



Dear heavenly Father, we worship You this morning with our tithe and offerings. We pray for the courage to put You first in our lives. In the name of Jesus, amen.

AUGUST 14, 2021

When James and Ellen White put God first

James and Ellen White were young when they decided to put God first. This cost them everything they had, but they didn't give up. What can we learn from James and Ellen White today that will help us put God first in our own lives?

James White was ordained as a minister in 1843 after 1000 people joined the Advent movement through his preaching. He worked tirelessly to spread the good news that Jesus was coming back in 1844.

Ellen was a debilitated young woman who had suffered an accident in her childhood. Her family made a decision to believe the Bible rather than the traditions of their church. Because they put God first, her family was forced out of the church and community they had known for years.

James and Ellen met just after the great disappointment of October 22, 1844, and were married in 1846. Because of their dedication to the truth, the Whites did not have a home of their own for the first six years of their marriage, living at times with her parents or with friends.

In November 1848, Ellen White was shown in vision that James should begin to print a paper, and that it would grow until its light would shine around the world. Printing was expensive and seemed impossible for them. But they decided to put God first and the funds began to come in from the readers whose lives were transformed.

Beginning in 1849, James published *The Present Truth*. It became *The Review and Herald* in 1850. Through the sacrifice of the small group of believers, the movement that focused on the whole Bible began to grow. In 1863, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists was organised.

James White put God first in everything. He never finished high school but went on to found four journals, two publishing houses, and one college, now Andrews University. He organised a denomination, served as its leader and published its hymnals. As a spare-time entrepreneur, he bought and sold real estate, ran a nursery and drove mules from Texas to Kansas on the Chisholm Trail.

Ellen White was a visionary in more ways than one. She was instrumental in confirming the study of scripture and strengthening the administrative structure of the fast-growing Adventist Church. But putting God first always requires sacrifices. James and Ellen White didn't give up even when they lost two beautiful sons to illness.

James and Ellen White put God first, even when it cost them everything. Their courage inspires us today. Jesus gave up everything to redeem us and His love compels us to put His kingdom first in our own lives. As the deacons collect the tithe and offerings, we are challenged to put God first.