

Social¹ Support: The Tie That Binds Us to One Another



SABBATH—JUNE 19

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Genesis 1:27; John 1:1–3; Romans 14:7; 1 Corinthians 12:14–26; 1 Corinthians 13; Galatians 6:2; Ephesians 4:1–16.

MEMORY VERSE: “ ‘I give you a new command. Love one another. You must love one another, just as I loved you. If you love one another, everyone will know you are my disciples [followers]’ ” (John 13:34, 35, NIV).

PEOPLE WHO FEEL UNLOVED AND ARE LONELY ARE MORE LIKELY to cause trouble or act or behave in a risky way. Such people are responsible for the rise of disease or premature death by 200 to 500 percent or more.

Anything that causes loneliness may cause illness and suffering. Instead, love, closeness, connection, and community² bring health and healing. This is no surprise because, as humans,³ we need to live in community and fellowship⁴ with one another.

With these ideas in mind, we come to the final week in our study about health and temperance.⁵ This week's topic deals with the important question of our relationships⁶ with others and how these can influence⁷ our health.

To view and/or download a Hope Channel show on this week's lesson, visit www.lifesbeat.org.

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1. social—liking to be with and talk to people; happy to be with people and do things with them.
 2. community—a group of people living, working, or worshipping together.
 3. humans—men, women, and children.
 4. fellowship—to join a group of people who share similar beliefs and interests.
 5. temperance—not overdoing anything we do; taking good care of health by avoiding habits that are not healthy.
 6. relationships—the way in which two or more people, groups, or countries talk to, behave toward, and deal with one another.
 7. influence—to have power, or an effect, over persons or things.

SUNDAY—JUNE 20

THE ORIGINAL (FIRST) IMAGE (LIKENESS; COPY) (Genesis 1:27)

Jesus Himself is God. How does this fact help us understand better what it means to have been made in the image (likeness) of God according to Genesis 1:27? How does knowing about Jesus help us understand Adam’s and Eve’s characters⁸ at Creation?

The Bible is clear. We were made in the image (likeness) of God. It is clear, too, that Jesus is God (read John 1:1–3). So, in the beginning, humans showed almost the same moral (holy; righteous) character⁹ as Jesus. For example, Jesus loved us so much that He stooped down and put on human form to save us. In the beginning humans loved like this. Jesus was willing to minister¹⁰ to others by washing the feet of Judas. Before the Fall, humans loved like this. Jesus, who was dying on the cross, took time to comfort the dying thief. This is how humans loved others before the Fall. Jesus cried out—“Father, forgive them. They don’t [do not] know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34 ,Nlrv). This is how humans loved before sin entered the world.

So, the idea of being almost the same as Jesus means being re-made

into His image. We read about how He lived. We know how He treated people and how He loved even His enemies. Then we understand that at the heart of Christ’s character was unselfish love for others. In the same way, as humans we were made to love and care unselfishly for those who were around us. That is part of what it means to have been made in the image of God.

So, we were made to love and to be loved. And this we cannot do in an empty space. We need people to love, just as people need to be loved. This is what community and family are for.



We were made to love and to be loved.

Think more about what it means to have been made in the image of God and that Jesus is God. How does this fact help us understand just how sinful we are and how much we need a Savior? More so, how should this help us understand why we need to treat people better than we often do?

8. characters—who people are; all that people do, feel, and think are what people are made of.

9. character (of Jesus)—who Jesus is; having and understanding the character of Jesus is the same as being kind, honest, and so on. God’s law (Ten Commandments) shows us His character.

10. minister—to help or care for someone or something.

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MONDAY—JUNE 21

SOCIAL PEOPLE (Romans 14:7)

What important principle (rule) is found in Romans 14:7? How have you experienced how real this truth is?

In life or death, we have some influence on others, especially those in our family. The responsible caring for our own health brings blessings to both ourselves and those who are around us.

What do Genesis 2:18; Ecclesiastes 4:9–12; 1 Corinthians 12:14–26; and Galatians 6:2 tell us about how social relationships were meant as a blessing for us?

Good relationships positively influence both our own and others' lives. For this reason we should learn to give and receive thankfully. It is incorrect to say, "It is my body, and it is nobody's business but mine." Society¹¹ pays for every person's poor health choices. Human life is a valuable creation of God. So it is of great worth and deserves protection. In many places the value of life is cheap. For the Christian, every person is valuable. It is important to invest not only in your own health, but also in the health of others.

A doctor studied how important

social ties and social supports are to disease and death rates. The close social and old-fashioned ties of the Japanese culture¹² lead to the best health results. The better the social ties, the better the health. The doctor also showed that social separation and loneliness lead to poorer health and higher mortality rates. Happy and satisfying friendships and relationships lead to healthy bodies, minds, hearts, and actions.



It is important to invest not only in your own health, but also in the health of others.

In what ways have you profited¹³ from social fellowship? How can you help others in the same way you have gained? Do you take more from the fellowship, or give more? What does your answer say about yourself?

TUESDAY—JUNE 22

UNITY¹⁴ IN SALVATION¹⁵ (Ephesians 4:1–16)

In Ephesians 4:1–16, how does

11. society—people living together as a group, or forming a group, with the same way of life.

12. culture—the way that people live, dress, think, eat, and socialize with one another.

13. profited—to have received an advantage or benefit from something.

14. unity—the state of being in full agreement.

15. salvation—God's plan for saving sinners from eternal (without end) death; the gift of eternal life; being saved.

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Paul describe the people who have been purchased by the blood of Jesus? What does this mean in our relationship with one another?

No one hates his or her own body (Ephesians 5:29, 30). All parts of the body work together to function (work) well. If one part of the body suffers, all other parts suffer. The closer we are to others, the more readily and powerfully we experience their problems.

When we mix socially and helpfully with others, it improves health. Two hundred and seventy-six healthy volunteers were exposed to the common cold virus.¹⁶ A study was made of different relationships. Those who had few relationships experienced more than four times the risk of developing a cold than those who had many relationships. These differences could not be explained by factors (things) such as immunity,¹⁷ smoking, exercise, amount of sleep, and drinking alcohol. Working together in different relationships helped people to fight against infection better, according to this study.

All this points to what we have been studying this quarter. Our emotional (heart), mental (mind), and spiritual health can have a powerful influence on our physical health. Our relationships with others are important to our health.

Sure, there are times when most everyone wants to be alone. But that is not the same as being part of a larger community (group) that can

act as a support group, especially in times of need.



Our relationships with others are important to our health.

How can you better involve yourself in the life of your church community? How much death to self will it take to be more involved? What gifts do you have that can help others?

WEDNESDAY—JUNE 23

**SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER
(1 Corinthians 13)**

What do John 13:35; Romans 15:7; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13; 1 Thessalonians 4:18; James 5:16; 1 Peter 3:8; 1 Peter 4:9; and 1 John 1:7 teach us about how we are to relate to one another?

One of the best things the Christian can do is to follow the example of Jesus in loving people, no matter what their weaknesses are. Jesus loved His disciples no matter what their weaknesses and failures were. Jesus was caring and protective, even toward people who refused to accept Him and betrayed Him. We are called to do the same. This can happen only as Christ works in our lives. And He can

¹⁶ virus—an extremely small living thing that causes a disease and that spreads from one person or animal to another.

¹⁷ immunity—the power to keep yourself from being affected by a disease.

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do that depending on how much we surrender¹⁸ and let Him do it. As we understand just how much grace¹⁹ and mercy²⁰ God has given to us, we can start doing the same to others. Loving the people who are loving and kind is rather easy. Almost everyone can do that. But suppose we are called to love the ones who are hard to get along with or the ones who treat us unfairly. Then it takes the grace of God working in us.



One of the best things a Christian can do is follow the example of Jesus in loving people no matter what their weaknesses are.

How well do you love those who are not so easy to love? How can you learn to do better in that area? How would Jesus treat that person? Go and do the same.

THURSDAY—JUNE 24

SERVE ONE ANOTHER (Romans 12:4–8)

We each have been created with certain spiritual gifts²¹ for service.

What are the different spiritual gifts and services found in Romans 12:4–8; 1 Corinthians 12:1–11; and Ephesians 4:8–11?

As humans, we were made to love others, as Jesus loved. And when we do this, we help others and ourselves too.

Think for a moment how good you feel when you reach out and help others without expecting something in return. Something inside us is touched. We get a sense of satisfaction that we never felt before. And that is because, by giving of ourselves, we are living as God planned for us to live. We are doing what God originally (first) created us to do.

A positive mental outlook on life can have a positive influence on our bodies too. Our bodies work better when we feel positive, happy, and fulfilled. It should be no surprise that scientific studies have shown positive medical rewards that come from doing good for others. It makes perfect sense. By helping others, we feel better. And when we feel better, our physical health is improved too. What a perfect team!

“My brothers and sisters, you were chosen to be free. But don’t [do not] use your freedom as an excuse to live in sin. Instead, serve one another in love” (Galatians 5:13, NIV). What does it mean to serve one another in love? How

18. surrender—giving one’s whole life to Jesus to love and serve and to obey His holy law.

19. grace—God’s gift of forgiveness, and mercy (kindness) that He freely gives us to take away our sin.

20. mercy—kind or forgiving treatment of someone who could be treated harshly.

21. spiritual gifts—the gifts the Holy Spirit gives us when we become born again. Read 1 Corinthians 12:1–11 for a list of those gifts.

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can you take these words and use them in your own life right now? Think of someone whom you can serve in love. Then do it, even if it takes self-denial on your part. After all, there is no question—someone out there needs you.

FRIDAY—JUNE 25

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Read Ellen G. White, “The Creation,” pages 44–51, in *Patriarchs and Prophets*;²² “Social Purity,”²³ pages 567–671, in *Counsels [Advice] on Health*; “Saved to Serve,” pages 95–107, in *The Ministry of Healing*; “Development [Growth] and Service,” pages 497–502, in *The Ministry of Healing*.

“The love of Christ, shown in unselfish ministry, will do more in changing the evildoer than the sword or the court of justice will do. These are necessary to scare the lawbreaker. But the loving missionary can do more than this. Often the heart that hardens under punishment²⁴ will melt under the love of Christ.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, pages 105, 106.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

❶ Think more about the idea that, as humans, Adam and Eve were made in the image of God. And they were

somewhat like Christ, even though they still had a lot to learn. How does this help us understand our need for a Savior? (After all, we can compare²⁵ ourselves to Jesus and see just how far we have fallen into sin.)

❷ Think of your own church situation. Discuss with your Sabbath School class how fellowship in your church could be improved. What can you do as a person to improve the level of fellowship within your church? What could your class do as a group to better strengthen the relationships within your church group? How well does your church deal with those who have special needs, such as sick people who stay at home?

❸ In class, talk about the rewards and happiness that come from serving others. Why do we get so much satisfaction from serving others? What things prevent us from doing this more often? Through the power of Christ, how can we fight against focusing on our own selfishness and our own needs rather than on the needs of others? What is your own experience with selfishness? How have you experienced in your own life just how unsatisfactory and empty life can be when you are selfish?

22. patriarchs and prophets—patriarchs were leaders of God’s people in early Bible times, such as Abraham and Isaac, or other leaders in Israel, such as Moses; prophets are men or women who are given messages by God to His people.

23. purity—the quality or state of being free of sin or guilt.

24. punishment—a penalty (price to be paid) for, or the result of, doing something wrong; when someone must suffer loss or pain for doing something bad, wrong, or against the law.

25. compare—to show how two or more things are the same.

