We pray for the Holy Spirit to help us know how to reach the 406 million people in the 105 least-reached cities of Northern Asia-Pacific Division.
- Please bless as Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries mobilizes chaplains and interested members to minister to those in prison.
- We also pray for our list of seven or more people [name the names if appropriate].

Thanksgiving

- Thank You, Lord, that You gave us the Holy Spirit to continually guide us into all truth.
- Thank You for working to answer our prayers in ways we cannot see.
- Lord, we thank You in advance for answering our prayers, not because we are worthy, but because Jesus is.

SUGGESTED SONGS TO SING

“Come, Thou Fount” (SDA Hymnal #334); “Have Thine Own Way” (SDA Hymnal #567); “All the Way” (SDA Hymnal #516); “Because He Lives” (SDA Hymnal #526); “Faith is the Victory” (SDA Hymnal #608)

PROMISES TO CLAIM AS YOU PRAY

- “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him” (1 John 5:14, 15).
- “I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely, for My anger has turned away from him” (Hos. 14:4).
- “I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance” (Luke 5:32).
- “So rend your heart, and not your garments; return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm” (Joel 2:13).