

# THE EDIFIER

Volume 29

Church of God (Seventh Day) Australia

June 2023

**A Higher View**

**Love Your Enemies**

**Sanctification**

**Shame or  
Godly Sorrow?**

 A magazine dedicated to uplifting  
and transforming peoples' lives  
through the uncompromised Word of God



# THE EDIFIER



*The truth will make you free*

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*Rising beyond our own nature*

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#### About:

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John Klassek

Richard Todd

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"I will carry you on the wings of eagles," is a metaphor that those in Christ, on the day of His return, will rise far above our present day sufferings and circumstances. There is a higher perspective than our own current sufferings. Photo by John Klassek

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## From the Editor

It's always encouraging to reflect on our personal and collective purpose. God who created everything, rested from his works on the seventh day, and then reflected on all that He had made. In His own estimation, "It was very good."

Likewise, as faithful stewards of God's will and work, we too must take the time to reflect on His good work among, in and through us. After all, we are God's fellow workers.

It is always encouraging to see growth, not only in our own lives, but also throughout our faith community. And to that end, our prayers are being answered in ways that are often surprising, as we witness more people come to faith in Jesus Christ.

What gives us perhaps the greatest joy is when the seeds of the gospel results in growth. Often, it takes watering of the Word with warm sunshine and gentle rain, and in ways only known to God, that little seed of truth somehow germinates, reaching up toward the light.

For others, it takes a bush fire to scorch the seed that lies buried under a blanket of leaves. Then, when the landscape seems blackened and lifeless, the first seedlings that appear are often those hardy "Banksias" that no amount of water or sunshine could raise!

That's the miracle and mystery of God's surprising handiwork. The fruits of our labour in witness and evangelism will be borne, either in our time, or in the harvest of yet another future generation.

Our goal is simply to share the good news in every way we can. Everything we say and do must be in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Of course, the greatest joy of our labour awaits the time when Jesus calls the names of all the righteous who sleep in their graves, to rise and live forever to be, "Where I AM".

Today, it is the compelling power and presence of the Holy Spirit that convicts, clarifies, comforts and confronts the human heart more than anything else can! To that end we pray and labour as we ourselves reach towards the light. □

*John Klassek*





# LOVE

## YOUR ENEMIES

**D**uring His sermon on the mount Jesus Christ admonishes us to love our enemies, and to bless, do good and pray for them (Matthew 5:43-48).

The saying, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy," does not come to us from the Bible but had its source amongst the other teachings of the Jews at that time. While no Bible verse explicitly says: "hate your enemy", the Pharisees may have somewhat misapplied some of the Old Testament passages about hatred for God's enemies.

Jesus explained to His followers that they should adhere to the real meaning of God's law, by loving their enemies as well as their neighbours. A Pharisee once asked Jesus: "Who is my neighbour?". Jesus then told the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Here Jesus taught that His followers must demonstrate love to all kinds of people, no matter their faith, nationality, or personality – enemies included. If you love your enemies and "pray for those who persecute you," Jesus is revealed as Lord of your life to others. This is because such behaviour is completely unnatural and contrary to the behaviour and desires of our flesh and can leave others somewhat perplexed.

By using an illustration of the sun rising and the rain falling on both the good and the evil, Jesus shows God's indiscriminating love to all people.

His disciples must then follow by His example and exhibit this same indiscriminating love for both friends and enemies. Jesus is teaching us that we must live by a higher standard than what the world expects; a standard that is impossible for us to attain by our own efforts. It's only through the power of God's Spirit that His people can truly love and pray for those who intend to do them harm. Christ not only preached this but exhibited this in His actions numerous times; with the primary example being that even though we were sinners He willingly laid down His life for us, even praying for His very persecutors during His crucifixion whilst they mocked and reviled Him.

Finally, after giving us the admonition to love our enemies, Jesus then gives us the following command: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect". As sons of our Father, we are to be perfect, even as He is perfect. This is utterly impossible for sinful man to achieve. This unattainable standard is exactly what the Law itself demanded. So how can Jesus demand the impossible? He later tells us, "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible." That which God demands only He can accomplish, including the demand to love our enemies. What is impossible for man becomes possible for those of us who repent and put our Faith in Jesus Christ, after which we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, which is the very Spirit of God living within us. □

*Michael Surnak  
Adelaide, SA*





# The Truth Shall Make You Free

**D**o you always speak the truth? Is your word trustworthy? When was the last time you lied – even a teeny-weeny little white lie? “I caught a fish this big,” said the weekend fisherman with outstretched arms, before bringing his hands closer together to reveal the actual size of the tiny minnow he had.

Our church’s motto is: “The truth shall make you free.” It’s fashioned from Jesus’ words who prefaced it with, “You shall know the truth...” True liberty is found only in truth!

Of His Father, Jesus said, “Your Word is truth.” Elsewhere, He said, “I am the truth...”

Thundered from Mount Sinai and emblazoned in stone is the life-changing commandment, “You shall not bear false witness.”

Tell the truth. Be the truth. Seek the truth. Anything else is from the devil. Thus says the Lord of Scripture.

And yet, in contrast to the truth, we live in an age of mis-speak, lies and deceit. This lying and false narrative exists throughout education (evolution), politics (broken promises) and mainstream media (bias and misleading content).

On a personal level, many people seem to have no issue with their conscience telling little “white lies”. It’s a face-saving matter, or a polite but untrue way of creating an alibi. Others are pathological liars, existing only to lie about almost anything and in any circumstance.

So, the telling question is, of course, by whose rules are we playing by? Jesus condemned the devil, declaring that he was a liar from the beginning. Lucifer, the bright and powerful archangel deceptively construed a jealous plot to overthrow God. As the serpent, he mixed a potent story of truth and lies, and thus mother Eve was deceived. The narrative for much of the past 6000 years has been dangerously deceptive. Elijah, for example, was a righteous prophet among 400 lying prophets!

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**“In contrast to the truth, we live in an age of mis-speak, lies and deceit.”**

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When Jesus' disciples privately enquired about the future, His first cautionary words to them were, "Take heed that no one deceive you (lead you astray)." His words are more poignant today than ever before!

Thus, if the world we live in is dangerously deceitful, what does it say about our hearts? Does not Jeremiah the prophet lament that the "heart is deceitful and desperately wicked?" How certain are we then that we always speak the truth?

If we're really honest it's the lies we tell ourselves that pose the real danger. How easy it is to make a new year's resolution to never lie and only speak the truth. We may find it more difficult than we think! But the end result of truth and purity is both revealing and encouraging.

We also soon discover how easy it is to lie to ourselves, let alone mislead others. When we covet, we deceive ourselves. It is also easy to entertain stray and unwanted thoughts, rather than immediately vanquish them. Self-justification is a lie, just as is unrepentance. Both motives assert a deceitful self-orientation apart from the highest, transcendent truth in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The world needs truth, and it must start with us. Our life story must be measured by truthfulness. Never compromise on truth. It's not your truth or my truth. Truth is absolute. And, the greatest gift a relationship can have is truth. Practice truth everywhere. Truthfulness in marriage, for example, is such a powerful blessing and assurance. In fact, a relationship cannot survive unless both parties agree to always be truthful.

Perhaps most don't overly realise the transcendent power of truth. We must not only speak the truth but also be the truth and live in the truth. The truth truly does set us free – liberating us completely from our own deceptive ways, the false narrative of society, and the devil's deathly guises.

You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free! □

*Pastor John Klassek  
Church of God (Seventh Day) Australia*

**"If the Son  
sets you free,  
you will be  
free indeed."**

**(John 8:36)**

## A HIGHER VIEW

In difficult times, in trial and tribulation, it is hard to sometimes fully understand the parts of our lives were suffering seem to prevail. But there is a higher view that we're often not privy to.

Job had no idea he was part of a cosmic conversation between God and the devil. The Psalmist expressed it eloquently when he wrote, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear none ill, for you are with me..." Despite the troubles we sometimes face, there are divine assurances of a good outcome.

The greatest asset we can have in our journey is the power of enduring faith. We know that while we don't understand all the details, we nonetheless trust in the goodness of God. And, we know that in Christ we have ultimate victory.

"When you see these things happen," said Jesus, speaking of tumultuous times, "Look up for your redemption is near."

In other words, may we always fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. His perspective is the higher view. □



# Sanctification

**S**anctification is one of the spiritual preparation processes instated by God for the blessing, equipping and empowering of His people. It is defined as the action of making or declaring something holy – a process of being freed from sin.

Through the process of sanctification, we are called to deep and sober reflection, engendering a complete submission to God in a repentant attitude. In Joel chapter 2, we read where Joel called the people together for a sacred fast with the hope that God would forgive and bless them. 1 Samuel 7:3 is a call for the abandonment of idols for perfect deliverance.

In 2 Chronicles 29:15 we read of a call for the cleansing of the temple of God. Going through to verse 19 we find that nothing in the temple was left uncleansed, from the altar of burnt offerings to the articles and tables of shewbread.

We read in 1 Corinthians 3:16 where we are the temple of God. This means that the body must be an instrument of righteousness to holiness, and therefore is never to be made an instrument of sin. Being a temple of God, we are then united with the Lord in Spirit. Sanctification then bridges the gap of immoral living and leads us to Holy living. There are many passages in the scripture that point us to the need for sanctification.

In Exodus 19:10-11, we read of when God wanted to meet with Israelite people at Mount

Sinai. He demanded them to sanctify themselves. "And the Lord said unto Moses go unto the people and sanctify them today, and tomorrow. And let them wash their clothes and be ready against the third day for the Lord will come down in the sight of all upon Mount Sinai."

We also read that Job intentionally on a daily basis sanctified his children. (Job 1:5) "And it was so, when the days of their fasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified his children, and rose up early in the morning and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: For Job said, 'It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.' ..."

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**"Sanctification  
is a process  
we all must  
intentionally  
participate in."**

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In 2 Timothy 2:21, sanctification was for personal purification. It reads thus: "If a man therefore purge himself from these (besetting sins that we continue to struggle with.)" Besetting sins are major recurring problems that alienate us from God. Sanctification can break the walls of those kinds of sins.

Our Lord Jesus Christ kept himself continually sanctified. In John 17:19, we read: "And for their sakes I sanctify myself that they also might be sanctified through the truth."

Reference can also be made to the book of Joshua when the Lord demanded the Israelites to be circumcised. Why was this?

Firstly, because the Israelites had seen a good measure of God's power, including the parting of the Jordan River at its peak. They saw the awesome power of God to enable his people to



pass through on dry land. Secondly, the cities and the inhabitants of the land had become terrified by the Israelites. Many kings and kingdoms had been subdued by the Lord.

Although they had already possessed a land before, Jordan, there were still many more lands to conquer and to possess. So, sanctification became the means of achieving God's promises. What did they have to do? In renewing their covenant with God, they were to cleanse themselves from their pride and crooked minds. Sanctification, as did circumcision, then prepared them for their final journey to the promised land.

In the second book of Chronicles, we learn that as people sanctify themselves, the land will be healed and blessed. The Lord's word will be fulfilled.

The body of Christ also needs continual sanctification. Sanctification is a process we all must intentionally participate in. This may involve periods of fasting, prayer, Bible reading and meditation.

The process of sanctification – our willing response to God's holy calling – involves total evaluation of our lives as individuals and our lives within our collective fellowship. By submitting to Christ's blood sacrifice, we become purged from all sorts of pride, self-claimed hypocrisies, euphoria of past successes and other personal sins. Only then might we be prepared to take up any new challenges in the march together as one body.

We are labourers in a larger harvest. The harvest of humanity is ripe, but the reapers are few. It is time for all of us to not only be stirred by the Holy Spirit in living clean, holy sanctified lives, but also as such to participate in the work of the greater harvest. □

*Levi Ogbonna  
Perth, Western Australia*

# The Ultimate Relationship



Consider how empty life can be with no-one close to share it with. Living in your luxurious apartment with wonderful views is not the same on your own. Going on holiday is not the same on your own. Our greatest times have been spent with others. Perhaps your greatest time in life was the time you spent with your first love.

We must not miss the fact the greatest joy God, who desires to be our 'first love,' has planned for us now and for eternity is relationship with Him. Knowing the joys of relationship, this should make perfect sense. Marriage between a man and a woman is even given as a picture of the relationship the church has with Christ.

How much more can relationship with Christ or God, the glorious and majestic Ones who created all things in heaven and earth surpass even the perfect marriage relationship? God's love, character and personality are vastly better than anything we can experience with another person.

Enjoying God will be what we will be doing throughout eternity. The beauty of what I'm sharing is you have been blessed with the opportunity to begin this relationship now. Rather than looking for things from God, just look for Him, to know Him and be known by Him. This is the beginning and end goal of a Christian life.

Jesus said, "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (John 17:3). □

*David Kidd,  
Pastor, New Zealand*



# Friends of Jesus

**L**yrics from the renowned singer, John Denver, say, “Friends, I will remember you, think of you, pray for you. And when another day is through, I’ll still be friends with you.”

Friends are hard to come by. It has been said a person may only have two or three truly close friends in an entire lifetime. When our friends are sick, we like to send them a “get well” card. We might even venture off to the hospital to see them and encourage them in their time of need. Phone calls are nice and uplifting.

One day a messenger arrived to tell Jesus, “LORD, behold, he whom You love is sick.” (John 11:3b NKJV). Jesus lingered for two whole days before leaving to go see His friend. Then He announced to the disciples, “Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up.” (John 11:11). Later He plainly said, “Lazarus is dead.” Lazarus, friend of Jesus had died. His friend was gone; it must have hurt.

Jesus personified friendship. He knew He would raise Lazarus from the dead. “A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.” (Proverbs 17:17). Lazarus was a friend of Jesus.

“A man who has friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.” (Proverb 18:24). How close do we stick to Jesus? Are we friends of Jesus?

“As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.” (Proverbs 27:17). Do we allow Jesus to sharpen us to His way of life? Do we allow our friends to sharpen us in the word? Are we and our friends, friends of Jesus?

The apostle John, a friend of Jesus, lovingly informs us of what Jesus said at His final

Passover. “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.” (John 15:13). Are we there for our friends when adversity strikes? Are we there for our friends when good things happen? Are we, as John intimated, friends of Jesus?

Jesus traveled to Bethany to see His friend and the family of Lazarus. He did not just mail a nice “get well” card, He went to His friend. “So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days.” (John 11:17).

In fact, Lazarus had been dead so long in the tomb that he was already decaying. Oh, how Mary and Martha had wanted Jesus to arrive sooner and heal their brother, a friend of Jesus. It was too late, Lazarus was dead. Friends had gathered to comfort Mary and Martha. People were crying and lamenting the death of Lazarus. The funeral was over. Lazarus was dead. Overcome with emotion for His friends, “Jesus wept.” (vs. 35).

Jesus walked to the tomb of His friend, Lazarus and He cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus come forth!” (vs. 43b). Lazarus, friend of Jesus was immediately resurrected by God. His rotting, stinking corpse had been healed, the breath of life was put back into him. Jesus, His friend had been there in the family’s time of adversity. Jesus, will be there when we have times of adversity. Lazarus, Mary and Martha were friends of Jesus. What a marvelous blessing to be friends of Jesus.

Who could ever have a better friend than Jesus? For He said, “I AM the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?” (John 11:25). Do we believe this? Are we truly friends of Jesus?

*Elder Mike Wallace  
Church of God (Seventh Day)  
Montana, USA*





# Shame or Godly Sorrow?

**O**ur Messiah was betrayed and denied by both Peter and Judas. History portrays one as a villain and one as a hero. What made the difference? One allowed shame to destroy him, the other pursued repentance and it transformed him. The truth is, we all have denied and betrayed our Lord in some way.

It is interesting to see how we might fit into this story. Will we be like the religious leaders, focussing all our energies on the things we don't like about other people. Instead of dealing with their own issues, they obsessed over their hatred of Jesus. You can try to make up for your mistakes, like Judas giving back the money he had received.

The problem is, of course, that you can't undo your sins. You can give in to despair, stew in your shame and let it eat you alive, as Judas did. Or you can repent, as Peter did. You can allow a godly sorrow to lead you to repentance, and bring your sin to a gracious God of mercy.

In Matthew 27:3-5 it says, *"Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief*

*priests and elders, saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." And they said, "What is that to us? You see to it!" Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself:"*

If you find yourself ensnared in some kind of sin, if you someday find yourself guilty of cowardice or betrayal, if you fail Jesus (and don't we all?), take fresh joy in the fact that Jesus knows your every weakness, your every failure, your every sin. He knew the worst about you. And He died for you anyway. Not so that He could hold you at arm's length for the rest of your life and hold over your head the things you've done, but so that you might be free, forgiven, transformed, and fully restored. All at a most awful cost to Himself.

He is a friend and Saviour who will never betray you. He is a friend who will never abandon you. He is a friend who when you truly repent, He takes your guilt and deals with it and makes it so that in God's sight you never did it. That's the kind of friend and Saviour you and I need!

What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear. □

*Brian Larson, Pastor  
Church of God (Seventh Day)  
Spokane, Washington, USA*

He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

(Isaiah 53:3-5 ESV)

“  
The tragedy was that everyone knew he was innocent. Everyone knew he had healed the sick, raised the dead, cast out demons and given sight to the blind. Moreover, he was betrayed and then denied by two of his followers, and his life exchanged for that of a known criminal. Everyone knew that this was an egregious injustice.”

<https://www.message7.org/2023/bread-yt.html>

## BIBLE PLACES SEARCH

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AKEAWBZPNPFWIWSGICHGDLWEQLTWO  
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OJFVVFDAUXUVKXMC AIRTSMHEDDFFUA  
FFKRMSJCRIAXQKZNQBIRJOUXEYCJHI  
EDTTZGGXEDGGHJXKHYOYV VHZAPHMXM  
TKYARAWOTLTIKKHUHATOJMFNWNFSHT  
ZFXD LLSLWDUCPMYGYCUGDVAOJNIIJJ  
PPBLBIRUVNRJXGPHAGZKESUEPHOKVP  
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### JERUSALEM

LIBYA  
ROME  
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DAN  
EPHRAIM  
ELAM  
UR  
ISRAEL  
CANAAH  
JORDAN  
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HEBRON  
GALILEE

Exploring essential Biblical doctrines of the Church of God (Seventh Day)

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Praise Faith  
Prayer Grace  
Petition Mercy  
Worship Joy

### Sabbath worship locations

#### PERTH:

11:00am 1470 Stoneville Road, Mundaring, WA

#### ADELAIDE:

10:45am Thirteenth Ave, Woodville Nth, SA

#### SYDNEY:

11:00am 44A Macquarie St, Auburn, NSW

For times and other regional venues, please see details at <https://www.cog7.au/welcome>

<https://www.cog7.au/welcome>

A Super Sabbath featuring the theme of "Sowing, Watering, Reaping" was held on 3-5 March 2023 in Woodville North, Adelaide, SA. Participants came from across Australia. Each day began with a free breakfast, followed by engaging workshops, worship services, children's activities, lunch and a Saturday afternoon concert. Many thanks to all who contributed to such a successful event.

Congratulations to Emma on her recent baptism into Christ, in the Swan River in Guildford, Western Australia. Following Sabbath worship services, members gathered by the river where Elder Joshua facilitated the baptism. The laying of hands prayer also included Pastor John and brother Pilar.



// Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. //



# Join Bible Study

## Australia Bible Study via Zoom

Tuesday evening 5:30pm WA time;

7:30pm NSW/VIC; 7:00pm SA time.

Zoom Meeting ID: 993 136 2668

Passcode: Church2020

No Sabbath worship services nearby?  
Join us online for regular livestreaming at

<https://www.cog7.au/live>



# His Will His Word His Worth

"Your Word is Truth"

Compelling, transformative conversations  
in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What was personally witnessed and taught by Jesus' disciples was eventually committed to parchment. This exciting news further traversed the known world by wooden sailing ships. Centuries later it was printed into book form. In more recent times, this good news was broadcast on the air waves and now via digital media further reaching into society's greatest need. This is the good news of Jesus Christ.

This ageless message of hope continues to herald the call to repentance and forgiveness, with a life of transcendent identity, meaning and purpose in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We pray that the timeless message of good news in Jesus not only helps, counsels and guides us on our faith journey but also reaches into countless other lives. There is no other way. There is no other truth. Only in Jesus do we have hope, meaning, purpose and identity. [www.message7.org](http://www.message7.org)



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