



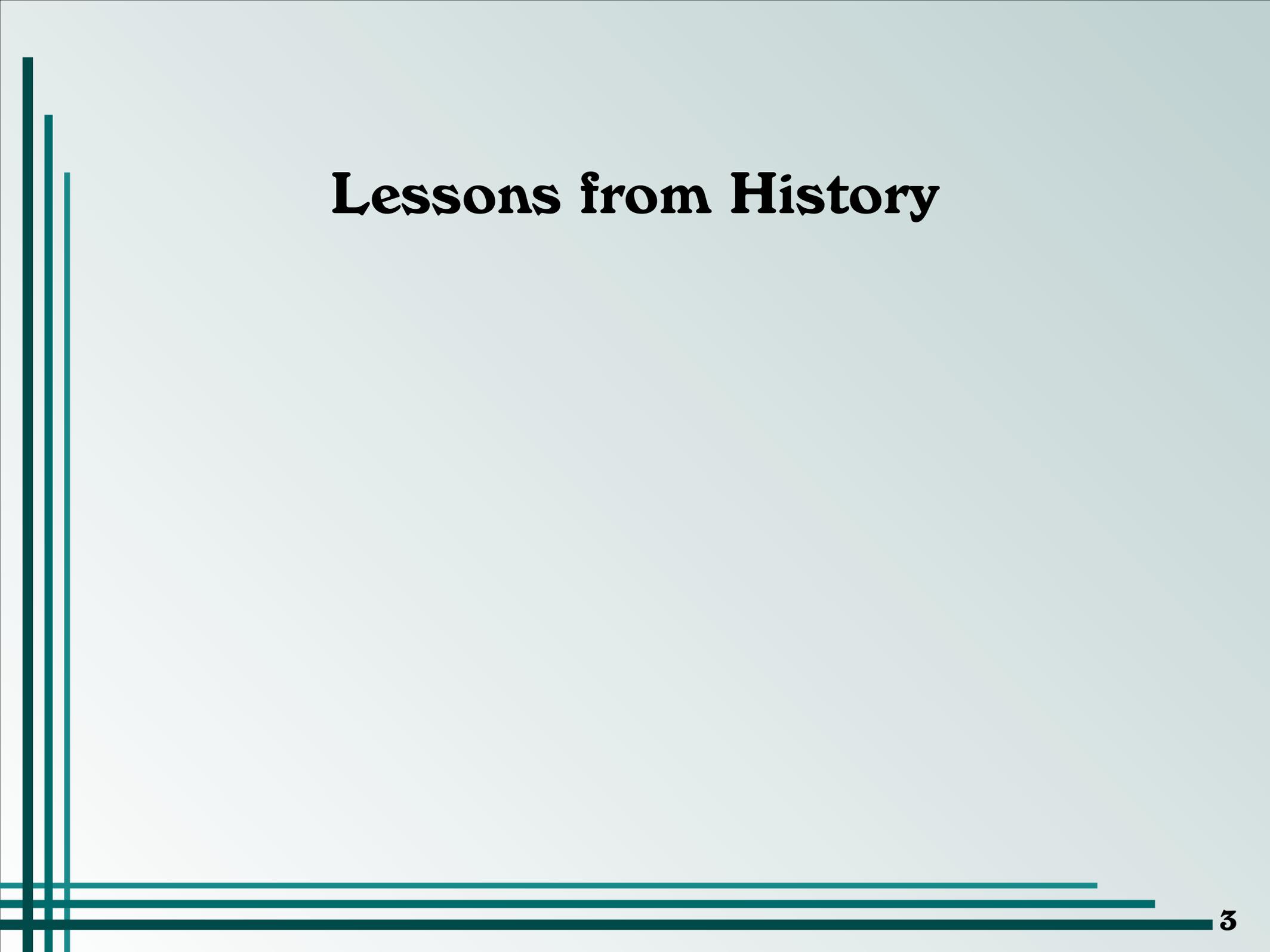
# **d'Sozo**

**REVERSING THE WORST EVIL**



# Insanity

THE CONVINCING EVIDENCE

The slide features a light teal background. On the left side, there are three vertical teal lines of varying heights. At the bottom, there are three horizontal teal lines of varying lengths, creating a grid-like decorative element.

# Lessons from History

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**“In some things you act like a man bereft of his reason. It is a marvel to me how one who has had the light in so many ways, who has received so many warnings and reproofs, can yet go on blindfolding himself and others.”** —*Battle Creek Letters*, 118

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**“This whole matter has been presented to me. You have worked as Lucifer worked in the heavenly courts to persuade his associates to unite with him. The enemy has used his arts upon your mind. Your boasted study of science and your assertion that you had obtained something excellent have deceived the men connected with you, and they have refused to listen to the warnings sent to keep them from listening to your false representations.”**

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**“The ministers of God are being drawn in and deceived by his science. He is doing all in his power to create a division between the medical work and the ministry of the word.”**

**—*Special Testimonies*, Series B, Number 7, 61**



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**Reversing the Worst Evil**

# Lessons from History

**“When the gospel ministers and the medical missionary workers are not united, there is placed on our churches the worst evil that can be placed there.”**

**—*Sermons and Talks*, vol. 1, 347**

# The Influence of Lucifer

**“Another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth....**

**“And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” —Revelation 12:3-9**

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**“Lucifer... gained the sympathy of some of his associates by suggesting thoughts of criticism regarding the government of God.**

**“This evil seed was scattered in a most seducing manner; and after it had sprung up and taken root in the minds of many, he gathered the ideas that he himself had first implanted in the minds of others, and brought them before the highest order of angels as the thoughts of other minds against the government of God. Thus, by ingenious methods of his own devising, Lucifer introduced rebellion in heaven.”** —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, 1143

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**“By sly insinuations... Lucifer sowed the seeds of doubt in the minds of many of the angels; and when he had won their support, he carried the matter to God, declaring that it was the sentiment of many of the heavenly beings that he should have the preference to Christ.”**

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# **Influence**

**“To a large degree Satan has succeeded in the execution of his plans. Through the medium of influence, taking advantage of the action of mind on mind, he prevailed on Adam to sin. Thus at its very source human nature was corrupted. And ever since then sin has continued its hateful work, reaching from mind to mind. Every sin committed awakens the echoes of the original sin.**

# Influence

**“Mutual dependence is a wonderful thing. Reciprocal influence should be carefully studied. We should find out without doubt on what side we are exerting our influence. When placed on the side of right, influence is a power for God; when placed on the side of evil, it is a power for Satan. One human being under Satan’s control becomes a means of temptation to another human being. Thus evil grows into immense proportions.”**

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# Influence

**“How striking is the power of influence as here presented! And how necessary it is for each of us to know the character of our influence, when that first sin could bring such a flood of woe upon our world! Not an evil deed has been performed but an unseen witness has marked it, and followed its influence from one person to another, and a faithful record has been made of it.”**

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# Influence

**“The influence of mind on mind, so strong a power for good when sanctified, is equally strong for evil in the hands of those opposed to God. This power Satan used in his work of instilling evil into the minds of the angels....**

**“Cast out of heaven, Satan set up his kingdom in this world, and ever since, he has been untiringly striving to seduce human beings from their allegiance to God. He uses the same power that he used in heaven—the influence of mind on mind. Men become tempters of their fellow men.”**

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# Influence

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# **A Counteracting Influence**

**An evil influence is any statement or action that leads others to believe that evil is actually not evil.**

# **A Counteracting Influence**

**“God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”**

**—Philippians 2:9–11**

# **A Counteracting Influence**

**“To the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places.”**

**—Ephesians 3:10**

# **A Counteracting Influence**

**“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”**

**—Romans 12:1-2**

# **A Counteracting Influence**

**“Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.”**

**—Romans 7:12**

**“The law of the LORD is perfect.”**

**—Psalms 19:7**

# **A Counteracting Influence**

**“The law of God is the foundation of His government, and is exactly what is needed to preserve life and righteousness.”**

**—*Signs of the Times*, February 26, 1894**

**“...was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.”**

**—John 8:44**

# **A Counteracting Influence**

**“The standard of the golden rule is the true standard of Christianity; anything short of it is a deception. A religion... that would lead us to be careless of human needs, sufferings, or rights, is a spurious religion. In slighting the claims of the poor, the suffering, and the sinful, we are proving ourselves traitors to Christ....**

# A Counteracting Influence

**“Search heaven and earth, and there is no truth revealed more powerful than that which is made manifest in works of mercy to those who need our sympathy and aid. This is the truth as it is in Jesus. When those who profess the name of Christ shall practice the principles of the golden rule, the same power will attend the gospel as in apostolic times.”**

*—Mount of Blessing, 137*

# **Insanity!**

**“Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest.”**

**—Luke 22:24**

# **Insanity!**

**“Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest.”**

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# Insanity!

**“The Lord Jesus has bound up His interests with the interests of the whole world. His influence is an ever-widening, shoreless influence. Although unseen, it is intensely active. Wielded by the Father Himself, it is the element which is used in restoring the moral image of God in man.”**

*—Manuscript Releases, vol. 14, 57*

## Sources of Influence

**“[Isaiah 58] is the work God requires His people to do.... With the work of advocating the commandments of God and repairing the breach that has been made in the law of God, we are to mingle compassion for suffering humanity. We are to show supreme love to God; we are to exalt His memorial, which has been trodden down by unholy feet; and with this we are to manifest mercy, benevolence, and the tenderest pity for the fallen race. ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.’ As a people we must take hold of this work. Love revealed for suffering humanity gives significance and power to the truth.”**

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# Sources of Influence

**“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”**

**—John 13:33–34**

# Sources of Influence

**“Nothing will help us more at this stage of our work than to understand and to fulfill the mission of the greatest Medical Missionary that ever trod the earth; nothing will help us more than to realize how sacred is this kind of work and how perfectly it corresponds with the lifework of the Great Missionary. The object of our mission is the same as the object of Christ’s mission. Why did God send His Son to the fallen world? To make known and to demonstrate to mankind His love for them....**

# Sources of Influence

**“God’s purpose in committing to men and women the mission that He committed to Christ is to disentangle His followers from all worldly policy and to give them a work identical with the work that Christ did.”**

*—Medical Ministry, 24*

## Sources of Influence

**“Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. And a certain man lame from his mother’s womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms from those who entered the temple; who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms. And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, ‘Look at us.’ So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them.**

# Sources of Influence

**“Then Peter said, ‘Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.’ And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God.”**

**—Acts 3:1–8**

# Sources of Influence

**“We believed the warning that Christ was soon to come, and we felt such an earnest longing for those in sin that we were willing to make almost any sacrifice. We have known what poverty is, and it was the best experience of our lives.”**

**—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 19, 136**

# Sources of Influence

**“...the highest and most precious of all human experiences, the constant dependence of the soul upon God.”**

**—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, 172**

# Sources of Influence

**“As we bring ourselves into right relationship with God, we shall have success wherever we go; and it is success that we want, not money—living success, and God will give it to us because He knows all about our self-denial. He knows every sacrifice that we make. You may think that your self-denial does not make any difference, that you ought to have more consideration, and so on. But it makes a great difference with the Lord....**

# Sources of Influence

**“When individuals begin to reach out after higher and still higher wages something comes into their experience that places them where they stand no longer on vantage ground. But when they take the wage that carries on the face of it the fact that they are self-sacrificing, the Lord sees their self-denial and He gives them success and victory.... The Lord that seeth in secret will reward openly for every sacrifice that His tried servants have been willing to make.”**

*—Loma Linda Messages, 617*

## Sources of Influence

**“...employed his wealth in sustaining the infant church that the Jews had expected to be blotted out at the death of Christ. In the time of peril he who had been so cautious and questioning was firm as a rock, encouraging the faith of the disciples, and furnishing means to carry forward the work of the gospel. He was scorned and persecuted by those who had paid him reverence in other days. He became poor in this world’s goods; yet he faltered not in the faith which had its beginning in that night conference with Jesus.”**

*—Desire of Ages, 177*

## Sources of Influence

**“In no way could the Lord be better glorified and the truth more highly honored than for unbelievers to see that the truth has wrought a great and good work upon the lives of naturally covetous and penurious men. If it could be seen that the faith of such had an influence to mold their characters, to change them from close, selfish, overreaching, money-loving men to men who love to do good, who seek opportunities to use their means to bless those who need to be blessed, who visit the widow and fatherless in their affliction, and who keep themselves unspotted from the world, it would be an evidence that their religion was genuine.**

## Sources of Influence

**“Such would let their light so shine that others seeing their good works would be led to glorify their Father which is in heaven. This fruit would be unto holiness, and they would be living representatives of Christ upon the earth. Sinners would be convicted that there is in the truth a power to which they are strangers.”**

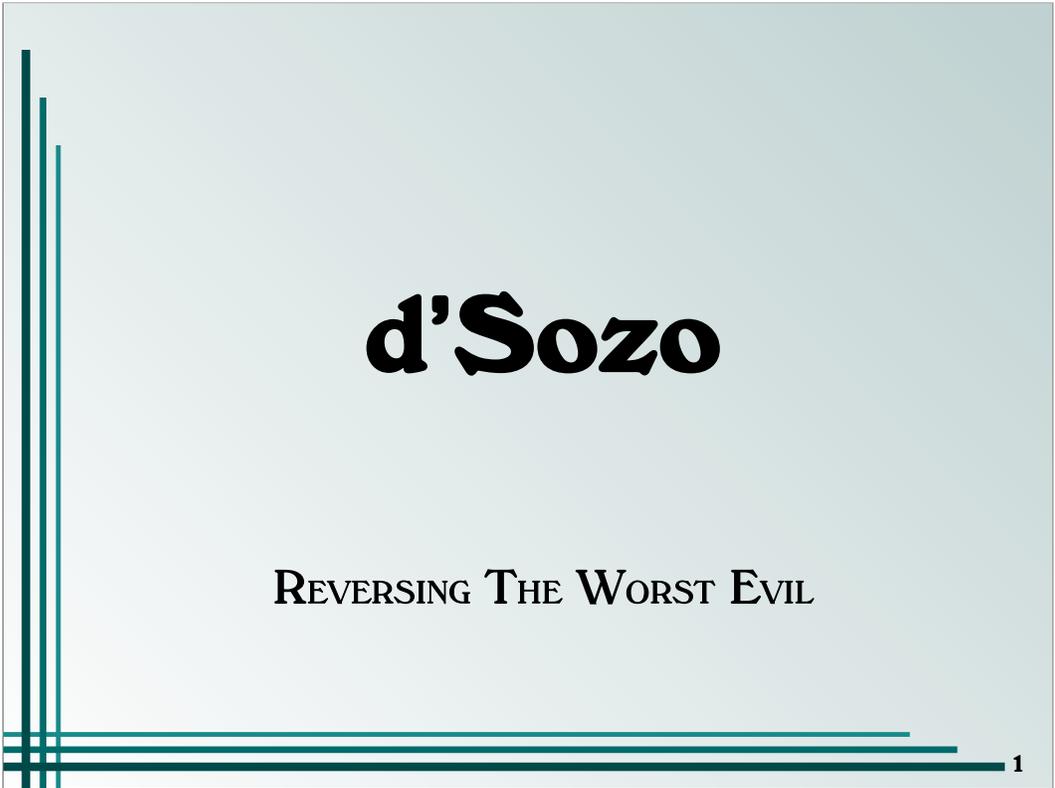
*—Testimonies, vol. 2, 239*

# Influence

**“The joy of our Lord consisted in enduring toil and shame for others, that they might be benefited thereby. We are capable of being happy in following His example and living to bless our fellow men.”**

*—Testimonies, vol. 4, 224*





# d'Sozo

## REVERSING THE WORST EVIL

1

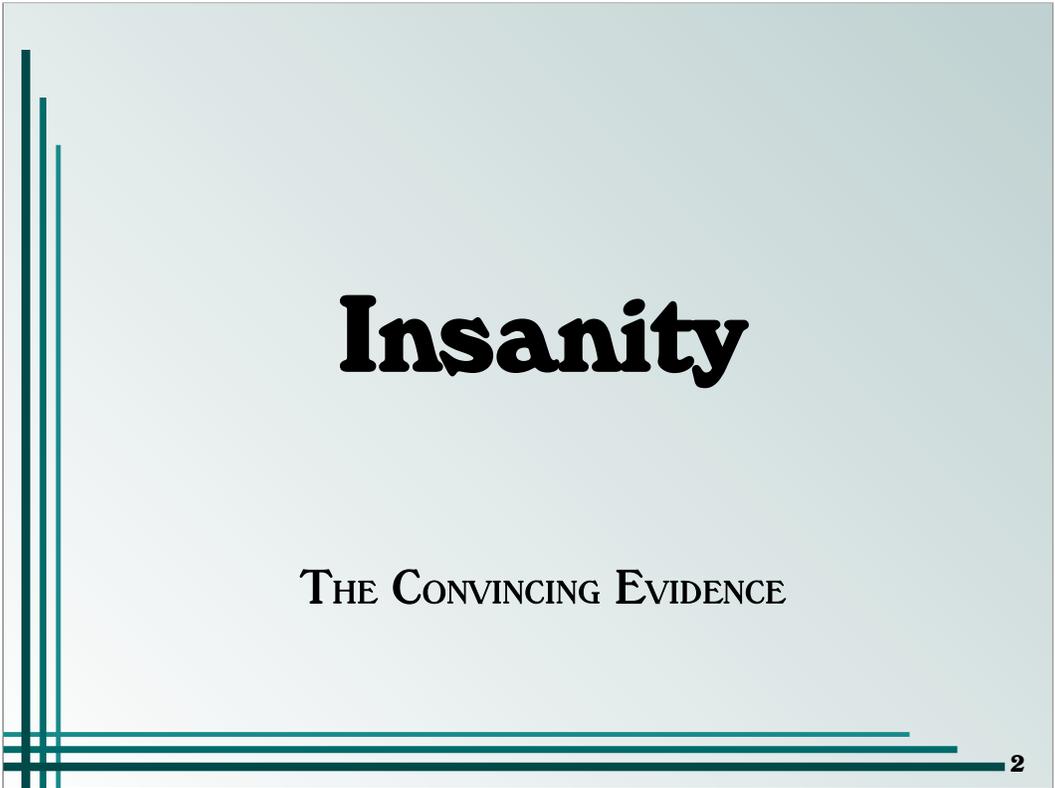
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My book on Adventist History, *Hindsight*, is also available through that address. (\$10 +s/h; free s/h on 5 or more copies). The book upon which this series of talks is based, (same title and subtitle as above) is currently available online from Remnant Publications. The HEALTH program (that's "Health Evangelism And Leadership Training for Him" and I highly recommend the class) operated by Weimar Institute has a supply, and the book is also available in at least some ABC's. If you are interested in box lots (36 copies per box), you could get in touch with me at the email above and I may (or may not) be able to help out on the pricing.

Questions and comments are always welcome, but please don't deprive yourself of sleep or food while waiting for a reply.

The notes for this file are typed out in some length so that readers can more or less re-create the full message of the presentation.

Sometimes there are notes intended to be read *before* the text on the slide, though usually the notes come *after* the text. How can you know? Just look for **CLICK** in the notes. If you see the bright red word, it means that the notes to that point apply *before* some element of the page which, in the original presentation format, would appear when the speaker "clicked" his remote control. It's not totally consistent, but if you're smart enough to be reading this, you're smart enough to figure it out. Any slide with no **CLICK** in it means that you read the slide first, then read the notes, and move on.



# Insanity

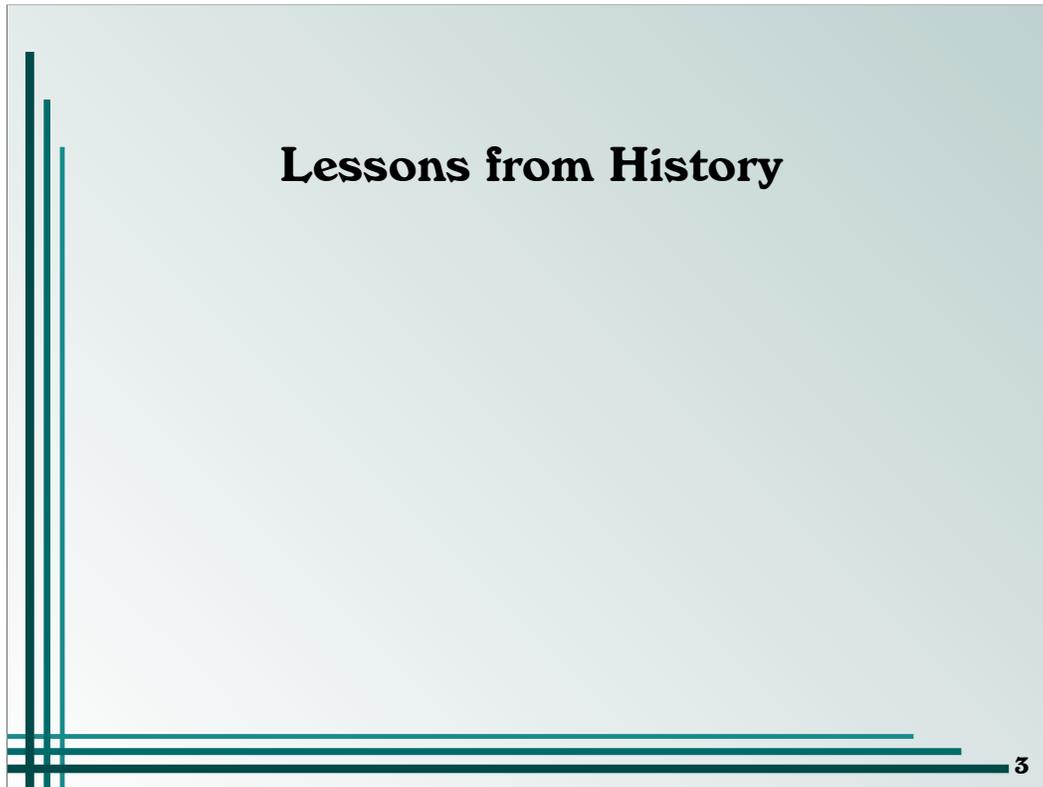
## THE CONVINCING EVIDENCE

2

This is the final presentation of our Week of Prayer. Now, that presents a challenge. On one hand, I have the advantage of building on the understanding laid down over the course of nine previous meetings. But on the other hand, the reality is that not everyone here today was able to make it to those meetings.

To those who managed to come faithfully night after night, I hope you'll forgive a certain amount of repetition; and for those who may be perhaps joining us for the first time—well, I apologize if some things are said that don't have all the background given right now.

With everyone's patience in these things, I think we can make it workable and gain a blessing, so let's give it a try.



Let's start with some lessons from history.

First up is a gentleman we've spoken of before in this series: a famous physician by the name of John Harvey Kellogg. If this is the first time you've heard of him, you might be thinking of breakfast cereal, and as it turns out, you wouldn't be far off.

In fact, it was John Harvey that invented corn flakes—along with both granola and peanut butter, believe it or not! But that sort of thing wasn't his big interest in life, so he left it to his brother, William Keith Kellogg to develop those commercial products.

John Harvey Kellogg had other other matters that filled his time.

## Lessons from History

**“A scene has been presented before me of actions performed by you, similar to the actions of Satan in the heavenly courts. From time to time I have given warnings to different ones who were being blinded by your sophistries and misrepresentations. Your power of misrepresentation is so continuously exerted that many have been deceived.**

**“In some things you act like a man bereft of his reason. It is a marvel to me how one who has had the light in so many ways, who has received so many warnings and reproofs, can yet go on blindfolding himself and others.”** —*Battle Creek Letters*, 118

4

In the years 1888 through about 1895 his influence might be described as especially positive; often, and in some very important ways, he was extremely helpful to the Lord's work. As a doctor, he was known around the world, and many of the rich and famous came to him for health care.

Unfortunately, there was a change over time. Largely because of misguided opposition to his work by some (but not all) Seventh-day Adventist ministers, there came a general souring of attitude, a settled dislike for the leaders of the denomination, a determination to outdo his detractors, a desire for praise and honor from the world, and a resistance to others' counsel.

This did not happen suddenly, nor was it a continuous or steady downhill slide. There were ups and downs, occasions for hope and despair, but the trend was for the worse. One key observer described it like this:

**CLICK** for text

## **Lessons from History**

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*—Battle Creek Letters, 120*

And one more...

## Lessons from History

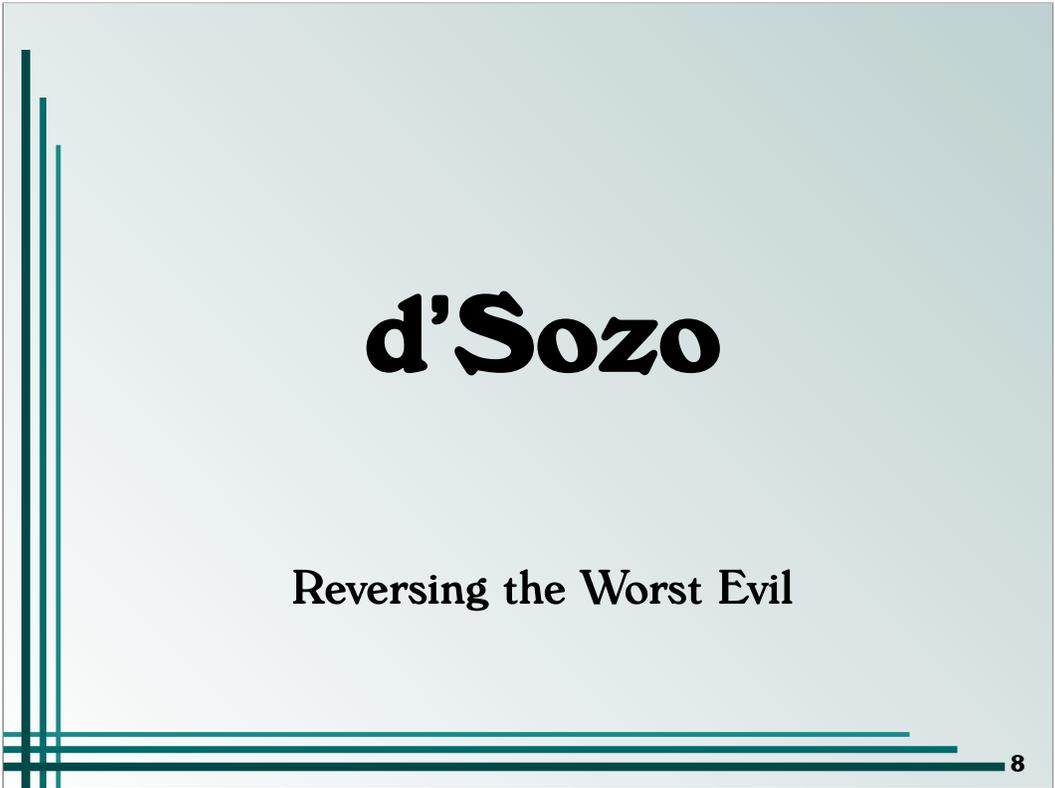
**“The ministers of God are being drawn in and deceived by his science. He is doing all in his power to create a division between the medical work and the ministry of the word.”**

*—Special Testimonies, Series B, Number 7, 61*

This final point is one that we have spent considerable time on in previous meetings.

In fact, the subtitle of this series of meetings—“Reversing the Worst Evil”—is a reference to any division between the work of saving souls and the work of caring for physical health.

That’s important enough to deserve a quick look, so let’s go back to the Title screen for a moment:



# **d'Sozo**

Reversing the Worst Evil

8

Our major topic this whole series has been the connection brought to light by the Greek word root “Sozo.”

In the New Testament, that one root is used for both Spiritual Salvation and Physical Healing.

And the sub-title of the series comes from this comment, written more than a century ago—

## Lessons from History

**“When the gospel ministers and the medical missionary workers are not united, there is placed on our churches the worst evil that can be placed there.”**

—*Sermons and Talks*, vol. 1, 347

Now, for those who heard all the previous meetings, this is all old stuff, and really it's just a means of introducing today's topic, so if some of this is a little obscure, don't worry too much.

Our main focus for now will be the two ideas of the union of physical and spiritual healing, and the influences that either help or hurt that goal.

A couple slides back, we saw a comment about Dr. Kellogg misleading people, and using the same sort of techniques that Lucifer used to deceive the angels in heaven. That's what we want to look at right now.

That story, of course, comes from the book of Revelation, chapter 12—

## The Influence of Lucifer

**“Another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth....**

**“And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” —Revelation 12:3-9**

Here we see Satan deceiving one third of the angels of heaven.

How did he \*do\* that? I mean, angels aren't dumb.

So let's look at this process a bit, because it carries an important warning for us today.

## The Influence of Lucifer

**“Lucifer... gained the sympathy of some of his associates by suggesting thoughts of criticism regarding the government of God.**

**“This evil seed was scattered in a most seducing manner; and after it had sprung up and taken root in the minds of many, he gathered the ideas that he himself had first implanted in the minds of others, and brought them before the highest order of angels as the thoughts of other minds against the government of God. Thus, by ingenious methods of his own devising, Lucifer introduced rebellion in heaven.”** —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, 1143

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*—Patriarchs and Prophets, 38*

13

Note the process: by subtly planting the seeds of doubt, and then waiting for the slightest echo of his own thought coming back from another angel, Lucifer first *\*corrupted\** and then *\*co-opted\** the influence of others.

The influence of a hitherto sinless angel was first tainted with sinful sentiments that were perhaps not even fully believed or understood by the one who repeated them, then taken out of the angel's hand and pressed into the service of Lucifer.

And this brings us to the broader, more general matter of influence. It's something we all have, and it's important, because our influence is going to be on God's side, or on Satan's.

## **Influence**

**“To a large degree Satan has succeeded in the execution of his plans. Through the medium of influence, taking advantage of the action of mind on mind, he prevailed on Adam to sin. Thus at its very source human nature was corrupted. And ever since then sin has continued its hateful work, reaching from mind to mind. Every sin committed awakens the echoes of the original sin.**

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## Influence

**“The plan of God was that the highest influence in the universe, emanating from the Center of all power, should be brought to bear on human minds. The goodness and love of God subdues the heart, and then man becomes a channel to communicate these divine impressions to his fellow-men. Thus in Christ he is a fruit-bearing branch. No man, saint or sinner, liveth to himself.”**

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Fascinating stuff here, isn't it?

But in all this, we're sort of skipping over a question that we really need to think through a bit. And that is, what really is “an evil influence”?

When does *\*my\** influence switch from good to evil?

I'd like to propose a definition, and that is this:

## **A Counteracting Influence**

**An evil influence is any statement or action that leads others to believe that evil is actually not evil.**

19

For instance, every time a person lies or steals or murders, it is an unspoken assertion that such actions are appropriate.

If the perpetrator gets away with it, perhaps even with public approval like some pop-culture outlaw hero, the influence of that action is reinforced, providing all the more support for the idea that lying or stealing or murdering is a fine thing to do.

Well, it's not hard to see that there are lots of evil influences running loose in our world today. Just about anywhere you look, from almost everything on television and the Internet, to the personal influence of terrorist suicide bombers.

But the harder job is finding a way to \*counteract\* an evil influence.

## A Counteracting Influence

**“God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”**

—Philippians 2:9–11

There's only one way: a counter influence. A force pushing in the opposite direction. How much counter influence do you need? Enough to destroy the believability of the false influence. As long as anyone still thinks the bad stuff is OK, then the job isn't done, and a stronger counter influence is needed.

Consider this Bible passage for instance:

**CLICK** for text

The point is, God isn't going to win the controversy with Satan by getting 51%, or 75%, or even 99% of the votes. When this war is all over, *\*every\** knee will bow, and *\*every\** tongue confess that God is right.

## A Counteracting Influence

“To the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places.”

—Ephesians 3:10

21

But there's another problem. You see, one of the things Satan has claimed is that God has been lying to everyone in the universe. That means that God can't simply say, "Satan's wrong, and I'm right," and just expect all the angels and whoever else He may have created out there to just accept it.

After all, He might be lying!

In the end, it all boils down to this: God has to *\*show\** that He's right, He can't just say it. Nor can we just say God is right, and expect anyone to believe it. What's needed is a demonstration. **CLICK** for text

This is a verse we've looked at before this week, and it points out something really profound. It's the church—people like you and I—who are supposed to show the universe something of the "manifold wisdom of God." That's significant, isn't it?

## A Counteracting Influence

**“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”**

—Romans 12:1-2

But how can human beings ever do anything that could teach the “principalities and powers in heavenly places” anything they don’t already know?

Here’s the answer:

**CLICK** for text

So where do we find the “good and acceptable and perfect will of God”?

Paul gives us the answer just a couple chapters earlier....

## **A Counteracting Influence**

**“Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.”**

—Romans 7:12

**“The law of the LORD is perfect.”**

—Psalms 19:7

Not surprisingly, the Old Testament agrees...

**CLICK** for second text

So, simply put, it's through our obedience to the law that the church is to make a demonstration to the “principalities and powers in heavenly places.”

Why the law? Why obedience? Why is that so important?

As we saw earlier this week, the “manifold wisdom of God” that needs to be demonstrated is the issue of whether or not people like us are safe to have in heaven, safe to make immortal. And without obedience to the law, that just wouldn't ever work—

## **A Counteracting Influence**

**“The law of God is the foundation of His government, and is exactly what is needed to preserve life and righteousness.”**

*—Signs of the Times, February 26, 1894*

**“...was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.”**

*—John 8:44*

Why is God’s law “exactly what is needed”? Because the only alternative to the law of love for others, is the law of love for self—and that always ends up in deception and murder. As Christ Himself said, Satan...

**CLICK** for second text

This is why, as we saw earlier this week...

## **A Counteracting Influence**

**“The standard of the golden rule is the true standard of Christianity; anything short of it is a deception. A religion... that would lead us to be careless of human needs, sufferings, or rights, is a spurious religion. In slighting the claims of the poor, the suffering, and the sinful, we are proving ourselves traitors to Christ....**

## **A Counteracting Influence**

**“Search heaven and earth, and there is no truth revealed more powerful than that which is made manifest in works of mercy to those who need our sympathy and aid. This is the truth as it is in Jesus. When those who profess the name of Christ shall practice the principles of the golden rule, the same power will attend the gospel as in apostolic times.”**

*—Mount of Blessing, 137*

Now this is all a little jumbled right now, and I apologize for that. But what we’ve got is all the jigsaw pieces to put together in our final picture.

And this is where the “insanity” part comes in.

So let’s start putting this all together by looking at the ministry of Christ. For three and a half years, He had been the Master and Teacher of His little band of twelve disciples. For three and a half years He had taught and modeled self-sacrificing love. For three and a half years... His students had failed to learn the lesson.

As they sat with Jesus at the Last Supper, what was the issue they were thinking about?

## **Insanity!**

**“Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest.”**

—Luke 22:24

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This wasn't a little issue; this was the issue that had started all of sin in the first place. \*Lucifer\* had disputed who “should be considered the greatest.” In other words, Jesus' own disciples, on the day before His crucifixion, were squarely on His enemy's side. But it gets worse.

Not only was Jesus a failure, He was hopelessly insane. You've heard the saying: “Insanity is doing the same thing and hoping for a different result.” And here, after three-and-a-half unsuccessful years of publicly demonstrating the principle of selfless service, Jesus says, “I'll try it one more day.”

If that isn't insanity... if that isn't insanity, then... then it has to be the most stunning example of confidence the universe has ever seen. Confidence that the principles of God's law were perfect; confidence that the Father's plan was wise; confidence that, somehow, it would all work out in the end.

**NOTES CONTINUE ON NEXT PAGE**

## **Insanity!**

**“Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest.”**

—Luke 22:24

28

And yet, what Jesus did in the next twenty-four hours wasn't the same as He had always done before. Yes, He demonstrated the principle of selfless service one more day, but this time He went to the extreme. He was all in on this deal, sink or swim. Selflessness would forever after be defined by what He was to do in the next twenty-four hours.

If we wanted to get analytical, we could say that qualitatively His course remained exactly the same as before—selfless service. But quantitatively, He took it off all previous charts.

We know the story, of course. Gethsemane... the betrayal... Peter's denial... the beatings... the nails... “Father, forgive them”... “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” This example of selflessness is the ultimate gift of Jesus to the universe, not just because He was saving mankind in the process, but because the influence of selflessness is the greatest gift that He could give anyone.

## **Insanity!**

**“The Lord Jesus has bound up His interests with the interests of the whole world. His influence is an ever-widening, shoreless influence. Although unseen, it is intensely active. Wielded by the Father Himself, it is the element which is used in restoring the moral image of God in man.”**

*—Manuscript Releases, vol. 14, 57*

And, having received the gift of that influence, it is our responsibility to pass it on to others.

So here we see our work. Here is where our influence is needed.

Yes, I know; it looks hopeless. Yes, I know; the world hardly notices us, no matter how much we advertise, no matter how we present the three angels' messages. The call to “Fear God,” is most often met with yawns, and the mark of the beast is no more scary than the latest Hollywood horror flick. So what are we doing wrong?

## Sources of Influence

**“[Isaiah 58] is the work God requires His people to do.... With the work of advocating the commandments of God and repairing the breach that has been made in the law of God, we are to mingle compassion for suffering humanity. We are to show supreme love to God; we are to exalt His memorial, which has been trodden down by unholy feet; and with this we are to manifest mercy, benevolence, and the tenderest pity for the fallen race. ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.’ As a people we must take hold of this work. Love revealed for suffering humanity gives significance and power to the truth.”**

*—Welfare Ministry, 32*

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Why does the world so easily ignore the work of Christians?

**CLICK** for highlighting...

## Sources of Influence

“[Isaiah 58] is the work God requires His people to do.... With the work of advocating the commandments of God and repairing the breach that has been made in the law of God, we are to mingle compassion for suffering humanity. We are to show supreme love to God; we are to exalt His memorial, which has been trodden down by unholy feet; and with this we are to manifest mercy, benevolence, and the tenderest pity for the fallen race. ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.’ As a people we must take hold of this work. **Love revealed for suffering humanity gives significance and power to the truth.**”

—*Welfare Ministry, 32*

He Himself gave us the key—

## Sources of Influence

**“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”**

—John 13:33-34

In fact, it's simple. We just have to follow His example.

## Sources of Influence

**“Nothing will help us more at this stage of our work than to understand and to fulfill the mission of the greatest Medical Missionary that ever trod the earth; nothing will help us more than to realize how sacred is this kind of work and how perfectly it corresponds with the lifework of the Great Missionary. The object of our mission is the same as the object of Christ’s mission. Why did God send His Son to the fallen world? To make known and to demonstrate to mankind His love for them....**

## Sources of Influence

**“God’s purpose in committing to men and women the mission that He committed to Christ is to disentangle His followers from all worldly policy and to give them a work identical with the work that Christ did.”**

*—Medical Ministry, 24*

But... Jesus was the Son of God! And His circumstances were so different from mine that it’s really confusing.

There’s truth in that. So, in an effort to be more specific and more practical, let’s look at two examples from the lives of Jesus’ followers. Let’s start with Peter and John...

## Sources of Influence

**“Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. And a certain man lame from his mother’s womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms from those who entered the temple; who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms. And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, ‘Look at us.’ So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them.**

## Sources of Influence

**“Then Peter said, ‘Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.’ And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God.”**

—Acts 3:1–8

It’s a familiar story, to be sure, but it points out a particular source of influence that deserves notice. Peter and John didn’t have any silver or gold. Given that they were fishermen by trade, and that they hadn’t gone fishing for forty-plus days (and that last catch had been left on the beach, anyway), it’s not hard to see how they could be out of money.

But here’s the important point: their financial condition didn’t seem to bother them. They were on their way to the temple, not to the lake. What’s more, their financial condition didn’t keep them from helping someone else.

Actually, there are some good things to be said for poverty—

## Sources of Influence

**“We believed the warning that Christ was soon to come, and we felt such an earnest longing for those in sin that we were willing to make almost any sacrifice. We have known what poverty is, and it was the best experience of our lives.”**

*—Manuscript Releases, vol. 19, 136*

Really? The best? It sounds a bit strange to our ear, but in a very real and practical way, poverty can help bring us to what is...

## Sources of Influence

**“...the highest and most precious of all human experiences, the constant dependence of the soul upon God.”**

*—Testimonies, vol. 7, 172*

There is a special influence that comes from someone who has little-to-nothing himself, who nevertheless is so confident in the Lord's care that he willingly goes out of his way to help someone else in need.

## Sources of Influence

**“As we bring ourselves into right relationship with God, we shall have success wherever we go; and it is success that we want, not money—living success, and God will give it to us because He knows all about our self-denial. He knows every sacrifice that we make. You may think that your self-denial does not make any difference, that you ought to have more consideration, and so on. But it makes a great difference with the Lord....**

## Sources of Influence

**“When individuals begin to reach out after higher and still higher wages something comes into their experience that places them where they stand no longer on vantage ground. But when they take the wage that carries on the face of it the fact that they are self-sacrificing, the Lord sees their self-denial and He gives them success and victory.... The Lord that seeth in secret will reward openly for every sacrifice that His tried servants have been willing to make.”**

*—Loma Linda Messages, 617*

Our second example comes from the life of Nicodemus. We find him at the opposite end of the socio-economic continuum from Peter and John. He was a ruler, a member of the Sanhedrin, a man of great wealth. He had used the influence gained by those circumstances in the service of Christ. Behind the scenes to a large extent, but he had repeatedly been in the right place at the right time to use his influence to protect the Lord.

He had done all he could, all that the influence of wealth and power could; it had been blessed of God, but it had a limit. There was only so much that could be done, and the situation had grown completely beyond his control. The influence of wealth and power could not save the Messiah from death. Perhaps for the first time in years, Nicodemus knew how it felt to be powerless.

And then, through the influence of Christ's final sacrifice, Nicodemus threw off all caution and publicly avowed himself a Christian. Boldly, and regardless of the consequences, he and Joseph of Arimathaea provided a burial for Christ that must have set the heads of Annas and Caiaphas spinning. But more than this, Nicodemus, we are told...

## Sources of Influence

**“...employed his wealth in sustaining the infant church that the Jews had expected to be blotted out at the death of Christ. In the time of peril he who had been so cautious and questioning was firm as a rock, encouraging the faith of the disciples, and furnishing means to carry forward the work of the gospel. He was scorned and persecuted by those who had paid him reverence in other days. He became poor in this world’s goods; yet he faltered not in the faith which had its beginning in that night conference with Jesus.”**

*—Desire of Ages, 177*

In this course, too, there is great influence for good.

Great influence? Perhaps that should be “greatest influence.”

## Sources of Influence

**“In no way could the Lord be better glorified and the truth more highly honored than for unbelievers to see that the truth has wrought a great and good work upon the lives of naturally covetous and penurious men. If it could be seen that the faith of such had an influence to mold their characters, to change them from close, selfish, overreaching, money-loving men to men who love to do good, who seek opportunities to use their means to bless those who need to be blessed, who visit the widow and fatherless in their affliction, and who keep themselves unspotted from the world, it would be an evidence that their religion was genuine.**

## Sources of Influence

**“Such would let their light so shine that others seeing their good works would be led to glorify their Father which is in heaven. This fruit would be unto holiness, and they would be living representatives of Christ upon the earth. Sinners would be convicted that there is in the truth a power to which they are strangers.”**

—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, 239

As always, it's a matter of influence. And this particular influence can glorify the Lord more than any other. That's nothing to scoff at. Influence is what God's people need, and it always comes through self-sacrifice.

And when the whole idea seems so completely off the wall that we doubt ourselves for even contemplating such insanity... for that, too, there is a promise:

## **Influence**

**“The joy of our Lord consisted in enduring toil and shame for others, that they might be benefited thereby. We are capable of being happy in following His example and living to bless our fellow men.”**

*—Testimonies, vol. 4, 224*

And, really, what more could we ask of life than to be insanely happy while following His example?



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