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#0799

Study Given by W.D Frazee

Now we've been noting in the Bible, both the Old and New Testament, interesting experiences in connection with the family plan of training. Today we begin something new getting down to modern times. And we're going to notice these methods as used in the Advent movement. These methods didn't originate at Wildwood, at all. We've already traced their use in Bible times. But in the Advent movement, as we shall see, these methods have had a definite part.

We're going to notice some of the experiences of James and Ellen White particularly. As you know, Ellen White was the prophet to whom the Lord gave many visions over a 70 year period. And her husband, Elder James White, was one of the earliest leaders. In fact, He was the outstanding leader in the early history of our work.

James and Ellen White had four children, all boys. The oldest died in his teens, the youngest died as a babe. The other two boys grew to adult life. James Edson was the older. William, or Willie as he was called, was the younger of the two. He was a personal friend of mine in his later years when I was a young man. I enjoyed a good fellowship with him.

As Sister White, along with her husband, was bringing up these four boys, they had some other responsibilities besides that of parents. They had the church to think about. She was the prophet, an unusual responsibility.

And he was several times the president of the General Conference. He was also the promoter of the *Review and Herald*, the one that led out in establishing it, first as *Present Truth*, and then under the name *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*. He was the pusher in starting the new sanitarium called The Western Reform Institute, and also in establishing the college in the mid-1870s. Besides that, he was the leader in bringing in church organization, which was established by forming the General Conference in 1863, nearly 20 years after the beginning of the Advent movement in 1844.

Then Elder and Sister White did a great deal of traveling, holding meetings in various places, camp meetings, and conferences, giving counsel. Sister White had many responsibilities in writing out in longhand, for it was before the days of typewriters, in her earlier years of ministry, testimonies to different ones.

I rather think if any of us had half to do of the things I have talked about, we would say we had our hands full. Would you agree with me? And yet in spite of all that, or perhaps I ought to say, partly because of it, their home was very much the type of home we've been studying, a home that was a place of ministry.

In the book, *Welfare Ministry*, pages 321–322, we have some interesting comments on the life and work of James and Ellen White. The first is from Elder J. O. Corliss, who as a boy or a young man, was under the influence of Elder and Sister White. He's writing in the *Review and Herald*:

“Not only was Mrs. White a strong counselor for her husband, to guard him against making mistakes that would jeopardize the cause in any part, but she was most careful to carry out in her own course the things she taught to others. For instance, she frequently dwelt in her public talks upon the duty of caring for widows and orphans, citing her hearers to Isaiah 58:7–10...” *Welfare Ministry*, page 321.

Let's turn and look at that and see what it was that she was citing her hearers to. Then I'll go on with what Elder Corliss says. We'll read the sixth verse with it:

“Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry...”

Whose bread? Your own

“...and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to...”
Isaiah 58:6–7.

The Salvation Army, the Red Cross, the poor farm, the Seventh-day Adventist Welfare center? Now all of those are good, aren't they, but that isn't what it says, is it? What is it? To thy house. You mean to actually bring poor people to my house?

“...and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou see the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily...” Isaiah 58:7–8.

By the way, besides all these burdens I've been telling you that Elder and Sister White carried, were they often troubled with sickness? It had been brought on by their habits of ignorance before the light on health reform came. But again and again, as they ventured out to do what God said, He did bless them with health and strength.

Now back to this:

“She frequently dwelt in her public talks upon the duty of caring for widows and orphans, citing her hearers to Isaiah 58:7–10; and she exemplified her exhortations by

taking the needy to her own home for shelter, food, and raiment” *Welfare Ministry*, page 321.

What does shelter mean? Well, they stayed there, maybe overnight, maybe a week, maybe a month, maybe longer. But the thing is, it wasn’t just bringing them in out of the rain on the porch. Food—I wonder if somebody gave her a budget for that. And raiment, what’s that? Clothes. Elder Corliss says:

“I well remember her having at one time, as members of her family, a boy and girl and a widow and her two daughters” *Ibid.*

How many was that? Five. That’s beside her own family, you understand.

“I have, moreover, known her to distribute to poor people hundreds of dollars’ worth of new clothes which she bought for that purpose.” J. O. Corliss, *Review and Herald*, August 30, 1923.

Old, Elder G. B. Starr whom I knew in later years, he and his wife were associated with Sister White for a number of years in Australia. He told me that he and his wife were personally acquainted with the fact that Sister White often wore old clothes and gave new clothes to the poor people. And she explained it this way: That she and those with her were able to use those better than the poor people. That they knew how to do it, and some of these poor people needed the help that a good dress or a good suit of clothes would give them. What a spirit of love that is!

Here’s another statement on page 322, this is from *Welfare Ministry*. Another minister who knew the Whites:

“Elder White was himself a very philanthropic man”
Welfare Ministry, page 322.

What does that word philanthropic mean? If you take the word and dissect it, you’ll find it means a lover of mankind. That’s what it means. A philanthropist is one who loves people. Elder and Sister White were that.

“He always lived in a large house, but there were no vacant rooms in it. Although his immediate family was small, his house was always filled with widows and their children, poor friends, poor brethren in the ministry, and those who needed a home. His heart and his pocketbook were always open, and he was ready to help those who needed help. He certainly set a most noble example to our denomination in his large heartedness and liberality of spirit. *The Medical Missionary*, February 1894.” *Ibid.*

I thought you’d be interested in those window lights of the home life of Elder and Sister White.

How could they do this traveling when they had these little children? In this book, *The Fruitage of Spiritual Gifts*, by Elder L. H. Christian, we have a number of letters quoted from Sister White that she wrote to her children. Now, here is a letter that she wrote to them when Henry was 10 years old, Edson was 8 years old, and Willie 3 years old. Now, imagine three boys, 10, 8, and 3 at home, and the father and mother are traveling.

“Your parents have to travel from place to place among the people of God to try to do them good and save souls. And the Lord has inclined Sisters Genny and Martha to come into our family to feel an interest for you, to love you, and to care for you that we may leave home feeling free. They are not related to you. They make a sacrifice. What for? Because they love you. When you grieve them you grieve your parents also” *The Fruitage of Spiritual Gifts*, page 77.

You can imagine these two young women who were helping in the home trying to care for these three growing, active boys while the parents were away.

“It is not a desirable task to have the care of children if they are ungrateful and disobedient. If you perseveringly try to do right you will make them happy, and they will feel it a pleasure to deny themselves to have a care for you. When asked to do anything, do not say, Wait a minute till I do this. Now dear children, obey because you love to, not because you are driven to. I shall have confidence that you will do as I wish you to. I shall confide in your honor, your manliness” *Ibid*.

Manliness: the oldest was 10 years old, then 8, and down to 3. Writing to the older boy she says:

“Be good to Willie. Love him. Teach him right things”
bid.

These are excerpts from letters that she wrote to her children from time to time.

Now, I ought to make plain that I’m not suggesting that God has called all fathers and mothers to travel over the country, leaving their children in the care of somebody else. This is very unusual. But Elder and Sister White were called to an unusual work. My point is, and don’t miss this, that with all this unusual work they were called to, they felt the burden and sensed the responsibility of making their home a place to take care of people that needed entertaining for shorter or longer periods. That’s the thing I want you to get.

On page 55 of this same book, Sister White tells her own experience. This is

a letter she wrote to Elder O. A. Olsen, who had been president of the General Conference. This was written in 1905 when she was nearly 80 years old:

“After my marriage I was instructed” *Ibid.*

Notice she did this by revelation. It wasn't just an idea that came to her.

“After my marriage I was instructed that I must show a special interest in motherless and fatherless children, taking some under my own charge for a time and then finding homes for them. Thus I would be giving others an example of what they could do” *Ibid.*, page 55.

So one of the reasons that the Lord instructed Sister White to do this was that she might be what? An example to others.

“I have felt it my duty to bring before our people that for which those in every church should feel a responsibility. I have taken children from three to five years of age and have educated them and trained them for responsible positions. I have taken into my home from time to time boys from ten to sixteen years of age, giving them motherly care and a training for service. These boys have now grown to manhood, and some of them occupy positions of trust in our institutions. One was for many years head pressman in the *Review and Herald*. Another stood for years as foreman at the type department in the *Review and Herald*.

“In Australia I carried on this same work” *Ibid.*

Do you know how old Sister White was when she was doing this in Australia? Older than most anybody here.

“In Australia I carried on this same work, taking into my home orphaned children who were in danger of being exposed to temptations that might cause the loss of their souls. While we were in Australia we worked as medical missionaries in every sense of the word. At times I made my home in Cooranbong an asylum for the sick and afflicted” *Ibid.*

What does she mean an asylum? A refuge, a place where the sick and afflicted could come.

“My secretary, who had received training in the Battle Creek Sanitarium, stood by my side and did the work of a missionary nurse. No charge was made for her services, and we won the confidence of the people by the interest

that we manifested in the sick and suffering” *Ibid.*

What a picture!

Next, I’m going to share with you from *The Youth’s Instructor* of July 18, 1939, an article by Elder Spalding, one of the historians of this movement. He was personally acquainted with Sister White. In fact, he lived in her home for a period when he was a young man, acted as one of her secretaries.

“Sister White’s household consisted for the most part not of relatives but of helpers” *The Youth’s Instructor*, July 18, 1939.

He’s speaking here of Sister White’s home at Elms haven when Sister White was in her 70s.

“Sister White’s household consisted for the most part not of relatives but of helpers. Some of them lodged in the house, others outside. But at the table and at the worship hours morning and night there met a company who made up the family. I do not remember them all, but besides the housekeeper and the cook I recall Sister Sarah McEnturfer” *Ibid.*

Sarah McEnturfer was Sister White’s personal attendant in those years.

“Mary Steward; Maggie Hare Bree; May Walling, Sister White’s niece; Minnie Hawkins, a young woman, a secretary from Australia; and Clarence C. Crisler who headed the secretarial staff. Sister White appeared regularly at the dinner table and at evening worship” *Ibid.*

Apparently sometimes, she was busy. It was her habit in those years when she was an old lady to be up in the morning at 2:00 or 3:00. She had everything arranged so she could make her own fire on the grate, and she’d be up writing. But she was always with the family, this says, at the dinner hour and at evening worship.

Elder Spalding in the same paper, issue of July 11, 1939, tells of an interesting experience he had in her home: He was using the ironing board, and Sister White happened to pass:

“She turned and came over to my ironing board. ‘I used to do that for my husband,’ she said, “before he was taken away from me.’ She fingered the cloth with a knowing touch. ‘That is very excellent goods,’ she remarked. ‘I did the shopping too, and I was always careful to get durable goods like this’

“And then she went on to speak of her children when they

were little in those strenuous days of ministry which I had so often read in *Life Sketches*" *Ibid.*

Sometime during the time that you are homeheading, take time to share with your worship group some of the experiences of the White's as given in the early pages of *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 1*, or in *Life Sketches*. They are very interesting.

"I had to leave my children so much,' she said with a shading of sadness in her voice. 'I had so often to leave them in the care of others, and not all of those who cared for them loved them or knew how to train them'" *Ibid.*

So she didn't have perfect baby sitters.

"I would have stayed with my children, but God told me to go. Yet my Heavenly Father saved them, though with many trials. And He has given me other children. Thousands of them. The children of God's people whom I love. You are one of my children,' she said to me with a direct look. 'Are you not one of my children?' I nodded speechless, tears in my eyes" *Ibid.*

What a picture!

Now let's take a look at Australia. This is in the 1890s. Sister White would be 70 years old in 1897. So this is just a few years before that in her later 60s. And the lady that's writing this particular article, this is in *The Youth's Instructor*, March 16, 1948, is Ella Robinson. Sister Ella Robinson is Sister White's oldest grandchild, the oldest daughter of Elder W. C. White. I've known Sister Robinson personally for nearly 50 years. She is now at Eden Valley Sanitarium, a dear old lady in her 90s. So she's writing this several years ago, reminiscences of her grandmother:

"After a voyage of nearly four weeks we steamed into beautiful Sidney harbor one bright morning in early April. At the wharf we were met by Miss Emily Campbell, a little lady dressed in gray with a gray handbag which she waved to the two little girls wearing navy blue suits and sailor caps" *Ibid.*, March 16, 1948.

That's Ella and her younger sister.

"We were glad to see Miss Marian Davis again, grandma's true and tried literary helper.

"A thirteen mile drive behind a pair of spirited horses brought us to grandma's home, a rented house in Grandville, one of Sidney's suburbs. It was just dinnertime when we arrived. The large dining table,

which when extended to full capacity could seat eighteen or twenty persons, was greatly reduced in size on the day of our arrival. Mother and father and grandma and Miss Maggie Hare were all away on an evangelistic tour in South Australia and Tasmania.

“Miss Campbell introduced to us a young boy of about fifteen known as Willie and later we learned his story”
Ibid.

Now get this little pen sketch of one person that was there that day in Sister White’s home:

“He was the eldest of a family of nine children whose parents had recently accepted the Sabbath message. They had been caught in the depression and were having a hard time. Their distressed condition was brought to grandma’s attention. She immediately went to her grocer, purchased fifty dollars worth of provisions and took them to the family” *Ibid.*

I wonder how much \$50.00 then would be now. Several hundred, wouldn’t it?

“While visiting and praying with them she noticed Willie and asked him to come and be one of her helpers. He was to care for the garden, look after the horse and hens, and do other chores. So Willie became the mainstay of his family until his father found regular employment” *Ibid.*

You notice how she thought of a way to help that family beside the immediate help? She thought of a way to help them to involve somebody in that family. That takes more head work than merely handing out money or clothes, doesn’t it?

“At the head of the table sat a man of about thirty-five years of age who acted as host. He was pleasant, and we children enjoyed his company. It was not until years later that we heard his story” *Ibid.*

Now, this is a fascinating thing. Listen:

“He had been a very earnest member of one of our churches in America, but had become discouraged. About this time he attended a conference in Battle Creek where he met a man by the name of Stanton who had written, and was circulating, a tract in which he set forth new light which he felt had been given him for the church”
Ibid.

This new light was that the Seventh-day Adventist church had become

Babylon and that the Loud Cry was to come out of it, but he quoted a lot of Sister White's writing.

"And so this man was looking for someone to carry his message to Australia, and this man volunteered to do so.

"To his mind the errand seemed so urgent that he did not take time to even go home and bid his wife and children goodbye, but took passage immediately for Australia"
Ibid.

Here you might wonder how he was sitting at the head of Sister White's table.

"The new members who were there in the ardor of their first love met him with questioning. Then too he soon learned that grandmother had written to Mr. Stanton pointing out that his message was not inspired of God. When the missionary to Australia found that the people did not care to listen to his message, and that the Lord had pointed out through Sister White that Mr. Stanton was all wrong, he lost faith in his own mission" *Ibid.*

Now, I've heard Elder G. B. Starr, who was present on these occasions (He stayed in my home for two weeks when I had a company of workers in San Jose, California), and he told us this story. He said that this man, having come in from America, came there to where they were, and he was invited courteously to eat with them or have worship with them. So at what he thought was the appropriate time, he stood up and said, "I have a message to give you. I saw that we are all to go back to America," and went he went on with different things.

Presently Sister White said, "No brother. The Lord has sent us over here to Australia to do this work, and we're going to do it. We're not going back to America at this time." And she said, "We all have our duties here in the home, so we'll be busy with them, and I'll leave you with Brother Starr." So Elder Starr was telling me, "I wondered just what I ought to do with that man on my hands."

And I bring you some of these experiences to show that the Lord didn't just sort out all people and give them to Sister White because she was the prophet, easy to get along with people, you understand. She had problems just like you and I do.

So there was Brother Starr. Sister White and her helpers were all busy with their various things: some doing their secretarial work, and some looking after the cooking and housework. So the man was sort of stunned by all this, and finally, he began to come out of his daze a bit, and he and Brother Starr engaged in a bit of conversation.

He said, "You know, Brother Starr, I don't know what to make of this. I thought sure that everybody would listen to this and that we'd all just get right into the Loud Cry. I don't know what to think."

Brother Starr said to him, "Well, now brother, let me ask you a question. I noticed that several times you said, "I saw," "I saw that we should do this or that." You know the prophets in the Bible, Daniel said, "I saw visions" and Ezekiel said, "I saw visions" Sister White saw visions. Now Brother, tell me, did you really see this, or do you mean that you were impressed?"

"Well," he said, "I guess I was just impressed."

Now, my point is, Sister White didn't kick him out. She took that fellow in, befriended him, and made a home for him until he could get his mind straighten and then go on back to America to his family. Isn't that tremendous? Oh, I think this is wonderful, folks.

"Grandma learned of his confusion and bewilderment, and suggested that he attend the new Bible school she had helped to start in Melbourne. After he had found his bearings and had a better understand of the third angel's message and work, she invited him to come to her home and help in the work God had given her to do. At the time of our arrival he was acting as bookkeeper and copyist. After a year or two, spent largely in reading, copying, and filing the precious documents that came from her pen, this man returned to America and ever remained a faithful member of the Seventh-day Adventist church" *Ibid*.

That's a salvage operation, isn't it? And that's one of our jobs in our homes, folks. This plan we're studying is far broader than merely taking some students the committee suggests we take in our home for a period. There're all kinds of people, young and old, rich and poor, sick and well, ignorant and educated, that need to be exposed for a longer or shorter period to a true Christian home. There aren't very many around.

Sister Robinson continuing:

"This experience which I have told in some detail illustrates grandma's favorite method of dealing with confused minds. She believed in giving them constructive work to do while sympathetically and patiently restoring them to usefulness" *Ibid*.

I don't know that the term occupational therapy had been coined then, but that's what it would be called today, wouldn't it? But she didn't have to have a professionally trained occupational therapist to do it.

"While we helped Annie, the cook, wash the dishes, she told us her story" *Ibid*.

Now, this is the cook in Sister White's home in Australia.

“She had recently begun keeping the Sabbath, and as the result had been cast off by friends and relatives alike”
Ibid.

What did we read there in Isaiah 58, “Bring the poor that are cast out to thy house.” Well, here was a woman who had been cast out of her house because of accepting the Sabbath. Is that what we saw last week happened in the early church? Many of those early believers were cast out for accepting Jesus, and the other believers made homes for them. So that’s what Sister White was doing with Annie. Now, notice how she did it:

“‘Annie, would you be willing to come and do the cooking for my large family?’ grandma asked her. ‘That will be real missionary work, and as important a part as that performed by any of my secretaries’” *Ibid.*

Do you notice the difference in that approach to saying, “Poor Annie, you’re having a hard time. I’ve a room over here. Come and sit down there and twiddle your thumbs and we’ll feed you”? No. She invited the young woman to come and do what? Help. To have a part, participate.

“Annie knew little about cooking, but she was willing and cheerful and soon learned” *Ibid.*

Now, if you’ll look in *Diet and Foods*, you’ll see times when Sister White was lamenting because she didn’t have a good cook. Why didn’t the Lord always let her have a good cook? Maybe there weren’t enough to go around. But the Lord let the prophet have experiences in ordinary life, just like He let Jesus have experiences in meeting hardships and problems.

Here are some more people in this home:

“Edith and Nettie were agreeable playmates” *Ibid.*

That is playmates to Ella and her sister Mabel.

“One day Mrs. Hamilton, Nettie’s mother, told us how they came to be living in grandma’s family. Her home in Scotland had been broken up by the sudden death of her husband, and seeking to forget her sorrow in a new environment, she took Nettie, the younger of her two daughters, and sailed for Australia, leaving her sister to bring the older daughter as soon as she could establish herself in the millinery trade in Sidney. The steamer on which her sister and older daughter later sailed was lost at sea, and Mrs. Hamilton and Nettie were left alone in a strange land at a time of financial depression. The message of Jesus soon coming found them and brought

cheer to their hearts. Without regard to difficulties, they took their stand to obey all the commandments of God.

“Having learned her sad story, grandma arranged a private interview. ‘I invite you and Nettie to become members of our household,’ she said. ‘You can be of great assistance to me. My large family of office workers have little time for sewing. We need a seamstress. My two granddaughters will soon arrive from America. This will make four little girls in the home, and you may act as governess to them.’ For several hours each week, while members of grandma’s family, we received lessons in dressmaking from Mrs. Hamilton” *Ibid.*

Now, isn’t that something? Apparently, Sister White had learned through long years of training under Jesus, the Master Teacher, to accept the assignment of Providence, to recognize in circumstances the signals of the divine will. So that instead of lamenting problems, she accepted them and used them as tools with which to work.

And as I sometimes say, does it make a difference which end of the hoe you pick up? Yes, oh so many people, even if they see the hoe and pick it up, insist on picking it up with the sharp end. And they do not cut many weeds. They just hurt themselves. Every problem that we come in contact with may be a tool that God wants us to use to get something done. That’s what Sister White was doing with these various people.

Now this other girl, Edith:

“Edith’s mother had recently died, and her father was trying to make his way and provide for his son and daughter by selling our message filled books. Colportering was not as profitable an enterprise then as it is today, and Mr. Ward was having a discouraging time.

“On hearing of his perplexity, grandma invited him to let Edith come and be her little girl for a while. A few months afterward she took Edith’s older brother, Earnest, and cared for the two until they were able to make their own way” *Ibid.*

Well, those are little glimpses, dear ones, of Sister White’s experience in various phases of what you and I call homeheading. I don’t know that she ever called it that. She was just doing what she wanted all our people, not just in institutional work, but everywhere to do.

Do you remember what we read last week in *Ministry of Healing*?

“Wonderful possibilities are ours through a faithful use of

the opportunities of our own homes” *Ministry of Healing*, page 355.

And thank God, she was a demonstration of what she taught.

Any questions you’d like to ask on what we have gone over today? Let me emphasize that Sister White’s purpose in these examples and my purpose in sharing them with you, neither one are to suggest that everybody is capable of doing or is required to do all that she did. In fact, I don’t know anybody that could do all she did, aside from being a prophet. Do you? It’s phenomenal.

But I know this, dear friends. If you and I will be willing to bring our little barley loaves to Jesus and ask Him to bless them, He will multiply them in the using. And each one of us has a potential that only Heaven sees:

“The humblest worker, moved by the Holy Spirit, will touch invisible chords, whose vibrations will ring to the ends of the earth, and make melody through eternal ages” *Desire of Ages*, page 822.

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