

Was Ellen White Against Chess, Checkers, Tennis, and Bicycles?

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Ellen White penned several strong statements about amusements. These statements are often taken out of their historical contexts by critics as well as supporters. On the one hand, critics use these statements to cast Ellen White as a legalist who condemned playing innocent games such as chess, checkers, and tennis. On the other hand, some supporters take these statements as commandments for today and believe chess, checkers, and tennis should be shunned by Christians. Does Heaven condemn checkers and chess? Are tennis and bicycles a “species of idolatry”? Is it a sin to engage in such amusements and exercise? Or is Ellen White being too harsh and legalistic, condemning that which, if played in moderation, is harmless? These are important questions that deserve careful answers.

At the outset it is essential to understand Ellen White’s overall approach to living the Christian life. For her, nothing short of radical discipleship to Jesus Christ should affect every aspect of the Christian’s daily life. Adventist historian George Knight said it well: “The large amount of material that Ellen White has written about recreation, marriage, health, the use of our time and abilities, and similar topics speaks to the practical implications of Christianity” (Knight, *Meeting Ellen White*, 123). Thus, the type of amusements one embraces says something about his or her Christianity, according to Ellen White.

DANCING, CARD PLAYING, CHESS, AND CHECKERS:

The following is Ellen White’s key statement on amusements:

“It is not essential to our salvation, nor for the glory of God, to keep the mind laboring constantly and excessively, even upon religious themes. There are amusements, such as dancing, card playing, chess, checkers, etc., which we cannot approve, because Heaven condemns them. These amusements open the door for great evil. They are not beneficial in their tendency, but have an exciting influence, producing in some minds a passion for those plays which lead to gambling and dissipation. All such plays should be condemned by Christians, and something perfectly harmless should be substituted in their place” (*Testimonies*, vol. 1, 514).

She spoke about these type of amusements in three other places: “Questions and Answers,” *Review and Herald*, October 8, 1867; *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 554-555; and Pamphlet 100 - *Testimony for the Physicians and Helpers of the Sanitarium*, 1879, 68-69. This statement, however, is the foundational statement and is dated in 1867. What are we to make of it? Is she saying that it is a sin for a father and son to play a simple game of checkers or for a family to play a board game? Let us examine the historical context.

Historical Context:

When Ellen White penned this statement in the late 1860s, these activities were all

associated with gambling and drinking. Notice the nineteenth-century setting for each one:

Dancing:

According to historian, Jack Larkin, the “valse”—later called the waltz—reached America in the 1820s. “Valsers completely abandoned the corporate or small-group form of earlier dances and danced as couples, whirling around the ballroom on their own. Partners clasped each other face to face in a stylized embrace. Even when performed with the utmost propriety, the valse provoked numerous accusations of licentiousness from Americans disturbed by its challenges to the social and sexual symbolism of dancing” (Larkin, 243).

But dancing was associated with much more than the valse. In Ellen White’s day, concert saloons and dance halls were everywhere, especially in the big cities. In addition to dancing, the typical dance hall included women enticing men to drink and illicit sexual encounters. One concert saloon on Broadway in New York City “featured ‘waiter girls’ in short-skirted theatrical costumes who performed ‘Gaieties,’ served drinks, and sometimes joined customers at their tables” (D’Emilio and Freedman, 130). By the 1880s the dance hall had captured the mood and environment of commercialized amusements. One reformer described the bodily contact of dancing couples as standing “very close together, the girl with her arms around the man’s neck, the man with both his arms around the girl on her hips; their cheeks are pressed close together, their bodies touch each other.” Another described the songs in the dance halls as containing the “most blatant and vulgar” lyrics. All of this “added to the air of sexual energy that permeated the environment” (D’Emilio and Freedman, 195-196).

It is not difficult to see why Ellen White wrote that Heaven condemned the dancing of her day. In 1882 she wrote: “The amusement of dancing, as conducted at the present day, is a school of depravity, a fearful curse to society” (“Should Christians Dance?” *Review and Herald*, February 28, 1882).

Card Playing, Chess, and Checkers

Without question, card playing, chess, checkers, and other games of the day were considered “implements of gambling” during the mid-nineteenth century. After identifying “cards, chess-men and boards, backgammon and draught or checker-boards” as gambling “implements,” 1840s gambling reformer Jonathan Harrington Green said of these activities: “It is a waste of precious time; it begets a passion for an evil practice, with which are associated all those abominable vices, profanity, falsehood, cheating, drunkenness, debauchery, quarrels, and murder. These are all naturally connected with gaming,” (Green, 15). He went on to say that the gambler begins with the “simple games of dominos and checkers,” then moves on to more serious forms, such as “poker,” and then to the more radical “race-horse and cock-fightings.” This habit eventually consumes the life of

the gambler. “In short,” Green wrote, “I know of no crime, even of the blackest hue, that the gambler will not stoop to commit, when to obtain money is his object; and what better can we expect of men, whose whole lives are spent in defrauding and cheating their fellow-men, by artifices so base, so vile, that every honest mind shudders to contemplate them?” (16-19).

Thus, Ellen White clearly viewed card playing, chess, and checkers in the tradition of Jonathon Harrington Green and other reformers who saw them as the beginning of gambling evils (see Ann Fabian’s book listed in the bibliography for an interesting discussion of these reformers and gambling in nineteenth-century America).

Immediate Context:

Here is the statement again with my emphasis:

There are amusements, such as dancing, card playing, chess, checkers, etc., which we cannot approve, because Heaven condemns them. **These amusements open the door for great evil. They are not beneficial in their tendency, but have an exciting influence, producing in some minds a passion for those plays which lead to gambling and dissipation.** All such plays should be condemned by Christians, and something perfectly harmless should be substituted in their place” (1T 514).

Notice her emphasis on how these amusements “**open the door for great evil.**” Card playing, chess, checkers, and other games of the day, such as backgammon, were “**not beneficial in their tendency.**” Why? Because in that day they were associated with gambling and created an appetite for it. They fostered an “**exciting influence,**” producing in some a “**passion**” for more advanced forms of gambling that would ultimately lead to a lifestyle of “**gambling and dissipation.**” Interestingly, the word “**dissipation**” was defined in Ellen White’s day as “a dissolute, irregular course of life; a wandering from object to object in pursuit of pleasure; a course of life usually attended with careless and exorbitant expenditure of money, and indulgence in vices, which impair or ruin both health and fortune” (Noah Webster’s 1828 *American Dictionary of the English Language*). This word clearly depicted a life sacrificed to the vice of gambling so vividly described by Green. **Thus, because card playing, chess, and checkers were known then as “implements of gambling” (Green, 15), Ellen White counseled Christians to avoid them.**

The Principle:

Are chess, checkers, and card games associated with gambling today like they were in Ellen White’s time? It can certainly be argued that some card games are associated with gambling and, at some online places, chess and checkers might also carry this association. But in general, these games are not connected with gambling and its accompanying vices, especially in the family context. In this vein, many Christians view these games as harmless when played free

of any gambling influence and high-spirited competition.

Would Ellen White, then, consider card playing and simple games of checkers and chess harmless in today's environment? The answer to this question, of course, depends on how one interprets the statement. Some Adventists regard it as one those Ellen White statements conditioned by the nineteenth century and irrelevant for today's Christians. Others, however, take it seriously and believe all games should be condemned by Christians. The critics, of course, assert that nothing is morally wrong with simple board games and view this statement as evidence Ellen White that was a legalist.

There is another position on this statement represented by many supporters of Ellen White, such as myself. It goes like this: **One must seek to understand the historical situation Ellen White was addressing and, if that situation is not applicable today, discern the universal principles and apply them to the present situation.** This involves applying correct principles of interpretation, which are discussed [here](#). As we have seen, when Ellen White penned this statement in 1867, card playing, chess, and checkers were considered "implements of gambling" and associated with all of its vices. Today these board games are not directly connected with the influence of gambling. **Is there a biblical principle that transcends the nineteenth century and applies to us today? Yes, I believe there is: Christians should avoid any amusement associated with immoral vice, such as gambling, drinking, or elicit sexual activity. This is the biblical principle Ellen White applied to amusements in her day. Thus, as long as a board game is free of these or any other negative influences like spiritualism (Ouija board game), I don't believe Ellen White would make an issue about it today, as long as the game is not taken to an extreme.** After all, she did write, "[I do not condemn the simple exercise of playing ball; but this, even in its simplicity, may be overdone](#)" (*Adventist Home*, 499). She always called for balance in any activity engaging the Christian's attention. Notice that she begins the statement under consideration with this balancing sentence: "[It is not essential to our salvation, nor for the glory of God, to keep the mind laboring constantly and excessively, even upon religious themes.](#)" She expanded this thought elsewhere in the same book:

[There are persons with a diseased imagination to whom religion is a tyrant, ruling them as with a rod of iron. Such are constantly mourning over their depravity and groaning over supposed evil. Love does not exist in their hearts; a frown is ever upon their countenances. They are chilled by the innocent laugh from the youth or from anyone. They consider all recreation or amusement a sin and think that the mind must be constantly wrought up to just such a stern, severe pitch. This is one extreme. Others think that the mind must be ever on the stretch to invent new amusements and diversions in order to gain health. They learn to depend on excitement, and are uneasy without it. Such are not true Christians. They go to another extreme.](#) The true principles of Christianity open before all a source of happiness, the height and depth, the length and breadth of which are immeasurable (1T 565).

Thus, Ellen White counseled Christians to maintain balance in amusements,

avoiding all extremes. If the playing of simple board games (or computer games) becomes an obsession for a person, consuming inordinate amounts of time, then it is in the extreme zone and should be controlled or discarded. But a benign board game, free of any evil influence and played in the simplicity and beauty of family relationships, can be a positive experience for all, and I see no counsel in Ellen White’s writings forbidding it in that context. It should be pointed out that Mrs. White would encourage a *variety* of innocent amusements, not just one or two (see *Adventist Home*, 493-520).

For those who want to take a strict stand on this issue and forbid all games for Seventh-day Adventists, I am reminded of this wise counsel from Ellen White concerning her own writings: “God wants us to have common sense, and He wants us to reason from common sense. Circumstances alter conditions. Circumstances change the relation of things” (*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 6, 354). Elsewhere on the subject of health reform she penned this important principle that applies to all of her writings: “We see those who will select from the testimonies the strongest expressions and, without bringing in or making any account of the circumstances under which the cautions and warnings are given, make them of force in every case. Thus they produce unhealthy impressions upon the minds of the people. There are always those who are ready to grasp anything of a character which they can use to rein up people to a close, severe test, and who will work elements of their own characters into the reforms” (*Selected Messages*, vol. 3, 285).

TENNIS:

“In the night season I was a witness to the performance that was carried on on the school grounds. The students who engaged in the grotesque mimicry that was seen, acted out the mind of the enemy, some in a very unbecoming manner. A view of things was presented before me in which the students were playing games of tennis and cricket. Then I was given instruction regarding the character of these amusements. They were presented to me as a species of idolatry, like the idols of the nations” (Pamphlet 145 - *Recreation*, 1912, 44).

Today the playing of tennis is considered by most Christians to be a game of harmless fun and exercise. How could it be a “species of idolatry”? Here, as in the above statement, the historical context is essential to understanding her meaning. The following principle of interpretation is also relevant: “God wants us to have common sense, and He wants us to reason from common sense. Circumstances alter conditions. Circumstances change the relation of things” (*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 6, 354).

Historical Context:

When Ellen White penned this statement about tennis, the game was more than just a sport of fun and exercise. Elliott J. Gorn and Warren Goldstein’s *A Brief History of American Sports* pinpoints an issue behind Ellen White’s strong rebuke of playing tennis and cricket. After discussing the “elitist impulse” in American sports during the late 1800s, they write:

Country clubs, yacht clubs, bicycle associations, tennis tournaments, jockey clubs, opulent new Thoroughbred tracks such as Belmont and Pimlico, golf courses, and polo grounds offered participants a change to display their wealth and status. New federations— the American Association of Amateur Oarsman (1872), the United States Lawn Tennis Association (1881), the League of American Whellmen (1880), and the United States Golf Association (1894)—bound local clubs together with uniform rules and entrance requirements. They also sponsored annual events at exclusive venues where elegant clothes (female spectators often wore furs and jewels) and expensive athletic equipment converted otherwise simple sports into grand pageants. Under the auspices of athletic clubs, country clubs, and related institutions, playing sports could become a mark of privilege and a source of distinction for those who sought recognition as a part of the social elite (134-135).

Gorn and Goldstein explain that the “sport itself was often lost in the quest for social exclusivity.” For example, “one observer declared that the Philadelphia ladies’ tennis championships “are social functions of the highest class, and none enter their names but those of assured social position . . . All our first lady tennis players belong to the best families” (135). The same was true of sports in other countries, such as Australia:

<[http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/tennis./](http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/tennis/)>

Immediate Context:

In the context of this statement, Ellen White is writing about a holiday appointed for the Avondale school in Australia. She addressed the students in morning worship and then went home. Later she was shown in vision what happened during the remainder of the day:

“In April, 1900, a holiday was appointed at the Avondale school for Christian workers. The program for the day provided for a meeting in the chapel in the morning, at which I and others addressed the students, calling their attention to what God had wrought in the building up of this school, and to their privilege and opportunities as students. After the meeting, the remainder of the day was spent by the students in various games and sports, some of which were frivolous, rude, and grotesque” (Pamphlet 145, 42).

Although we cannot describe exactly what the students were doing on that day (we have no detailed written record of their activities), we can discern the spirit in which the games and sports were played, based on Ellen White’s use of words: “exhibition,” “performance,” and “grotesque mimicry” (43-44). Evidently, “some” of the “games and sports” played by the students that day were “frivolous, rude, and grotesque.” It is in this context that she writes: “A view of things was presented before me in which the students were playing games of tennis and cricket. Then I was given instruction regarding the character of these amusements. They were presented to me as a species of idolatry, like the idols of the nations.”

Does she mean tennis and cricket are a “species of idolatry” anytime they are played? Or does she mean they were a “species of idolatry” in the way they were played that day on the

grounds of Avondale? Notice the “character” of the “amusements” included tennis, cricket, and the mimicry. The issue thus seemed to be the spirit and attitude in which the students engaged in the games and sports. This “mimicry” seemed to characterize the entire afternoon. What were they mimicking? We don’t know, but it was “frivolous, rude, and grotesque,” a “performance.” The use of the word “exhibition” (43) suggests the possibility of a contest involving intense competition in which the focus was on outdoing one another. As such, it seemed to be the general attitude manifested throughout this particular day that was at issue. Furthermore, the general atmosphere of elitism and pride associated with tennis, as discussed above in the historical context, could have certainly been a factor in the students’ behavior. **Social status, elitism, and superiority, or even mimicking this attitude in the playing of sports, could certainly be considered a “species of idolatry.”**

Ellen White’s great concern over the attitude and actions of the students must be seen in the background of her expectations for that particular day. Note her words to the teachers at Avondale:

On Wednesday morning when I spoke to the students and to the others who had assembled, the words that the Lord gave me to speak, I did not know anything of what was to take place afterward; for no intimation of it had come to me. How could those at the head of the school harmonize with the words spoken, the proceedings that followed, which were of a character to make of no effect the instruction that had just come to them from God? If their perceptions had not been greatly beclouded, they would have understood this instruction as rebuking all such proceedings. I felt deeply the importance of the words that the Lord gave me at this time for teachers and students. This instruction presented before the students duties of the highest order; and to efface by the amusements afterward entered into, the good impressions made, was virtually saying, We want not Thy way, O God; we want our own way; we want to follow our own wisdom (43).

Thus, the “character” of the amusements that day evidently made of “no effect” the counsel she believed came from God. This day should not have been the day for amusements and sports. It was meant to be a day of honoring God for what He had done in raising up this Christian school. In Mrs. White’s mind the attitude and atmosphere of the day should have been a completely different “character” from what it was.

It should be pointed out that during the decade Ellen White was in Australia (1890s), her focus was on making Avondale a model of Seventh-day Adventist Christian education. In America the premiere school of Adventist education, Battle Creek College, had miserably failed. Mrs. White was thus determined to make Avondale a success and devoted her pen to every facet of its campus life. The statement under consideration reflects this great interest and concern for the school’s spirituality. The counsels she produced during these years are the foundation for one of the most successful Christian parochial educational systems in the world—the Seventh-day Adventist educational system.

Thus, the “character” of the day was Mrs. White’s great concern. Did she believe that

sports of any kind should never be played at our SDA schools? Would she condemn the tennis courts found on many of our campuses today? The answer to this question lies in a statement she made while writing a letter to a college student in 1893: “I do not condemn the simple exercise of playing ball; but this, even in its simplicity, may be overdone” (*Adventist Home*, 499). Denton Rebok, Ellen White specialist of yesteryear, provides a helpful comment on this statement:

Again we find Mrs. White to be very human and very sensible. She did not condemn the throwing of a ball. She did not condemn the hitting of a ball. She did not condemn running, after you have hit the ball. What then did she condemn? She warns against the overdoing of even the very best of things, against the making of something of that kind so all important in the life that everything else fades into insignificance (Rebok, 164-165).

This comment fits with the context of the sentence. Notice:

I do not condemn the simple exercise of playing ball; but this, even in its simplicity, may be overdone. I shrink always from the almost sure result which follows in the wake of these amusements. It leads to an outlay of means that should be expended in bringing the light of truth to souls that are perishing out of Christ. The amusements and expenditures of means for self-pleasing, which lead on step by step to self-glorifying, and the educating in these games for pleasure, produce a love and passion for such things that is not favorable to the perfection of Christian character (Letter 17a, 1893; 1SM 321-324).

Based on the language used in this statement, she is clearly addressing nineteenth-century sports as described above. The expressions “outlay of means,” “expenditures of means,” “self-pleasing,” and “self-glorifying” reflect the nature of sports in the late 1800s, which involved elitism, social status and exclusivity, heavy competition, and expensive athletic equipment. **But when a sport involving a ball is not taken to any of these extremes, Ellen White did not condemn it.**

George Knight gives excellent counsel on this subject:

Part of our task in reading Ellen White is to avoid extreme interpretations and to understand her message in its proper balance. That in turn means that we need to read the counsel from both ends of the spectrum on a given topic.

A case in point is her strong words about playing games. “**In plunging into amusements, match games, pugilistic performances,**” she wrote, **the students at Battle Creek College “declared to the world that Christ was not their leader in any of these things. All this called forth the warning from God.”** A powerful statement, it and others like it have led many to the conclusion that God frowns on *all* games and ball playing. But here, as on all extreme interpretations, one should use caution. After all, the *very next* sentence reads: “**Now that which burdens me is the danger of going into extremes on**

the other side” (*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 378). **As the following statements demonstrate, Ellen White did not hold for either extreme on the topic of ball playing and games. Speaking of parents and teachers, she wrote: “If they would gather the children close to them, and show that they love them, and would manifest an interest in all their efforts, and even in their sports, sometimes even being a child among children, they would make the children very happy, and would gain their love and win their confidence”** (ibid., 18, emphasis mine).

From <<http://www.whiteestate.org/issues/herm-pri.html#extreme>>

Hence, there is nothing wrong, for example, with the tennis courts at Southern Adventist University where I teach. There is no elitism on these courts, no social exclusivity, no matches where the stakes are high. The students play tennis for the purpose of recreation and exercise. It is a needed physical break from their intense study schedule. When not taken to competitive extremes, tennis is a wholesome way to get exercise and have fun with a friend. **Nothing in the context of Ellen White’s writings militates against *this kind of approach* to sports, such as tennis, cricket, or racquetball.**

Those who apply this statement to Adventist college campuses today, without taking the historical context into consideration, and call all tennis games a “species of idolatry” grossly misunderstand Ellen White’s intention behind the statement.

BICYCLES:

Ellen White’s statements on bicycles have always elicited interesting discussion:

There seemed to be a bicycle craze. Money was spent to gratify an enthusiasm in this direction that might better, far better, have been invested in building houses of worship where they are greatly needed. There were presented before me some very strange things in Battle Creek. A bewitching influence seemed to be passing as a wave over our people there, and I saw that this would be followed by other temptations. Satan works with intensity of purpose to induce our people to invest their time and money in gratifying supposed wants. This is a species of idolatry (8T 51).

The money expended in bicycles and dress and other needless things must be accounted for. As God’s people you should represent Jesus; but Christ is ashamed of the self-indulgent ones. My heart is pained, I can scarcely restrain my feelings, when I think of how easily our people are led away from practical Christian principles to self-pleasing (*Special Testimonies for Ministers and Workers* -- No. 10, 1897).

There were some who were striving for the mastery, each trying to excel the other in the swift running of their bicycles. There was a spirit of strife and contention

among them as to which should be the greatest. The spirit was similar to that manifested in the baseball games on the college ground. Said my Guide: "These things are an offense to God. Both near and afar off souls are perishing for the bread of life and the water of salvation." When Satan is defeated in one line, he will be all ready with other schemes and plans which will appear attractive and needful, and which will absorb money and thought, and encourage selfishness, so that he can overcome those who are so easily led into a false and selfish indulgence (8T 52).

George Knight explains the context of these statements with precision, and I will use his words:

In July 1894 Ellen White sent a letter to the denomination's headquarters church in Battle Creek, Michigan, in which she condemned the purchase and riding of bicycles (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 50-53). At first glance it appears strange that such an issue should be considered important enough for a prophet to deal with. It seems especially odd when we note that the bicycle issue had been specifically revealed in vision.

How should we apply such counsel today? Does it mean that Seventh-day Adventists should not own bicycles? In answering that question we first need to examine the historical context. In 1894 the modern bicycle was just beginning to be manufactured, and a fad quickly developed to acquire bicycles, not for the purpose of economical transportation, but simply to be in style, to enter bicycle races, and to parade around town on them. In the evening such parading included the hanging of Japanese lanterns on the bicycles. Bicycling was the "in" thing--the thing to do if you were anything or anybody on the social scale.

Extracts from an article entitled "When All the World Went Wheeling" will help us get into the historical context of the bicycle counsel. "Toward the end of the last century," we read, "the American people were swept with a consuming passion which left them with little time or money for anything else. . . . What was this big new distraction? For an answer the merchants had only to look out the window and watch their erstwhile customers go whizzing by. America had discovered the bicycle, and everybody was making the most of the new freedom it brought. . . . The bicycle began as a rich man's toy. Society and celebrity went awheel.

"The best early bicycle cost \$150, an investment comparable to the cost of an automobile today. . . . Every member of the family wanted a 'wheel,' and entire family savings often were used up in supplying the demand" (*Reader's Digest*, December 1951).

In the light of the historical context, Ellen White's statement in 1894 regarding

bicycles takes on a new significance. “There seemed to be,” she wrote, “a bicycle craze. Money was spent to gratify an enthusiasm in this direction that might better, far better, have been invested in building houses of worship where they are greatly needed. . . . A bewitching influence seemed to be passing as a wave over our people. . . . Satan works with intensity of purpose to induce our people to invest their time and money in gratifying supposed wants. This is a species of idolatry. . . . While hundreds are starving for bread, while famine and pestilence are seen and felt, . . . shall those who profess to love and serve God act as did the people in the days of Noah, following the imagination of their hearts?”

“There were some who were striving for the mastery, each trying to excel the other in the swift running of their bicycles. There was a spirit of strife and contention among them as to which should be the greatest. . . . Said my Guide: ‘These things are an offense to God. Both near and afar off souls are perishing for the bread of life and the water of salvation.’ When Satan is defeated in one line, he will be all ready with other schemes and plans which will appear attractive and needful, and which will absorb money and thought, and encourage selfishness, so that he can overcome those who are so easily led into a false and selfish indulgence.”

“What burden,” she asks, “do these persons carry for the advancement of the work of God? . . . Is this investment of means and this spinning of bicycles through the streets of Battle Creek giving evidence of the genuineness of your faith in the last solemn warning to be given to human beings standing on the very verge of the eternal world?” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 51, 52).

Her counsel on bicycles is obviously dated. Within a few years bicycles became quite inexpensive and were relegated to the realm of practical transportation for young people and those without means, even as the larger culture switched its focus and desires to the four-wheeled successor of the humble bicycle. Ellen White never wrote against bicycles again. While it is true that some of the specifics of the counsel no longer apply, the principles on which the specific counsel rests remain quite applicable across time and space.

And what are some of those principles? First, that Christians are not to spend money on selfish gratification. Second, that Christians are not to strive for mastery over one another by doing things that generate a spirit of strife and contention. Third, that Christians should focus their primary values on the kingdom to come and on helping others during the present period of history. And fourth, that Satan will always have a scheme to derail Christians into the realm of selfish indulgence.

Those principles are unchangeable. They apply to every place and to every age of earthly history. Bicycles were merely the point of contact between the principles and the human situation in Battle Creek during 1894. The particulars of time and

place change, but the universal principles remain constant.

Our responsibility as Christians is not only to read God's counsel to us, but to apply it faithfully to our personal lives. The Christian's task is to search out God's revelations and then seek to put them into practice in daily living without doing violence to the intent of their underlying principles. That takes personal dedication as well as sensitivity to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

From <<http://www.whiteestate.org/issues/herm-pri.html#principles>>

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