**Women’s Ministries Emphasis Day**

**June 8, 2023**

Sermon

**The God Who Sees You**

Written by Edith Ruiz-Espinoza

Workshop

**The Apple of His Eye**

Written by Edith Ruiz-Espinoza



This sermon resource packet was prepared by the

Department of Women’s Ministries

General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

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GENERAL CONFERENCE

WORLD HEADQUARTERS



WOMEN’S MINISTRIES

November 30, 2023

Dear Sister-Leaders,

Joyful greetings. This world has changed from even a couple of years ago. It seems that anyone can find out about us. The places we visit online, the places we visit in person or in our cars, our preferences at the grocery store, our charitable donations, even our mobile phones track our every move and choice. Advertisers are counting on artificial intelligence knowing more about us than we know ourselves. But artificial intelligence and algorithms cannot measure, predict, or fulfill the spiritual needs of our hearts.

The theme of this Women’s Ministries Emphasis Day (WMED) packet is “The God Who Sees You.” Written by Edith Ruiz-Espinoza, Inter-American Division Women’s Ministries Director, the sermon reminds us that God sees us wandering in the “deserts” of our lives, in our pain of lost dreams and relationships, and in our shame when we have failed even ourselves. Nothing happens that God doesn’t notice. He is “The God Who Sees You.” He “tracks” us and is attentive to our needs. He sees everything we suffer and everything we go through; everything we are and everything we will become through relying on His strength alone. The workshop, “The Apple of His Eye,” shows us seven ways God takes special care of us.

Our prayer is that you will see how closely God watches over you, that you will pay attention

to God at work in your life, and that you will keep your eyes focused on Him.

With love and joy,



Heather-Dawn Small

Women’s Ministries Director

“I thank God for you…” Philippians 1:3-6

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# Program Notes

Please feel free to translate, adjust, and edit the resource packet according to your division’s needs, including the best Bible version for your use. Also, you are free to adapt the packet according to your cultural audience. When your division has translated the packet, please send us the digital files. We will share French, Portuguese, and Spanish with you when we receive it. Other languages will be uploaded directly on our website.

<https://women.adventist.org/women-s-ministries-emphasis-day>

# About the Author

**Edith Ruiz-Espinoza,** director of Women’s and Children’s Ministries for the Inter-American Division, (Miami, Florida), has served the church as Women’s, Children’s, and Family Ministries director, and coordinator for ministerial spouses (formerly Shepherdess International) in both the conference and union levels in Mexico.

With a bachelor’s degree in educational psychology from Montemorelos University, she’s also been high school teacher, counselor, and guidance and tutoring director.

Edith is married to Pastor Isaias Espinoza, and they have two daughters, Sarai and Rachel, both married, and a grandson, Rubén Isaias. She likes to write, travel, and exercise.

Her greatest desires are to build a God-fearing family, serve Jesus at all times, and to see His soon return.

# Scripture References

All scripture verses used by the author in this packet are quoted from NKJV, unless otherwise noted.

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# Outline of Divine Service

Suggested Order of Service

Call to Worship

Opening Prayer

Scripture Reading Job 34:21, NKJV

For His eyes are on the ways of man,

And He sees all his steps.

Hymn: #515 *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*

“The Lord Is My Light”

Pastoral Prayer

Children’s Offering and Story

“Freddy and the Deep Hole of Water”

Call for the Offering

Special Music or Hymn

Sermon

Hymn: #181 *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*

“Does Jesus Care?”

Closing Prayer

-end-

# Children’s Story

Freddy and the Deep Hole of Water

God Sees You and Cares for You

Written by Edith Ruiz-Espinoza

Inter-American Division Women’s Ministries Director

Scripture: Psalm 91:11, NIV

For he will command his angels concerning you

to guard you in all your ways.

Who likes rain? Yes, many of you! When it is hot, rain cools the air, and it is refreshing. Children like to play in the rain and get wet and cool off.

Freddy was a child who loved the rain. He enjoyed getting wet in the rain and playing with the children in his neighborhood when it rained. They ran from one side of the street to the other; they splashed the water with their feet; they tried to see who got the most rainwater by opening their mouths. They were happy on rainy days.

After playing for a while one day when it rained, Freddy went a little distance from his friends, and began to run backwards. Of course, he wasn’t looking where he was going and did not notice a deep hole in the street that had filled with water. Because it had rained so much the night before, the hole became deeper and deeper which made it dark and barely visible. Suddenly Freddy fell into the deep hole. The children were still playing in the rain, and no one saw him fall, except for a little boy who could barely talk.

Freddy was small in stature, and the hole was narrow, deep, and full of water. He could not move his arms to get out. Gradually, he began to sink. Seeing Freddy disappearing into the hole, the little boy ran to tell the others, but nobody listened. They were having too much fun laughing and shouting. But someone was listening to the little boy and watching Freddy trying to get out of the hole. Who do you think it was? Yes, Jesus was listening and watching.

As Freddy sank deeper and deeper, the light was blocked out, and it became dark in the hole. Then the water went over Freddy’s head. He kept kicking his legs strongly to get above water because he was desperate to breathe. The other boys kept playing, not noticing that Freddy was missing. They didn’t know he was sinking in the deep hole full of water. With almost no strength left, Freddy sank under the water.

Suddenly, Freddy felt a big strong hand grab him and begin pulling him towards the surface of the hole, and each tug on Freddy’s arm was stronger than the previous tug. Finally, Freddy was pulled completely out of deep hole full of water. The person who rescued Freddy lay him on the street and turned his head sideways to help the water drain from his mouth. Freddy began coughing out the water he had swallowed, but he turned his head back to see who had pulled him out of the hole. It was an old man; someone Freddy had never seen before. With Freddy safely lying on the street and breathing again, the man smiled and quickly walked away.

At that same moment, the other children noticed Freddy and rushed to find out why he was lying in the middle of the street. Freddy told them what happened and asked if they had seen the old man who had pulled him out of the hole. None of the children had seen anyone pass by, certainly not an old man.

Freddy then understood that God saved him, that God saw him in trouble in the watery hole, and that God sent an angel in the form of an old man to rescue him.

Today, it is good for you to remember that whatever situation you face, no matter how difficult it seems, Jesus sees you and He knows what to do. Also, remember that your guardian angel is always by your side ready to do as God commands, to do whatever is needed to save you.

Let's repeat our verse for today:

For he will command his angels concerning you

to guard you in all your ways (Psalms 91:11, NIV).

Do you want to thank God for His protection and watch care over you? Let's pray.

-end of story-

# Sermon

**The God Who Sees You**

Written by Edith Ruiz-Espinoza

Inter-American Division Women’s Ministries Director

For His eyes are on the ways of man,

And He sees all his steps.

Job 34:21

*All verses in the sermon are from New King James Version unless otherwise noted.*

**INTRODUCTION**

Which of our five senses is the most essential? Surely the answer is all of them are essential, but without a doubt, the most important sensory organ of all is the eye. Up to 80% of all the impressions we perceive come to us through our sight. In fact, if any of the other senses (for example, taste or smell) stop working, sight is the one that best protects us against danger.

Do we see as much as we should? Our lives are so hurried that we limit ourselves to urgent needs and often give up seeing the profound. How many things do we stop seeing? How much goes unnoticed in our lives?

We live in a world that is in crisis, and we face many difficult situations. The lack of values, empathy, and love in the world often hinders us from perceiving the impressions we receive through sight; it prevents us from seeing the many needs of other people and, especially, that of many women in crisis.

Women struggle every day to get ahead, even in their crisis and pain. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), it is estimated that 70% of those affected by hunger in the world are women and that 5.9% of women in the world experience despair, compared to 3.2% of men—which is almost twice as many women suffering from depression and despair as men. Many women experience feelings that nobody loves them, nobody cares for them; and for this reason, they go unnoticed as if nobody sees them.

**What does it mean to see?**

Seeing is...perceiving through the sense of sight—this is physical.

Seeing is...perceiving feelings and understanding them—this is emotional.

Seeing is…perceiving intelligently and attentively—this is cognitive.

God sees you, and you are precious in the sight of God. He sees and identifies your physical situation. He sees and understands how you feel. He sees and pays attention to what you need. This morning we will consider three biblical women who were seen by God in their time of need: Hagar, Rizpah, and a woman caught in adultery.

**1. GOD SEES YOU IN YOUR DESERT**

**Introduction**

An impressive feature about nature is deserts. The world has many deserts, but the Atacama Desert of South America is considered the most arid on earth. It is a desert plateau, a strip of land about 1,000 miles (1,600 km) stretched along the Pacific coast, west of the Andes Mountains. It doesn’t have enough moisture for most creatures or plants to live, certainly not enough for humans to survive.

**A Woman Named Hagar**

A woman named Hagar, mentioned in Genesis 16 and 21, walked in a similar desert, the Wilderness of Beersheba, a place where she didn’t know how to survive. How did she find herself in the desert? She was a foreign slave, and she had no control over her own life because her life was for serving her mistress. Therefore, she had no autonomy, yet she apparently lived peacefully—until she faced a crisis with her mistress, Sarah. The first time she went into the desert was because she was mistreated and wanted to escape from Sarah. But the second time she was sent away and forced to leave her comfortable environment, taking only her son Ishmael, bread, and a waterskin (Genesis 21:14).

Imagine what this involved. She had lost everything: home, family [her son’s father], a steady supply of food, plentiful water, and the security of a large community. As Hagar walked, she became disoriented and lost, and maybe she was crying. The Bible says she was “wandering” (Genesis 21:14). Imagine not knowing where you are, not knowing how to find food, not having any water, and being at risk for meeting robbers and other desert dangers. As if that were not enough, she saw that her only son was about to die (vs. 15, 16). What a scenario!

When she wandered in the desert the first time, she was pregnant and experiencing despair. But “the Angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness” and called her by name (Genesis 16:7-8). He knew her status and her situation. He gave her directions, a prophecy about her son, and even the name for him—Ishmael (meaning, “God will listen”) —“…Because the Lord has heard your affliction” (v. 11). And Hagar “called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees.” (v. 13). But what about now? Does the Lord hear the cry of her son? Does He see their misery?

Yes! God heard the weeping of the boy and his mother in the desert. God opened Hagar's eyes to see a fountain of water in front of her (Genesis 21:19). Her son wasn’t going to die, not that day. God was faithful to His earlier promise that a great nation would come from him. Proof of the fulfillment of the promise is Ishmael’s great offspring who can be seen today.

**As With Hagar**

As with Hagar in the desert, God sees you in your desert. And we all have our deserts, whatever they may be. God sees when you feel disoriented, not knowing what to do or where to or to whom to turn. God sees your affliction when you lose what you need or what you love most. God sees when your life is collapsing around you and you see no way out. God sees your physical and emotional loneliness. That's when God manifests Himself and gives you hope. He takes care of you and provides a fountain gushing with hope. God lifts you up when the world abandons you. You can depend on His promise, “For He Himself has said, *‘I will never leave you nor forsake you’”* (Hebrews 13:5).

***God saw Hagar. God was her strength. God was her light. God held her in His hands. He is the God who sees.*** The first time Hagar was in the desert, God found her by a spring of water. This time, He not only saw her, but He opened her eyes to see a fountain of water. Do not be afraid in your desert; God sees you too.

**Your Promise**

Take this verse to heart. It is God’s promise to you.

“God is our refuge and strength,

A very present help in trouble” (Psalm 46:1).

Psalm 46:1

**2. GOD SEES YOU IN YOUR PAIN**

**Introduction**

Pain is described as an unpleasant, sensitive, physical, or emotional experience. It has even been used to describe an intense feeling of sadness. Nobody likes to experience any kind of pain, be it physical or emotional, but the reality is that pain is present in our lives.

**A Woman Named Rizpah**

A woman named Rizpah, mentioned in 2 Samuel 21:10-14, experienced terrible pain. She was a concubine of the late King Saul and mother of two of his sons, her only children. Her sons were executed for past actions of King Saul, not because of their own actions or way of life.

Imagine seeing your children die. Parents who love their children feel their children are the most valuable aspect of their lives. They hope to see children grow, develop their skills, start families, succeed in their professions, and bury their parents. No one expects parents to experience the death of their own children.

Rizpah showed her love and pain of losing her sons by taking a sackcloth (a dark and rough cloth generally woven with goat or camel hair which is a symbol of deep sadness and lamentation) to the place where the bodies hung from a tree. She spread the sackcloth on a rock (v. 10), watching the bodies of her sons harden, then soften, then enter a state of decomposition. This would be painful enough but imagine constantly scaring away scavengers and birds of prey between the beginning of the harvest until rains came. She protected the bodies probably for six months, sleeping there, eating there, everything there. The pain and sadness this woman felt was terrible, what she experienced was not easy.

Pain can come from physical distress, such as headaches, bodily assault, broken bones, surgical pain, or internal disease and injury. Pain can come from emotional trauma, such as, worry, offense, fear, grief, anguish, or anger that may, in turn, manifest itself in general physical pain. Pain is not easy, but the pain is not forever. You do not have to scare away the birds endlessly.

**As with Rizpah**

As with Rizpah in her pain, God also sees your tragedies. God sees your tears when your life is out of control. God does not plan your pain, but has ordained a time for everything, even a time to cry (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 4). Knowing that God is in control does not always take away your pain, but it will give peace and hope. God gives emotional, physical, and spiritual healing, and uses “all things [to] work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28). God sees your pain, and He transforms your pain into a blessing. God will give you strength in your pain because He sees your need and restores you.

***But God saw Rizpah. God was her strength. God was her light. God held her in His hands. He is the God who sees.*** God restored Rizpah through her tragedy, because water filled the land after a long time of no rain, and King David tenderly buried the bodies of her children in the tomb of Saul’s father Kish, their grandfather (vs. 13, 14).

**Your Promise**

Take this verse to heart. It is God’s promise to you.

“The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart,

And saves such as have a contrite spirit” (Psalm 34:18).

**3. GOD SEES YOU IN YOUR SHAME**

**Introduction**

At some point in life all of us have experienced shame for something we did or said. Even entire nations have suffered embarrassment, such as Brazil did the night when they mourned their most embarrassing defeat on record in their national sport of soccer. They were thrashed 7 to 1 by Germany in the 2014 World Cup semifinal. But this kind of embarrassment is not the most significant for a person to experience.

“Shame is the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing we are flawed and therefore unworthy of acceptance and belonging.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

**A Woman Unnamed (The Adulterous Woman)**

A woman is mentioned in John 8:2-12, but her story is so full of shame that her name is not even recorded. She is simply called “the adulterous woman.”

What this woman had to live through was not easy. She had to face many people who looked on her judiciously, critically. It is no surprise she was filled with even more shame when she was caught in the awkward position of adultery.

Imagine early that morning when the Pharisees hauled her out of bed. Perhaps they did not give her time to fully dress. What a sight it must have been as the religious leaders marched her down the streets until they reached the temple. People would have hurried from everywhere to watch, looking through windows, from behind doors and market stalls, murmuring about what she might have done. This woman’s great need for covering her shame was not being met.

At times when we are criticized for our actions, judged for our unwise choices, and waiting the punishment of a sentence, we feel unworthy. Women feel unworthiness for various reasons: shame for their physical appearance, shame for their family, shame for their addictions (and this is not exclusively substance addiction but also behavioral addiction), shame for defects they want hidden, shame for not being enough or for not being able to fit in among the best … and so many other things. The effects of shame span across many debilitating deficiencies, including insecurity, the inability to perform a task, the impediment in developing abilities. The result can become as severe as self-hatred and even suicidal tendencies.

The Pharisees took the woman to Jesus and asked how He would judge her. He didn’t reply but began writing on the ground. When Jesus finally stood up, He saw no one except the woman (v. 10). Jesus fixed His eyes only on her. She must have felt as if nothing else in the world mattered to Jesus at that moment except for herself. Shame was killing this woman, but Jesus saw her need and covered her shame. How? Jesus looked on her with compassion and forgiveness; He loved her unconditionally and fully. “And above all things have fervent love for one another, for “love will cover a multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8).

Stop carrying the burden of your shame. Jesus already took the burden upon Himself and paid the price for your sin and shame to be covered and removed.

“Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering. . .” (Isaiah 53:4, NIV).

“But He was wounded for our transgressions,

*He was* bruised for our iniquities;

The chastisement for our peace was upon Him,

And by His stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5, NKJV).

**As with the Adulterous Woman**

As with the adulterous woman in her shame, God looks and sees your failures. He sees what makes you worry, what makes you feel insecure or unworthy, what makes you weep. Your shame may be only known to you, but He sees it. Yet God does not condemn you. He does not blame you. He does not criticize you. Instead, He covers you with love and forgiveness, then He restores you and transforms you. Only by encountering Jesus personally can we find joy and full satisfaction, so let us always remember to look at Jesus.

***God saw the adulterous woman. God was her strength. God was her light. God held her in His hands. He is the God who sees.*** And when God looks, He does something about what He sees.

**Your Promise**

Take this verse to heart. It is God’s promise to you.

“For the scripture says: ‘Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame’” (Romans 10:11, NIV).

**GOD SEES YOU IN YOUR STORM**

**A Woman Named Edith**

A woman named Edith was scheduled for an airplane flight. Although the weather that day was not favorable, the airline decided the flight would still leave. On the runway, the pilot waited in the heavy downpour of the dark overcast sky. Finally, the plane took off in the middle of that severe storm. As it rose, it entered the dense black clouds full of water, charged with the electricity of lightning bolts. Inside the plane, a tense atmosphere was accentuated by strange noises and jerky movements. After a few minutes of turbulence, the plane passed through the black clouds. Immediately, the lightning ceased, the storm cleared, and the sun shone brightly in a blue sky. It was a beautiful day above the storm clouds.

**As with Edith**

As with Edith on her airplane flight, God sees the severely cloudy days when you feel a gray atmosphere surrounding you. Storms of a crisis may break upon you. Black clouds may be loaded with uncertainty, causing you to feel overwhelmed. Sometimes everything suddenly shifts, and in a moment, you become unbalanced with the jerking of significant changes, such as divorce, illness, lack of a job, the need to move from one place to another, loneliness, and situations that are out of your control. The atmosphere is tense and seems to get worse. Remember, the situation is only momentary, and you will pass through it. Above the clouds, you will see the light, everything will become clear, and more beautiful moments will come.

You may think the storm clouds have buried you from God’s sight, but God sees through the darkness. Nothing happens that God doesn’t notice because He is the God who sees. He is always attentive to your needs. He sees everything you suffer, everything that wears you down.

David had times when he felt overwhelmed by storms, when he beseeched God to bend down and hear his cry for help. These selected lines from Psalm 86 may reflect your own feelings. They also express words of praise for the God who sees us through the darkness and reaches down to hold us in His hands. Try praying these words during those difficult times.

“Bow down Your ear, O Lord, hear me:

For I am poor and needy (v. 1).

…For I cry to You all day long (v. 3).

Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer,

And attend to the voice of my supplications (v. 6).

In the day of my trouble I will call upon You,

For You will answer me (v. 7).

Among the gods there is none like You, O Lord… (v. 8).

For you are great, and do wonderous things;

You alone are God” (v. 10).

***God sees you. God is your strength. God is your light. God holds you in His hands. He is the God who sees.*** God sees everything you are now because He knows you fully. And He also sees everything that you will become in His strength.

**Your Promise**

Take this verse to heart. It isGod’s promise to you.

“For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known” 1 Corinthians 13:12, NIV).

Someday, you will see Jesus face-to-face. His eyes of love will meet yours. Not only will He see you, but He will hug you, give you a crown of victory, and take you home to be with Him for eternity. He will do this because He is your God—the God who sees you and loves you.

**APPEAL**

Do you want to leave everything in the hands of Jesus this morning—your crises, your loneliness, your fears, your failures? Will you bring to Jesus the pain that overwhelms you, that makes you feel as if you can't go on? Will you give Him those things that embarrass you, shame you, make you feel incapable or unworthy?

Don't hide, don't run away, don't be ashamed. In your pain, in your need, in your desert, come to Jesus. Jesus is always able to see your need, to calm your fears, to restore what is damaged, to heal your pain, and to give purpose to your life.

Do not hesitate! Come to Jesus now. He is waiting with love for you. Jesus looks at you with mercy. Jesus sees you not as you are, but as who you can become in Him. Come to Jesus today! Listen to Him inviting you: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

Please stand if you are willing to come to Jesus and place your burdens of need, of pain, and of shame in His hands.

**CLOSING PRAYER**

-end of sermon-

# Workshop

**The Apple of His Eye**

**The God who sees you also protects and delivers you**

Written by Edith Ruiz-Espinoza

Inter-American Division Women’s Ministries Director

…He kept him as the apple of His eye.

Deuteronomy 32:10

*All verses in the workshop are from New King James Version.*

**Instructions for the facilitator of this workshop**

*Discussion questions are included with each of the seven sections and the conclusion. Before you begin, ask participants to form groups of three or more. It is best to sit in a circle or around a table. Project the questions on the screen; or print the separate document of questions and distribute them to each participant.*

**INTRODUCTION**

In this workshop you will discover seven ways God cares for you as the apple of His eye. The God who sees you knows how to protect and deliver you, restore and lead you—because He is your Creator and Redeemer and knows all about you and what is best for you.

Seven ways God cares for you as the apple of His eye:

1. God cares for you.
2. God is your refuge.
3. God gives you His DNA.
4. God is your Protector.
5. God is your Deliverer.
6. God restores you.
7. God goes ahead of you.

**1. GOD CARES FOR YOU**

The pupil of the eye is extremely important. It has a particularly defined function, responsible for regulating the entry of light into the eye, allowing the retina to receive the necessary light to see. The pupil is a special, delicate, and sensitive place. Because of the need to protect this organ, the pupil is also commonly known as “the apple of the eye.”

Just as human beings take special care of the pupil of the eye, in the same way God uses this figurative language to show that He cares for us, His most precious creatures. He cares for us as the apple of His eye in our joy, sadness, tears, anguish, and fear, and in the past, present, and future.

He found him in a desert land

And in the wasteland,

 a howling wilderness;

He encircled him, He instructed him,

He kept him as the apple of His eye.

Deuteronomy 32:10

Sometimes, “the apple of the eye” means the whole eyeball. Our eyes are extremely sensitive. We feel uncomfortable, to say the least, when a grain of sand hits our eye. God says He feels the pain when someone hurts us as if His eyeball was touched. In the book of Zechariah, we read: “… for he who touches you touches the apple of His eye. (2:8). Our pain is His pain.

The phrase “apple of the eye” became an idiom pointing to something or someone valued above all other things or people. It is something that is at the center of person's attention. How wonderful that you and I are the apple of God’s eye! We are at the center of His love, care, and attention. Isn’t this wonderful, good news?

**For Discussion:** Look at each other and describe the color of the eyes of the person to your right. Be as precise as possible. What is her pupil's color? What application does it have?

**For Discussion:** Who took care of you in childhood: a parent, a grandparent, a sibling, or another caregiver? Did that help you develop trust or mistrust in that person? Were you able to keep a close relationship with that person through the years? Do these relationships resemble God’s care for you and your relationship with Him?

**2. GOD IS YOUR REFUGE**

God cares for us not only in good times, but also in bad times when we are hurt or at risk. He feels our pain, and then does something about it. He provides a shelter, a refuge in our time of trouble. A refuge (a shelter) is a place serving as protection from danger. Often when we face a crisis, we feel the need for shelter. Do you know where to find refuge?

“Trust in Him at all times, you people;

Pour out your heart before Him;

God *is* a refuge for us” (Psalm 62:8).

When our security is threatened, we need someone to provide refuge or restore our safety., Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs shows that safety and security must be met for humans to survive. The five levels of the hierarchy are basic human needs (food/water and clothing), safety and security, love and belonging (relationships), esteem (self-confidence and respect), and self-actualization (knowing your purpose and reaching your potential).[[2]](#footnote-2) God helps us with our needs at each of these levels.

What are you going through that is causing your need for a sheltering refuge? Maybe it is illness, emotional crisis, uncertainty about the future, or situations that overwhelm you, causing stress or depression. Perhaps your parents or someone you love has hurt you. One thing is certain, our God is a good, loving, an extraordinary Father, a father who loves you deeply—as no one else can love you.

The care and love of God is our sure foundation, our refuge in time of trouble. We can turn to Him for safety and protection.

“You *are* my hiding place;

You shall preserve me from trouble;

You shall surround me with songs of deliverance” (Psalm 32:7).

**For Discussion:** Share some experiences when you were frightened or were in a dangerous situation, but God helped or rescued you. Share about the emotions you felt in this situation. Has this experience strengthened your faith in God?

**For Discussion:** Someone said: "Do not fear for the future; God is already there." Do you agree? What are your current worries? Can you apply this thought to your situation?

**3. GOD GIVES YOU HIS DNA**

Sometimes we think or say negative things, such as I can't, I'm useless, I'm worthless. Or some people around us diminish our self-esteem. But our value does not lie in what we have—our titles, possessions, money, fame, or physique. Our value does not depend on what other people think about us. Our value lies in the fact that we are created by the Creator using the genetics of His own DNA—because we are made in His image. God’s DNA makes us valuable because He is King of kings and Lord of lords, which means we are His daughters and royal princesses.

If God values us as much as “the apple of His eye,” why do we struggle with feeling unworthy? Why do we devalue ourselves? Devaluation begins as an emotional wound which festers; the result being the feeling of worthlessness. A reason you might feel this way is because someone else caused you to think you are insignificant or useless. But God holds you in great esteem.

“Since you were precious in My sight,

You have been honored,

And I have loved you…” (Isaiah 43:4 ).

Never forget that you are God’s special treasure; you are valuable to Him. It is not who you are nor where you are, but who is with you, and how valuable you are to him.

“Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth *is* Mine” (Exodus 19:5).

When you grasp this concept that you are God’s child—the apple of His eye, His special treasure—you will find your real self-worth.

**For Discussion:** How do you evaluate yourself? How is your value related to your evaluation of yourself? When you understand that your real self-worth is how God sees you—as His daughter, His royal princess—how does it affect your ability to see yourself?

**4. GOD IS YOUR PROTECTOR**

Knowing that we are the apple of His eye we also know that God protects us. That's why we must dwell under the shadow of the Almighty God. No fear exists under His shadow, only safety and security.

“He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High

Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty” (Psalm 91:1).

God’s protection is your strength; His shield surrounds you. Practice putting your trust in the strength of the Lord who loves you—even when you are being stubborn, rebellious, or stuck in the worst of situations.

“The Lord *is* my strength and my shield;

My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped;

Therefore my heart greatly rejoices,

And with my song I will praise Him” (Psalm 28:7).

God’s protection does not mean that we will not have troubles in our lives. But it does mean that He will be there with us even in difficult times. He will bring us through.

“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;

And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you.

When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned,

Nor shall the flame scorch you” (Isaiah 43:2).

**For Discussion:** How do you understand this promise? “The name of the Lord *is* a strong tower; The righteous run to it and are safe” (Proverbs 18:10). How can God’s name be a tower of refuge for you? Make a list of symbols and metaphors that Bible writers used to describe God’s strength and protection for His people.

**5. GOD IS YOUR DELIVERER**

God is your Deliverer who redeems you and rescues you.

* God rescues you from your problems, whatever they may be.
* God rescues you from your enemies.
* God rescues you from your criticizers.
* God rescues you from your negative emotions.
* God rescues you from your sins.

From a prayer of David:

“Keep me as the apple of Your eye;

Hide me under the shadow of Your wings,

 From the wicked who oppress me,

 *From* my deadly enemies who surround me” (Psalm 17:8-9).

The enemy who interferes with you, interferes with the apple of God's eye. And God always reacts to the interference. God frees you from your afflictions and burdens because He is your strong Deliverer.

“Many *are* the afflictions of the righteous,

But the Lord delivers him out of them all” (Psalm 34:19).

“But the Lord is with me as a mighty, awesome one.

Therefore my persecutors will stumble, and will not prevail.

They will be greatly ashamed, for they will not prosper.

*Their* everlasting confusion will never be forgotten” (Jeremiah 20:11)

**For Discussion**:What is the difference between protection and deliverance? What is the difference between our redemption and our restoration?

**6. GOD RESTORES YOU**

“We are the Lord's by creation, and we are His by redemption,” writes Ellen G. White.[[3]](#footnote-3) Because God is your Creator and Redeemer, He restores you with His forgiveness, and through your forgiveness to others He restores earthly relationships, heals your wounds, and transforms your sadness into joy.

“But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you” (1 Peter 5:10).

What have the crises of your life taken away from you? What have you lost? Children, work, love, life’s meaning, your clean heart? God is able to restore or replace what you have lost, be it material things or affections that no longer flow; be it the loss of loved ones who have died or abandoned you. God restored to Job all material things that were lost and gave him a new family of relationships.

“And the Lord restored Job’s losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before” (Job 42:10).

We don’t know if God will decide to replace everything we lost in every case of our lives, but we surely can trust His wisdom. We can trust that He will always provide what we need and even more. And we should remember that His primary concern is to restore our souls.

“He restores my soul;

He leads me in the paths of righteousness

For His name’s sake” (Psalm 23:3).

Ellen White writes: “He restores the willing, desirous soul from the power of Satan unto God.”[[4]](#footnote-4) In her book, *The Ministry of Healing,* she states that “Our condition through sin is unnatural, and the power that restores us must be supernatural, else it has no value.”[[5]](#footnote-5) Yes, Jesus wants to improve our physical well-being, but most of all He wants to restore our inner person. “Christ is the Great Physician, not only of the body, but of the soul. He restores man to his God.”[[6]](#footnote-6)

We have a God who gives everything for us, even His own life to restore us. That is why we can trust in Him. And if He chooses not to replace everything we have lost, we still can trust Him because He is in business of even greater miracle—He is restoring our souls. "They are spiritually blind, and the Lord Jesus performs a greater miracle when He restores spiritual vision to those who have been blinded by the glitter and tinsel of this world, than if He healed the most malignant disease.”[[7]](#footnote-7)

**For Discussion:** What burdens have you carried or are you carrying? “The burden of disease and wretchedness and sin He came to remove. It was His mission to bring to men complete restoration.”[[8]](#footnote-8) In what ways has God lifted your burdens already? Do you have burdens you need to give to Jesus?

**For Discussion:** Sometimes a great loss can be the motivation to depend wholly on God, which in turn, develops faith and character. What losses have you grieved that helped you depend on God? What suffering have you experienced that helped to develop your faith? In what ways has God restored you?

**7. GOD GOES AHEAD OF YOU**

What are your challenges today?

* Do you feel scared of a situation out of your control?
* Are you going through a difficult season in your life?
* Do you feel that you are not worthy enough?
* Do you feel alone and unprotected?

“And the Lord, He is the one who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed” (Deuteronomy 31:8).

Leave your affairs and challenges to God. He goes before you and fights your battles.

“You will not *need* to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, who is with you. O Judah and Jerusalem! Do not fear or be dismayed…for the Lord *is* with you” (2 Chronicles 20:17).

**For Discussion:** How does it feel to know that God goes ahead of you fighting your battles? Describe how vulnerable you are from behind. Do you have someone you trust who covers your back? Did you know that God covers your back? “For you shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight; for the Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard” (Isaiah 52:12). The Lord goes before you (to lead) and comes along behind you (to guard).

**CONCLUSION**

Through it all, remember that God keeps you “as the apple of His eye” (Deuteronomy 32:10).

Being the apple of God's eye means being at the center of His attention and protection.

Likewise, keep God and His instructions at the center of your attention, as cherished and protected as the apple of your own eye.

When we focus fully on Jesus, our own fears and worries fade away. When we are truly in Christ, we are protected as the apple of God's eye.

“For thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘He sent Me after glory, to the nations which plunder you; for he who touches you touches the apple of His eye’” (Zechariah 2:8).

**For Discussion:** What did you learn today that changed your perspective about yourself? What did you learn today that changed your perspective about God? What is your takeaway from the “The Apple of His Eye” workshop?

—end of workshop—

*The workshop Bible promises have been typed on a single sheet of paper for distribution at the beginning of the workshop. Participants may take the* ***handout*** *home to cut apart the promise cards. This works better if you can print on heavier paper such as cardstock.*

1. Brené Brown, [*I Thought It Was Just Me: Women Reclaiming Power and Courage in a Culture of Shame*](https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/2715197)

<https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/7198272-shame-is-the-intensely-painful-feeling-or-experience-of-believing> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Saul Mcleod, PhD. “Maslow’s Hierarch of Needs,” Simply Psychology, October 24, 2023, reviewed by Olivia Guy-Evans, MSc. <https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. E. G. White, *Our High Calling.* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1961), 42. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. E.G. White, *The Review and Herald,* October 12, 1897, paragraph 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. E.G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Assn, 1905), 428.3. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. E.G. White, *Medical Ministry* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Assn, 1932), 120.3. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. E.G. White, *The Signs of the Times,* March 28, 1895, paragraph 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. E.G. White, *A Call to Stand Apart* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Assn, 2002), 59.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)