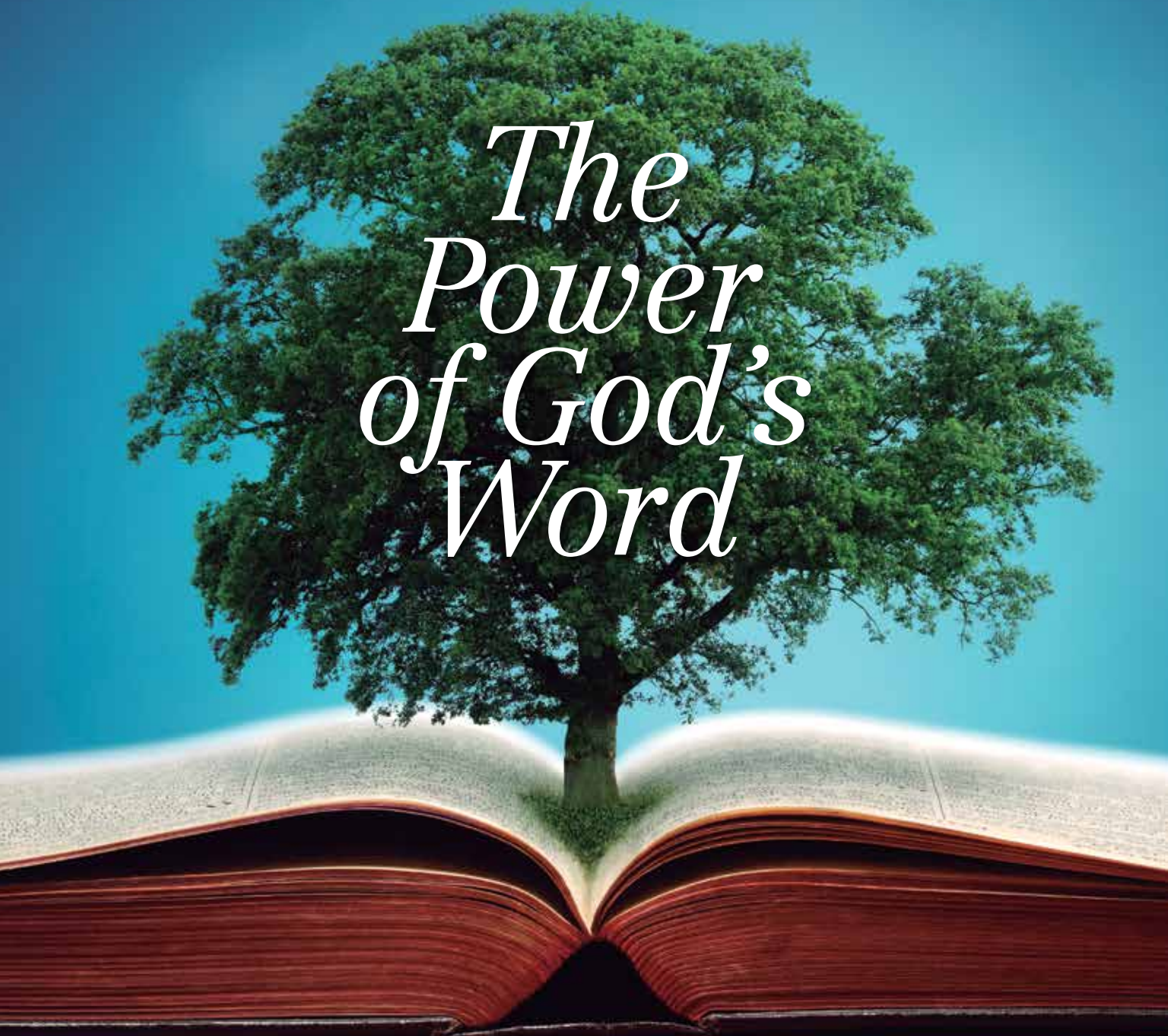


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*The
Power
of God's
Word*

A large, leafy green tree grows out of the center of an open book with a wooden cover. The tree's trunk is positioned in the gutter of the book, and its branches spread out against a clear blue sky. The pages of the book are visible, showing some text. The overall composition is centered and visually striking.

The Backward Glance

“Taking time to look back, is a foundation on course to build a stable future.”

Unarine Ramaru

THE SHOCK HIT ME the instant I saw the train leave the station. My purse! I had left my purse on the train! I could see it clearly in my mind, on the floor by the seat I had just left. I'd grabbed my packages from the overhead bin and walked off

the train, leaving my purse with my credit cards, checkbook, keys, health card, driver's license, social security card, and a bit of money.

As I began to panic, I berated myself for not having followed the “Backward Glance” rule.

LOOKING BACK

During nurses' training some years ago, as my class began clinical duties, we were advised to always stop at the doorway of a

patient's room and look back to be sure everything was in order and the patient was comfortable.

This rule has been remarkably helpful not only in my nursing experience but also when leaving the house, my office, the clinic, the car, my seat on a plane (or train), or the pew at church.

The concept applies just as well to mentally

reviewing past experiences, beliefs and practices learned, or past dreams and goals. You may have heard advice against reflecting on the past, based on the idea that people should look forward and not dwell on mistakes or neglected opportunities. But we can experience positive results from occasionally reflecting on life and thinking with gratitude about God's faithfulness, forgiveness, and generous blessings. Looking back can strengthen hope, rekindle faith, and fill the heart with a sense of health-giving peace.

RECALLING OUR HERITAGE

Do you remember how health ministry began for the Seventh-day Adventist Church? During a vision on June 6, 1863, Ellen White received detailed instructions from God regarding specific health principles she was to share with the church. It was a time of ignorance regarding health habits, barbaric curative treatments, and a universal misunderstanding of disease. The vision was a shocking revelation even to Ellen White. Since then, God's principles for good health and longevity have been validated over and over by medical research as scientifically sound.

While we do feel truly privileged to have a message of health, our imperfect human natures sometimes forget the benefits and become a bit too relaxed. We can end up depending on personal interpretations of health principles in order to accommodate tastes or habit preferences. Just as



reflection can benefit our personal lives, this is another area where it's good to look back and be reminded of God's loving instructions. He wants His children to enjoy the best health possible!

Take a minute to review these core principles as they were presented in 1863:

1. Those who do not control their appetite in eating are guilty of intemperance.

2. Swine's flesh is not to be eaten under any circumstance.

3. Tobacco in any form is a slow poison.

4. Strict cleanliness of the body and home premises is important.

5. Tea and coffee, like tobacco, are slow poisons.

6. Rich cake, pies, and puddings are injurious.

7. Eating in between meals injures the stomach and digestive process.

8. Adequate time must be allowed between meals, giving the stomach time to rest.

9. If a third meal is taken, it should be light and eaten several hours before bedtime.

10. People used to meat, gravies, and pastries do not immediately relish a plain, wholesome diet.

11. Gluttonous appetite contributes to indulgence of corrupt passions.

12. Adopting a plain, nutritious diet may overcome the physical damage caused by a wrong diet.

13. Reforms in eating will save expense and labor.

14. Children eating flesh meat and spicy foods have strong tendencies toward sexual indulgences.

15. Pure water should be used freely in maintaining health and curing illnesses.

16. Nature alone has curative powers.

17. Common medicines, such as strychnine, opium, calomel, mercury, and quinine, are poisons. *(These were common disease treatment options used at the time of the vision. Quinine is still used with care for the treatment of malaria.)*

18. Parents transmit their weaknesses to their children; prenatal influences have enormous effects.

19. Obeying the laws of health will prevent many illnesses.

20. God is too often blamed for deaths caused by violation of nature's laws.



“We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history.”

Ellen G. White, Life Sketches, p. 196

21. Light and pure air, especially in the sleeping quarters, are required.

22. On rising in the morning, bathing, even a sponge bath, will be beneficial. God will not work healing miracles for those who continually violate the laws of health.

23. Many invalids have no physical cause for their illness; they have a diseased imagination.

24. Physical labor, willingly performed, will help to create a healthy, cheerful disposition.

25. Willpower has much to do with resisting disease and soothing nerves.

26. Outdoor exercise is very important to health of mind and body. Overwork breaks down both mind and body; routine daily rest is necessary.

27. Many die of disease caused wholly by eating flesh food.

28. Caring for health is a spiritual matter, reflecting a person's commitment to God.

29. A healthy mind and body directly affect one's morals and one's ability to discern truth.

30. All God's promises are given on condition of obedience.

(List reprinted from *Dramatic Prophecies of Ellen White*, Herbert Edgar Douglass, Pacific Press, 2007, pp. 64-66.)

REMINDERS KEEP US ON TRACK

I was so relieved and thankful when I awoke and fully realized that my leaving a purse on the train was only a dream, albeit a very vivid nightmare. It reminded me to look back, not only when physically leaving a room or area but occasionally to help keep me on track—with my health habits, with my spiritual values, and with my priorities in life. ■

Rae Lee Cooper writes from Washington State, which she and her husband now call home. Enjoyable activities include being more involved in the lives of her children and grandchildren, teaching music, and participating in church community health and welfare programs.

