

How to Be Perfect

#0141

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—January 7, 1979

I'm especially happy for the opportunity of being with you all tonight, and I pray that God may be very near us as we study some practical things that concern us all. Let's begin with the last page of the Old Testament—Malachi, the fourth chapter and the last three verses. The fourth verse begins with a word that Seventh-day Adventists remember. What is it? Remember. What do we think of when we think of that word “remember”? The Sabbath.

“Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse” Malachi 4:4–6.

The message of Moses was the law. The message of Elijah, as the prophet, was “to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” (Luke 1:17) And Moses and Elijah combined in the work of this movement, restoring the emphasis on the law and on the Sabbath and on the gift of prophecy. Now you notice that this is to result in a bringing together of what? Parents and children. And it begins with the parents. I will “turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.” All who do not receive that experience of being turned—parents to children and children to parents—will be smitten with what? The curse. The curse is here, friends; it's filling the world.

And it's very important that we understand that God's people today will be different, *entirely* different, from this world, on this subject (on a lot of other subjects too). We're rapidly approaching the time when all the world will be separated into two camps: those who keep the Sabbath and those who honor the Sunday. But equally true, the world is rapidly forming into two camps: those who are loyal to God's commandments and those who are disloyal—those who believe in the Fifth Commandment as well as the fourth, and those who don't.

We hear about the generation gap today. It's more than a gap, it's a chasm—a great canyon. But God's message is to draw together parents and children. I suggest that there is danger even in our religious work and our educational work in achieving the doubtful result of separating children from parents. Very few young people growing up in Seventh-day Adventist homes today are growing up together with the parents. There are literally thousands of children and young people, today, whose almost entire religious experience is outside the home. I'm not talking about the people out in the world; I'm talking about the people in the church.

Now, it's nice that we have the school. It's nice that we have Sabbath Schools. It's nice that we have various activities. But whenever those become an alibi for lack of union between parents and children, we've missed the point, we've missed the boat. It's true that there are thousands of children and young people, today, that come from broken homes, divided homes, and no homes at all. And thank God for a lifeboat to save them. But my message tonight is for parents and teachers who wish the ideal program to produce ideal children.

There weren't very many Daniels and Shadrachs in the group that went from Jerusalem to Babylon. Thank God, there were four. And today, God is looking somewhere for parents and teachers who will produce a few Daniels, a few Esthers, a few Ruths, a few Marys. And this is not a mass movement. It will never be; never has been. Won't today. And my dear parents, if you carry out what God intends, you will be peculiar even among Seventh-day Adventists. I'll tell you that. And if your children carry out what's intended, they will be peculiar even among Seventh-day Adventists. I'm laying it right out on the line because I am talking to a group where I can talk freely and right to the point; I don't have to deal in parables.

May I get a little closer? You may find it necessary to be peculiar, even on the Wildwood campus. One of the great problems here at Wildwood, and I speak from experience, for I have been here 37 years this month, is that parents come to Wildwood for the purpose of getting their children into a proper religious environment so that the children can have a proper religious experience.

Well, you say, "Isn't that a good reason?"

I am not so sure that it is, dear friends. If I were advising parents in Texas, or Michigan, or Timbuktu, who were thinking about coming to Wildwood in order to provide a better spiritual atmosphere for their children, I would advise them to look into that with the Lord very carefully. Very carefully. I find this statement:

"No family is justified in bringing children to [Wildwood] who are not under the control of their parents"
Testimonies for the Church, Volume 4, page 204.

You say, "Does it say Wildwood?"

It's says, blank. And I've put in the blank. The reason I put it in is because it *belongs* there. The blank is Battle Creek, but it's a blank here, it doesn't say Battle Creek, but that's what it's talking about.

"No family is justified in bringing children to [Wildwood] who are not under the control of their parents... They will only be the means of demoralizing the young people of that place and bringing discord where peace and prosperity should reign. Let such parents take up the neglected work of restraining and disciplining their children before they venture to impose them upon the church at [Wildwood]" *Ibid.*

You see dear ones, suppose I'm a parent out in some distant place, and my child has leprosy, we'll say. And I hear about the ways at Wildwood, and I think, 'Why if my child could only be at Wildwood I think that he'd get over that leprosy.' And some other parent, a thousand miles in another direction, they hear about it too. And so pretty soon we have several parents, each one of whom has some children that they want to get over the leprosy, but it isn't that simple; there are more diseases than leprosy.

Now, there's one thing about many diseases, and that is: they're contagious. Have you heard of people catching health? Health is not caught. Is it? Do you know some way to catch the germs of health? I don't. But you can surely catch the germs of *disease*, can't you? Oh yes. And so I submit to you, my dear parents, first of all you have a great responsibility to God, and this place, not to let your children be an infecting agency to spread the contagion of disobedience, complaining, murmuring, impurity, and all the rest of the long train, you see. Do not think that because your children are precious to you that that gives you a license to let them run the campus and run around over the campus and spread that contagion.

If you *know* that they're pure and *know* that they're obedient and *know* that they're loyal, and *know* that they have learned these lessons, and the next step is: What are you going to do to safeguard them from some *other* family that has brought their children here that had leprosy? What are you going to do? You have two reasons for being very guarded: one is to keep your children from infecting others, the other is to keep them from being infected *by* others.

You say, "Brother Frazee, is it this bad?"

It's *worse*!

There's no way that I can paint the picture more black or more red than it really is. Arise, it says, and "Work as if you were working for your life to save the children" from the polluted atmosphere. (See *Child Guidance*, page 308.)

Things are as Sodom in this world, my friends. And there are parents here, tonight, that if they knew how much their children know experimentally of sin and impurity and wickedness, it would make them so they couldn't *sleep* tonight.

Reading the *Testimonies* on these things will help us to recognize that we've got to be entirely different from the world and entirely different from most of the church around us if we succeed in producing a Daniel, a Joseph, an Esther. And we're living in the time where, unless our young people come out to be like Daniel and Joseph and Esther, they're going to receive the mark of the beast.

There may have been a time when people could be, shall I say, somewhat mediocre and still "make it." But this is not so today; everyone's going to get the seal of God or else the mark of the beast. Do we believe that? And oh, won't be a wonderful thing if our children, as children, our youth, as youth, can receive that significant mark of God's acceptance?

Somebody says, "Brother Frazee, do you think people will really see their children, as children, receive this?"

Why, of course.

That's what the whole plan of salvation is about. That's why Christ died on the cross. That's why He's ministering in the Heavenly Sanctuary. It can be done.

Now, what did we read here in Malachi 4?

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" Malachi 4:5-6.

Suppose Elijah was to come here, I mean the real, physical, literal Elijah. Is he alive? Could he come? He could if God sent him. He's up there; he's watching. I imagine there are times he'd *like* to come. But if he'd come, my friend, I don't know whether some people would want him around or not. He really got down to business, didn't he? Yes, he did. He called for decisions. And he slew the priests of Baal with his own hands and the prophets of Baal. And he established the schools of the prophets that Samuel had generations before, and with his successor, Elisha, built up that reformatory, educational work which trains young people to be loyal to God in a time of universal apostasy.

Now who and what fulfills this prediction? John the Baptist did 2,000 years ago. The Elijah message of this movement, dear friends, is found in the life and work and visions of Ellen G. White. If you will receive it, this is Elijah which was for to come. The work that Elijah did back in ancient Israel, the work that John the Baptist did in fulfilling this just before the appearance of the Messiah, is the work that has been brought to us in the visions and writings of Ellen G. White. And God intended that this people, the Seventh-day Adventist people, should be so saturated with this light and knowledge that their homes would be ideal, beautifully ideal homes. The instruction is here.

I'm sad when I tell you that, in spite of this wonderful light, thousands of God's dear remnant people are studying all kinds of things that Babylon has written on marriage relations, the training of children, and the whole thing. And all the while, these wonderful books of *Adventist Home*, *Child Guidance*, *Ministry of Healing*, *Education*, *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, and *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students* either are not in the homes, or they lie unused in the bookcase or perhaps read occasionally with the Sabbath School lesson. God intended these books to *saturate* our minds so that we live what we read in these books.

We've come to a time when it's popular to have discussions and panels and get a consensus of what this one thinks and that one thinks. My friends, it doesn't amount to a hill of beans what people think. If God has spoken, why should I get up and tell what I *think*? "Man's words, if of any value, echo the words of God." (See

Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, page 423.) And so-called learned men, with their various degrees and training in sociology and psychology, and you name it, pontificate about how parents should relate to each other, and relate to their children and all the rest. And my friends, listen, if they're telling the truth, it's told better in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. But there is no one, and don't miss what I'm saying, there is no one that can drink deeply of the cisterns of this world and come back with an unpolluted mind. There is nobody who can fill his mind with the books that Babylon has written on child training and education and then stand before a group and express thoughts which are fully true. Always there is some error, and it takes a wiser mind than anybody here tonight, including this speaker, to always *catch* that error.

Why waste my time, my friends, dissecting out the cancers and the carcasses of this world's ideas when I can get pure truth thoroughly winnowed, and I can get pure water from the fountainhead, and I can get light, precious light, in these books, these *inspired* books, these *wonderful* books? Aren't you glad for them? Oh yes. Well, that's why you *come* to Wildwood, every one of you, I'm sure. You've come here because you want to follow the *Testimonies* in *medical* work and *evangelistic* work and *educational* work, in *recreation*, in *music* and every *other* way. Let us follow it, my dear friends, in the relation of parents and children.

And it's not like what's being taught today. Do you know what the idea of modern society is? The attitude of modern society is this: that children and young people today are being faced with decisions at an earlier age than before. And that, therefore, the children and young people must be equipped to know the answers because the culture in which we move is that the children and young people are making the decisions. That is a devilish attitude, my friends. It came *from* Hell, and it leads *to* Hell. God never intended that children and young people should be cut loose from *parental* leadership, and *church* leadership, and *school* leadership, and taught when they're in junior high and high school to make all the important life decisions themselves. One of the greatest lessons that our children and young people have to learn (they ought to learn it in infancy and have the lesson confirmed during childhood and have it *doubly* confirmed during the teenage) is the lesson of loyalty. That is the Fifth Commandment. Isn't it? Let's say it together:

"Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee"
Exodus 20:12.

Well, God help us to learn that lesson.

Now, I want to give two or three simple, practical suggestions. One is based upon the Ninth Commandment. Will you repeat the Ninth Commandment with me?

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour"
Exodus 20:16.

If we're not to bear false witness, then we are to bear what? *True* witness. Do you know the One—don't miss this—do you know the One against whom the greatest false witness has been born in this universe is? It's God. Do you know the

One who's looking there for people who will keep the Ninth Commandment, and not bear false witness against Him? Do you know who He is? Who is it? God. He's looking for true witnesses who will *bear* true witness.

Now, I found in *Steps to Christ* a way in which we can bear *true* witness, and the converse—how we can bear *false* witness:

“If we do represent Christ, we shall make His service appear attractive, as it really is. Christians who gather up gloom and sadness to their souls, and murmur and complain, are giving to others a false representation of God and the Christian life. They give the impression that God is not pleased to have His children happy, and in this, they bear false witness against our heavenly Father” *Steps to Christ*, page 116.

So, my number one practical suggestion, tonight, is this: Dear parents and teachers, let the happiness of Jesus, and His beautiful way of life, radiate from your face and be represented in your daily experience. Now it's one thing to come to church or a meeting like this and smile at one another. We go home, and we say, “Well, Brother Jones. He's really a Christian, isn't he?” Or “Sister Smith. She's really a Christian.” Well, maybe the children know more about that than we do. Maybe they do.

As Elijah, the spirit of Elijah, turn your heart, my dear parents, to your children so that you love them in a way that they feel the joy of the Christian life. Is the Christian life a good life? Is God's way of diet better than what the world is? Is His way of recreation better? Way of study, way of work, way of spending money, earning money, is it? Is God's plan better all the way through? Do you believe it? Does it make you happy? Has every step you've taken in the Christian life made you happy? Well, if you haven't, you either took the wrong step or you didn't take it in the right spirit.

I once heard Doctor Mervin Harding giving a talk up at Madison College, at a self-supporting convention, talking about health. And in his interesting way, he said, “Now, what is the object of health reform anyway? Isn't it to make better Christians?” Yes. Now he said, “Are there some of you that used to eat white bread, and now you eat whole wheat bread?” He said, “Has it made you easier to live with?” Then he added, “If it hasn't, maybe you ought to think about going back to eating white bread.”

And what I'm talking about, my dear brothers and sisters, is *not* getting up before the mirror and practicing smiling so that when we come to the table, we have a smile on our face. This is not a clown's mask that might do for Halloween in some circles. But, my dear friends, you can't wear it 365 days a year. Can you? No. The real thing shows through.

I was thinking about it as I was meditating on this meeting. I found this way of putting it. If a child can say this, “It's a wonderful thing to be as happy as my parents are.” Have you ever meditated on this thought: that God is really more interested in our being *happy* than He is our being *good*?

Oh, you say, “Brother Frazee, I don’t think so.”

Well now, think it through. I think it is. In fact, I’m sure of it. Did you know the only reason He wants us to be good is because that’s the best way to be happy.

“He that keepeth the law, happy is he” Proverbs 29:18.

“These things I have spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full” John 15:11.

It’s a wonderful thing when your child sees that whether he’s old enough to grasp it or not, he knows that daddy and mother are sure that the way they’re living—reading it out of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy—is the way that they’re sure is the happiest way in all this world to live. Now that is not particularly promoted. When we use either the Bible or the Spirit of Prophecy as a club or as a reprimand (“Larry don’t you know you shouldn’t eat between meals? Don’t you know it says in Volume 2 that you should ‘never let a morsel pass your lips’?”) so that Sister White and the Spirit of Prophecy or the Bible become the fence that stands between the child and doing what he thinks would make him happy.

Does eating between meals make children happy? If it does, bring it on. If it won’t... Well, it’s true that indulgence tickles the palate. It’s true that the enemy has arranged it so that there’s a temporary excitement that comes through disobedience. Eve experienced it in the garden. But, oh before the sun set that day they were already experiencing some of the pangs and the sorrows that disloyalty and disobedience bring. Weren’t they? And the end is not yet.

Oh, let us have it settled in our hearts. Do we really have it settled in our hearts, my brothers and sisters—that the way of obedience is the good way, the happy way? I challenge you, *this* is fundamental in turning the heart of the fathers to the children, and the children to their fathers.

Now, I know that all of you know something about what I’m saying right now. I know that none of you, none of us, including this speaker, have experience in its fullness yet. If we had, we would be *perfect*. That’s all it takes to be perfect—it is to be fully sold on everything that God ever said as the way of happiness. We believe it in principle. We believe it in general. But oh, to get down to specifics and to experiment and experience, one by one, every item that God has said. And happy is the child that knows that father and mother believe that looking up something in the index is the way to find happiness, that looking up something in the concordance is the way to find pleasure, that finding out God’s ways of life—that this is the way to keep out of trouble. These are like the guardrails on the interstate highway to keep us out of the ditch. This is the way of joy. Well, I leave that with you to think about.

Number two (Brother Pyke mentioned it a while ago): “Be with your children.”

And somebody is thinking, “Brother Frazee, that’s just what I wish I would do—be with my children more.”

I want to tell you something. I've been around a bit. I've spent several years, and not very many of you are as old as I am, and I travel quite a bit, and I want to tell you something. There are very few parents, let me repeat it, there are very few parents that have the opportunity to be with their children as much as the people at Wildwood do. Now, having said that, I hasten to add: nobody can make you take advantage of this. That's up to you. That's up to you.

Do you know that a large fraction of the mothers out in the world, and in the church, hold down jobs, and the fathers do too? And do you know that even when the mother's at home, the father sometimes has to leave for work before the children appear at breakfast, and he's not there at dinner time, and the only time the children see the father, if at all, is in the evening? And you know there are all manner of things that call the parents away and the children away?

Most parents at Wildwood eat at least one meal a day with their children. Many of them eat two meals a day with their children. Am I correct? Yes. I know there are emergencies, and I know there are differences, and we have to take care of the shifts of taking care of the sick. I'm talking about, in general, the opportunities.

And I'll go farther. If I found, as a parent, that it was impossible for me to spend the time with my children that I ought to spend, then I would leave Wildwood. I wouldn't leave it in a complaining way. I wouldn't leave it in a disgruntled way. I wouldn't leave it *any* way except the Lord would have something for me where I could do my job. You've taken the responsibility of bringing those children into the world. Don't think that by bringing them *here*, because there's a school here and the Sabbath School, and there's something wonderful about Wildwood. No, no. That won't save the children. The Devil is on this campus; he's going up and down (he's got a special committee working on Wildwood); I know he is. So "be with your children."

Now, let's think of how we're to be with them:

"It was God's plan for the members of the family to be associated in work and study, in worship and recreation"
Child Guidance, page 535.

I want you to think of those four things. What are they? "Associated in work and study, in worship and recreation." Your opportunity is here, my friends.

Now, I want to be helpful tonight; not just talk a lot of generalities or "pep talk." And I want to help you think through this thing. Do you have the opportunity to work with your children? Do your children have the opportunity to work with you? If you don't have any *other* opportunity, you have the opportunity to wash dishes together. That's a chance that some families out in the world don't have because of the way they work, and the school program is staggered. Fathers, if the only opportunity you have to be with your children, whether boys or girls, is to wash and dry the dishes with them, grab it. It's your glorious opportunity. Gardening... And I could go on with other opportunities. Watch for the opportunities to work with your children, but do not assign them work as a penalty or as a bondage. Or as something that, "Well, it has to be done and you're no better than anybody else, so get in there." Oh, no. Does work make you happy? Well, if it doesn't, get down on your knees and pray to

God that He will give you a love for work. God appointed work as a *blessing*, didn't He? Oh, yes. To accomplish something—a wonderful thing.

Isn't it strange a thing that people think it's fun to get out here and use the same muscles they would use in work to something with no purpose? And if there's no purpose to it, except to chase a ball out over the greens, or around a court or something, that's fun. But if you take those same muscles and use them in *producing* something, "No, there's no fun in that." Isn't that strange? It's silly.

You and I are called to demonstrate the joy of work. But, again, there's no use putting on. The children will be able to see through it, if you don't *like* to wash dishes, if you *hate* washing dishes, and you're just looking to find somebody else that you can put it on to. And the poor child, he bears the brunt of it. He's not going to like it any better than you do. Why should he? No, let us share with our children the joy of working, working with them.

And what was that? "Work and study" (study with the children, and share in their study, the Sabbath School lesson, the day school lesson, and whatever), "in worship and recreation."

I'm so glad that so many of you have your children with you on Friday nights at vesper service and Sabbath morning at church. This is what the Lord intends. You'll find that in *Child Guidance*, page 542. The children are to remain with their parents in the house of God, "in worship and recreation."

I always feel sorry for a child when he thinks of recreation he thinks of somebody else, either some of his peers or some other older church member that delights in taking the children out. Don't misunderstand me, I'm always thankful for church members who take an interest in other people's children. But, brethren and sisters, God wants your child, when he thinks of having a good time in nature, to think of *you*. That's your destiny. That's your privilege. Study it, think about it, get all the help you can.

All right. Well, that's a couple of practical suggestions. First, bear witness, true witness, to God by demonstrating the joy and the happiness. And I don't mean a frothy, bubbly exuberance all the time. If that's your natural disposition, ok, don't stifle it. But most of us are not Artesian wells, just bubbling up all the time. Life is not like that. But there is a satisfaction which is deep and abiding—an assurance that all things are working together for good to those that love God. And then sharing with our children "in work and study, in recreation and worship."

Who is sufficient for these things? God is. And He sent us Elijah the prophet to help us. Let's fill up and share. What do you say?

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