

Back to the Altar

AN INSIDE-OUT
REVOLUTION

A Daily Place for God in
Every Heart and Home

2022–2027



Dwain N. Esmond, Assoc. Dir.
Ellen G. White Estate

2 YEARS OF **FUTILITY**

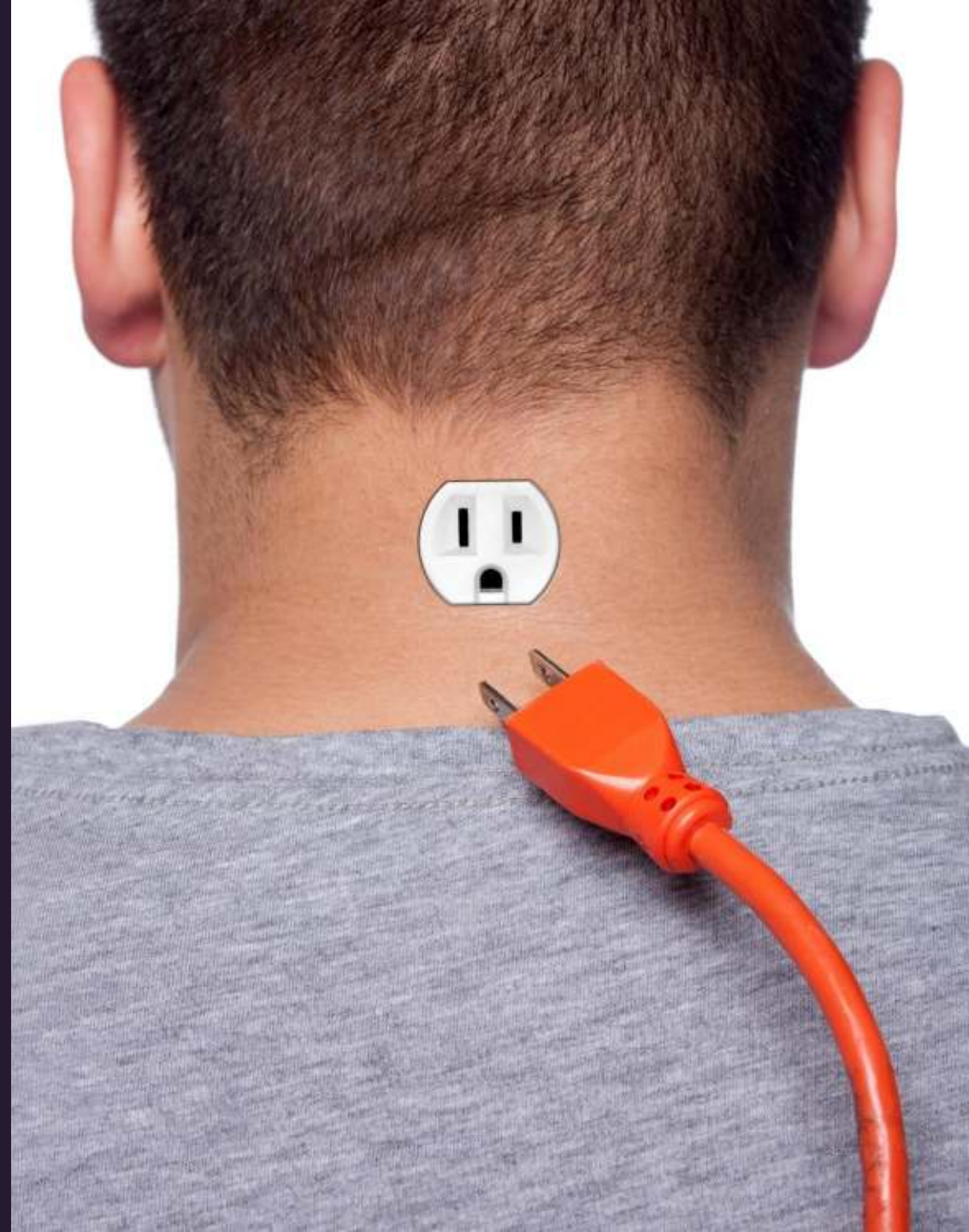
- Dr. Herbert C. Jackson,
American Missionary, Seminary
Professor and Writer
- A Car that needed **a push** to
start



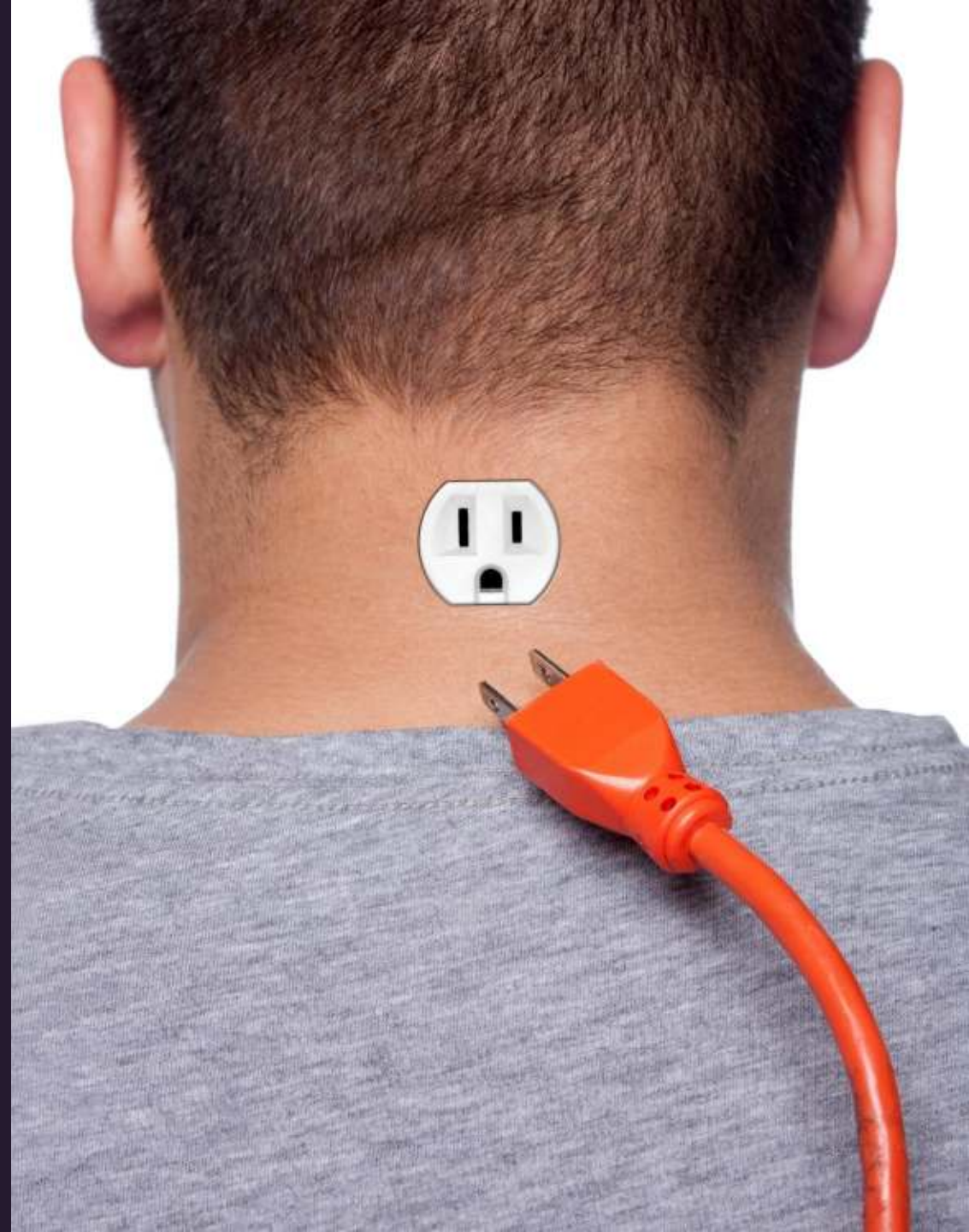


IF WE LOOKED
UNDER THE
HOOD OF GOD'S
REMNANT
CHURCH, **WHAT**
WOULD WE SEE?

- **PRACTICE** OR PROFESSION
- **FERVOR** OR FUTILITY
- **COMMITMENT** OR CARELESSNESS
- **CHRIST** OR CAUSES
- **POWER** OR POWERLESSNESS



- WE **PUSH** AND WE **PROD**?
- WE **ENCOURAGE** AND WE **ENTICE**?
- WE **PRAY** AND WE **HOPE** THAT SOMETHING WILL **START THE ENGINE** OF GOD'S CHURCH?



2 “AVERAGE JOES”

#1. JOSHUA

Ex. 33:11; Num. 13-14; Jos.
1:1; Jos 24:15

- Apprenticed to Moses, Preparing for Leadership
- **Critical Window into Joshua's life:** “When Moses returned to the camp, his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, *would not depart from the tent*” (Ex. 33:11)
- “And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve. . . **But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord**” (Jos. 24:15)
- **Joshua's End:** “And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of 110 years”(Jos. 2:8)



2 "AVERAGE JOES"

#2. JOASH

2 Chron. 22-24

- Born of Royalty, Son of Ahaziah, King of Judah, escaped the murderous plots of Athaliah, his grandmother
- Raised by Jehoida the priest, led a major reformation of Judah, rebuilding the temple
- **Critical Window into Joshua's life:** "Joash did what was right in the eyes of the Lord **all the years Jehoiada the priest instructed him**" (2 Ki. 12:2)
- **Joash's End:** "his own servants conspired against him **because of the blood of the sons of Jehoiada the priest, and killed him on his bed**"



Joshua vs. Joash

Intimacy vs. Activity

Connection vs. Cause

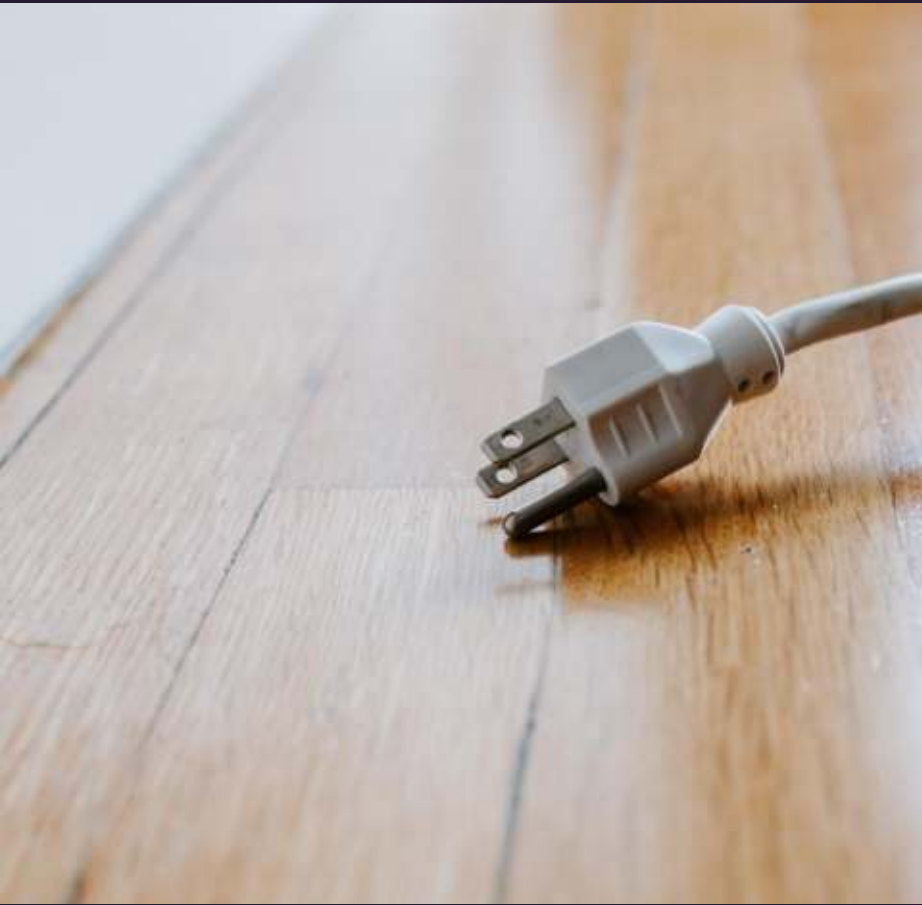
Relationship vs. Religion

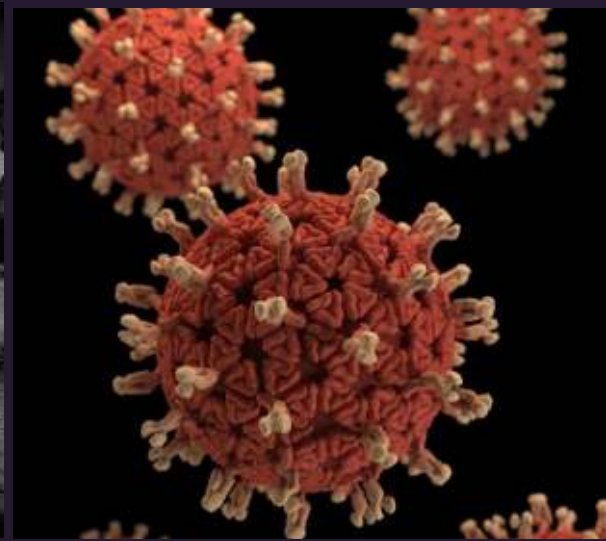
God vs. Jehoida

Being vs Doing

Altar vs. No Altar

Power vs. Position





We live in a world in
need of People who
know God and Possess
His Power!

DISTRACTED

As a Church, we have **never**
faced a more formidable
challenge to personal worship
than the one posed by digital
media?



Amazing Benefits of Technology

Gives us access to more information

Saves us time

Gives us more mobility options

Communicate more efficiently

Makes things cheaper

Inspires innovation

Improves money management

Better methods of learning

Allows us to focus on ability rather than disability

Allows us to eliminate many repetitious processes



Do You Have a Problem?

Y or N



- Do you find yourself **spending more time** on your cell or smartphone **than you realize**?
- **mindlessly passing time** on a regular basis by staring at your cell or smartphone?
- **losing track of time** when on your cell or smartphone?
- spending more time texting, tweeting or emailing **as opposed to talking to people in person**?
- Has the amount of **time you spend** on your cell or smartphone been **increasing**?

Do You Have a Problem?

Y or N



- Do you wish you could **use your cell or smartphone less**?
- **Do you sleep with your cell or smartphone** (turned on) under your pillow or next to your bed regularly?
- Do you find yourself **viewing and answering texts, tweets and emails at all hours of the day and night**—even when it means interrupting other things you are doing?
- Do you text, email, tweet, or surf **while driving or doing other similar activities** that require your focused attention and concentration?
- Do you feel your use of your cell or smartphone **decreases your productivity at times**?

Do You Have a Problem?

Y or N



- **Are you reluctant** to be without your cell or smartphone, **even for a short time?**
- Do you feel ill-at-ease or uncomfortable when you **accidentally leave your smartphone** in the car or at home, have no service or have a broken phone?
- When you eat meals, is your cell or smartphone **part of the table setting?**
- When your cell or smartphone rings, beeps or buzzes, do **you feel an intense urge to check** for texts, tweets, emails, updates, etc.?
- Do you find **yourself mindlessly checking your cell or smartphone many times a day**, even when you know there is likely nothing new or important to see?

Scoring Your Test



Scoring: If you answered Yes to:

1 – 2. **Your behavior is normal** but that doesn't mean you should live on your Smartphone.

3 – 4. **Your behavior is leaning toward problematic** or compulsive

5 – or above: It is likely that you may have a **problematic or compulsive Smartphone use pattern.**

8 or higher - If your score is over 8 you might consider seeing a psychologist, psychiatrist, or psychotherapist **who specializes in behavioral addictions for a consultation.**

Source: Center for Internet and Technology Addiction

A Matter of Time



The Average Social Media user spent **2 hours and 27 minutes** per day on social media in 2022.



50.1% of the time spent on mobile was done using social media apps in 2020.

Based on self-reported data, **the average person** taps, clicks, swipes their phone **2,617 times per day**.

(Dscout Research)



Heaviest users averaged **5,427 touches per day**

(Dscout Research)

Average Screen Time

- **Children 8-12** in the United States spend **4-6 hours a day** watching or using screens
- **Teens** spend up to **9 hours per day** using screens

Source: American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychology



Potential Exposure to:

- Violence and risk-taking behaviors
- Videos of stunts or challenges that may inspire unsafe behavior
- Sexual content
- Negative stereotypes
- Substance use, cyberbullies and predators
- Advertising
- Misleading or inaccurate information



By Beholding we are Being...**REWIRED**



UNHEALTHY, UNBALANCED Digital/Social Media:

- Damages our ability to concentrate and focus
 - Makes us feel lonely
 - Sleeping problems
 - Raises our stress levels
 - Increases Depression & Anxiety
 - Tends to Negative Body Image
 - Encourages Unhealthy Sleep Patterns
 - Leads to Addiction (dopamine cycle)
 - Promotes Cyberbullying
-
- FOMO
 - Promotes Unrealistic Expectations
 - Causes Memory Deficits

250 Undergraduates at UC San Diego, CA.

1. Available Cognitive Capacity—
how fully a person's mind can
focus on a task

2. Fluid Intelligence—interpreting
and solving unfamiliar problems

1. Leave phone on desk (Scored Worst)
2. Place phone in pocket (Scored in middle)
3. Leave phone in a different room (Scored best)

Researchers concluded, the “integration of smartphones into daily life appears to **diminish such vital mental skills as “learning, logical reasoning, abstract thought, problem solving, and creativity.”** (2017, Journal of the Association for Consumer Research)



By Beholding we are Being...**REWIRED**

“We give technology the power to shape and change and fashion us, **remaking ourselves in its image**” (p. 27).

“A technology **wears its benefits on its sleeve**—but the **drawbacks are buried deep within**” (p. 74)

(Source: Tim Challies, *The Next Story: Faith, Friends, Family and the Digital World*)

Serious Spiritual Implications



Many of us today are living lives that **are mediated by Screens**. The screen stands between the creator and the receiver. As screen time exceeds face to face time, **we are losing the inherent richness and fullness of immediate, direct contact**. “We are created with an **innate desire for unmediated contact and communication with God**” (p. 93).

Genesis 1-3: Adam and Eve had daily face to face communication with God



Changing Our **Values**

How we spend our time is one of the best predictors of what we value. **We take on the values of what we spend time valuing.**

“For where your treasure is, **there your heart will be also**” (Matt. 6:21).

“**Our time belongs to God.** Every moment is His, and we are under the most solemn obligation to improve it to His glory. **Of no talent He has given will He require a more strict account than of our time**” (COL p. 302)

A command to **keep**

- "Keep your heart with all diligence, **for out of it spring the issues of life**"—
Prov. 4:23
- **The Brain Heart**, the Desire Producer
- "I will set nothing wicked before my eyes; I hate the work of **It shall not cling to me** those who fall away;" (Ps. 103:3)




A Battle for the Mind



- “Every organ of the body was made to be **servant to the mind**. The mind is the **capital of the body**.
- “The mind controls the whole man. All our actions, good or bad, have their source in the mind. **It is the mind that worships God and allies us to heavenly beings**. Yet many spend all their lives without becoming intelligent in regard to the casket [jewel case] that contains this treasure”—1MCP 72
- “**The mind is the Lord’s garden**, and man must **cultivate it earnestly in order to form a character** after the divine similitude” (2MCP, p. 800).

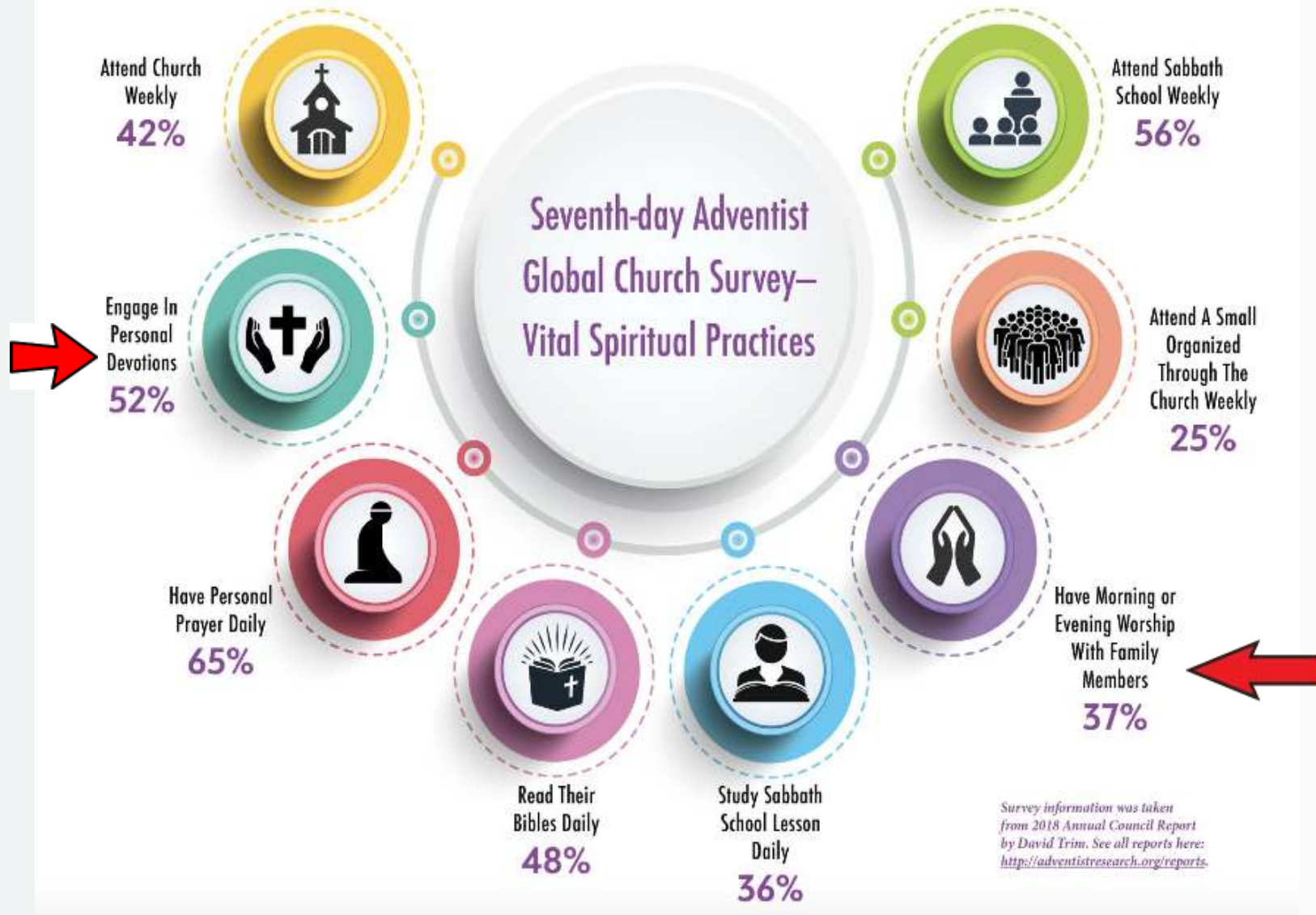


HOW DOES THIS
MIND **WORSHIP**
GOD?

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a red long-sleeved shirt, is shown in profile from the waist up. She has her hands clasped in prayer and is looking upwards. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with green foliage and a pale sky. The overall mood is contemplative and spiritual.

**THE BIGGEST
LOSS: BROKEN
WORSHIP
ALTAR**

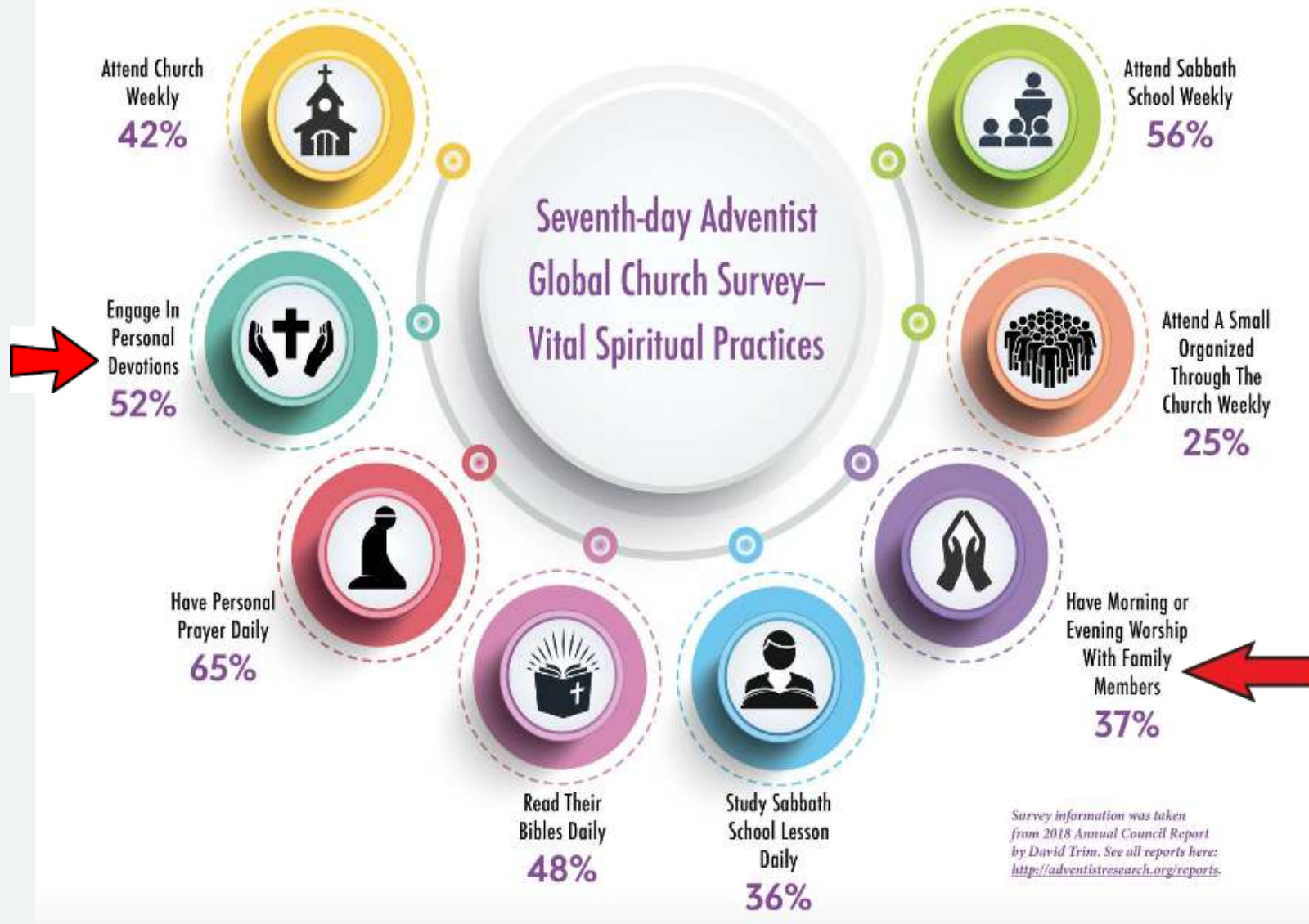
**"Give yourselves to
prayer. LIVE AT THE
ALTAR" (1T 169)**



KPI 5.1

Significant increase in the number of church members **regularly praying, studying the Bible, reading the writings of Ellen White, and engaging in other personal devotions.**

Responsible for Implementation:
ABSG, ASTR, WHT, FM, GCMA, GCSS/PM



KPI 6.4

Significant increase in the number of church members regularly engaging in family worships.

Responsible for Implementation:
FM, WM, YOU, CHM



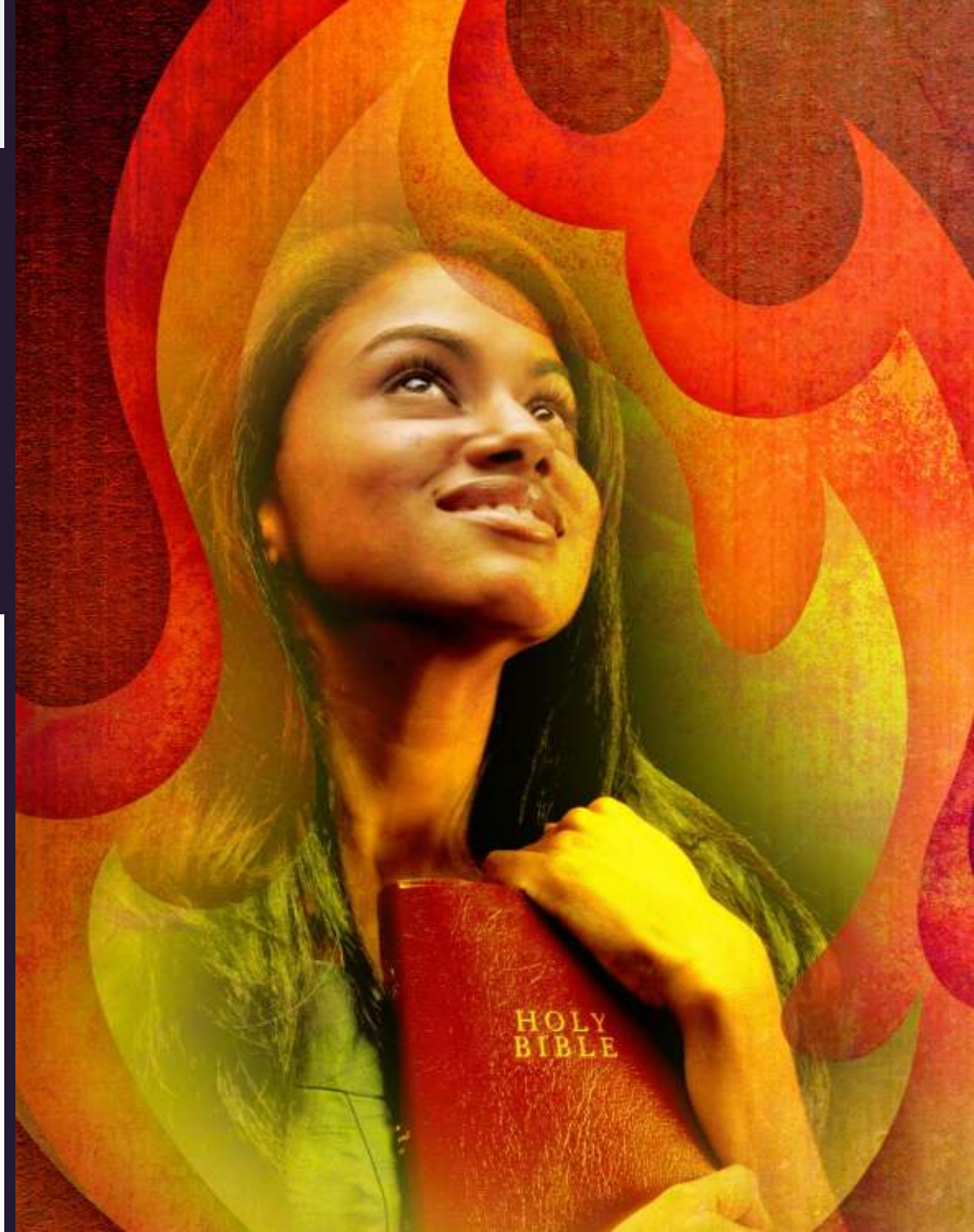
KPI 7.3
 Increased ethical and responsible use of media platforms by students..
 Responsible for Implementation:
GCCM, GCCC, GCED, FM, GCFM, GCYM

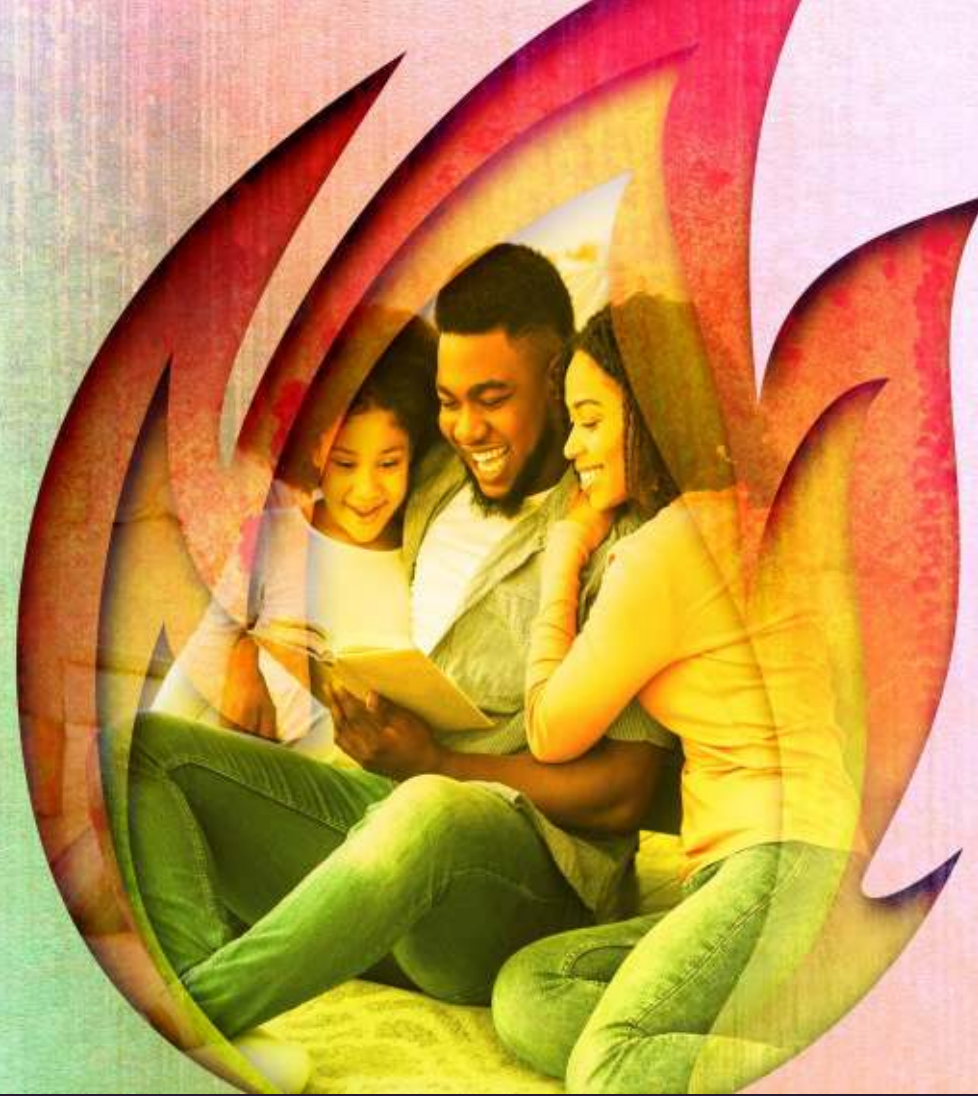
IMPORTANCE OF THE PERSONAL ALTAR:

"But the hour is coming and now is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father: for **the Father seeketh such to worship Him in spirit and in truth**" (Jn. 4:23).

"There is **nothing more needed** in the work than the **practical results of communion with God**"—9T143

"**No words can properly set forth the deep blessedness of genuine worship.**"—9T143





IMPORTANCE OF THE FAMILY ALTAR:

“Like the patriarchs of old, those who profess to love God should **erect an altar to the Lord** wherever they pitch their tent.... **Fathers and mothers should often lift up their hearts to God in humble supplication for themselves and their children.** Let the father, as priest of the household, lay upon the altar of God the morning and evening sacrifice, while the wife and children unite in prayer and praise. In such a household Jesus will love to tarry.”--CG518

Can We Do this?

- “Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people— saying with a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; **and worship Him** who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water’ ” (Rev. 14:6-7).
- **Can a Church that worships at 37% or 52% effectively proclaim a worship-centered message to the world?**



The Altar

Negative Effects of Social Media Misuse

It damages our ability to concentrate and focus

It makes us feel lonely

It stresses us out

Depression & Anxiety

Negative Body Image

Unhealthy Sleep Patterns

General Addiction

Cyberbullying

FOMO

Unrealistic Expectations

Antidote

Healing Effects of Worship

Calms the mind and trains it to focus

Decreases loneliness, increases intimacy w/God

Reduces and removes stress and worry

Reminds us that God is in control/God lifts us up

Body made by God, inhabited by God, precious to God

Worship calms the heart and leads to better rest

God fills the emotional needs that lead to addiction

Unconditional love and acceptance from God

Living in God's will means I am always in the right place. I'm missing what I should miss

Godliness and contentment, great gain

Back to the Altar: The Resource Suite

GOAL: 70% of Adventists Engaging in Daily Worship by 2027

- **A Coordinated Church-wide Emphasis** on Personal/Family Worship at all levels of the Church
- **2 Back to the Altar books:** Worship ideas for families, Worship ideas for individuals (youth and young adults)
- **ONE YEAR WITH JESUS FAMILY Curriculum**—The family studies the same material, age-appropriately so that they have a shared spiritual experience from day to day and week to week for 1 year.
- **13 15-minute videos on *The Adventist Home***, updated and retooled for the 21st Century Adventist Family.



Back to the Altar: The Resource Suite

13 15-minute videos on *Child Guidance*, updated and retooled for all families. Viral 1-minute vids

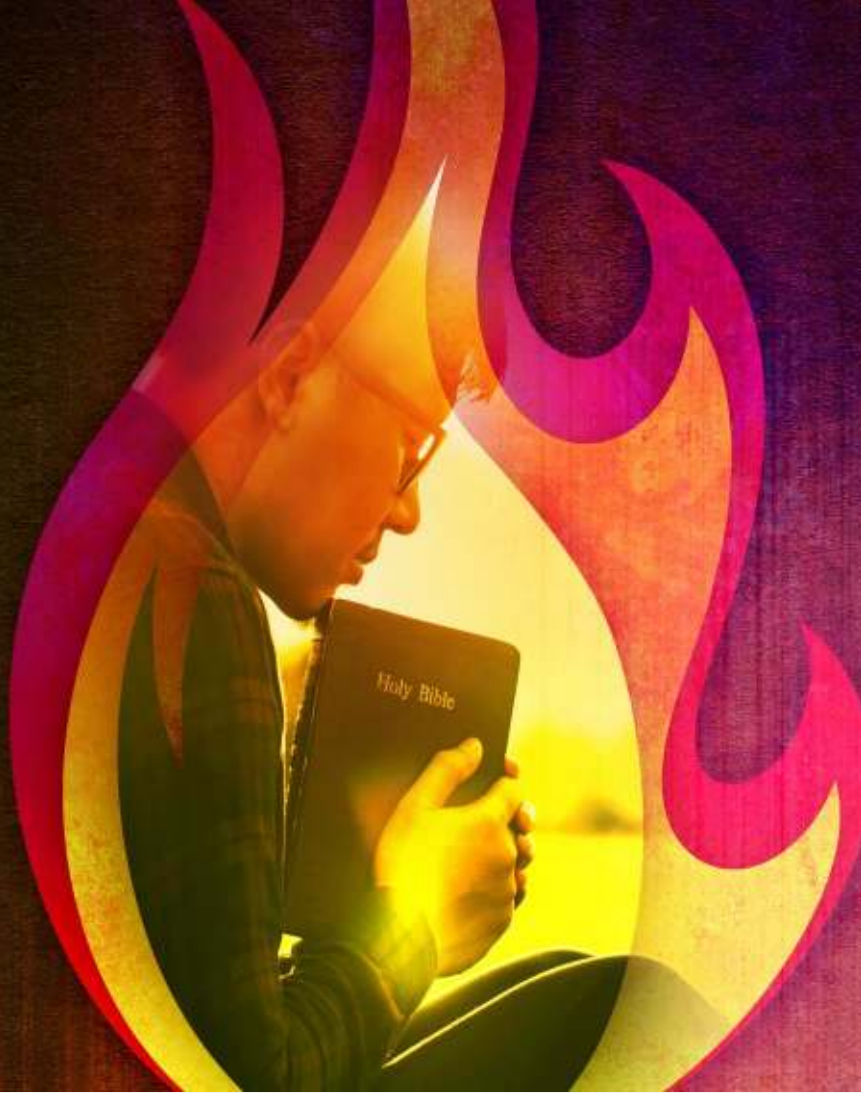
Adventist Media Resource: Healthy media tips/recommendations for youth, young adults, adults, and families

Resources specifically created for those with Special Needs (APM)

BTTA Revival Conferences: 3-4 Day Conferences for leaders, laity, and their families to experience engaging personal and family worship, engaging Bible Study, vibrant prayer and spiritual growth

A Back to the Altar weekly Podcast to highlight people in devotion to God and reaching out to others

Back to the Altar Worship Night: 1 night a year, the entire church celebrates a joint family worship experience, streamed worldwide (GCFMTWOP)





Back to the Altar: an inside-out revolution

- The Church on the Outside **is a reflection of the Church on the Inside!**
- The Power of our Church to do God's will in the world is **directly proportional to the time spent at the altar with God**
- **Seclusion before success** in ministry
- Public Effectiveness in evangelism is tied to **Private Power from God!**



I WILL GO—
AFTER I GO TO
THE ALTAR!