CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
DECEMBER252021

Scripture Story: Matthew 28:16-20; Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:9-12.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* or *Humble Hero,* chapters 86, 87.

calling change agents



Photo by Barin Von Foregger

flashlight

"Christ had sojourned in the world for thirty-three years; He had endured its scorn, insult, and mockery; He had been rejected and crucified. Now, when about to ascend to His throne of glory—as He reviews the ingratitude of the people He came to save—will He not withdraw from them His sympathy and love? Will not His affections be centered upon that realm where He is appreciated, and where sinless angels wait to do His bidding? No; His promise to those loved ones whom He leaves on earth is, 'I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world'" (*The Desire of Ages,* p. 830).

keytext

"They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 'Men of Galilee,' they said, 'why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus . . . will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.'"

(Acts 1:10, 11, NIV)

CCBSG B4 2021.indd 53 12/12/20 5:45 PM

what do you think?

Are you a good follower? Or do you tend to be more of a leader? Rank yourself from 1 ("That's not me at all") to 10 ("That is totally me") after the following statements:

_____ I lean on God for everything.
_____ My friends tell me I'm really good at following directions.
_____ If I sense God is calling me to do something I do it without hesitation.
_____ I ask my parents or other adults for advice.
_____ I believe that God makes His will known through His Spirit.
_____ I'm content to be a support person on a team.
_____ I prefer one-on-one mentoring to being in front of a big crowd of people.
_____ I believe the kingdom of God gets built through personal relationships—one friend at a time.
_____ I never worry about anything.
_____ I prefer singing in a choir rather than singing a solo.

did you know?

According to a site on friendship evangelism, polls suggest that approximately 90 percent of converts come to faith because they were invited by a "relative, friend, or neighbor."

INTO THE STORY

"Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.' "

"When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God."

"After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

"They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 'Men of Galilee,' they said, 'why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.' "

(Matthew 28:16-20; Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:9-12, NIV)



OUT OF THE STORY

Matthew 28:16-20

Notice that before Jesus challenges His disciples with the Great Commission, He reminds them that all authority has been given to Him (verse 18). Why do you think He did this?

_____
_____
_____

Why do you think Jesus reminded His disciples that He would always be with them?

_____
_____
_____

Acts 1:9-12

What attitude do you sense in the angels' question "Why do you stand here looking into the sky?"

a. Sympathy
b. Curiosity
c. Sincerity
d. All of the above

Explain.

_____
_____
_____
_____

Luke 24:51, 52

Would you characterize this passage as positive or negative? Why?

_____
_____
_____

punch lines

"Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor's crown" **(Revelation 2:10, NIV).**

" 'You are my witnesses,' declares the Lord, 'and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he' " **(Isaiah 43:10, NIV).**

"This is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world" **(1 John 5:3, 4, NIV).**

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight" **(Proverbs 3:5, 6, NIV).**

"You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance" **(Psalm 32:7, NIV).**

further insight

"He teaches us to look upon every needy soul as our brother, and the world as our field."

—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages,* p. 823

CCBSG B4 2021.indd 55 12/12/20 5:45 PM

Sabbath

Read Isaiah 43:10.

Add up your points from the *What Do You Think?* section to discover your "Follower Quotient." Use this key:

0-20 points	= You are a leader, not a follower.
21-40 points	= You tend to lead rather than follow.
41-60 points	= You are comfortable leading or following.
61-80 points	= You lean toward following.
81-100 points	= You are a gifted team player, supporter, and follower.

Compare your score with the score of friends in your Sabbath School class. Discuss the following questions:

How might you sense God calling you to help build the kingdom of God as a leader? a follower?

_____
_____

Do you tend to be a change agent?

_____
_____

Review the instructions that Jesus gave to His followers at His ascension. How can you make His calling personal and follow those directions today?

_____
_____

Sunday

Read Revelation 2:10.

Read the sections *Into the Story* and *Out of the Story*. If we are to accept the challenge that Jesus gave His followers as He ascended to heaven, would our message be charming? popular? offensive? Why or why not?

_____
_____

_____
_____

Monday

Read Acts 1:9-11.

Compare the *Key Text* with this quotation from Ellen White: "God is not partial. All who are made partakers of His salvation here, and who hope to share the glories of the kingdom hereafter, must gather with Christ. Each must feel that he is responsible for his own case, and for the influence he exerts over others" (*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 1, p. 179).

Ask yourself:

- What influence do I exert over others?
- What does it mean to "gather with Christ"?
- Do I understand that I am responsible for my own case? What does that look like in my life?

Tuesday

Read 1 John 5:3, 4.

Read this week's *Flashlight.* Escape to a quiet place and reflect on God's love for you.

Wednesday

Read the verses in *Punch Lines.* Dig deeper into God's Word by reading these additional texts:

- Matthew 5:14-16
- Mark 1:17
- Acts 1:8
- 2 Timothy 4:1-8
- Luke 9:23-27

Thursday

Read Proverbs 3:5, 6.

At Jesus' ascension, the two men dressed in white asked the disciples, "Why do you just stand here looking up at an empty sky?" (Acts 1:11, *The Message*). In other words: "Are you going to be a stargazer or a change agent?" Jesus asks you to choose being a witness for Him today. How will you answer?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Friday

Read Psalm 32:7.

Ellen White writes: "When Christ ascended to heaven, the sense of His presence was still with His followers. It was a personal presence, full of love and light. Jesus, the Savior, who had walked and talked and prayed with them, who had spoken hope and comfort to their hearts, had, while the message of peace was still upon His lips, been taken up from them into heaven, and the tones of His voice had come back to them, as the cloud of angels received Him—'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.' Matthew 28:20. . . . They knew that He had ascended to heaven to prepare places for them, and that He would come again and take them to Himself" (*Steps to Christ*, pp. 73, 74*).*

Do you enjoy the sense of Christ's personal presence? If so, in what ways? How will you respond to His call to a consistent relationship with Him?

_____
_____
_____

this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages or *Humble Hero*, chapters 86, 87.

**Humble Hero* is a special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages,* created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URIhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.

CCBSG B4 2021.indd 56 12/12/20 5:45 PM