Contemporary Comments on the Adult Sabbath School Lesson

[Title] Relationships
[Text] 1 Samuel 25; Ephesians 4:1-3; 1 Peter 3:9-12; Luke 17:3, 4; 23:34; James 5:16; Matthew 7:12
[Use] January 22, 2011

America is known for pulling together in times of tragedy. Such times seem to bring out the best in a sometimes-fragmented nation. They help us take our minds off our own small matters and see ourselves as part of something much bigger. And they turn everyday people into national heroes.

Such was the case in the Arizona shooting two weeks ago, when six people were killed and 14 others wounded.1

Dorwin Stoddard was a hero that day. The 76-year-old thought that when his time came to die, it would be from complications after having 17 heart stents. But when he heard gun shots and saw his wife Mary fall to the ground, he wasn’t thinking of his heart. He was thinking of his wife. Dorwin and Mary had been grade school sweethearts in Tucson. Both later moved away to start families, but came home when their respective spouses died. They became re-acquainted, fell in love, and married. When Mary was shot in the leg three times that day, Dorwin dove to the ground, covering her body with his. He was shot in the head. While he was still conscious, but breathing heavily, Mary talked with him for 10 minutes until he died.

And who can forget nine-year-old Christina-Taylor Green who also died that day? Born on 9/11, the third grader had just been elected to her school’s student counsel, and had big dreams of one day becoming a politician. She even had her college chosen—Penn State—and told her parents that she wanted a career that would help those less fortunate than her. Her death hasn’t stopped that desire to be of service. Christina’s father told reporters that two children’s eyesight was saved through the donation of her corneas. “The fact that her organs were able to help people, that was an amazing thing to me. It’s just another thing that this little girl has given the world,” John Green said.2

Not all heroes died that day. A retired airline pilot, George Morris, remains in critical condition. One of his daughters told reporters that he was shot while trying to protect his wife of 50 years. He threw Dorothy to the ground and tried to protect her by lying on top of her to shield her. Sadly, she was killed.

Mary Reed’s motherly instincts kicked in when the shooting began. She told reporters that she and her daughter attended the event hoping to get a photograph with Congresswoman Giffords. When Mary was shot in the arm, she pinned her daughter to a wall to protect her. She was then shot two more times, in her right arm and back. Mary is now recovering at home.

And then there were the other heroes: the local men who tackled the shooter; the 61-year-old woman who helped them by grabbing the attacker’s ammo magazine as he tried to reload; Giffords’ intern who raced to her side and applied pressure to her head wound; and the countless unnamed bystanders who gave physical and emotional help until first responders arrived.

In addressing the nation, President Obama said of the attack, “As shrill and discordant as our politics can be at times, it was a moment that reminded us of who we really are—and how much we depend on one another. While we can’t escape our grief for those we’ve lost, we carry on now, mindful of those truths.”3

In this week’s memory text in Matthew 7:12, Jesus sets the bar high for the kind of relationship we should have with each other: “So
in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you...’ “ We all want and need someone to be there for us when we’re going through a crisis. Maybe we don’t need someone to put their own life at risk, but someone who will listen, help us problem-solve, and put their words into action. So the next time you see someone in need, remember the acronym, WWJD: What Would Jesus Do? He would do to others what He would have them do to Him. He would be humble and gentle. He would forgive. He would build up rather than tear down. And so should we.

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1. MSNBC
2. USA Today
3. LA Times

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