



**North American Division of the Seventh-day
Adventist Church**

**Men's Day of Prayer September 7, 2013
"BIG BROTHER'S WATCHING"**

Table of Contents

Suggested Order of Service.....3

Children's Story.....4

Sermon.....6

Men's Activity Ideas.....18

Suggested Order of Service

Men's Ministries Day of Prayer
September 7, 2013

Call to Worship

Opening Prayer

Opening Hymn -- *Children of the Heavenly Father* -- Adventist Hymnal #101

Offering

Children's Story (See Story Provided)

Scripture Reading Hebrews 12:1-2

Pastoral Prayer

1. For the men to be empowered by the Holy Spirit
2. For the men's family life: mothers, wives, children and others
3. For the men's work and church life
4. For men to become friends of God and each other

Special Music [Select a Joyful song of Victory and Strength Preferred- Male Quartet, or Male Choir]

Sermon (Provided) *"BIG BROTHER'S WATCHING"*

Closing Hymn -- *Hail Him The King of Glory* -- Adventist Hymnal #202

Closing Prayer

Children's Story

Dr. Pamela Consuegra, Associate Director

Family Ministries Department North American Division of the Seventh-day

Watch What You Say!

Objects: A tube of toothpaste

Theme: Making our speech pleasing to God

Scriptures:

Reckless words are like a sword. Proverbs 12:18

He who holds his tongue is wise. Proverbs 10:19

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight. Psalm 19:14

This morning I have a tube of toothpaste. I want you to watch very carefully and see what I am going to do with this toothpaste. (Open the toothpaste and squeeze all of the toothpaste out of the tube onto a saucer.) There, I think I have just about all of the toothpaste squeezed out of the tube. Now I need one of you to help me with the next part. (Choose one of the children to be your helper.) Okay, I want you to put all of the toothpaste back into the tube. Can you do that? You can't? You mean that you can't put that toothpaste back into the tube once it is squeezed out? Of course not, that is silly isn't it?

Did you know that very same thing is true of the words we speak? Have you ever said something that hurt someone's feelings and heard them say, "You take that back!" You can't take it back, can you? Once you have said it, it is said. You can't put the words back in your mouth any more than you can squeeze this toothpaste back into the tube. That is why we need to be very careful about the things we say. The Bible says, "He who holds his tongue is wise."

All of you know the children's rhyme that says, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names can never hurt me." That sounds nice, but it just isn't true. Words can hurt. The Bible says, "Reckless words pierce like a sword." Our words can cut like a knife. They can hurt others. We all know that God hears every word we say and he knows every thought we have in our mind. It is very important for us to be careful about the things we think and say.

The Bible says, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be

acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer." Once we have said it, we can't take it back, so let's make sure that our words are pleasing to God.

Sermon
Dr. Claudio Consuegra
Family Ministries and Men's Ministries Director
North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

Big Brother's Watching
Hebrews 12:1-2

Millions of Americans have been following for several years the reality television show "Big Brother."

In this show, several house guests are challenged to live together for several weeks, up to three months, separated from their families and friends, with no contact with the outside world, in a specially constructed house with lots of cameras and microphones and no privacy.

Every two weeks, the residents nominate two people they would like to see leave the house, and during the week you and I can vote which of the two actually gets to leave the house until there are just two left.

The house guests were carefully selected to reflect both genders and various educational, social and ethnic backgrounds.

What an interesting concept - let's see how ten total strangers behave while sequestered inside a house for three months.

I'm sure the producers knew it would create very tense moments which could keep the audience glued to the tube.

People have a certain sense of curiosity as to how their neighbor or their friend lives.

But the concept is not necessarily new.

Big Brother is the American version of a European program just like it.

And yet, the concept is not new even to the European version of the program.

Paul speaks about it in (Hebrews 12:1-2 NKJV)

"Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of

witnesses . . .

A long time ago, a situation developed that caused the universe to get involved in a cosmic battle - the battle for truth.

On the one side God, the Creator and Lover of everything and everyone made worlds and people to inhabit them.

He created angels - messengers – to go to and from everywhere and everyone.

And among them He created Lucifer, a being unlike any other.

(Ezekiel 28:15 NKJV) You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you.

Vs. 13 (NRSV) every precious stone was your covering, carnelian, chrysolite, and moonstone, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald; and worked in gold were your settings and your engravings.

It might have been his beauty or his splendid ornamentation, maybe his musical talent or his wisdom – we're not sure exactly what it was that cause him to want to be like God, to be worshiped like God, to have God's power.

But he knew he could not fight God.

So instead, He began to spread rumors about God.

“He's not as good as you think He is.

“He's unfair.”

“He doesn't mean the best for us.”

“Just get on His bad side and you'll see.”

“He makes us live by laws that are too hard to follow.”

And there was war in heaven.

(Revelation 12:7-9 NKJV) Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, {8} but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. {9} So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

The war moved from heaven to earth.

And suddenly we became the participants in this cosmic struggle.

It's like . . . Big Brother

In Big Brother, the contestants are very different people.

We're all very different people – we have different backgrounds, we speak different languages, we look different, we all have and have had different opportunities, different parents, different experiences.

The difference between the Big Brother house guests and us is that they chose to go into the house.

We had no choice, we were born into this conflict.

And yet, like in the Big Brother program the contestants can't leave the house, neither can we leave this conflict.

We're in this world, confined to the conflict within.

In Big Brother, the contestants have no privacy.

Everything they do is being watched by camera operators, taped in miles of video-recording tape.

Everything they say is being recorded.

Just about the only thing we don't know is what they're thinking.

It's like in our situation.

Everything we say, everything we do is being witnessed by the entire universe, we are in full display.

That's what Paul referred to when he wrote:

(1 Corinthians 4:9 NKJV) "For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men."

The entire universe is watching us!

I think the best picture of this scenario is found in the book of Job.

You remember the story.

(Job 1:6-11 TLB) One day as the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, Satan, the Accuser, came with them. {7} "Where have you come from?" the Lord asked Satan. And Satan replied, "From Earth, where I've been watching everything that's going on." {8} Then the Lord asked Satan, "Have you noticed my servant Job?"

"Have you noticed, have you considered my servant Job?"

Now that's an interesting question, coming from God.

If the devil had not noticed Job, why would God point him out to Satan?

It is obvious by the question that God knew Satan had noticed Job.

And with the Great Controversy in the background, I can understand why God asked that question.

It's as if God is saying, "in spite of all that you have done to cast a shadow on Me so my people hardly know me, have you noticed my servant Job?"

"Even though you've been working hard to dissuade people from worshiping Me, have you noticed my servant Job?"

“Even though you have tried to turn my people’s love away from Me, have you noticed my servant Job?”

He is the finest man in all the earth--a good man who fears God and will have nothing to do with evil." vs.8

But Satan, with a ready answer, continues with the same argument.

{9} "Why shouldn't he when you pay him so well?" Satan scoffed.

{10} "You have always protected him and his home and his property from all harm. You have prospered everything he does--look how rich he is! No wonder he 'worships' you! {11} But just take away his wealth, and you'll see him curse you to your face!"

Job was being watched – by God, by Satan, by all the good angels, by all the evil angels, by the entire universe.

And before the universe, God declared him to be the finest man in all the earth, a true righteous man.

There’s a reason why ten people decided to leave their jobs, their families, their friends, the outside world for three months and move into this secluded place, with no privacy whatsoever.

The prize. . . thousands, indeed, hundreds of thousands of dollars.

We had no choice being here.

But there’s also a prize.

No, not eternal life - that’s the reward for achieving the prize.

The prize, the real goal in this struggle is nothing less than vindication of God’s character before the entire universe.

God declared Job to be the finest man because Job had proclaimed to the entire universe that God is the finest God there is.

Through his words, through his actions, through his very thoughts, Job vindicated

God before the watching universe.

In Big Brother the viewers get to see what the residents are like.

In the Great Controversy the universe gets to see what God is like.

That's the reason for the church's existence.

That's indeed what Paul wrote:

(Ephesians 3:8-13 NKJV) "To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, {9} and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; {10} to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places.

Everything we do, everything we say is a witness to the universe about God's dealings with us, about His justice, about His grace, about His love toward us.

The life of Cain is another example of the Big Brother/Great Controversy.

Cain, as you remember was the first-born of Adam and Eve. Enraged because God did not accept his offering of fruits and vegetables but Abel's, his brother's sacrifice of a lamb, Cain killed him.

Notice this insight into the Great Controversy:

In sparing the life of the first murderer, God presented before the whole universe a lesson bearing upon the great controversy. The dark history of Cain and his descendants was an illustration of what would have been the result of permitting the sinner to live on forever, to carry out his rebellion against God. The forbearance of God only rendered the wicked more bold and defiant in their iniquity. {PP 78.2}

That's why eventually God had to bring a flood upon the earth because "every intent of the thoughts of their heart was only evil continually." Genesis 6:5

But, had God destroyed Cain as soon as he killed his brother Abel, Satan would have raised his accusing finger toward God and before the universe declared, “See, try to do anything other than what God says and He’ll wipe you out too.”

Listen to these words,

Satan is constantly at work, with intense energy and under a thousand disguises, to misrepresent the character and government of God. . . God, the One infinite and all-wise, sees the end from the beginning, and in dealing with evil His plans were far-reaching and comprehensive. It was His purpose, not merely to put down the rebellion, but to demonstrate to all the universe the nature of the rebellion. God's plan was unfolding, showing both His justice and His mercy, and fully vindicating His wisdom and righteousness in His dealings with evil. {PP 78.3}

The holy inhabitants of other worlds were watching with the deepest interest the events taking place on the earth. {PP 78:4}

For the universe the fall of Adam and Eve was a sad lesson about Satan’s deceitfulness.

In the death of Abel at the hands of his brother the universe saw again how quickly evil spread.

And then, the universe witnessed the generation in Noah’s time.

In the condition of the world that existed before the Flood they saw illustrated the results of the administration which Lucifer had endeavored to establish in heaven, in rejecting the authority of Christ and casting aside the law of God. In those high-handed sinners of the antediluvian world they saw the subjects over whom Satan held sway. The thoughts of men's hearts were only evil continually. Genesis 6:5. Every emotion, every impulse and imagination, was at war with the divine principles of purity and peace and love. It was an example of the awful depravity resulting from Satan's policy to remove from God's creatures the restraint of His holy law. {PP 78.4}

The Lord God in His mercy allows the universe to witness all the horrible scenes that have taken place since the creation of man so that they can have a chance, without coercion, without fear, without doubt, to make up their own minds about who is right and who is wrong, who is good and who is evil, who is God and who is not.

By the facts unfolded in the progress of the great controversy, God will demonstrate the principles of His rules of government, which have been falsified by Satan and by all whom he has deceived. His justice will finally be acknowledged by the whole world, though the acknowledgment will be made too late to save the rebellious. {PP 79.1}

But the greatest, most horrific event the universe ever witnessed happened just outside the city of Jerusalem less than two thousand years ago.

With what intense interest had they [the universe] followed the closing scenes of the conflict! They had beheld the Saviour enter the garden of Gethsemane, his soul bowed down by a horror of darkness that he had never before experienced. {3SP 184.1}

Heaven had beheld the victim betrayed and hurried from one earthly tribunal to another with mockery and violence. It had heard the sneers of his persecutors because of his lowly birth, and his denial with cursing and swearing by one of his best-loved disciples. It had seen the frenzied work of Satan, and his power over the hearts of men. Oh, fearful scene! the Saviour seized at midnight in Gethsemane as a murderer, dragged to and fro from palace to judgment hall, arraigned twice before the priests, twice before the Sanhedrim, twice before Pilate, and once before Herod, mocked, scourged, and condemned, led out to be crucified, bearing the heavy burden of the cross amid the wailing of the daughters of Jerusalem and the jeering of the crowd! {3SP 185.1}

Heaven had viewed with grief and amazement Christ hanging upon the cross, blood flowing from his wounded temples, and sweat tinged with blood standing upon his brow. From his hands and feet the blood had fallen, drop by drop, upon the rock drilled for the foot of the cross. The wounds made by the nails had gaped as the weight of his body dragged upon his hands. His labored breath had grown quick and deep, as his soul panted under the burden of the sins of the world. All Heaven had been filled with admiration when the prayer of Christ was offered in the midst of his terrible suffering--"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Yet there stood men, formed in the image of God, joining with Satan to crush out the last spark of life from the heart of the Son of God. {3SP 185.2}

The entire universe witnessed this horrible scenes and through it all they came to

love and appreciate God even more than ever before.

What great love!

What great mercy!

What amazing grace!

Big Brother's watching!

The entire universe sits on edge, watching this cosmic drama unfold.

But now the actors are not Adam and Eve, or Noah and David.

This time the actors are not Peter or John, Paul or Mary.

This time the actors are you and me.

Men and women like you and me.

And how we respond to those trials we've had – trials we thought unbearable. . .

How we respond to the temptations that come our way. . . .

How we act while surrounded by people or when we're completely alone, gives the universe another bit of evidence about God.

If only we could read the story of our lives from both sides of the mirror like we read Job's story now, what do you think we would see?

When the redeemed stand in the presence of God, they will see how short-sighted were their conclusions as to what Heaven records as success. They will see how petty were their supposed trials, and how unreasonable were their doubts. They will see how often they brought failure to their work by failing to show unquestioning faith in God.

RH, March 7, 1912 par. 11}

Ah, but there's another difference, a great difference between Big Brother the TV show and Big Brother the Cosmic Conflict.

The difference is illustrated in the words of one of Bette Midler's most beautiful, most catchy songs.

You'll probably remember the tune as I read the words:

From a distance the world looks blue and green,
and the snow-capped mountains white.
From a distance the ocean meets the stream,
and the eagle takes to flight.

And then the song ends with those familiar words. . .

And God is watching us, God is watching us,
God is watching us from a distance.
Oh, God is watching us, God is watching.
God is watching us from a distance.

Beautiful song, isn't it?

And yet its message is so distorted!

God is not watching us from a distance, He's right here in our midst.

The residents of the Big Brother house don't have TV, don't have a radio, don't have newspapers, don't have access to the outside world.

Not so with us.

We have access to heaven itself through prayer.

We have yesterday's, today's, and tomorrow's news through the Bible.

The residents of the Big Brother house have to fend for themselves.

But we have a host of angels to help us in this great battle.

So in all ages, angels have been near to Christ's faithful followers. . . . Heaven and earth are no wider apart today than when the shepherds listened to the angels' song. Humanity is still as much the object of Heaven's solicitude as when common men of common occupations met angels at noon-day, and talked with heavenly messengers in the vineyards and the fields. Angels from the courts above attend the steps of those who come and go at God's command. {ST, April 27, 1904 par. 6}

We're not alone in this struggle.

We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses. The battlements of heaven are thronged with a great crowd of angels watching the conflict of man with the prince of darkness. They bend from the eminence and with intense interest watch to see if the child of God, harassed, perplexed, persecuted, denounced, defamed, and condemned as was the Master, will look to heaven for strength. Heaven waits our demand upon its resources. . . . Angels are waiting as messengers to minister unto those who shall be heirs of salvation. They are close by every one who needs their help while fighting the good fight of faith.-Manuscript 38, 1887.

The residents of the Big Brother house look at mirrors and all they see is a reflection of themselves even though there are cameras on the other side watching them.

We too see through a mirror (1 Corinthians).

But we need not worry that we cannot see everything clearly.

Yes, Big Brother's watching – the entire universe watches carefully every step we take, every action, every word.

A cloud of heavenly witnesses is watching the conflict between good and evil. Those who live for their own pleasure must one day answer to the Judge of all the earth for their misspent privileges and neglected opportunities. They will lose an eternity of bliss and the riches of everlasting life. God forbid that any should delay until it is too late, and should at last have to say, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." {ST, June 15, 1904 par. 5}

One more thing about Big Brother.

The residents of the Big Brother house have a weekly challenge – whether it is to build something or solve something, they come together because by coming up with a solution they can gain some future advantage.

We have a constant challenge.

Here's our challenge.

We have a heaven to gain and a hell to shun. We are under obligation as those who have made solemn vows to God, and who have been commissioned as the messengers of Christ, as stewards of the mysteries of the grace of God, to declare faithfully the whole counsel of God. Ever remember that we are surrounded, encompassed, with a great cloud of witnesses; for the heavenly intelligences are looking upon us as ambassadors of the King of kings and Lord of lords. We have a right to lift the standard high. He who understands the dignity of our calling, the sacredness of our work, commands that we declare the message with unshrinking heart. {1888 443.1}

For the entire universe is watching us.

Men, the entire universe is watching you.

How will you behave?

How will you respond?

Men's Weekend Activity Ideas and Planning Suggestions

Written by Pastor Minner Labrador Jr.
Men's Ministries Director
Southwestern Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

We encourage you to get the men out of the normal meetings, away from church where men can be men and have fun together which in turn will encourage men to relate to each other in a different format than in church or church meetings.

How do I plan a men's outing?

1. Talk and brainstorm with your pastor and leading elders.
- 1 Select an idea or get a group of men together and ask them what they would like to do together as a group.
- 2 Pick a date and time for the activity.
- 3 Get it into the bulletin.
- 4 Make a list of the men in your church and personally call them and invite them to be a part of the activity. Note the ones that want to be a part so that they can personally be called again just before the event.
- 5 Announce the scheduled activity in church and then 2 weeks before announce it again, and then announce it the week before the scheduled time.
- 6 Carry through with the scheduled activity no matter how many men do or don't show up.
- 7 Take pictures if possible and write up a story on your event to put into the bulletin as an insert and also submit your story and pictures to NAD Men's Ministry Department for publication on the web site www.emale.org or www.adventistmen.org.

Saturday night event suggestions:

- Game night
- Pee Wee golf outing
- Movie night at one of the men's homes
- Bowling
- Fire pit gathering
- Horseshoes
- Sunday event suggestions:

- Fishing Trip
- Canoeing
- Putting contest at Pee Wee golf course
- Hiking
- Bike ride
- Golf
- Pick up game of basketball, football or baseball
- Horseback riding
- Whitewater Rafting
- Mountain Climbing
- Whatever you decide to do have FUN with the men in your church!
- Remember; “Play hard, Pray even harder.”