



SHARING SCRIPTURE

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New Weekly Feature

The Center for Creative Ministry is proud to introduce the new video series *Amazing Transformations in Christ*.

This series presents inspirational messages from various thought leaders, the latest news from the Adventist world, beautiful music, and some familiar faces. It is our hope that this weekly feature may be used to enrich your Friday evening worships, add value to your personal devotions, and catalyze thoughtful discussions with your family and friends.

Amazing Transformations in Christ updates on [our website](#) and [Facebook page](#) every Friday.

To see the latest editions, please click the button below. We know you won't want to miss them!

Blessings,

Paul Richardson
Executive Director

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The Everlasting Covenant

For use: October 10 - 16

Texts: Genesis 12:1–3, Romans 4:1–5, Exodus 2:24, Deuteronomy 5:1–21, Deuteronomy 26:16–19, Deuteronomy 8:5, Matthew 28:10

Blood is thicker than water—but what’s thicker than blood?

Earlier this year, 28-year old Jake Wagner pled guilty to 8 counts of aggravated murder against the Rhoden family, and in doing so broke the ties that had bound his own family together. [1] Perhaps more shocking than the amount of slayings in which he masterminded is that his family, including his own mother, helped him commit these violent acts. [2]

The iHeartRadio podcast The Piketon Massacre, in the second season’s second episode “Cinnamon and Hay,” dissects the “cult like” family ties that for years had made blood thicker than water. [3] But the investigative journalists are still left wondering what caused Jake to turn on the familial accomplices he had been shielding since 2016.

While we may never know what set Jake on the path of honesty, we can see that even the strongest bonds can’t last forever. That is, not when they’re forged merely by human hands.

Humans have always muddied the waters when it comes to remembering and following through on promises, especially the important ones. We’ve had enough wars and court cases to prove that. Even with divine assistance we are not infallible (you can thank free will for that). Fortunately, when those promises came to deal with our eternal salvation and relationship with the Spirit, God foresaw that we would need some leniency composed of forgiveness and second chances.

In fact, God knew that if it were up to us to always be on our best behavior, we would never succeed. That’s why, when God first made the covenant with Abraham, righteousness was credited to the man based upon his faith and not his works ([Romans 4:1-5](#)). This is how the covenants would continue, even when Abraham and his descendants messed up. And God always remembers this covenant, which now extends to you and me.

You and I will make mistakes too, and our best laid plans will go to waste. But by turning our eyes repentantly to the cross, God lovingly envelops us into the heavenly fold with the power only found in the blood of Christ.

~Stefani Leeper

[1] <https://www.wlwt.com/article/pike-county-massacre-jake-wagner-pleads-guilty-to-8-counts-of-aggravated-murder-in-rhoden-family-slayings/36202005#>

[2] <https://www.dispatch.com/story/news/local/2021/09/10/angela-wagner-pleads-guilty-rhoden-family-murder-case-pike-county-ohio/8273343002/>

[3] <https://www.iheart.com/podcast/1119-the-piketon-massacre-68805569/episode/episode-2-cinnamon-and-hay-82708769/>

For Reflection

Connecting: Did God make the covenant with us similar to agreements between earthly kingdoms because we need something we can easily understand? Could the divine covenant have been made any other way?

Sharing: What does God get out of making an everlasting covenant with us?

1. Begrudgingly obligated followers who function more like machinery than individuals
2. Complete control
3. Nothing, this is solely for our benefit
4. The chance to experience our pains and joys with us rather than from a distance
5. Faithful and happy believers who want to spread the gospel until Jesus returns
6. Other:

Applying: When was the last time you let a promise fall through the cracks? The next time you make a promise to someone, set attainable goals and visible reminders for yourself to help you keep your end of the bargain.

Valuing: How can we have a loving and trusting relationship with God devoid of the fear and wariness that we tend to feel about creators and upholders of laws?

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