

Magazine for Adventist Pastoral Spouses - Dutch Caribbean Union - First Semester 2021

# ABIDE



**PERSEVERE!**

*Those who persevere up to the end shall be saved*



## Abide Magazine

This magazine is especially prepared to stimulate spiritual vitality, to nurture emotional growth and to encourage every pastor's wife of the Seventh Day Adventist Church in Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao to live a balanced healthy life, and encourage them to be a good christian witness in the home and community, to be a wonderful mother for their children, and a big support for their husbands in the ministry.

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**NOTE:** All unnamed article is contribution of the editor

# Abide Magazine:



Is a call from God to every pastor's wife to stay connected, every day anew to the Vine, just like Jesus said in John 15:5: "*I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.*"

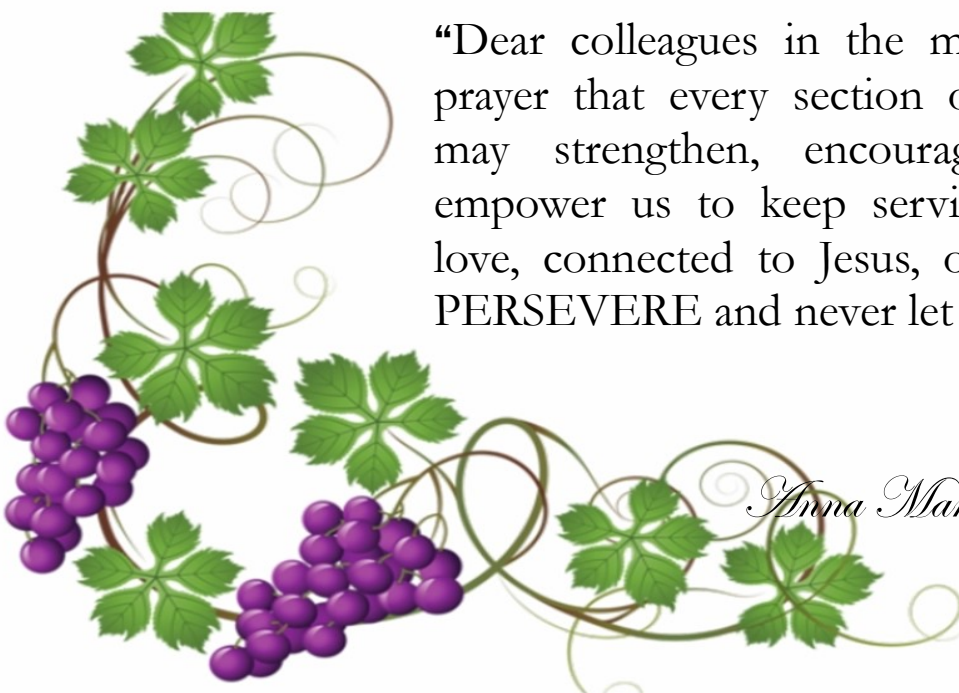
Like author and pastor Morris Venden says in his book "Grapes", "*Whether a branch abides and, as a result, it produces fruit; or the branch doesn't stay connected, and it will wither and decay.*" In another part he emphasizes: "*No branch will produce fruit if it is only occasionally connected to the vine. The connection must be consistent... We trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of sin, but then we sought by our own efforts to live for Him... Every failure on the part of God's people is due, not to their lack of trying to produce fruit, but due to their lack of faith and trust in Him.*"

**"Our growth in grace, our joy, our usefulness, all depend on our union with Christ. It's through communion with Him, every day, every hour,— abiding in Him,— we ought to grow in grace" (Steps to Christ, p. 69).**

"Dear colleagues in the ministry, it is our prayer that every section of this magazine may strengthen, encourage, inspire and empower us to keep serving with joy and love, connected to Jesus, our good Master. PERSEVERE and never let go!!!

Cordially,

*Anna Maria Manuela Croes*



# "PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)"

By: Pastor Shurman Kook



I have waited so long in writing this article, and the circumstances at the time of publication have changed so dramatically from the circumstances at the time when I was first asked to write this article. Procrastination, this time, has resulted in an advantage. I have never before heard of COVID-19. Certainly not before December 2019. It was at the end of December 2019 that a worldwide pandemic started. When I noticed, through the international news, that a mortal virus had risen in China at the end of this year, I thought that it would be one of those diseases that in the past had affected epidemically only far away countries, and that this too would come to pass. Life would afterwards continue its ordinary course here where we live.

At the moment, while I was writing this article, there were 45,319,063 cases of infection worldwide, of which 1,186,198 persons have died.<sup>1</sup> In the Dutch Caribbean territory we had 5,605 cases of infection and 41 deaths caused by this virus.

With such high ratings, evidently, we are conscious that although this virus is invisible to the human eye, without the aid of microscopes, this virus is a realistic mortal threat.

In order to protect themselves from this realistic threat, professionals in these medical sectors are using Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). This is the Equipment that they put on to minimize exposure to the danger of harm or serious illnesses at work. The harm from illnesses are caused by contact with chemical, radiological, physical, electronic, or mechanical dangers at work. PPE could include accessories such as gloves, glasses, shoe protection, ear protectors, helmets, vests, or a complete outfit.

The Bible clarifies that God hath called us, ministers of the gospel, to open the eyes of mankind "so that they turn their backs to the darkness and accept light, turn away from the power of Satan and accept God". In light of the picture of the great controversy between Satan and God, we are continually exposed to the seen and unseen dangers. Because of this reason,

the apostle Paul addressed explicitly the threat, as well as the PPE that God hath provided so that we would be able to complete our task of ministry.

“**10** Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. **11** Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. **12** For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. **13** Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. **14** Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, **15** and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. **16** In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. **17** Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. **18** And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people. **19** Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, **20** for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.”<sup>4</sup>

## **God, being a good employer, provided a PPE in the form of a complete outfit for us**

The PPE that God hath given us includes a belt of truth around our waist, righteousness as a breastplate, zeal to announce the good message of peace, a shield of faith that can withstand the arrows of fire that the evil ones are inflicting us with. Salvation as a helmet that is able to protect our head and

Spirit. Notice that God did not give us a PPE only to protect us from the enemy, but also to grant us offensive mechanisms so that we can effectively work against the enemies kingdom. This is the ‘Word of God which is our sword of the Holy Spirit’.

The Apostle Paul urges us by saying that we ought to ‘seek the strength of the Lord and in His great power’. ‘Put on the armor that God gives, so you can attack the Devil’s deceitful plans’. Paul is conscious that in our own strength it is impossible to confront the threats. Therefore, he urges us to seek power from God, ‘put on the armor that God gives’, ‘persevere’, ‘stand firm and ready’, ‘pray and ask God to always help you’.

Therefore, my brethren and companions in the battle, may each of us put on the PPE of God. May we have the discipline to seek power from God each new day. May the grace of God help us to discern well, and to confront false teachings, and that our faith, like a shield, may withstand the evil that men may throw against ourselves, our family members and against our church where we serve. May our waist be girded by the truth so we may bring good leadership into our church in these uncertain times. May the righteousness of God be our protection that covers us and our family members, while we help our congregations to comply with the mission of God in our particular spheres of influence. Finally, may we be effective in our offensive attacks against the reign of the enemy by means of the Word of God which is the sword of the Holy Spirit. So that we may preach the Good News with ‘well-mastered courage’. - Maranatha.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus> (29 october 2020)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.osha.gov/personal-protective-equipment> (30 october 2020)

<sup>3</sup> Acts 26: 18

<sup>4</sup> Ephesians 6: 10 – 20

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# LESSONS WE CAN LEARN FROM THE EPIDEMIC COVID 19



## **1. Be willing to trade some of your liberties for the good of the public at large**

Without a doubt, it is difficult to remain at home. Many people complain about tiredness, about boredom, and not knowing what to do. Some might even think that they have lost their personal right to decide for themselves, because they are now forced to remain at home. However, for the good of the majority, we must be willing to sacrifice a bit of our freedom.

## **2. You ought to wash your hands, with or without a virus**

Personal Hygiene is always important. Wet your hands. Scrub with soap for 20 seconds. Rinse. Dry your hand with clean towels. Soap helps to kill viruses.

## **3. To work from home ought to be an option for many people**

During this time many have learned that they are able to work from their homes.

## **4. When you call in sick, spending the day at home might save lives**

Try not to impress you boss with your martyrlike attitude: *"Listen boss, I am sick, but I will still*

*come to work. See how hard I do work?"* This mentality must stop. If you are ill, please stay home!

## **5. The Internet is important**

Especially during times like these, having the internet is important in order to contact family members or friends in any part of the world, but also to work at home if this is necessary.

## **6. It is noticeable how hard health-care professionals do work and how much they sacrifice for others**

We do learn that doctors, nurses and all those who work in the medical health and care sector can help us to overcome these problems. They are at work day and night trying to save lives. They deserve our understanding, cooperation, support and prayers.

## **7. Everyone must learn to cook**

While staying at home, many were forced to learn or reawaken their love for cooking. It is one of the most important abilities that a human being could have. You can support yourself. It helps you to depend on yourself and save some money. During this period, many are sharing via social media the different recipes of delicious

and nutritious meals that they have prepared.

### 8. Importance for all of speaking every day with friends and loved one

Now that we are unable to leave our homes, and become very busy, the best way to combat loneliness is to seek regular contact with family members and acquaintances, by means of telephone calls or 'video chats'. These are the moments for long and deep conversations. Don't forget human connection in these crucial times. Remember to call your grandma!

### 9. Learn to appreciate nature

If you are currently living in a rural community or you have trees and plants in your neighborhood, appreciate them. Sit down, admire and contemplate them. They do not only offer oxygen for our bodies, but remember also that the color green (for example of leaves) and the color blue (for example of the sky) are colors that aid relaxation. They can help alleviate stress and avoid depression. Whenever you are able to go out and enjoy nature, do so without hindering/ harming anyone else. Or if you have a large yard, go outside and walk around the house a couple of times while taking deep breaths.

### 10. Learn to be happy

For some people it may be hard to be quiet and do nothing. To be alone, especially if you are an extrovert person, who likes to be in the company of other people, is tiresome and lonesome. And yet, you can learn a lot more about yourself. You can learn to keep yourself occupied with productive activities. You can learn to enjoy your own company, and as a Christian you can learn to appreciate the company of God, the Holy Spirit and His holy angels.

### ASSURANCES FOR A CHRISTIAN

● **God will support you.** In Acts chapter 17, Paul is speaking to the people in Athens, and says the following: *"For in Him we live and move and exist"*. In God we find our assurance. Not in our health, our securities, our commodities. God has promised us that He would be with us. He did not promise that we would not suffer, but He assured us that our sufferings and fears will not be disproportionate. In the midst of persecution or global panic, God sustains his people.



● **Through Jesus, we are "more than conquerors" (Romans 8:37).** *"Who can separate us from Christ's love? Trouble, anguish, persecution, hunger, nakedness, danger or threats? .... Despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us."*

● **God is trustworthy.** God has not abandoned us. He is there, if we have courage enough to seek Him. His ways are not our ways, but we trust that He will fulfill His perfect will in His timing.

● **God is in control.** Whatever men may do or say, whether it be something good or bad, God knows. Nothing is hidden from our heavenly Father. "Belief God's Word, in the same way that you believe another person. He said it and He will accomplish what He said.... Whatever raises up its ugly head, never be discouraged. The Lord God loves us and He will fulfill His words (1 SM 83 - 85).

Philippians 4:19. *"But my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."* Remember, there is a God who loves us more than what we can fathom. He knows about your needs and He promises that He will provide. You are not alone during this difficult time. Believe, trust and persevere.



**“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”**

[Philippians 4:6, 7](#)

- Pray that God will calm our fears, and that His people will remember that we have a different identity - being courageous, and not fearful.
- Pray that our church will be a calming and positive presence amidst the confusion and darkness among us.
- Pray that we shall be a people full of compassion, willing to help others.
- Pray for all the Healthcare workers, that God may help them in their work.
- Pray for those who have lost loved ones due to this disease.
- Pray for those who are enduring financial difficulties.
- Pray for parents who work and simultaneously take care of their children.
- Pray that churches may seek ways to help families who have dire needs and that they may display the love of Christ.
- Pray for the health of the elderly.
- Pray for the leaders of our church, that God may give them wisdom in taking measures that will help in the current crisis.
- Pray that God's people might be united in Him.
- Pray that God's people might be reminded of their hope in Christ, and of the truth that our redeemer who died and is resurrected, has already overcome the world.
- Pray that we might be a people who read and studies the Word of God daily, and a people who seriously thinks about His calling to serve and His promises that He will be with us while we live and serve.

**RESOURCES:**

[11 Lessons From COVID-19 Pandemic — What I Learned In Quarantine \(womansday.com\)](#)

*United in Prayer [UnitedinPrayer@ministerialassociation.org]*

[God's Got This | Revival & Reformation \(revivalandreformation.org\)](#)

[Ease coronavirus fears: 7 lessons from persecuted Christians - Open Doors USA - Open Doors USA](#)



# TEXTS OF PERSEVERANCE

“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing” (James 1:2-4).

“And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary” (Galatians 6:9).

“And if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us” (Romans 8:17, 18).

“We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing” (2 Corinthians 4:8).

“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

“Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:1, 2).

“Yet those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary” (Isaiah 40:31).

“Have not I commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:9).

“Many are the afflictions of the righteous; But the Lord delivers him out of them all” (Psalms 34:19).

# "THE CHURCH IN DIFFICULT TIMES"



By: Pastor Elbert Presentacion

Since march 2020 the World Health Organisation recognized COVID -19 as a pandemic. From its epicenter in Wuhan, China, this outbreak created panic combined with prevention for travelers, and for commerce and in family homes, it seemed that more we try to prevent, it draws closer to our doorsteps and we feel the effect. The world never felt such an effect. May God help us to have the strength to be able to help those in need, while we fulfill our mission.

**The history of Christianity in the years 249-262 D.C** suffered the more cruel pandemic of all times. They say the city of Rome was losing about 5000 people a day, it was an epidemic of small pox and the flu, so the bishop and writer Tascio Cecilio Cipriano documented, and although the plaque didn't respect colour, race nor religion, there was no difference either between pagans or christians. Notwithstanding the crisis, the more beautiful detail was that the majority of the christian brethren were showing love and loyalty without limit and without discrimination,

thinking in helping both Christians and none Christians as Jesus had done. <https://biteproject.com/compasion-pestes-roma/>

Today as our attention is focused on COVID 19, Global Health Organization has other worries. 94 million people run the risk of being contaminated with measles. They fear this pandemic of measles which is growing daily— 870 million contaminated and 208 million died. They are motivating the population to vaccinate children and adults in Brazil, Philippines, Nigeria, Somalia. *International News of November 13, 2020.*

As the church is nearing the end time, there won't be easy times, the Bible is right about it in:

**2 Timothy 3:1 “But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come.”**

Jeremiah 29:11 “For I know the plans that I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.”

Everything gets harder every day, but our message can't stop. It is remarkable the impact that this pandemic had on our churches with every member and sympathizer:

- Effect on the active members.
- Effect on pastoral visits.
- Effect on families and homes.
- Effect on socialization in weddings and funerals.
- Effect on our singing that gives life to every service.
- Effect on the financial system of the church and family.

Waw, you nearly get discouraged as a leader, because as we plan one thing, another action comes out, of which each one is to bring balance in the home, at work or in the church, while as a leader you have to decide what to do to encourage the brethren and keep them warm in God's service. Where it says in the Bible *"most people's love will grow cold"* Matthew 24:12.

Jesus instructed His disciples on the signs of the end of the world, amidst a crisis like this one in Matthew 24:21, 22 *"For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall. And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short."*

The church will continue through difficult times while the government and the call-ups in the front row have the difficult task of implementing the order, we as Christians, followers of the Master who has everything under His control, it will be a blessing for us to follow order, a blessing to obey, while at the long run we ourselves will be benefitted with a healthy physical, social and spiritual life.

**Keep in mind that even though we are in difficult times, the church will triumph.**

We have to respond with responsibility in this crisis, because our responsibility as a



Christian is to: Respect in a prudent way the advices of medical professionals and follow the orders of the government to help stay the sickness.

Today more than ever before we do have the opportunity to love and to serve our neighbor, sharing the gospel both with words, but also in action.

While we are going through this new model, it is important to pay attention to what it teaches us, how to deal better with monetary, social, family and spiritual issues.

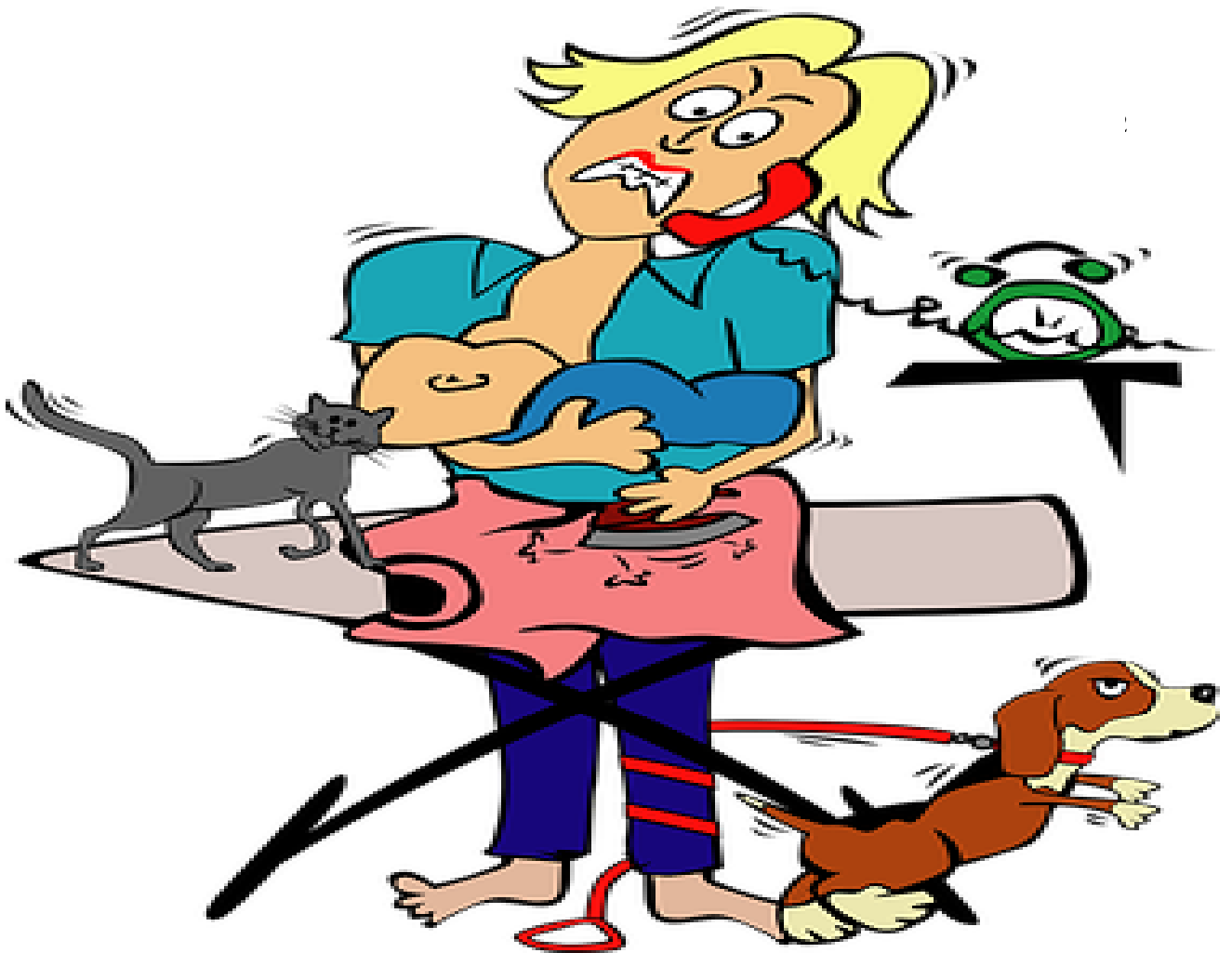
With this model it's not convenient to watch and see who helps, but notwithstanding the difficult times, God calls us as His church leaders, that our task is to continue helping, share the love, continue to be a disciple to help share the message in good times and bad times.

Notwithstanding the difficult times we are going through, there is a reason to be grateful in everything, because in spite of everything our God stays in control.

Keep up the courage colleagues, together we will achieve great things for the Lord, supporting, sustaining and loving each other, because indeed, our Lord is on the way!

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Pastor Elbert Presentacion pastors the churches Yandorèt, Veeris and Mundu Nobo in Curaçao.



They say a picture is worth more than ten thousand words. Looking at this graphic, I can imagine this housewife is saying to herself, *"But how then! What's the matter with only me! Here I have to iron this shirt in a hurry because I need to wear it just now when I go out, now the phone is ringing, baby's feeding time has arrived, and to make matters worse this restless dog can't keep still and it seems he has bad intentions with me... What do I feel around my leg???... Help!!!!"*

Have you ever felt like that, with your hands full of responsibilities, the clock goes too fast and instead of giving you a break so you can accomplish everything, "others" come and take your time away from you?

I have felt like that, and I tell you it was an effort not to pull my hairs out, or run out screaming into the yard... Ya, the remedy would have been to take me to montekristu!... (Mental institution in Curaçao) Yes, indeed, sometimes there are days like these.

But you know, thank God for God Himself who promised that He is here for us! And especially during these days of lockdown, when you have to work from home, sometimes the children get their schooling at home, money is running out, the bills keep coming, and we feel stressed out and ask ourselves where to start solving all?

One day, while reading the Bible I came across three beautiful texts amidst the various laments in Jeremiah's book. I liked them and I asked God to help me memorize them. They are found in Lamentations 3:22-24. *"The Lord's lovingkindness indeed never cease. For His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; Great is Thy faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, says my soul. Therefore I have hope in Him."*

I hope they are of strength for you too, housewife, know that God understands, He sees, and He will provide. Let's lift up our faces to heaven and persevere!



### **SPEND TIME ALONE WITH GOD**

We are human. We are sinners. We are fragile. We need God in our lives, daily, every hour, every second, we need the protection and guidance of His Holy Spirit. In Ephesians 6:10-13 we are reminded to *“be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil... that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.”* Here are some tips how to spend time alone with God:

- Make spending time with God our daily priority.
- Find your own solitary place to meet with God.
- Develop the habit of going to bed at a reasonable hour.
- Develop the habit of getting up early.
- When you get up, don't get distracted.
- Make a plan and be consistent.
- Treat God with respect, as the King He really is!
- Keep God with you as you go throughout your day

We may keep so near to God that in every unexpected trial our thoughts will turn to Him as naturally as the flower turns to the sun”.

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*(Counsels taken from the book “Daring To Ask For More”, of Melody Mason, chap. 10)*

**“Having a close, deep relationship with God will not develop by accident or by random visits. We must take time for intentional cultivation. We must guard our set-apart time with God as sacred for it belongs to God just as much as our tithe.**



Protecting yourself and your loved ones from #coronavirus is simple:

- Clean your hands often
- Cough or sneeze in your bent elbow – not on your hands!
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Limit social gatherings and time spent in crowded places
- Avoid close contact with anyone who is sick
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.



#MentalHealth #COVID19 #coronavirus



# FIVE POSITIVE LESSONS TO TEACH OUR CHILDREN DURING COVID 19:



## 1. Be aware of bacteria

More than ever before we are conscientious of the many ways we can transmit bacteria to others. Make our children aware of this, and practice together the different suggestions to be extra clean so to avoid sickness.

## 2. Adaptability

Instead of focusing on the negative things, that we can't do anymore like we used to in the past, choose to look at the bright side. Help our children learn how to solve problems and seek new ways to adapt under the present circumstances. Life won't be always according to our expectations. Be creative in sharing your time between your children, your chores, yourselves as a couple and your job, if you have to do that at home. It will maybe be uncomfortable at the beginning, but at the long run it will become a source of great joy and victory.



## 3. Gratitude

When we always have what we want at hand (*f.e. sports for the kids*) it is natural for them to start to take them for granted. We learn that it will always be there and we depend on that. But there's no guarantee. In actual circumstances it is advisable to keep distance, and sometimes we are even told "Stay home!" Be grateful today for all that you have, because some day, maybe, they are gone.

## 4. Preparation for the future

At the moment our children watch us as grown ups, how we deal with this pandemic and they learn from us for other pandemics that may come in the future. They fix their eyes on our emotions, our vocabulary, and experience. As an adult, how do you want your child to react when it reoccurs in the future? With fear? Prepared? Blaming others? By being aggressive? With innovation? With the ability to solve problems? With cooperation? With adaptability? Take time to reflect with them on this possibility and what to do.



## 5. We will overcome!

We have to go forward, we can't go back. We have to deal with the reality of the circumstances, and don't waste time lamenting and start blaming. We must think critical, with innovation, being positive, an optimist. The following generation have their own struggles to deal with. We will overcome with God's help!



# PERSEVERE!

**E**VERYONE has problems in this restless world of care.

EVERYONE grows weary with the “cross they have to bear.

EVERYONE is troubled and “their skies are overcast.”

AS they try to face the future while still dwelling in the past...

BUT the people with their problems only “listen with one ear”.

FOR people only listen to the things they want to hear.

AND they only hear the kind of things they are able to believe.

AND the answers that are God’s to give they’re not ready to receive.

SO while the peoples problems keep growing every day.

AND man vainly tries to solve them in his own self-willful way...

GOD seeks to help and watches, waiting always patiently.

TO help them solve their problems whatever they may be—

SO may the people of all nations at last become aware.

THAT God will solve the peoples’ problems through faith and hope and prayer!

*Helen Steiner Rice*

**“PERSEVERANCE** is more than endurance.

**It is combined with absolute assurance that what we are hoping for is going to happen. Endurance may merely be the fear of letting go. Perseverance demonstrates complete faith that God will prevail. If our hopes are experiencing disappointments, it is because they are being purified.” — Jere Patzer, *The Road Ahead*, p. 22.**



# "I WILL NEVER FORSAKE YOU!"

By: Claudette Presentacion

Deuteronomy 31:8, "And the Lord is the one who goes ahead of you; *He will be with you. He will not fail you or forsake you.*" When we speak and say that the Lord will not forsake us, this means that He will not renounce you or abandon you completely.

Sleeping very sick on my bed three months ago, I could not say I felt forsaken by God. These were difficult days, but it was a time when I felt God's presence more than ever before. I had an encounter with Him like never before. I was at the point of giving up, it was a terrible experience, but the conversations and communion I had with God were so deep and tremendous. God is good, very good, God is with you, He will not fail you nor forsake you, never! Don't be afraid and don't be dismayed, not even when you are suffering. **Hold fast unto the Lord.** I thank God for the beautiful promises in His Word.

As was the case of Ruth with Naomi in Ruth 1:14-16 "Ruth clung to her." Then Naomi said: "Behold your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and her gods; return after your sister-in-law." But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the Lord do to me, and worse, if anything but death parts you and me." In like manner we have to take hold of Jesus. Jesus will never forsake us; He's always there for us!

**Be strong and courageous.  
Don't be afraid of nothing,  
For the Lord goes with you,  
He will never forsake you.  
He's always there to  
comfort, support and help  
you wherever you go or  
whatever you do. God's  
grace is sufficient in any  
situation of our lives.**

In these difficult times, many of us are suffering or have lost a dear one. Many of us could be dismayed because we lost our job. Don't lose hope, God equips us with His Holy Spirit just as He did with the people of Israel. In Deuteronomy 31:6 He says again "Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or tremble at them, for the Lord your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you."



Jesus felt the abandonment of His Father at the cross, so we could have His fellowship forever. Jesus understands what it means to feel lonely, to lose your job, to lose a loved one, to be discouraged and without hope. Like I myself, my mother died last year, and let me tell you: "It is hard!" Going back to to the cross and seeing Jesus dying nailed to a cross, is a big demonstration that God has not forsaken us. What a sacrifice for humanity!

Going ahead with our journey through life, we will encounter big challenges. But we must be strong in the Lord and be completely sure that God is the One leading us, because He promised that He will not fail us nor forsake us. The way God's promise works requires action and faith from us. If you are in trouble, if you are facing a giant, if you don't have faith and trust in God, it can be very difficult to believe His promise.

**That's why, God tells you, do not be afraid, nor dismayed, you will win the battle in My name, you will be victorious, go ahead to war.**

Sometimes as a human being you think there is no solution, that God has forsaken you, but I want to tell you that God is still on His throne. And if God is on His throne, why be afraid. If you focus on the problem, be it either sickness, abuse, loneliness or unemployment, you will for sure think that God has forsaken you. Leave them in His hands. Everything is possible for those who belief in God.

May God open our eyes, just like He did for Gehazi, servant of Elisha ([2 Kings 6:17](#)).

#### **WONDERFULL PROMISES:**

**Matt. 1:23** *"Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which translated means, 'God with us.'"*

**Psalms 139:7** *"Where can I go from Thy Spirit? Or where can I flee from Thy presence?"*

**Psalms 139:8-10** *"If I ascend to heaven, Thou art there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the dawn, if I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, even there Thy hand will lead me. And Thy right hand will lay hold of me."*

#### **Today I want to tell you:**

When you wake up in the morning, say: Jesus I love You. When you leave home, say: Jesus come with me. When you feel like crying, say: Jesus hug me. When you are happy, say: Jesus I adore You. When you are going to do something, say: Jesus help me. When you make a mistake, say: Jesus forgive me. When you are going to sleep, say: Thank You, Jesus and cover me with Your holy cloak.

Nothing in this world nor joy can take the place of the presence and favor of God. Without Him as our Friend, we are entirely alone. We may have many other friends, but they can never be what Jesus is to us. He's always here, obey Him for you to feel His presence. Obey, for He will never forsake you. Jesus will give you rest.

God never leaves us, He's always at the same place as ever, at the reach of one prayer.

Matthew 28:20 *"And teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

#### **MY PRAYER:**

Thank You loving Father, because You never change. Help us abide in Christ, because His grace is sufficient for us in every challenge. Help us to learn the lessons that You want to teach us, so we can mature in faith, by trusting Your words and obeying Your commandments. Thank you, Lord, because You are always present. Open our spiritual eyes to see that You are here.

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Claudette Presentacion is the spouse of Pr. Elbert Presentacion, in charge of the churches Yandorèt, Veeris and Mundu Nobo in Curaçao.



## WOMEN WHO PERSEVERED

The Bible presents us in a very peculiar way a parade of characters who, although distant in time, we feel them close, because in their walk through life they show those universal and common features and circumstances to all human beings of all ages, especially to our women of today.

And one of those characteristics is *perseverance* that the Spirit of Prophecy says is:

“active virtue essential to success” (Ev 479)  
“Christians can do nothing without” (MH 196)  
“must cultivate earnestly” (CG 161)  
“developed by inconveniences” (5T 312)  
“important in character building” (MYP 45)  
“needed to fill responsible calling” (Ed 267)

Here are some women in Bible times who demonstrated this virtue. They are:

### **ABIGAIL:**

A beautiful woman, with a foolish husband. She had probably been wed to Nabal for his wealth. (*The Top 100 Women of the Bible*, p. 11). When her husband intentionally offended King David’s servants (1 Samuel 25:4-13), when she heard about it, without saying anything to her husband, she persevered in doing what was good, and so

saved both her life, that of her family, and that of all the servants.

### **ACSAH:**

Daughter of Caleb, whom the father raffled off to the man who was successful in battle, courageous enough to attack and capture Kiriath Sepher. Othniel, Caleb’s nephew was the man. He became the first major judge of Israel. As part of her dowry, Acsah received dry land in the Negev. So she told her husband to ask Caleb for another field, one that had springs. When Othniel didn’t do it, Acsah persevered and took on the task herself and got the land.

### **ANNA:**

A prophetess advanced in years, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. Having lived with a husband seven years after her marriage, and then as a widow to the age of 84, she never left the temple, she dedicated her life to the Lord. She persevered, serving night and day with fastings and prayers. She had the privilege of seeing the Messiah with her own eyes. She immediately recognized Him. She gave thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

### DEBORAH:

A prophetess whom God chose and had given authority and a message for Barak whom God chose as the country's military commander to go and fight Sisera, the Canaanite commander. He was reluctant to do it. *"If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go."* That was a strange petition for usually only men went to war. But Deborah persevered as a consecrated leader and she went with him with an army of 10,000 men. God Himself fought for them, and they won the battle against the enemy. She described herself as "a mother in Israel."

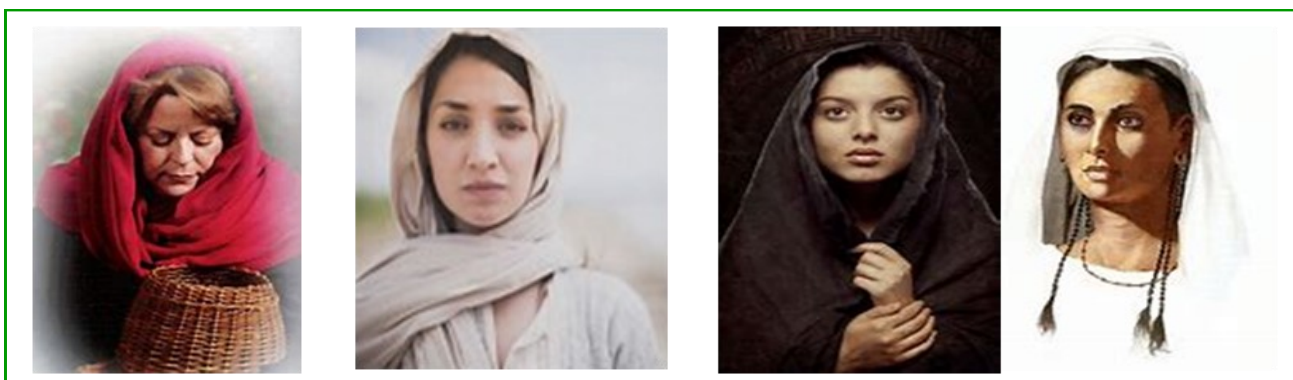
### ESTHER:

A beautiful Jewish girl, married to a pagan king. When the situation arose where she and her

answered her prayer. Hannah later on fulfilled her promise that she made and gave him back to the Lord. After that the Lord happily blessed her with three more sons and two daughters (1 Samuel 2:21).

### JOCHEBED:

Courageous mother and slave in Egypt. She loved all her children. When the wicked pharaoh said to throw all newborn male babies into the river for them to die, she decided to hide her baby as much as she could, up to 3-months, but then she persevered in seeking another solution to preserve the life of her son. By God's inspiration she made a rush basket and placed it in the Nile River and allowed his sister to hide and watch over him. Miraculously, through the Egypt princess, the life of the baby was spared.



own people would lose their lives, she persevered in doing what was right, and risked her life going unto the king and ask for his help, though she was not summoned to present before him. And she said these famous words: *"And if I perish, I perish!"*

### HANNAH:

She was married to a devout Israelite, but she was sterile and couldn't give him a child. The husband married a second wife who gave him children. Separate from this second hurt, the new wife tormented Hannah continually with her words, even insinuating that God had cursed her and left her because she could not bear a child. Afflicted in spirit she presented her case to the Lord and persevered in prayer, even promising that she would give her son back to Him to serve Him forever in His temple. And God heard and

He was Moses, chosen by God to deliver the Hebrews from slavery.

So there are other women in Bible times, like Ruth, Zipporah, Rahab, Mary, the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, the woman with the issue of blood, the Samaritan woman and many more who persevered against all odds. At the long run they were accepted, vindicated, chosen, rescued, healed, forgiven, encouraged and empowered for ministry.

As God was with these women and had helped them, God is here, today, at our side to be our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Let's trust ourselves and our family in His capable hands.

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Resource: The Top 100 Women of the Bible

# "EXAMPLE OF THE PIONEERS"



During the time of the Great Disappointment in 1844, a small group emerged that later on would be known as the Seventh Day Adventists. The following list includes the name of the principal ones:

- James White (1821-1881) – writer, preacher, administrator
- Ellen G. White (1827-1915) – writer, the Lord's messenger
- Joseph Bates (1792-1872) – author, retired ship captain
- Stephen Pierce (1804-1883) – Bible student, author
- Hiram Edson (1806-1882) – preacher, author
- John N. Andrews (1829-1883) – author, preacher, missionary
- E. Cornell (1827-1893) – preacher, evangelist
- Stephen Haskell (1833-1922) – evangelist, administrator, missionary
- N. Loughborough (1832-1924) – evangelist, administrator
- Uriah Smith (1832-1903) – editor, administrator, preacher



*(Thanks to Adventist Pioneer Library who compiled the biography of many of these pioneers).*

These believers, who went through the experiences of these first years, are known as Adventist Pioneers.

The pioneers of the Seventh Day Adventist Church were members of the Seventh Day Adventist church. They were part of the Millerite group that came together after the Great Disappointment that took place in the whole United States of America, and they formed the Seventh Day Adventist Church in 1860. Three years after that, on May 21, 1863, the General Conference of Seventh Day Adventists was established and the movement became an official organisation.

Many of the Adventist pioneers initiated their work when they were teenagers. When the Seventh Day Adventist church was formed, it was teenagers and young adults who carried many of the leadership positions.

### **BUT THEY PERSEVERED!**

Since the start, each one of them, in their own situation, struggled with many hardships. They invested everything they were and had for the Advent Movement. Some of them were timid, afraid to speak in public, but they still did it with the help of God's Holy Spirit.

Poverty was something that Ellen and James White struggled with at the beginning and at other times in their marriage. It is told that the first furniture for their house was either borrowed or bought at a sale. Notwithstanding, it is told that Ellen was a generous and practical Christian. Among other things, when she could afford it, she used to buy whole bolts of fabric, which she kept at hand to sew new clothes for those in need. She would go to auctions and buy second hand furniture to put in storage, so when a house burned down or there was another calamity, she was prepared to help. Even before the days when the church started with its plan of retirement, if she heard that any elderly worker had financial problems, she would send them some money to help them in their emergency.

The pioneers traveled extensively, in all kind of weather, going everywhere they were invited, to carry the Advent message. Sickness and weakness bothered them, nonetheless they persevered in the cause, overburdened sometimes, because the workers were few in all areas of the cause. The health of many broke down. They even had to amputate a leg under the knee from Uriah Smith. But they persevered!

They were persecuted and molested by opposers, clergy of other faith, or by Satan who tried to take away their lives, or to discourage them through the death of their children and other loved ones. They struggled also with opposition inside the cause, and one of the most painful came from a very talented pioneer, called Dr. John H. Kellogg.

### **EXAMPLE OF THE PIONEERS (6T 419)**

"It has cost self-denial, self-sacrifice, indomitable energy, and much prayer, to bring up the various missionary enterprises where they now stand. There is danger that some of those now coming upon the stage of action will rest content to be inefficient, feeling that there is now no need of so great self-denial and diligence, such hard and disagreeable labor, as the leaders in this message experienced; that times have changed; and that since there is now more means in the cause of God, it is not necessary for them to place themselves in such trying circumstances as many were called to meet in the rise of the message.

But were there the same diligence and self-sacrifice manifest at the present stage of the work as at its beginning, we should see a hundred times more than is now accomplished.

If the work is to go forward on the high plane of action upon which it started, there must be no falling off in moral resources. New accessions of moral powers must continually be made. If those now entering the field as laborers feel that they may relax their efforts, that self-denial and strict economy not only of means but of time are not now essential, the work will retrograde. The workers at the present time should have the same degree of piety, energy, and perseverance that the leader had.

"We can do nothing without courage and perseverance" (MH 196).

"Neither young nor old are excusable in trusting to another to have an experience for them... Men, women, and youth, God requires you to possess moral courage, steadiness of purpose, fortitude and perseverance" (2T 130).

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For more information read and hear the CD:

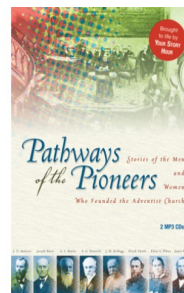
<https://www.adventtruth.com/history/pioneers/>

<https://www.heavenpreparation.org/adventist-pioneer-writings>

<https://whiteestate.org/resources/pioneers/>

<https://whiteestate.org/resources/pioneers-stories/>

<https://www.present-truth.org/12-Ad-History/Stories/PIIONEER%20STORIES.pdf>



# "PERSEVERE IN THE MINISTRY"

By: Jeimi Bruno



On the 31 of December 2019 we congregated in our different churches to say welcome to the new year 2020. Everybody was happy to go to the house of God and to receive His blessing. I am sure we were all very attentive to listen to the message God had for us, for the year that was making its entrance. We already made our goals and planned ahead of time. With a fraternal embrace we wished our family and brethren a happy new year filled with joy and prosperity.

But who could have thought that the enthusiasm of many would change to anxiety, fear and even desperation? Who could have thought they would restrict our hugging to protect ourselves and others from a sickness that we can't see nor detect with our eyes? The goals of some were hindered while the illusion of others vanished in front of them. We empathize with the pain of millions who lost a dear one.

Today we live in a so called new normal where we have to divide the amount of our brethren so each one can have a chance to assist to the worship services. We can't sing and worship God in our congregations as we usually did in the past, and many are getting discouraged by the after-effect of COVID 19.

Aware of everything the year 2020 brought with it, it takes my mind to the first vision Ellen White had, where she saw the people of God walking on a narrow road. Although some were tired amid the difficulties that the road represented, they walked safely when their eyes were kept on Jesus. Advancing without looking to the left nor to the right, without paying attention to the difficulties and dangers, they remained on the road.

**In Materguide they taught  
us we are soldiers of the  
Lord and we will march  
“in the cold and in the heat.”  
This is the time when we  
have to advance with  
our eyes fixed on Jesus**

It doesn't matter what kind of difficulties we encounter today in our ministries, nor the adverse situations we'll have to confront. We ought to stay focused and advance! God revealed that His saints have to go through a lot of challenges, but He assured us also that our afflictions are just for a brief moment and producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all

comparison, on the condition that we won't stay focused on what we see, because these are passing, but what we don't see is eternal.

In Philippians 4:4-7 Paul gave a warning to the church at a moment when he wasn't sure of his own life. Notwithstanding this Paul says: *“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! Let your forbearing spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by much prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let our requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

NOW, more than ever before, let us fix our eyes upon Jesus and continue advancing, because we don't know the day nor the hour, let us persevere and keep on working while the day lasts!

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*Resources:* Early Writings, The First Vision; Beibel Santu, p. 1131

Jeimi Bruno is spouse of Pastor Charlton Bruno, secretary of the Seventh Day Adventist Conference in Curaçao.







## "GOD SPEAKING THROUGH MATTHEW 24:13"

"But he who **perseveres** till the end will be saved" (Beibel); "But he that shall **endure** unto the end, the same shall be saved" (KJV); "But those enduring to the end shall be saved" (NIV); "**Staying with it**—that's what God requires. Stay with it to the end. You won't be sorry, and you'll be saved" (The Message).

In the first vision E.G. White received from God, she saw His people traveling on a small road leading up to heaven. Some of the people got weary and started to murmur. Soon they took their eyes of Jesus who was guiding them up ahead; they started to look around, deviate from the road, and stumbled into the darkness on either side of the road.

"The proclamation of the Gospel leading up to the age to come would be hampered by wars, persecution, hatred of believers, and loss of faith. Christ begins His discourse with a warning against deception. There seems to be a connection between the falling away of many (v. 10) and the false prophets who mislead many (v. 11). Satan is a subtle adversary who works as an angel of light through false religious teachers (2 Cor. 11:14, 15). Apostasy is also the result of persecution. Tribulation and being hated on account of Christ precede the mention of apostasy (v. 9). Jesus speaks of 'temporary' faith, and says that a falling away often occurs when 'affliction or persecution arises because of the Word' (13:21). Perseverance in faith and in the accompanying results of faith are positive evidence of a genuine Christian profession." (Commentary of NIV Bible version, p. 1242, 1243).

"God has shown me that He gave His people a bitter cup to drink, to purify and cleanse them... They can make it still more bitter by murmuring, complaining, and repining. But those who receive it thus must have another draught, for the first does not have its designated effect upon the heart. And if the second does not effect the work, then they must have another, and another, until it does have its designated effect, or they will be left filthy, impure in heart. I saw that this bitter cup can be sweetened by patience, endurance, and prayer... And God will be honored and glorified. It is no small thing to be a Christian and to be owned and approved of God." (*It would be well to read the entire chapter The Trial of Our Faith, in Early Writings, p. 46-48*).

**"We must be partakers of Christ's sufferings here if we would share in His glory hereafter."**

# ANTS AND PERSEVERANCE



“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse” ([Romans 1:20](#)).

By: Indra Willems

Sometimes we think that those who never heard of God; have no means of getting to know Him either. In the above texts apostle Paul says that these people have no excuse, because they have always all the wonders created by God around them. Even the primitive people living in bushes and desert of this world learned and practiced the lessons of nature to stay of good cheer, healthy and save. For example, research has been made and has discovered that there are more than 10 type of ants called: Syrup Ants; Thief Ants; Bulldog Ants; Needle Ants; Floor Ants; Carnivorous Ants; Ball Ants; Ghost Ants; Turtle Ants; Fire Ants; Surgeon Ants; Lazy Ants; Umbrella Ants. We will analyze shortly just the four last type of ants mentioned.

## Fire Ants:

We know them as Stinging Ants. This ant bites and then stings you with a poison that itches and hurts. If someone stood in the nest of this ant, and was bitten by this ant, and he is somewhat allergic for this poison, it can even cause its death. At the moment that they bite in defense of their colony, a certain chemical liquid/ fume goes into the air, and all the rest of the ants come to help attack. They can become up to a quart million ants.

Just as these ants persevere until they reach their goal, so also the enemy of our souls tries to tempt us and perseveres until he makes us victim of wrath and sin, and we are completely in his grasp ([Luke 11:26](#)). Remember Saul and David. And when we feel that the enemy attacks us, *persevere* in prayer and Jesus will free us ([Ps. 59:1, 16](#)).

## Surgeon Ant:

In the forests of Brazil these ants can tumble down big trees. These ants have a big jaw, that is very sharp. When someone or an indian hurts themselves, their companions clean the wound, and bring a handful of these ants. What they do is they put the two sides of the skin together and let the ants bite the skin until the wound is totally 'sewed' together. Then they remove the body of the ant and leave only the jaw till the wound heals nicely. The friends with perseverance and patience use these surgeon ants to do a job which a professional surgeon would have done with needle and thread. Allow that the same way the missionaries teach these people that Jesus is their Chief Doctor and He loves them, that we also will persevere and remember He came to heal us of our wounds and skars that sin caused humanity ([Psalm 147:3](#)).

## Lazy Ant: (Teleuto)

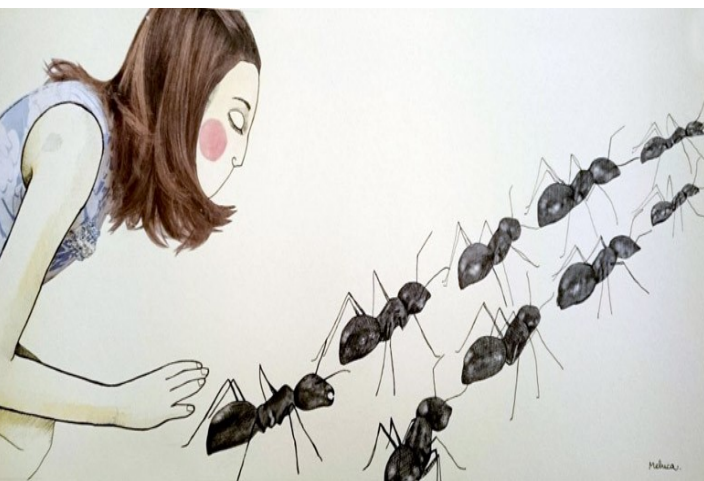
I know this is difficult for you to believe me, but yes, there are lazy ants in this world. Though the Bible uses the ant to say to those who are lazy: “Go to the ants, o sluggard, observe her ways and be wise” (Proverbs 6:6).

There are these which I am sure, you don't want to imitate, because they degenerated so much, that they not only are lazy, but they scarcely move. They live with other type of ants, much larger than they are, that if it was in another ant colony we would think they were the boss of the big ants who do everything for them, because they are so tiny and delicate.

You find these ants only in the house of the bigger ants, and they are transported by the guests of the house; who developed a big belly 'pouch' so the small ant would not fall out.

At the beginning these small ants were stronger and healthier, but by being served constantly, and not persevering in their own lives, little by little they started to lose their strength and importance in their own colony. So they came to the end of their own type, and now they are called: Extinguished Ants.

Therefore, persevere! The Bible tells us clearly: “Whatever your hand finds to do, verily, do it with all your might” (Ecclesiastes 9:10). There is strength in the proposed values of Proverbs 30:25.



## Umbrella ants:

We do know by nature that ants are hard workers, and that's why King Solomon advised us to observe the ants. If you just want to tire yourself out a moment, seek an ant colony and see how they work, and think how you would feel to work just like them, in-exhaustible, without rest, without recreation, nothing else but work, work, work and work. Would you have liked that?

The Umbrella Ants live in warmer climates of this world. They prepare their own food and store these in tunnels in the trees (Proverbs 6:7, 8). Maybe you wouldn't like it to have the same diet time after time, but for the ants there is nothing more palatable than these kind of mushrooms. And to enjoy these they need the fresh green leaves so they can spend the hot hours of the day in the shadow, and they use them also for the night. These are like umbrellas on their head, that's why they are called Umbrella Ants.

Imagine yourself an ant of ½ cm large and the journey going to the tree is like 7m (21 feet), this means they walk 1.440 times their own body size. Another way to think how far this trip is for the ants: Consider the height of a normal child, of a walk of 1,6 km. Going in only one direction, to go and cut, carry the food back to the nest, and when you arrive, you have to go again, and again, and again, from morning till the evening. Colleague, maybe sometimes you feel discouraged and lazy, and don't want to continue or don't want to do nothing more, just remember these Umbrella Ants and persevere, thankful for your own lot in life.



### Marriage of the Ants

The nuptial flight of some ants illustrate the fact that none of them knows when this event takes place. There exists only one period in the life of these ants when they grow wings. Male and female leave the nest flying in the day or night to start a new colony in a different place. They all prepare with anticipation awaiting anxiously the moment to start the flight, but the worker ants won't let them leave the nest, until the hour strikes for them to leave. Perhaps they await for the time to have certain characteristics or an internal mechanism to indicate the appropriate moment. When the midnight of that time comes, it is like a loud voice announces: *Here comes the Bridegroom! Come out to meet Him!* (Matthew 25:6).

The doors open and the ants come out by the thousands and by millions. There must exist some mysterious mean of communication between the colonies, because from the nest of all colonies in the zone, at the same moment, these ants come out and start their flight.

The book of Revelation tells us that the four angels stand with patience and perseverance, keeping back the winds of the earth for God's people, His church, His bride, so the saints could be ready.

Just as it happened with the working ants, so also the angels and the redeemed await with patience the definite sign to open the doors for the action to start. The action will not start if we are not all prepared, for we understand this passage speaks of the coming of Jesus, and we must have obeyed the mission and are ready at all times, persevering in the study of His Word and in prayer to be able to receive Him and be saved (Matthew 24:13).

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*Bible Version:* Beibel Santu and Koriente  
*Morning Watch:* Vislumbre del amor de Dios  
Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Thsm5Y56Zvw>

Indra Willems is spouse of Pastor Shelwin Willems, president of the Seventh Day Adventist Conference in Curaçao



"With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints."

(Ephesians 6:18)