2

Guarding the Gates

Key References: Luke 1:13-17; Matthew 3:4-9; *The Desire of Ages*, chap. 10, pp. 101-103; Our Beliefs, nos. 22, 5, 17















power**text**

"Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies" (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20).

power**point**

We respond to God's love when we dedicate ourselves entirely to Him.

Imagine what John the Baptist might have said to share the reason for his simple lifestyle with someone your age.

John the Baptist stood beside the Jordan River. It was evening, and the people who had been around him all day were finally on their way home.

John talked to God. When he was alone with nature, he felt that God was right there with him. Slowly John realized that he and God were not alone. The young man who had asked him such thoughtful questions a few days ago had hung back from the crowd and was waiting patiently to catch John's attention.

John looked up and smiled, inviting the young man to come closer.

"I want to know why you live so simply," the young man stated.

"There is no easy answer," John replied thoughtfully. "I was dedicated to God for a special purpose before my birth. I am not just trying to be different. I am obeying God's call and purpose for my life. Each person must talk with God about their own life," John began. "But there is an important principle to use in making decisions about how you will live, and how you will worship God."

Sabbath

DO Do this week's activity on page 19.

2

Sunday

READ Read "Guarding the Gates" and start learning the power text, 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20.

TRACK Each day, write in the appropriate box of your NEWSTART sheet (from Sabbath School) how well you are worshipping God in that area of your life. If you did not receive a handout, put the words from the activity on page 19 down the left-hand side of a piece of paper. Put the days of the week across the top and draw lines to make columns for a chart.

PRAY Ask God to help you make choices to worship Him in each area of your life today.

Monday

READ Read Luke 1:13-17. What does this passage tell you about the habits and healthful choices of John the Baptist?

DRAW Draw or trace a picture of a body, remembering that our five senses—touch, taste, hearing, smell, sight—are the five main gates into our body and mind temple.

THINK What types of things should you let in through these gates, or keep out?

PRAY Ask God to help you understand what things you should allow and what you should not allow into your body temple which belongs to God.

Tuesday

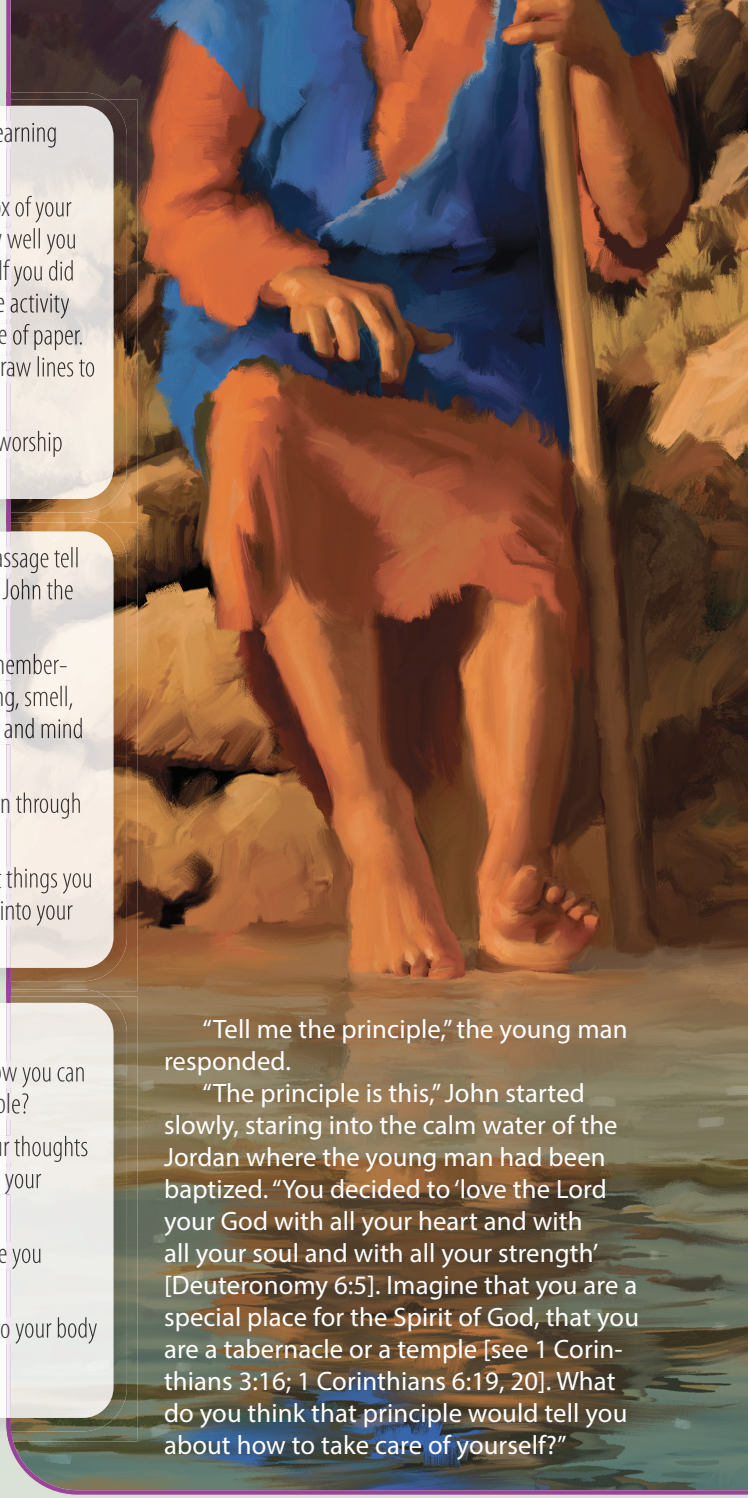
READ Read 2 Corinthians 6:16 and 7:1.

THINK What do these verses teach about how you can allow God to live in your body and mind temple?

WRITE In your Bible study journal, write your thoughts about how these verses relate to your life and your worship of God.

TRACK Fill in your NEWSTART chart. How are you doing?

PRAY Ask God to guard one specific gate into your body temple today.



"Tell me the principle," the young man responded.

"The principle is this," John started slowly, staring into the calm water of the Jordan where the young man had been baptized. "You decided to 'love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength' [Deuteronomy 6:5]. Imagine that you are a special place for the Spirit of God, that you are a tabernacle or a temple [see 1 Corinthians 3:16; 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20]. What do you think that principle would tell you about how to take care of yourself?"



Now it was the young man who stared thoughtfully into the Jordan waters. "I imagine I need to make sure the temple is always clean and ready for God. I have seen the priests cleaning the temple. I think it would be important to keep the temple clean."

"Yes," John nodded, "cleanliness is important. That could include how you take care of your body inside and out, couldn't it? The food you eat, the thoughts you allow to stay in your head."

"I see," the young man responded. Thinking of ways to apply the principle was almost like playing a game. "I have watched the priests chase stray dogs away from the gates. I guess it would be important to guard the gates of the temple. What would that be like for my body temple?" He looked expectantly at John.

"Let's see. What are the gates of your body temple?"

"I think that my eyes and my mouth are gates."

John smiled. "What about your ears, your nose, and your fingers?"

"I get the idea." The young man laughed. "I need to keep my body temple

Wednesday

READ Read Proverbs 4:20-27. Think about your entertainment choices, such as music, videos, TV, magazines, the Internet, and books.

THINK How could you keep your heart and mind clean "above all else," knowing that all your actions are based on what you feel and think?

LIST List the positive things that you allow into the mind chamber of your body temple. List the negative things that sometimes get in as well.

PRAY Ask God to help you make good entertainment choices.

Thursday

READ Read 1 Corinthians 3:16.

PLAN Based on what you have learned this week, write out God's plan to improve the treatment of your body temple.

PRAY Ask God to send His Holy Spirit to make the changes you need to make to care for your body temple.

WRITE In your Bible study journal, write out a prayer to God, asking Him to make the changes you have outlined.

Friday

READ Read 1 Corinthians 10:31.

SHARE With your family, create a care manual for the human body. List as many positive ways to care for the wonderful body God provided as you can think of.

PRAY Commit your mind/body temple to God and ask Him to live there.

TRACK Before going to bed, look over your NEWSTART sheet. What is the Holy Spirit changing in you? What did you learn about yourself this week? Be prepared to share what you learned at Sabbath School tomorrow.

clean and in good order. That probably means I need to get enough sleep, like my mother keeps telling me. And I need to eat the fruit and vegetables that will keep me strong and active. And I need to shut my 'mouth gate' to wine and the other substances that could damage my brain."

"Yes," John replied. "Guard all the gates so that nothing comes in that clutters it up or makes it dirty, so that the temple is always ready for the presence of God. That is a way you worship Him, by providing your body and mind as a dwelling place for Him."

Both of them sat in thought for a few moments. "You know," the young man finally broke the silence, "keeping my body and mind as a temple for God makes me the best person I can be."

"Exactly," John smiled broadly. "If you dedicate your entire self to God, and then ask Him to always live in you, you will know to make the choices that He would have you make for your own lifestyle. When you have a choice to make, you can just think about your body temple and its gates. God will give you the wisdom to know how to take care of that temple and what to let in those gates."

The young man had come that evening looking very serious. Now he looked relieved and enthusiastic.

The prophet Isaiah had predicted that John was going to "prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God" (Isaiah 40:3). As John watched the young man climb up from the Jordan riverbed toward his home, he thanked God for the straight path the Spirit had into another heart temple.



PUZZLE 2

HEALTHY LIVING

"Pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness, rest, exercise, proper diet, the use of water, trust in divine power—these are the true remedies" (*The Ministry of Healing,* p. 127).

Instructions: Living healthfully gives us a new start. Fit these eight keys to good health into the grid below, one letter to a block. If you put them in correctly, the yellow letter blocks will describe a new life in Jesus. Use the letter length of the words as a guide.

Air
Exercise
Nutrition
Rest
Sunshine
Temperance
Trust
Water

