

Appendix 4

Valuable Gems by Ellen G. White on Our Need of a Will-Plan

Compiled by W. Robert Daum

This compilation is considered to be the most pertinent and valuable counsels we find in the writings of Ellen G. White by Pastor Bob Daum, the author of *Whatcha Gonna Do With Whatcha Got?*.

Does God Own What I've Got—Absolutely?

The Lord would have His followers dispense their means while they can do it themselves. Some may inquire: "Must we actually dispossess ourselves of everything which we call our own?" We may not be required to do this now; but we must be willing to do so for Christ's sake. We must acknowledge that our possessions are absolutely His, by using of them freely whenever means is needed to advance His cause." (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 479)

Fears of The Aged

"It is frequently the case that aged persons are unwilling to realize and acknowledge that their mental strength is failing. They shorten their days by taking care which belongs to their children. Satan often plays upon their imagination and leads them to feel a continual anxiety in regard to their money. It is their idol, and they hoard it with miserly care. They will sometimes deprive themselves of many of the comforts of life, and labor beyond their strength, rather than use the means which they have. In this way they place themselves in continual want, through fear that sometime in the future they shall want.

"All these fears originate with Satan. He excites the organs which lead to slavish fears and jealousies which corrupt nobleness of soul and destroy elevated thoughts and feelings. Such persons are insane upon the subject of money. If they would take the position which God would have them, their last days might be their best and happiest. Those who have children in whose honesty and judicious management they have reason to confide, should let their children make them happy. Unless they do this, Satan will take advantage of their lack of mental strength and will manage for them. They should lay aside anxiety and burdens, and occupy their time as happily as they can, and be ripening up for heaven." (*Ibid*, vol. 1, pp. 423-424)

Prosperity's Trap

"These earthly treasures are blessings when rightly used. Those who have them should realize that they are lent them of God and should cheerfully spend their means to advance His cause. They will not lose their reward here. They will be kindly regarded by the angels of God and will also lay up a treasure in heaven. (*Ibid*, vol. 1, p. 141)

"I saw that Satan watches the peculiar, selfish, covetous temperament of some who profess the truth, and he will tempt them by throwing prosperity in their path, offering them the riches of earth. He knows that if they do not overcome their natural temperament, they will stumble and fall by loving mammon, worshiping their idol. Satan's object is often accomplished. The strong love of the world overcomes, or swallows up, the love of the truth. The kingdoms of the world are offered them, and they eagerly grasp their treasure and think they are wonderfully prospered.

Satan triumphs because his plan has succeeded. They have given up the love of God for the love of the world. (*Ibid*, vol. 1, p. 142)

"I saw that those who are thus prospered can thwart the design of Satan if they will overcome their selfish covetousness by laying all their possessions upon the altar of God. And when they see where means are needed to advance the cause of truth and to help the widow, the fatherless, and afflicted, they should give cheerfully and thus lay-up treasure in heaven. (*Ibid*, }

"Heed the counsel of the True Witness. Buy gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and eyesalve that thou mayest see. Make some effort. These precious treasures will not drop upon us without some exertion on our part. We must buy--"be zealous and repent" of our lukewarm state. We must be awake to see our wrongs, to search for our sins, and to zealously repent of them. (*Ibid*)

"I saw that the brethren who have possessions have a work to do to tear away from these earthly treasures and to overcome their love of the world. Many of them love this world, love their treasure, but are not willing to see it. They must be zealous and repent of their selfish covetousness, that the love of the truth may swallow up everything else. I saw that many of those who have riches will fail to buy the gold, white raiment, and eyesalve. Their zeal does not possess intensity and earnestness proportionate to the value of the object of which they are in pursuit. (*Ibid*)

"I saw these men while striving for the possessions of earth; what zeal they manifested, what earnestness, what energy to obtain an earthly treasure that must soon pass away! What cool calculations they made! They plan and toil early and late, and sacrifice their ease and comfort for earthly treasure. A corresponding zeal on their part to obtain the gold, white raiment, and eyesalve will bring them in possession of these desirable treasures and life, everlasting life, in the kingdom of God. I saw that if any need eyesalve, it is those who have earthly possessions. Many of them are blind to their own state, blind to their firm grasp upon this world. Oh, that they may see! (*Ibid*, p. 143)

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." I saw that many have so much rubbish piled up at the door of their heart that they cannot get the door open. Some have difficulties between themselves and their brethren to remove. Others have evil tempers, selfish covetousness, to remove before they can open the door. Others have rolled the world before the door of their heart, which bars the door. All this rubbish must be taken away, and then they can open the door and welcome the Saviour in. (*Ibid*)

"Oh, how precious was this promise, as it was shown to me in vision! "I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." Oh, the love, the wondrous love of God! After all our lukewarmness and sins He says: "Return unto Me, and I will return unto thee, and will heal all thy backslidings." This was repeated by the angel a number of times. "Return unto Me, and I will return unto thee, and will heal all thy backslidings."

“Some, I saw, would gladly return. Others will not let this message to the Laodicean church have its weight upon them. They will glide along, much after the same manner as before, and will be spewed out of the mouth of the Lord. Those only who zealously repent will have favor with God. (*Ibid*, p. 144)

General Spiritual & Legal Counsel on Will Planning

Wills To Be Made To Stand The Test Of Law

“Wills should be made in a manner to stand the test of law. After they are drawn, they may remain for years and do no harm, if donations continue to be made from time to time as the cause has need. Death will not come one day sooner, brethren, because you have made your will. In disposing of your property by will to your relatives, be sure that you do not forget God's cause. You are His agents, holding His property; and His claims should have your first consideration. Your wife and children, of course, should not be left destitute; provision should be made for them if they are needy. But do not, simply because it is customary, bring into your will a long line of relatives who are not needy. (*Adventist Home*, p. 397)

Remember God's Cause While Living

“Let no one think that he will meet the mind of Christ in hoarding up property through life and then at death making a bequest of a portion of it to some benevolent cause.” (*Ibid*)

“Some selfishly retain their means during their lifetime, trusting to make up for their neglect by remembering the cause in their wills. But not half the means thus bestowed in legacies ever benefits the object specified. Brethren and sisters, invest in the bank of heaven yourselves, and do not leave your stewardship upon another.” (*Ibid*)

You Won't Die One Day Earlier Because Of Making A Will

“Death will not come one day sooner, brethren, because you have made your will. In disposing of your property by will to your relatives, be sure that you do not forget God's cause. You are His agents, holding His property; and His claims should have your first consideration. Your wife and children, of course, should not be left destitute; provision should be made for them if they are needy. But do not, simply because it is customary, bring into your will a long line of relatives who are not needy.” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 482)

A Dying Bequest Is Not An Acceptable Substitute For Current Gifts

“Dying charity is a poor substitute for living benevolence. Many will to their friends and relatives all except a very small pittance of their property. This they leave for their supreme Friend, who became poor for their sakes, who suffered insult, mockery, and death, that they might become sons and daughters of God. And yet they expect when the righteous dead shall come forth to immortal life that this Friend will take them into His everlasting habitations. (*Ibid*, vol. 5, p. 155)

“The cause of Christ is robbed, not by a mere passing thought, not by an unpremeditated act. No. By your own deliberate act you made your will, placing your property at the disposal of unbelievers. After having robbed God during your lifetime, you continue to rob Him after your death, and you do this with the full consent of all your powers of mind, in a document called

your will. What do you think will be your Master's will toward you for thus appropriating His goods? What will you say when an account is demanded of your stewardship? (*Ibid*)

“Brethren, awake from your life of selfishness, and act like consistent Christians. The Lord requires you to economize your means and let every dollar not needed for your comfort flow into the treasury. Sisters, take that ten cents, that twenty cents, that dollar which you were about to spend for candies, for ruffles, or for ribbons, and donate it to God's cause. Many of our sisters earn good wages, but it is nearly all spent in gratifying their pride of dress. (*Ibid*, p. 156)

“The wants of the cause will continually increase as we near the close of time. Means is needed to give young men a short course of study in our schools, to prepare them for efficient work in the ministry and in different branches of the cause. We are not coming up to our privilege in this matter. All schools among us will soon be closed up. How much more might have been done had men obeyed the requirements of Christ in Christian beneficence! What an influence would this readiness to give all for Christ have had upon the world! It would have been one of the most convincing arguments in favor of the truth we profess to believe--an argument which the world could not misunderstand nor gainsay. The Lord would have distinguished us with His blessing even before the eyes of the world. (*Ibid*)

“The first Christian church had not the privileges and opportunities we have. They were a poor people, but they felt the power of the truth. The object before them was sufficient to lead them to invest all. They felt that the salvation or the loss of a world depended upon their instrumentality. They cast in their all and held themselves in readiness to go or come at the Lord's bidding. (*Ibid*)

“We profess to be governed by the same principles, to be influenced by the same spirit. But instead of giving all for Christ many have taken the golden wedge and a goodly Babylonish garment and hid them in the camp. If the presence of one Achan was sufficient to weaken the whole camp of Israel, can we be surprised at the little success which attends our efforts when every church and almost every family has its Achan? Let us individually go to work to stimulate others by our example of disinterested benevolence. The work might have gone forward with far greater power had all done what they could to supply the treasury with means. (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol 5, pp. 155-156)

Wholistic Family Considerations

“Satan works with acute skill to stir up the relatives, and every false position is taken to gain to the world that which was solemnly dedicated to the cause of God. Much less than the sum willed is always received. Satan even puts it into the hearts of men and women to protest against their relatives' doing what they wish in the bestowment of their property. They seem to regard everything given to the Lord as robbing the relatives of the deceased.” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 155)

The Curse Of Hoarded Wealth.—“Those who acquire wealth for the purpose of hoarding it leave the curse of wealth to their children. It is a sin, an awful, soul-periling sin for fathers and mothers to do this, and this sin extends to their posterity. Often the children spend their means in foolish extravagance, in riotous living, so that they become beggars. They know not the value of the inheritance they have squandered. Had their fathers and mothers set them a proper example, not

in hoarding but in imparting their wealth, they would have laid up for themselves treasure in heaven and received a return even in this world of peace and happiness and in the future life eternal riches. (*Adventist Home*, p. 398)

The Will of a Covetous Individual—"Ours is a great work. Yet there are many who profess to believe these sacred truths, who are paralyzed by the sophistry of Satan, and are doing nothing for, but rather hinder, God's cause. When will they act like those who wait for the Lord? When will they show a zeal in accordance with their faith? Many people selfishly retain their means, and soothe their conscience with a plan for doing some great thing for the cause of God after their death. They make a will donating a large sum to the church and its various interests, and then settle down with a feeling that they have done all that is required of them. Wherein have they denied self by this act? They have, on the contrary, exhibited the true essence of selfishness. When they have no longer any use for their money they propose to give it to God. But they will retain it as long as they can, till they are compelled to relinquish it by a messenger that cannot be turned aside. (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 81)

"Such a will is often an evidence of real covetousness. God has made us all His stewards, and in no case has He authorized us to neglect our duty or leave it for others to do. The call for means to advance the cause of truth will never be more urgent than now. Our money will never do a greater amount of good than at the present time. Every day of delay in rightly appropriating it, is limiting the period in which it will do good in saving souls. If we leave others to accomplish that which God has left for us to do, we wrong ourselves and Him who gave us all we have. How can others do our work of benevolence any better than we can do it ourselves? God would have every man, during his lifetime, the executor of his own will in this matter. Adversity, accident, or intrigue may forever cut off meditated acts of benevolence, when he who has accumulated a fortune is no longer by to guard it. It is sad that so many neglect the present golden opportunity to do good, and wait to be cast out of their stewardship before giving back to the Lord the means which He has lent them to be used for His glory." {4T 81.2} (*Testimonies for the Church*, Volume 4, pages 81-82)

JESUS SAID:

"Don't imagine that I came to bring peace to the earth! No, I came to bring a sword. I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. Your enemies will be right in your own household! If you love your father or mother more than you love me, you are not worthy of being mine; or if you love your son or daughter more than me, you are not worthy of being mine. If you refuse to take up your cross and follow me, you are not worthy of being mine. If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give it up for me, you will find it. (Matthew 10:34-39 NLT 1996)

Commentary On The Above Words Of Jesus.—"This creating of strife is not the effect of the gospel, but the result of opposition to it. Of all persecution the hardest to bear is variance in the home, the estrangement of dearest earthly friends. But Jesus declares, "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me." (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 357)

“All who would be soldiers of the cross of Christ, must gird on the armor and prepare for conflict. They should not be intimidated by threats, or terrified by dangers. They must be cautious in peril, yet firm and brave in facing the foe and doing battle for God. The consecration of Christ's follower must be complete. *Father, mother, wife, children, houses, lands, everything, must be held secondary to the work and cause of God.* He must be willing to bear patiently, cheerfully, joyfully, whatever in God's providence he may be called to suffer. His final reward will be to share with Christ the throne of immortal glory . . . [Judges 7:4 quoted] (ST June 30, 1881). {2BC 1003.7}” (Ellen G. White, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 1003)

The Steward's Responsibility & Accountability

“Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.” (1 Corinthians 4:2)

“God has made us all His stewards, and in no case has He authorized us to neglect our duty or leave it for others to do. The call for means to advance the cause of truth will never be more urgent than now. Our money will never do a greater amount of good than at the present time. Every day of delay in rightly appropriating it, is limiting the period in which it will do good in saving souls. If we leave others to accomplish that which God has left for us to do, we wrong ourselves and Him who gave us all we have. How can others do our work of benevolence any better than we can do it ourselves?” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 81)

Definition Of The Right Thing To Do

“Parents should exercise the right that God has given them. He entrusted to them the talents He would have them use to His glory. The children were not to become responsible for the talents of the father. While they have sound minds and good judgment, parents should, with prayerful consideration, and with the help of proper counselors who have experience in the truth and a knowledge of the divine will, make disposition of their property.” (*Counsels On Stewardship*, p. 330)

Call To Stop Robbing God

“I call upon our brethren to cease their robbery of God. Some are so situated that wills must be made. But in doing this, care should be taken not to give to sons and daughters means which should flow into the treasury of God. These wills often become the subject of quarrels and dissensions. (*Testimonies for the Church*, Volume 4, page 484)

We Become A Praise To God When We Give All To God For His Glory

“It is recorded to the praise of God's ancient people that He was not ashamed to be called their God; and the reason assigned is that instead of selfishly seeking for and coveting earthly possessions, or seeking their happiness in worldly pleasures, they placed themselves and all that they had in the hands of God. They lived only for His glory, declaring plainly that they sought a better country, even a heavenly. Of such a people God was not ashamed. They did not disgrace Him in the eyes of the world. The Majesty of heaven was not ashamed to call them brethren. {4T 484.1}” (*Testimonies for the Church*, Volume 4, page 484)

“I was shown that Brother X's course in dividing his property among his children was shifting the responsibility upon them which he should not have laid off. He now sees that the result of

this course has brought to him no increase of affection from his children.” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 129)

The Prominent Consideration In Our Last Will And Testament

“Those who have property and whose minds are darkened by the god of this world seem to be controlled by Satan in the disposal of it. If they have true, believing children, and also children whose affections are wholly upon the things of the world, in making a transfer of their means to their children, they generally give a larger amount to those children who do not love God, and who are serving the enemy of all righteousness, than to those who are serving God. (*Ibid*, p. 658)

“They place in the hands of the unfaithful children the very things that will prove a snare to them and that will be obstacles in the way of their making a surrender to God. While they make large presents to the unbelieving children they make very stinted gifts to those who are of the same faith with themselves. This very fact should startle the men of means who have pursued this course. They should see that the deceitfulness of riches has perverted their judgment. If they could see the influence operating upon their minds they would understand that Satan had these matters very much according to his own purposes and plans. Instead of God's controlling the mind and sanctifying the judgment, it is controlled by exactly the opposite power. The ones who have been with them in the faith they sometimes even neglect, and are frequently very close and exacting in all their deal with them; while they have an open hand to the unbelieving, world-loving children, who they know will not use the means they have placed in their hands, to advance the cause of God. The Lord requires that those to whom He has lent talents of means make a right use of them, having the advancement of His cause prominent. Every other consideration should be inferior to this. (*Ibid*, pp 658-659)

Blessings To Children Who Rely On Their Own Initiative

“If parents, while they live, would assist their children to help themselves, it would be better than to leave them a large amount at death. Children who are left to rely principally upon their own exertions make better men and women, and are better fitted for practical life than those children who have depended upon their father's estate. The children left to depend upon their own resources generally prize their abilities, improve their privileges, and cultivate and direct their faculties to accomplish a purpose in life. They frequently develop characters of industry, frugality, and moral worth, which lie at the foundation of success in the Christian life. Those children for whom parents do the most, frequently feel under the least obligation toward them. The errors of which we have spoken have existed in ----- . Parents have shifted their stewardship upon their children. (*Ibid*, vol. 3, pp. 122-123)

Responsibility of Parents

“Parents should exercise the right that God has given them. He entrusted to them the talents He would have them use to His glory. The children were not to become responsible for the talents of the father. While they have sound minds and good judgment, parents should, with prayerful consideration, and with the help of proper counselors who have experience in the truth and a knowledge of the divine will, make disposition of their property. If they have children who are afflicted or are struggling in poverty, and who will make a judicious use of means, they should

be considered. But if they have unbelieving children who have abundance of this world, and who are serving the world, they commit a sin against the Master, who has made them His stewards, by placing means in their hands merely because they are their children. God's claims are not to be lightly regarded. (*Ibid*, p. 121)

“And it should be distinctly understood that because parents have made their will, this will not prevent them from giving means to the cause of God while they live. This they should do. They should have the satisfaction here, and the reward hereafter, of disposing of their surplus means while they live. They should do their part to advance the cause of God. They should use the means lent them by the Master to carry on the work which needs to be done in His vineyard. (*Ibid*)

Parents Should Fear What?

“Parents should have great fear in entrusting children with the talents of means that God has placed in their hands, unless they have the surest evidence that their children have greater interest in, love for, and devotion to, the cause of God than they themselves possess, and that these children will be more earnest and zealous in forwarding the work of God, and more benevolent in carrying forward the various enterprises connected with it which call for means. But many place their means in the hands of their children, thus throwing upon them the responsibility of their own stewardship, because Satan prompts them to do it. In so doing they effectually place that means in the enemy's ranks. Satan works the matter to suit his own purpose and keeps from the cause of God the means which it needs, that it may be abundantly sustained.” (*Ibid*, p. 118)

A Root Of Bitterness To Children

“I was shown that the property left by the father had indeed been a root of bitterness to his children. Their peace and happiness, and their confidence in one another, had been greatly disturbed by it. Brother A Y did not need his father's property. He had enough talents to handle that God had entrusted to his management. If he made a right disposition of that which he had, he would at least be among that number who were faithful in that which is least. The addition of the stewardship of his father's property, which he had covetously desired, was a heavier responsibility than he could well manage. (*Ibid*, p. 127)

Unauthorized Transfer of Responsibility to Children

“I was shown that Brother X's course in dividing his property among his children was shifting the responsibility upon them which he should not have laid off. He now sees that the result of this course has brought to him no increase of affection from his children. They have not felt under obligation to their parents for what they have done for them. These children were young and inexperienced. They were not qualified to bear the responsibility laid upon them. Their hearts were unconsecrated, and true friends were looked upon by them as designing enemies, while those who would separate very friends were accepted. These agents of Satan were continually suggesting false ideas to the minds of these young men, and the hearts of brothers and sisters, father and mother, were at variance. (*Ibid*, p. 129)

Children Unable To Bear The Responsibilities Given To Them

“Brother J has erred in entrusting his property to his children. He has laid upon them responsibilities which they were not qualified to bear. He placed his means out of his control and has gathered up means from his brethren for his feeble labors. God has not been glorified by the

course which he has pursued in regard to his property. He has excused a wrong course pursued by his children, which is not in keeping with our faith or the Bible standard. He has virtually said to the wicked, It shall be well with thee; when God has plainly declared it shall be ill with him. (*Ibid*, vol. 2, p. 648)

Woeful Results To The Children When Parents Withhold From God

“Those who withhold from the treasury of God and hoard their means for their children, endanger the spiritual interest of their children. They place their property, which is a stumbling block to themselves, in the pathway of their children, that they may stumble over it to perdition. Many are making a great mistake in regard to the things of this life. They economize, withholding from themselves and others the good they might receive from a right use of the means which God has lent them, and become selfish and avaricious. They neglect their spiritual interests and become dwarfs in religious growth, all for the sake of accumulating wealth which they cannot use. They leave their property to their children, and nine times out of ten it is even a greater curse to their heirs than it has been to themselves. Children, relying upon the property of their parents, often fail to make a success of this life, and generally utterly fail to secure the life to come.” (*Ibid*, vol. 3, p. 399)

Property Frequently A Curse To Children

“I stated at the camp meeting that when property is willed principally to children, while none is appropriated to the cause of God, or, if any, a meager pittance unworthy to be mentioned, this property would frequently prove a curse to the children who inherit it. It would be a source of temptation and would open a door through which they would be in danger of falling into many dangerous and hurtful lusts. (*Ibid*, vol. 3, p. 120)

Children's Dangerous Influence On Parents

“Children were influencing their parents to leave their property in their hands for them to appropriate according to their judgment. With the light of God's word, so plain and clear in reference to the money lent to stewards, and with the warnings and reproofs which God has given through the Testimonies in regard to the disposition of means--if, with all this light before them, children either directly or indirectly influence their parents to divide their property while living, or to will it mainly to the children to come into their hands after the death of their parents, they take upon themselves fearful responsibilities. Children of aged parents who profess to believe the truth should, in the fear of God, advise and entreat their parents to be true to their profession of faith, and take a course in regard to their means which God can approve. Parents should lay up for themselves treasures in heaven by appropriating their means themselves to the advancement of the cause of God. They should not rob themselves of heavenly treasure by leaving a surplus of means to those who have enough; for by so doing they not only deprive themselves of the precious privilege of laying up a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, but they rob the treasury of God. (*Ibid*)

Our friend, Scott Christiansen helps here too--

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Stewardship Transferred to Children Is Often Unwise.

Parents should have great fear in entrusting children with the talents of means that God has placed in their hands, unless they have the surest evidence that their children have greater interest in, love for, and devotion to the cause of God than they themselves possess, and that these children will be more earnest and zealous in forwarding the work of God and more benevolent in carrying forward the various enterprises connected with in which call for means. But many place their means in the hands of their children, thus throwing upon them the responsibility of their own stewardship because Satan prompts them to do it. In so doing they effectually place that means in the enemy's ranks. Satan works the matter to suit his own purpose and keeps from the cause of God the means which it needs, that it may be abundantly sustained. (*Ibid*, pp. 397-398)

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