



SABBATH BIBLE LESSONS
Senior Division

Hearing the
Voice of God

Vol. 91, No. 3

July–September, 2015

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Sabbath Bible Lessons, a daily study program, is based solely on the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy without additional comments. The quotations are as brief as possible to provide concise, direct thoughts. Brackets [] are supplied in some cases to ensure clarity, proper context, and smooth readability. Further study in the source materials is strongly recommended.

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Foreword

With so many voices in the world today, where can we turn to find truth? How can we know God's will and guard against Satan's deceptions? Does it really matter what we believe?

"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them' (Isaiah 8:20). The people of God are directed to the Scriptures as their safeguard against the influence of false teachers and the delusive power of spirits of darkness. Satan employs every possible device to prevent men from obtaining a knowledge of the Bible; for its plain utterances reveal his deceptions. At every revival of God's work the prince of evil is aroused to more intense activity; he is now putting forth his utmost efforts for a final struggle against Christ and His followers. The last great delusion is soon to open before us. Antichrist is to perform his marvelous works in our sight. So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures. By their testimony every statement and every miracle must be tested.

"Those who endeavor to obey all the commandments of God will be opposed and derided. They can stand only in God. In order to endure the trial before them, they must understand the will of God as revealed in His word; they can honor Him only as they have a right conception of His character, government, and purposes, and act in accordance with them. None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict. To every soul will come the searching test: Shall I obey God rather than men? The decisive hour is even now at hand. Are our feet planted on the rock of God's immutable word? Are we prepared to stand firm in defense of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus?"—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 593, 594.

"The voice of God is speaking to us through His Word, and there are many voices that we will hear; but Christ has said we should beware of them who will say, 'Here is Christ, or there is Christ.' Then how shall we know that they have not the truth unless we bring everything to the Scriptures?"—*Faith and Works*, p. 55.

"God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 595.

Our heritage as Protestant Christians in general and Seventh Day Adventist Reformers in particular is founded on a firm belief that God's voice is to be respected above every other. It is our prayer that this series of lessons will be a means of helping our readers discern, understand, and follow the voice of God in every aspect of their life.

The General Conference Sabbath School Department

First Sabbath Offering for a church renovation in Hungary

Hungary is a landlocked country in Central Europe with almost 10 million inhabitants, most of whom hold to the Catholic religion. The Reform message has existed in our little country since the very first beginnings of the Reform Movement in Europe. Since 1990 we have enjoyed much religious freedom.

However, recent government regulations have changed our status from a recognized church to a religious association. This has placed new burdens upon us.

Before 1990 our believers worshipped together in private homes. But after the political restrictions of the communist era were lifted, we made the decision to purchase or build houses for the worship of God. In 1992 we started to build a new church complex at Mogyoród, which is 20 km from Budapest, our capital city. The believers in Hungary were faithful in giving and diligent in work. By the grace of God, in 1995 we were able to hold an International Youth Convention in this facility. A second one was held there in 1997 and a third in 2001. Today, we have an increasing number of visitors to our outreach programs. The facility is also used for our weekly vegan-vegetarian cooking courses. These have been held regularly for more than 10 years and have proved really popular with the public. However, this building, which includes the chapel, after 17 years of use, requires renovation in order to become a more suitable place for reverent worship.

We also have a facility to house our elderly brothers and sisters who are in need. This facility also contains a place of worship, but this building is very old and needs renovating. However, while our brethren and sisters are truly generous in their giving, we do not have enough financial means to perform this work.

Therefore we ask our brethren, sisters, and friends all over the world to give generously as they are able on the first Sabbath of July, 2015. It is our prayer that God will bless you all in your giving for this project in order that we may continue to use our facilities to the glory and honor of God.

We thank you for your great generosity.

Your brothers and sisters from Hungary



May I Have Your Attention?

“What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?” (Isaiah 5:4).

“The heart of God yearns over His earthly children with a love stronger than death. In giving up His Son, He has poured out to us all heaven in one gift. The Saviour’s life and death and intercession, the ministry of angels, the pleading of the Spirit, the Father working above and through all, the unceasing interest of heavenly beings—all are enlisted in behalf of man’s redemption.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 21.

Suggested Reading: *The Signs of the Times*, April 15, 1889.

1. CONVERSATIONS WITH GOD

- a. Does God want to communicate with humans? Acts 17:27; Isaiah 65:1.
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“What can the angels of heaven think of poor helpless human beings, who are subject to temptation, when God’s heart of infinite love yearns toward them, ready to give them more than they can ask or think, and yet they pray so little and have so little faith? The angels love to bow before God; they love to be near Him. They regard communion with God as their highest joy; and yet the children of earth, who need so much the help that God only can give, seem satisfied to walk without the light of His Spirit, the companionship of His presence.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 94.

Acts 17:27: That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: Isaiah 65:1: I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.

1. CONVERSATIONS WITH GOD

- b. **With how many of us does God want to communicate personally?**
Hebrews 8:11; Psalm 4:3 (last part).
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“The Saviour regards with infinite tenderness the souls whom He has purchased with His own blood. They are the claim of His love. He looks upon them with unutterable longing.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 517.

Hebrews 8:11: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

Psalms 4:3 (last part): But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto him.

2. GOD WANTS TO SPEAK TO CONSECRATED PEOPLE

- a. How did God talk with Moses? Exodus 33:11 (first part). What kind of person was Moses when God talked face-to-face with him? Numbers 12:3; Hebrews 3:1, 2.
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“‘Come up to Me into the mount,’ God bids us. To Moses, before he could be God’s instrument in delivering Israel, was appointed the forty years of communion with Him in the mountain solitudes. Before bearing God’s message to Pharaoh, he spoke with the angel in the burning bush. . . .

“We, too, must have times set apart for meditation and prayer and for receiving spiritual refreshing. We do not value the power and efficacy of prayer as we should. Prayer and faith will do what no power on earth can accomplish.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 508, 509.

Exodus 33:11 (first part): And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle.

Numbers 12:3: (Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)

Hebrews 3:1-2: 1 Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; 2 Who was faithful to him that* appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house.

2. GOD WANTS TO SPEAK TO CONSECRATED PEOPLE

- b. What kind of person was Samuel when God first talked with him? 1 Samuel 3:1 (first part). Why didn't Samuel recognize God when He first called him? Verses 4, 5, 7.
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"[Samuel] was kind, generous, obedient, and respectful. . . . [He] was helpful and affectionate."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 573.

1 Samuel 3:1 (First part), 4, 5, 7: 1 And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision.

4 That the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I. 5 And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down.

7 Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him.

2. GOD WANTS TO SPEAK TO CONSECRATED PEOPLE

- c. What kind of person was Cornelius when God spoke to him in vision? Was he a church member at that time? Acts 10:1, 2. How did Cornelius respond to God's message? Verses 7, 8.
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“Cornelius was a Roman centurion. He was a man of wealth and noble birth, and his position was one of trust and honor. A heathen by birth, training, and education, through contact with the Jews he had gained a knowledge of God, and he worshiped Him with a true heart, showing the sincerity of his faith by compassion to the poor. He was known far and near for his beneficence, and his righteous life made him of good repute among both Jews and Gentiles. His influence was a blessing to all with whom he came in contact.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 132, 133.

Acts 10:1-2: 1 There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, 2 A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.

Acts 10:7-8: 7 And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; 8 And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

3. GOD SPEAKS TO UNCONSECRATED PEOPLE

- a. What kind of person was Cain when God talked with him? Genesis 4:3–5, 8.
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“Notwithstanding Cain’s disregard of the divine command, God did not leave him to himself; but He condescended to reason with the man who had shown himself so unreasonable. And the Lord said unto Cain, ‘Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?’ Through an angel messenger the divine warning was conveyed: ‘If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door’ (Genesis 4:6, 7). The choice lay with Cain himself. If he would trust to the merits of the promised Saviour, and would obey God’s requirements, he would enjoy His favor. But should he persist in unbelief and transgression, he would have no ground for complaint because he was rejected by the Lord.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 74.

Genesis 4:3-5, 8: 3 And* in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. 4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his* flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: 5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

8 And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

3. GOD SPEAKS TO UNCONSECRATED PEOPLE

- b. What kind of woman was Hagar at the time that God talked to her? Genesis 16:1-9.
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Genesis 16:1-9: 1 Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. 2 And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may* obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. 3 And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. 4 And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes. 5 And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee. 6 But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her* as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarai* dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face. 7 And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur. 8 And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai. 9 And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands.

3. GOD SPEAKS TO UNCONSECRATED PEOPLE

- c. What kind of person was the unnamed woman whom the Scribes and Pharisees brought to Christ? John 8:3, 4. What was she like after her conversation with Him? Verses 10, 11.
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“The woman had stood before Jesus, cowering with fear. His words, ‘He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone,’ had come to her as a death sentence. She dared not lift her eyes to the Saviour’s face but silently awaited her doom. In astonishment she saw her accusers depart speechless and confounded; then those words of hope fell upon her ear, ‘Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more’ (verse 11). Her heart was melted, and she cast herself at the feet of Jesus, sobbing out her grateful love, and with bitter tears confessing her sins.

“This was to her the beginning of a new life, a life of purity and peace, devoted to the service of God. . . . This penitent woman became one of His most steadfast followers. With self-sacrificing love and devotion she repaid His forgiving mercy.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 462.

John 8:3-4: 3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, 4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.

John 8:10-11: 10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? 11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

4. WHEN GOD REFUSES TO SPEAK

- a. Why wouldn't Jesus talk to Caiaphas during part of His trial? Matthew 26:62, 63; Isaiah 53:7.
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"Caiaphas was a proud and cruel man, overbearing and intolerant."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 539.

"Caiaphas had regarded Jesus as his rival. The eagerness of the people to hear the Saviour, and their apparent readiness to accept His teachings, had aroused the bitter jealousy of the high priest. But as Caiaphas now looked upon the prisoner, he was struck with admiration for His noble and dignified bearing. A conviction came over him that this Man was akin to God. The next instant he scornfully banished the thought. Immediately his voice was heard in sneering, haughty tones demanding that Jesus work one of His mighty miracles before them. But his words fell upon the Saviour's ears as though He heard them not."—*Ibid.*, pp. 704, 705.

"The Lord reads the hearts of all and understands their motives and purposes."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 534.

Matthew 26:62-63: 62 And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? 63 But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.

Isaiah 53:7: He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

4. WHEN GOD REFUSES TO SPEAK

- b. Would God talk to King Saul near the end of his life? 1 Samuel 28:5, 6. Why did God treat him this way? 1 Samuel 15:22, 23.
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“The Lord never turned away a soul that came to Him in sincerity and humility. Why did He turn Saul away unanswered? The king had by his own act forfeited the benefits of all the methods of inquiring of God. He had rejected the counsel of Samuel the prophet; he had exiled David, the chosen of God; he had slain the priests of the Lord. Could he expect to be answered by God when he had cut off the channels of communication that Heaven had ordained? He had sinned away the Spirit of grace, and could he be answered by dreams and revelations from the Lord? Saul did not turn to God with humility and repentance. It was not pardon for sin and reconciliation with God, that he sought, but deliverance from his foes. By his own stubbornness and rebellion he had cut himself off from God. There could be no return but by the way of penitence and contrition; but the proud monarch, in his anguish and despair, determined to seek help from another source.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 676.

1 Samuel 28:5-6: 5 And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled. 6 And when Saul enquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.

1 Samuel 15:22-23: 22 And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is as the sin of^t witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

5. GOD WANTS OUR ATTENTION

a. How has God tried to get the attention of various people in the past?

- Moses: Exodus 3:2, 3.
- Elijah: 1 Kings 19:9–13.
- Balaam: Numbers 22:27, 28.

Exodus 3:2-3: 2 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. 3 And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.

1 Kings 19:9-13: 9 And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah? 10 And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. 11 And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: 12 And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. 13 And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?

Numbers 22:27-28: 27 And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she fell down under Balaam: and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff. 28 And the LORD opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?

5. GOD WANTS OUR ATTENTION

b. Under what conditions will God speak to us today? Psalm 46:10.

“All who are under the training of God need the quiet hour for communion with their own hearts, with nature, and with God. In them is to be revealed a life that is not in harmony with the world, its customs, or its practices; and they need to have a personal experience in obtaining a knowledge of the will of God. We must individually hear Him speaking to the heart. When every other voice is hushed, and in quietness we wait before Him, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God. He bids us, ‘Be still, and know that I am God’ (Psalm 46:10). This is the effectual preparation for all labor for God. Amidst the hurrying throng, and the strain of life’s intense activities, he who is thus refreshed will be surrounded with an atmosphere of light and peace. He will receive a new endowment of both physical and mental strength. His life will breathe out a fragrance, and will reveal a divine power that will reach men’s hearts.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 58.

“He who is made complete in Christ must first be emptied of pride, of self-sufficiency. Then there is silence in the soul, and God’s voice can be heard.”—*The Signs of the Times*, April 9, 1902.

Psalms 46:10: Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How do we know that God wants to talk with each of us personally?
2. How do we know that God talks to people who are devoted to Him?
3. How do we know if God talks to those who are not walking with Him?
4. To whom does God refuse to speak, and why?
5. How is God trying to get our attention today?

Practical Listening

“O ye simple, understand wisdom: and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart” (Proverbs 8:5).

“The voice of duty is the voice of God—an inborn, heaven-sent guide. Whether it be pleasing or unpleasing, we are to do the duty that lies directly in our pathway.”—*The Review and Herald*, December 29, 1910.

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 521–544.

1. GOD'S VOICE IN DAY-TO-DAY LIFE

- a. What is a common way that God reveals His will to us? Luke 17:10. Can we safely ignore this method of God's communication?
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"No one can believe with the heart unto righteousness, and obtain justification by faith, while continuing the practice of those things which the Word of God forbids, or while neglecting any known duty."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 396.

"While living in neglect of a known duty, [Moses] would not be secure; for he could not be shielded by the angels of God."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 256.

"Duty admits no rival, enters into no compromise with any opposing powers. The most precious friends and relatives must not step in between your duty and your God. The voice of duty is the voice of God in our souls."—*The Review and Herald*, June 7, 1887.

Luke 17:10: So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

1. GOD'S VOICE IN DAY-TO-DAY LIFE

- b. Why was the master displeased with the servant to whom he had given one talent? Matthew 25:26, 27; Luke 16:10.
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“By unfaithfulness in even the smallest duties, man robs his Maker of the service which is His due.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 356.

Matthew 25:26-27: 26 His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: 27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

Luke 16:10: He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

2. REFUSING TO HEAR

- a. Why didn't the rich young ruler want to do what Jesus had asked him to do? Matthew 19:21, 22. What two tools does God use to teach us our duty?
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"The man or woman that leaves the place that God has given him or her, in order to please inclination, and acts on his own devised plan meets with disappointment, because he has chosen his way instead of God's way."—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 175.

"There are persons who would understand their duty clearly, if their duty was in harmony with their natural inclinations. Reason and circumstances may point out their duty clearly; but when the path of duty is not in line with their inclinations, these evidences are frequently set aside. Then these persons will presume to go to God to learn their duty. But God will not be trifled with. He will permit such persons to follow the desires of their own hearts."—*The Watchman*, September 1, 1908.

"Those who disregard the requirements of God in this life would not respect His authority were they in heaven."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 312.

Matthew 19:21-22: 21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. 22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

2. REFUSING TO HEAR

- b. Why does God sometimes choose to refrain from teaching us His will? Isaiah 59:1, 2; Psalm 81:11, 12; John 7:17.
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“There is no help for man, woman, or child who will not hear and obey the voice of duty; for the voice of duty is the voice of God. The eyes, the ears, and the heart will become unimpressible if men and women refuse to give heed to the divine counsel and choose the way that is best pleasing to themselves.”—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 175.

Isaiah 59:1-2: 1 Behold, the LORD’S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: 2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

Psalms 81:11-12: 11 But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. 12 So I gave them up unto their own hearts’ lust:and they walked in their own counsels.

John 7:17: If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

2. REFUSING TO HEAR

- c. What is usually the reason for not listening to God? Deuteronomy 1:43; 1 Samuel 15:23.
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Deuteronomy 1:43: So I spake unto you; and ye would not hear, but rebelled against the commandment of the LORD, and* went presumptuously up into the hill.

1 Samuel 15:23: For rebellion is as the sin of* witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

3. NO MIDDLEMAN NEEDED

- a. Do we need to wait for anyone else to teach us God's will? James 1:5, 6.
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“We are not to place the responsibility of our duty upon others and wait for them to tell us what to do. We cannot depend for counsel upon humanity. The Lord will teach us our duty just as willingly as He will teach somebody else. If we come to Him in faith, He will speak His mysteries to us personally. Our hearts will often burn within us as One draws nigh to commune with us as He did with Enoch. Those who decide to do nothing in any line that will displease God, will know, after presenting their case before Him, just what course to pursue. And they will receive not only wisdom, but strength. Power for obedience, for service, will be imparted to them, as Christ has promised.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 668.

James 1:5-6: 5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. 6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

3. NO MIDDLEMAN NEEDED

- b. What are we promised when we ask God for guidance? Proverbs 3:5-7.

“When perplexities arise, and difficulties confront you, look not for help to humanity. Trust all with God. The practice of telling our difficulties to others only makes us weak and brings no strength to them. It lays upon them the burden of our spiritual infirmities, which they cannot relieve. We seek the strength of erring, finite man, when we might have the strength of the unerring, infinite God. . . .

“We need to have far less confidence in what man can do and far more confidence in what God can do for every believing soul. He longs to have you reach after Him by faith. He longs to have you expect great things from Him. He longs to give you understanding in temporal as well as in spiritual matters. He can sharpen the intellect. He can give tact and skill.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 146.

“Has not God said He would give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him? and is not this spirit a real, true actual guide? Some men seem afraid to take God at His word as though it would be presumption in them. They pray for the Lord to teach us and yet are afraid to credit the pledged word of God and believe we have been taught of Him. So long as we come to our heavenly Father humbly and with a spirit to be taught, willing and anxious to learn, why should we doubt God's fulfillment of His own promise?”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 3, pp. 1155, 1156.

Proverbs 3:5-7: 5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. 7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.

4. GOD'S ATTITUDE TOWARD US

- a. What did Christ say to reveal God's willingness to teach us His ways, personally? Matthew 7:7-11.
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“God wants His children to ask for those things that will enable Him to reveal His grace through them to the world. He wants them to seek His counsel, to acknowledge His power. Christ lays loving claims on all for whom He has given His life; they are to obey His will if they would share the joys that He has prepared for all who reflect His character here. It is well for us to feel our weakness, for then we shall seek the strength and wisdom that the Father delights to give to His children for their daily strife against the powers of evil.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 284.

Matthew 7:7-11: 7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: 8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. 9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? 10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

4. GOD'S ATTITUDE TOWARD US

- b. How patient is God as He seeks to communicate with us? Romans 14:5 (second part); 2 Peter 3:9.**
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Romans 14:5 (Second Part): One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be* fully persuaded in his own mind.

2 Peter 3:9: The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

4. GOD'S ATTITUDE TOWARD US

- c. How patient should we be with others in their understanding of God's ways? Matthew 7:12; Ephesians 4:2; Luke 6:37.
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“As God’s free agents, all should ask wisdom of Him. When the learner depends wholly upon another’s thoughts, and goes no further than to accept his plans, he sees only through that man’s eyes and is, so far, only an echo of another. God deals with men as responsible beings. He will work by His Spirit through the mind He has put in man, if man will only give Him a chance to work and will recognize His dealings. He designs that each shall use his mind and conscience for himself. He does not intend that one man shall become the shadow of another, uttering only another’s sentiments. . . .

“Men are individually accountable to God, and each must act as God moves upon him, not as he is moved by the mind of another.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 5, pp. 724, 725.

“No one is to control another’s mind, to judge for another, or to prescribe his duty. God gives to every soul freedom to think and to follow his own convictions. . . . No one has a right to merge his own individuality in that of another.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 550.

Matthew 7:12: Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Ephesians 4:2: With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

Luke 6:37: Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:

5. HOW GOD USES IMPRESSIONS

- a. In addition to guiding us through the voice of duty, what is another way that God speaks to us? Isaiah 30:21. How did God guide Mary through the impressions of the Holy Spirit?
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“Mary knew not the full significance of her deed of love. She could not answer her accusers. She could not explain why she had chosen that occasion for anointing Jesus. The Holy Spirit had planned for her, and she had obeyed His promptings. Inspiration stoops to give no reason. An unseen presence, it speaks to mind and soul, and moves the heart to action. It is its own justification.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 560.

“Another way in which God’s voice is heard is through the appeals of His Holy Spirit, making impressions upon the heart, which will be wrought out in the character.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 512.

“Conscience is the voice of God, heard amid the conflict of human passions; when it is resisted, the Spirit of God is grieved.”—*Ibid.*, p. 120.

“God speaks to us through His providential workings and through the influence of His Spirit upon the heart.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 87.

Isaiah 30:21: And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.

5. HOW GOD USES IMPRESSIONS

- b. Against what standard should we evaluate our impressions? Isaiah 8:20.
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“The Bible . . . marks out the duty of man in every circumstance of life.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 312.

“If you are in doubt upon any subject you must first consult the Scriptures.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 512.

Isaiah 8:20: To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is * no light in them.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. If we neglect a known duty, what is our spiritual condition?
2. How are we to determine our duty?
3. What must we do in order to learn our duty?
4. What is the relationship between duty and individuality?
5. How does God use impressions? How can we abuse them?

God's Voice in Nature

“God thundereth marvellously with his voice; great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend” (Job 37:5).

“Look at the wonderful and beautiful things of nature. . . . The sunshine and the rain, that gladden and refresh the earth, the hills and seas and plains, all speak to us of the Creator’s love.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 9.

Suggested Readings: *Education*, pp. 113–120.
The Ministry of Healing, pp. 50–58.

1. A UNIVERSAL VOICE

- a. **Where in the world would the voice of God in nature be unheard?**
Psalm 19:1–3.
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“Nature speaks to [our] senses, declaring that there is a living God, the Creator, the Supreme Ruler of all. . . . The beauty that clothes the earth is a token of God’s love. We may behold it in the everlasting hills, in the lofty trees, in the opening buds and the delicate flowers. All speak to us of God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 48.

Psalms 19:1-3: 1 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. 2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. 3 There is no speech nor language,* where their voice is not heard.

1. A UNIVERSAL VOICE

- b. What message does nature provide to people around the world?
Romans 1:20.
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“Those who have a true knowledge of God will not become so infatuated with the laws of matter or the operations of nature as to overlook, or refuse to acknowledge, the continual working of God in nature. Nature is not God, nor was it ever God. The voice of nature testifies of God, but nature is not God. As His created work, it simply bears a testimony to God’s power.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 293.

Romans 1:20: For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead;* so that they are without excuse:

2. LESSONS FROM THE BIRDS

- a. What does God teach us through the behavior of the eagle? Isaiah 40:31.
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“The eagle of the Alps is sometimes beaten down by the tempest into the narrow defiles of the mountains. Storm clouds shut in this mighty bird of the forest, their dark masses separating her from the sunny heights where she has made her home. Her efforts to escape seem fruitless. She dashes to and fro, beating the air with her strong wings and waking the mountain echoes with her cries. At length, with a note of triumph, she darts upward, and, piercing the clouds, is once more in the clear sunlight, with the darkness and tempest far beneath. So we may be surrounded with difficulties, discouragement, and darkness. Falsehood, calamity, injustice, shut us in. There are clouds that we cannot dispel. We battle with circumstances in vain. There is one, and but one, way of escape. The mists and fogs cling to the earth; beyond the clouds God’s light is shining. Into the sunlight of His presence we may rise on the wings of faith.”—*Education*, pp. 118, 119.

Isaiah 40:31: But they that wait upon the LORD shall* renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

2. LESSONS FROM THE BIRDS

- b. What is another lesson that we can learn by watching the birds?
Matthew 6:25, 26.
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“The natural world has, in itself, no power but that which God supplies.”— *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 293.

“The birds are teachers of the sweet lesson of trust. Our heavenly Father provides for them; but they must gather the food, they must build their nests and rear their young. Every moment they are exposed to enemies that seek to destroy them. Yet how cheerily they go about their work! how full of joy are their little songs!”—*Education*, pp. 117, 118.

“Let us not mourn and grieve because in this life we are not free from disappointments and afflictions. If in the providence of God we are called upon to endure trials, let us accept the cross and drink the bitter cup, remembering that it is a Father’s hand that holds it to our lips. Let us trust Him in the darkness as well as in the day.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 316.

Matthew 6:25-26: 25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? 26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

3. FAITH THAT WORKS

- a. What other lessons of trust does God want to teach us from nature? Matthew 6:27–30. Should we devote more interest, time, and effort to serving God or to meeting our daily temporal needs? Verses 30–33.
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“He who has given you life knows your need of food to sustain it. He who created the body is not unmindful of your need of raiment. Will not He who has bestowed the greater gift bestow also what is needed to make it complete?”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 95.

“God’s law is the law of love. He has surrounded you with beauty to teach you that you are not placed on earth merely to delve for self, to dig and build, to toil and spin, but to make life bright and joyous and beautiful with the love of Christ—like the flowers, to gladden other lives by the ministry of love.”—*Ibid.*, p. 97.

Matthew 6:27-33: 27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? 28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: 29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? 31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. 33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

3. FAITH THAT WORKS

- b. What lessons can we learn from some of God's other creatures?
Proverbs 6:6–11; 30:25–28 (compare 2 Thessalonians 3:10).

“The ants teach lessons of patient industry, of perseverance in surmounting obstacles, of providence for the future.”—*Education*, p. 117.

“The habitations which the ants build for themselves show skill and perseverance. Only one little grain at a time can they handle, but by diligence and perseverance they accomplish wonders. Solomon presents to the world the industry of the ant as a reproach to those who waste their hours in sinful idleness, in practices which corrupt soul and body. The ant prepares for future seasons. This is a lesson which many gifted with reasoning powers disregard. They fail entirely to prepare for the future immortal life which God has in His providence secured for the fallen race.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 3, pp. 1157, 1158.

“Jesus does not release us from the necessity of effort, but He teaches that we are to make Him first and last and best in everything. We are to engage in no business, follow no pursuit, seek no pleasure, that would hinder the outworking of His righteousness in our character and life. Whatever we do is to be done heartily, as unto the Lord.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 99.

Proverbs 6:6-11: 6 Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: 7 Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, 8 Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. 9 How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? 10 Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: 11 So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.

Proverbs 30:25-28: 25 The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer; 26 The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks; 27 The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them* by bands; 28 The spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces.

2 Thessalonians 3:10: For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

4. BE LIKE A TREE

- a. Why is our study of nature so important? What can we learn about God? Psalm 111:4, 6–8; Isaiah 40:26.
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“How much time is spent by intelligent human beings in horse racing, cricket matches, and ball playing! But will indulgence in these sports give men a desire to know truth and righteousness? Will it keep God in their thoughts? Will it lead them to inquire, How is it with my soul? . . .

“God calls upon His creatures to turn their attention from the confusion and perplexity around them and admire His handiwork. As we study His works, angels from heaven will be by our side to enlighten our minds and guard them from Satan’s deceptions. As you look at the wonderful things that God’s hand has made, let your proud, foolish heart feel its dependence and inferiority.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, pp. 456, 457.

Psalms 111:4: He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the LORD is gracious and full of compassion.

Psalms 111:6-8: 6 He hath shewed his people the power of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the heathen. 7 The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure. 8 They* stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness.

Isaiah 40:26: Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.

4. BE LIKE A TREE

b. To what is the Christian compared? Psalms 1:1-3; 92:12, 13.

“The palm tree well represents the life of a Christian. It stands upright amid the burning desert sand, and dies not; for it draws its sustenance from the springs of life beneath the surface.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 3, p. 1151.

Psalms 1:1-3: 1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the* ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not* wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Psalms 92:12-13: 12 The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. 13 Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God.

4. BE LIKE A TREE

c. What are some other practical lessons we can learn from nature?

“Many are the lessons that may thus be learned [from nature]. Self-reliance, from the tree that, growing alone on plain or mountainside, strikes down its roots deep into the earth, and in its rugged strength defies the tempest. The power of early influence, from the gnarled, shapeless trunk, bent as a sapling, to which no earthly power can afterward restore its lost symmetry. The secret of a holy life, from the water lily, that, on the bosom of some slimy pool, surrounded by weeds and rubbish, strikes down its channeled stem to the pure sands beneath, and, drawing thence its life, lifts up its fragrant blossoms to the light in spotless purity.”—*Education*, p. 119.

5. HOW TO UNDERSTAND NATURE'S MESSAGES

- a. Whose guidance is essential in order for us to understand nature?
John 16:13; 14:26.
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“Teach [the children] to notice the evidences everywhere manifest in nature of God’s thought for us, the wonderful adaptation of all things to our need and happiness.

“He alone who recognizes in nature his Father’s handiwork, who in the richness and beauty of the earth reads the Father’s handwriting—he alone learns from the things of nature their deepest lessons and receives their highest ministry. Only he can fully appreciate the significance of hill and vale, river and sea, who looks upon them as an expression of the thought of God, a revelation of the Creator.”—*Education*, pp. 119, 120.

John 16:13: Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

John 14:26: But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

5. HOW TO UNDERSTAND NATURE'S MESSAGES

b. What event teaches us the messages of nature most clearly? John 1:4.

“Only in the light that shines from Calvary can nature’s teaching be read aright. Through the story of Bethlehem and the cross let it be shown how good is to conquer evil, and how every blessing that comes to us is a gift of redemption.

“In brier and thorn, in thistle and tare, is represented the evil that blights and mars. In singing bird and opening blossom, in rain and sunshine, in summer breeze and gentle dew, in ten thousand objects in nature, from the oak of the forest to the violet that blossoms at its root, is seen the love that restores. And nature still speaks to us of God’s goodness.”—Ibid., p. 101.

John 1:4: In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is God trying to tell you through nature today?
2. How can the birds teach us lessons of trust in God?
3. What can we learn from the ant, one of the smallest of creatures?
4. What are some object lessons that trees give us?
5. How does God explain nature's messages to us today?

God's Ambassadors

“My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother” (Proverbs 1:8).

“Parents . . . cannot displease [God] more than by neglecting to train their children aright. God has given them these children as a sacred trust, to educate for Him. In a sense they stand in the place of God to their children.”—*The Signs of the Times*, September 25, 1901.

Suggested Reading: *The Adventist Home*, pp. 187–194.

1. AMBASSADORS FOR GOD

- a. What is the message of the fifth commandment? Exodus 20:12.
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“Parents are entitled to a degree of love and respect which is due to no other person. God Himself, who has placed upon them a responsibility for the souls committed to their charge, has ordained that during the earlier years of life, parents shall stand in the place of God to their children. And he who rejects the rightful authority of his parents is rejecting the authority of God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 308.

Exodus 20:12: Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

1. AMBASSADORS FOR GOD

b. How are parents to help young children? Proverbs 22:6.

“[Parents] are to work out the salvation of those who are too young to understand the difference between good and evil. They are in no case to think that good will naturally predominate in the hearts of their children. They are to guard carefully the words and actions of their little ones, lest the enemy shall gain an influence over them.”—*The Signs of the Times*, September 25, 1901.

Proverbs 22:6: Train up a child* in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

2. AN AWESOME RESPONSIBILITY

- a. How should parents handle the most serious responsibility ever given to humanity? Ephesians 6:4.

“For some reason many parents dislike to give their children religious instruction, and they leave them to pick up in the Sabbath School the knowledge which it is their privilege and duty to impart. . . . God commands His people to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. What does this mean—the nurture and admonition of the Lord? It means to teach them to order the life by the requirements and lessons of the word; to help them to gain a clear understanding of the terms of entrance into the city of God. Not to all who would enter will the gates of that city be opened, but to those only who have studied to know God’s will and have yielded their lives to His control.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 109.

“Kindly, earnestly, tenderly, parents are to work for their children, cultivating every good trait and repressing every evil trait which develops in the character.”—*The Signs of the Times*, September 25, 1901.

“You should have no work so important that it will prevent you from giving to your children all the time that is necessary to make them understand what it means to obey and trust the Lord fully.”—*The Adventist Home*, pp. 183, 184.

Ephesians 6:4: And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

2. AN AWESOME RESPONSIBILITY

- b. Who taught Timothy in his home, and how did their teaching affect his life as a child and as a youth? 2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15.
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“Timothy’s father was a Greek and his mother a Jewess. From a child he had known the Scriptures. The piety that he saw in his home life was sound and sensible. The faith of his mother and his grandmother in the sacred oracles was to him a constant reminder of the blessing in doing God’s will. The word of God was the rule by which these two godly women had guided Timothy. The spiritual power of the lessons that he had received from them kept him pure in speech and unsullied by the evil influences with which he was surrounded. Thus his home instructors had cooperated with God in preparing him to bear burdens.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 203.

2 Timothy 1:5: Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

2 Timothy 3:15: And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

3. THE ROLE OF DISCIPLINE

- a. What is the purpose of discipline? Psalm 144:12; Proverbs 25:28; 16:32.
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“The object of discipline is the training of the child for self-government. He should be taught self-reliance and self-control. . . . Help him to see that all things are under law, and that disobedience leads, in the end, to disaster and suffering. . . .

“The true object of reproof is gained only when the wrongdoer himself is led to see his fault and his will is enlisted for its correction. When this is accomplished, point him to the source of pardon and power.”—*Child Guidance*, p. 223.

“One child, properly disciplined in the principles of truth, who has the love and fear of God woven through the character, will possess a power for good in the world that cannot be estimated.”—*Ibid.*, p. 163.

Psalms 144:12: That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones,* polished after the similitude of a palace:

Proverbs 25:28: He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.

Proverbs 16:32: He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.

3. THE ROLE OF DISCIPLINE

- b. How should we discipline the children under our care? Proverbs 29:15; Colossians 3:21.
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“First reason with your children, clearly point out their wrongs, and impress upon them that they have not only sinned against you, but against God. With your heart full of pity and sorrow for your erring children, pray with them before correcting them. Then they will see that you do not punish them because they have put you to inconvenience, or because you wish to vent your displeasure upon them, but from a sense of duty, for their good; and they will love and respect you.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 252, 253.

“Great care should be exercised by parents lest they treat their children in such a way as to provoke obstinacy, disobedience, and rebellion. Parents often stir up the worst passions of the human heart because of their lack of self-control. They correct them in a spirit of anger, and rather confirm them in their evil ways and defiant spirit, than influence them in the way of right.”—*The Review and Herald*, November 15, 1892.

“Parents, never act from impulse. Never correct your child when you are angry; for if you do this, you will mold him after your own image—impulsive, passionate, and unreasonable. You can be firm without violent threatenings or scoldings.”—*Australasian Union Conference Record*, September 6, 1909.

Proverbs 29:15: The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.

Colossians 3:21: Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.

4. OVERCOMING PARENTAL MISTAKES

- a. **What command is given to all children about obeying their parents? Ephesians 6:1. What can parents learn from the advice given to teachers?**
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“The parent’s will, when it is in harmony with the will of God, is to be law.”—*The Review and Herald*, December 18, 1900.

“Heavenly messengers are sent to minister unto those who shall be heirs of salvation; and these would converse with the teachers if they were not so satisfied with the well-trodden path of tradition, if they were not so fearful of getting away from the shadow of the world. Teachers should beware lest they close the gates so that the Lord can find no entrance into the hearts of the youth.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 161.

Ephesians 6:1: Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

4. OVERCOMING PARENTAL MISTAKES

- b. What should we do as we review those things which we have learned in our childhood? 1 Thessalonians 5:21.
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“In all who have been chosen to accomplish a work for God the human element is seen. Yet they have not been men of stereotyped habits and character, who were satisfied to remain in that condition. They earnestly desired to obtain wisdom from God and to learn to work for Him. . . . [James 1:5 quoted.] But God will not impart to men divine light while they are content to remain in darkness. In order to receive God’s help, man must realize his weakness and deficiency; he must apply his own mind to the great change to be wrought in himself; he must be aroused to earnest and persevering prayer and effort. Wrong habits and customs must be shaken off; and it is only by determined endeavor to correct these errors and to conform to right principles that the victory can be gained. Many never attain to the position that they might occupy, because they wait for God to do for them that which He has given them power to do for themselves. All who are fitted for usefulness must be trained by the severest mental and moral discipline, and God will assist them by uniting divine power with human effort.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 248.

1 Thessalonians 5:21: Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

4. OVERCOMING PARENTAL MISTAKES

- c. How many generations of our ancestors will have influenced our habits? Exodus 20:5.
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Exodus 20:5: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;

5. VICTORY POSSIBLE

- a. When Moses was a young man, what choice did he make? How was he able to overcome the effects of his life in Egypt? Hebrews 11:24–27.
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“Moses had been learning much that he must unlearn. The influences that had surrounded him in Egypt—the love of his foster mother, his own high position as the king’s grandson, the dissipation on every hand, the refinement, the subtlety, and the mysticism of a false religion, the splendor of idolatrous worship, the solemn grandeur of architecture and sculpture—all had left deep impressions upon his developing mind and had molded, to some extent, his habits and character. Time, change of surroundings, and communion with God could remove these impressions. It would require on the part of Moses himself a struggle as for life to renounce error and accept truth, but God would be his helper when the conflict should be too severe for human strength.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 248.

Hebrews 11:24-27: 24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; 25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; 26 Esteeming the reproach* of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. 27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

5. VICTORY POSSIBLE

- b. How can we encourage our children to overcome sin? 2 Peter 1:4; 1 Corinthians 15:57, 58; Proverbs 24:16 (last part).
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“Let the child and the youth be taught that every mistake, every fault, every difficulty, conquered, becomes a steppingstone to better and higher things. It is through such experiences that all who have ever made life worth the living have achieved success.”—*Child Guidance*, p. 255.

2 Peter 1:4: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

1 Corinthians 15:57-58: 57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Proverbs 24:16 (Last Part): For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. When are parents' words to their children as the voice of God?
2. How can we bring up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?
3. What must be gained in order for discipline or reproof to be successful?
4. What great change must we go through to be used by God?
5. How can we overcome bad habits that we have formed in childhood?

First Sabbath Offering for missionary schools

In loving obedience to the Saviour's commission, "Go ye into all the world" and teach all nations, the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement is striving to prepare qualified workers to accomplish this task.

Missionary schools are one of the main means for this preparation. These schools, being established in different parts of the world, are to be focussed on instructing our young people in the "Present Truth" and how to spread it abroad.

"True education is missionary training. Every son and daughter of God is called to be a missionary; we are called to the service of God and our fellow men; and to fit us for this service should be the object of our education."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 395.

In carrying out this educational work, a double advantage is gained. Not only are the sincere, thirsting souls benefitted, but also the messengers who will themselves be strengthened and brought into a closer connection with God.

The Lord's messenger endorsed this kind of activity and encouraged believers to engage in it:

"He who strives to obtain knowledge in order that he may labor for the ignorant and perishing is acting his part in fulfilling God's great purpose for mankind. In unselfish service for the blessing of others he is meeting the high ideal of Christian education."—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 545.

"The Lord calls for strong, devoted, self-sacrificing young men and women, who will press to the front, and who, after a short time spent in school, will go forth prepared to give the message to the world."—*Ibid.*, p. 549.

Therefore, we kindly appeal to all the believers around the world, to open their heart for this need and to contribute generously for the development of this rewarding branch of God's work on this Sabbath, when a special offering will be collected for this purpose.

We want to thank you in advance for your generosity and trust that God will richly bless the gifts and the givers.

Your brethren from the Education Department



God's Voice in the Church

“What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God” (Romans 3:1, 2).

“God had chosen Israel . . . to preserve among men the knowledge of His law, and of the symbols and prophecies that pointed to the Saviour. . . . They were to reveal God to men.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 27.

Suggested Reading: *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 188–200.

1. GOD SPEAKS THROUGH HIS CHURCH

- a. What was the first direction that Jesus gave to Saul of Tarsus after his conversion? Acts 9:6.
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“Many have an idea that they are responsible to Christ alone for their light and experience, independent of His recognized followers on earth. Jesus. . . respects the means that He has ordained for the enlightenment and salvation of men; He directs sinners to the church.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 122.

Acts 9:6: And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

1. GOD SPEAKS THROUGH HIS CHURCH

- b. How important is it to hear God's voice speaking to us through His church and to cooperate with His people? Matthew 18:18–20.
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“The Lord has an organized body through whom He will work.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 3, p. 17.

“The Redeemer of the world does not sanction experience and exercise in religious matters independent of his organized and acknowledged church. . . . The Saviour placed [Saul] in connection with His church, and let them direct him what to do. . . .

“All is done in the name and by the authority of Christ; but the church is the channel of communication.”—*Sketches From the Life of Paul*, pp. 31, 32.

Matthew 18:18-20: 18 Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. 19 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

2. HEARING GOD SPEAKING THROUGH THE CHURCH

- a. Three years later, after Jesus had taught him personally, where did Saul (now called Paul) go? Galatians 1:1, 15–19.

“Notwithstanding the fact that Paul was personally taught by God, he had no strained ideas of individual responsibility. While looking to God for direct guidance, he was ever ready to recognize the authority vested in the body of believers united in church fellowship.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 200.

“God never designed that one man’s mind and judgment should be a controlling power. He never designed that one man should rule and plan and devise without the careful and prayerful consideration of the whole body.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 3, pp. 16, 17.

“Even the best of men, if left to themselves, will err in judgment. . . .

“The greater the responsibilities placed upon the human agent, and the larger his opportunities to dictate and control, the more harm he is sure to do if he does not carefully follow the way of the Lord and labor in harmony with the decisions arrived at by the general body of believers in united council.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 198, 199.

Galatians 1:1: Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) Galatians 1:15-19: 15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace, 16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: 17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. 18 Then after three years I* went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. 19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord’s brother.

2. HEARING GOD SPEAKING THROUGH THE CHURCH

- b. What happened in Old Testament times when God's chosen leadership was jealously criticized? Numbers 12:1, 2, 9, 10. What can we learn from this?
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"Those who are inclined to regard their individual judgment as supreme are in grave peril. It is Satan's studied effort to separate such ones from those who are channels of light, through whom God has wrought to build up and extend His work in the earth. To neglect or despise those whom God has appointed to bear the responsibilities of leadership in connection with the advancement of the truth is to reject the means that He has ordained for the help, encouragement, and strength of His people. For any worker in the Lord's cause to pass these by, and to think that his light must come through no other channel than directly from God, is to place himself in a position where he is liable to be deceived by the enemy and overthrown. . . . Every agency will be subordinate to the Holy Spirit, and all the believers will be united."—*Ibid.*, p. 164.

Numbers 12:1,2,9,10: 1 And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had* married an* Ethiopian woman. 2 And they said, Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the LORD heard it. 9 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them; and he departed. 10 And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous.

3. COOPERATION WITH CHURCH DECISIONS

- a. **What respect should be given to legitimate church decisions? 1 Peter 5:5; Hebrews 13:17; Proverbs 11:14.**
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“I have often been instructed by the Lord that no man’s judgment should be surrendered to the judgment of any other one man. Never should the mind of one man or the minds of a few men be regarded as sufficient in wisdom and power to control the work and to say what plans shall be followed. But when, in a General Conference, the judgment of the brethren assembled from all parts of the field is exercised, private independence and private judgment must not be stubbornly maintained, but surrendered. Never should a laborer regard as a virtue the persistent maintenance of his position of independence, contrary to the decision of the general body.

“At times, when a small group of men entrusted with the general management of the work have, in the name of the General Conference, sought to carry out unwise plans and to restrict God’s work, I have said that I could no longer regard the voice of the General Conference, represented by these few men, as the voice of God. But this is not saying that the decisions of a General Conference composed of an assembly of duly appointed, representative men from all parts of the field should not be respected. God has ordained that the representatives of His church from all parts of the earth, when assembled in a General Conference, shall have authority. The error that some are in danger of committing is in giving to the mind and judgment of one man, or of a small group of men, the full measure of authority and influence that God has vested in His church in the judgment and voice of the General Conference assembled to plan for the prosperity and advancement of His work. . . .

“Let us give to the highest organized authority in the church that which we are prone to give to one man or to a small group of men.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 260, 261.

“God has bestowed the highest power under heaven upon His church. It is the voice of God in His united people in church capacity which is to be respected.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 451.

1 Peter 5:5: Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

Hebrews 13:17: Obey them that* have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

Proverbs 11:14: Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.

3. COOPERATION WITH CHURCH DECISIONS

- b. What type of attitude does the Lord want the church leaders to have toward their fellow believers? **Philippians 2:3-8.**
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b. Philippians 2:3 - 8 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. (4) Look not every man on his own things, but everyman also on the things of others. (5) Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: (6) Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: (7) But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: (8) And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

4. THE CHURCH NEVER REPLACES GOD

- a. Can any member or church officer determine or dictate the individual duty of another member? Matthew 20:25–28.

“Let all who accept human authority, the customs of the church, or the traditions of the fathers, take heed to the warning conveyed in the words of Christ, ‘In vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men’ (Matthew 15:9).”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 398.

“Let your faith and trust be in God. Do not depend on any erring man to define your duty. . . .

“Every church member should understand that God is the one to whom to look for an understanding of individual duty. It is right that brethren counsel together; but when men arrange just what their brethren shall do, let them answer that they have chosen the Lord as their counselor. Those who will humbly seek Him will find His grace sufficient. But when one man allows another to step in between him and the duty that God has pointed out to him, giving to man his confidence and accepting him as guide, then he steps from the true platform to a false and dangerous one. Such a man, instead of growing and developing, will lose his spirituality.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 279, 280.

- a. Matthew 20:25-28 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. (26) But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; (27) And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: (28) Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

4. THE CHURCH NEVER REPLACES GOD

- b. What advice given to church leaders should also guide any member tempted to control the behavior of another human being?
Matthew 23:8, 10–12.
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“Instead of considering it their duty to order and dictate and command, [all who occupy responsible positions] should realize that they are to be learners themselves. When a responsible worker fails to learn this lesson, the sooner he is released from his responsibilities the better it will be for him and for the work of God. Position never will give holiness and excellence of character. He who honors God and keeps His commandments is himself honored.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 282, 283.

“Men whom the Lord calls to important positions in His work are to cultivate a humble dependence upon Him. They are not to seek to embrace too much authority; for God has not called them to a work of ruling, but to plan and counsel with their fellow laborers.”—*Ibid.*, p. 270.

b. Matthew 23:8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.

Matthew 23:10-12 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. (11) But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. (12) And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted

5. RESOLVING CONFLICTS

- a. What procedure was used in resolving a conflict in the early church? Acts 15:1–4. What can we learn from this?

“[Certain Jews] asserted with great assurance, that none could be saved without being circumcised and keeping the entire ceremonial law.

“This was an important question, and one which affected the church in a very great degree. . . . The matter resulted in much discussion and want of harmony in the church, until finally the church of Antioch, apprehending that a division among them would occur from any further discussion of the question, decided to send Paul and Barnabas, together with some responsible men of Antioch, to Jerusalem, to lay the matter before the apostles and elders. There they were to meet delegates from the different churches, and those who had come to attend the approaching annual festivals. Meanwhile all controversy was to cease until a final decision should be made by the responsible men of the church. This decision was then to be universally accepted by the various churches throughout the country.”—*Sketches From the Life of Paul*, p. 63.

- a. Acts 15:1-4 And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. (2) When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. (3) And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. (4) And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.

5. RESOLVING CONFLICTS

- b. Summarize Peter's account of the point in question. Acts 11:2-17. Upon what did the apostle James base his argument? Acts 15:13-17. Who settled this dispute? Verse 28.
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b. Acts 11:2-17 And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, (3) Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. (4) But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying, (5) I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me: (6) Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. (7) And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat. (8) But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth. (9) But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. (10) And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven. (11) And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me. (12) And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house: (13) And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; (14) Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved. (15) And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. (16) Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. (17) Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How do we know that God works and speaks through an organized body?
2. Why is one human not entrusted with the responsibility of ruling over and planning for God's church?
3. How should we relate to decisions made by church representatives in session?
4. What does God want us to do regarding our personal duty instead of going to someone in the church for advice? Why?
5. How should we handle controversy in the church?

Listening to God's Word

“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17).

“God speaks to us in His word.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 87.

Suggested Reading: *The Great Controversy*, pp. 197–210.

1. THE ULTIMATE AUTHORITY

- a. How much authority does the Word of God have over human teaching? Psalm 119:105; Isaiah 8:20.
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“The Holy Scriptures are the perfect standard of truth.”—*Education*, p. 17.

“ ‘All human teaching should be subordinate to the oracles of God.’ ”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 204.

“The Lord has one path of safety for His people, and that is the path of obedience to His word. That word is given to us as our guide.”—*The Bible Echo*, August 19, 1895.

a. Psalms 119:105 NUN. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

Isaiah 8:20 To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them

1. THE ULTIMATE AUTHORITY

- b. How can we use our reasoning powers properly in understanding God's Word? Isaiah 1:16–18; 1 Corinthians 1:18, 25; 2:14–16.
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“When we come to the Bible, reason must acknowledge an authority superior to itself, and heart and intellect must bow to the great I AM.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 110.

“We are to beware of deifying reason, which is subject to the weakness and infirmity of humanity.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 703.

“With your Bibles open before you, consult sanctified reason and a good conscience. Your heart must be moved, your soul touched, your reason and intellect awakened by the Spirit of God; and then holy principles revealed in the word of God will give light to the soul.”—*The Review and Herald*, February 7, 1893.

Isaiah 1:16-18: 16 Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; 17 Learn to do well; seek judgment,* relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. 18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

1 Corinthians 1:18: 18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

1 Corinthians 1:25: Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

1 Corinthians 2:14-16: 14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But he that is spiritual* judgeth all things, yet he himself is* judged of no man. 16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he* may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

2. LISTENING TO GOD THROUGH HIS WORD

- a. What will be the result if we personally listen to God through His word? Deuteronomy 4:6; Psalm 119:94, 97–100.

“The precious book of God contains rules of life for men of every class and every vocation.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 416.

“We shall advance in true spiritual knowledge only as we realize our own littleness and our entire dependence upon God; but all who come to the Bible with a teachable and prayerful spirit, to study its utterances as the word of God, will receive divine enlightenment.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 704.

“In searching the Scriptures for yourself, you will become established in the faith. It is of the greatest importance that you continually search the Scriptures, storing the mind with the truths of God.”—*The Bible Echo*, October 15, 1892.

“Conservative traditions received from educated men, and from the writings of great men of the past, are not safe guides for us in these last days. . . . Daily, hourly, we must be actuated by the principles of Bible truth—righteousness, mercy, and the love of God. He who would have moral and intellectual power must draw from the divine source. At every point of decision inquire, ‘Is this the way of the Lord?’”—*The Review and Herald*, February 7, 1893.

a. Deuteronomy 4:6 Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.

Psalms 119:94 I am thine, save me; for I have sought thy precepts.

Psalms 119:97-100 MEM. O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. (98) Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. (99) I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. (100) I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.

2. LISTENING TO GOD THROUGH HIS WORD

- b. What assurance do we have that God will talk to us, individually, through the Bible? John 6:63; Jeremiah 15:16; Psalm 34:8.
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“The word of the living God is not merely written but spoken. The Bible is God’s voice speaking to us, just as surely as though we could hear it with our ears. If we realized this, with what awe would we open God’s word, and with what earnestness would we search its precepts! The reading and contemplation of the Scriptures would be regarded as an audience with the Infinite One.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 393.

“When Satan presses his suggestions upon our minds, we may, if we cherish a ‘Thus saith the Lord,’ be drawn into the secret pavilion of the Most High.”—*Ibid.*

“So many are full of busy plans, always active; and there is no time or place for the precious Jesus to be a close, dear companion. They do not refer every thought and action to Him, inquiring: ‘Is this the way of the Lord?’ If they did they would walk with God, as did Enoch.”—*Ibid.*

b. John 6:63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

Jeremiah 15:16 Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.

Psalms 34:8 O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him

3. ESSENTIAL COMMUNICATION

a. Why were the scriptures written? John 20:31.

a. John 20:31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

3. ESSENTIAL COMMUNICATION

- b. If we reject God's voice in His written Word, can we expect Him to communicate His will to us through other means? Luke 16:31; Proverbs 28:9. Why?
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"The law and the prophets are God's appointed agencies for the salvation of men. . . . If they do not listen to the voice of God in His word, the testimony of a witness raised from the dead would not be heeded.

"Those who heed Moses and the prophets will require no greater light than God has given; but if men reject the light, and fail to appreciate the opportunities granted them, they would not hear if one from the dead should come to them with a message. They would not be convinced even by this evidence; for those who reject the law and the prophets so harden their hearts that they will reject all light."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 265.

b. Luke 16:31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. Proverbs 28:9 He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.

3. ESSENTIAL COMMUNICATION

- c. Why can't we rely on anyone else to listen to God for us? Ezekiel 14:12-14; 33:14-16.

"We must study the truth for ourselves; no man should be relied upon to think for us, no matter who he may be or in what position he may be placed. We are not to look upon any man as a perfect guide for us. We are to counsel together and be subject one to another; but at the same time we are to exercise the ability God has given us to learn what is truth. Each one of us must look to God for divine enlightenment, that we may individually develop a character that will stand the test of the great day. . . .

"Many are drifting into darkness and infidelity, picking flaws with the Bible, bringing up superstitious inventions, unscriptural theories, and speculations of vain philosophy; but it is the duty of everyone to seek a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. The importance and benefit of Bible study cannot be overestimated. In searching the Scriptures our minds are led to dwell upon the infinite sacrifice of Christ, on His mediation in our behalf. As we see His love, as we meditate upon His humiliation and sufferings, the same spirit of self-denial and sacrifice for the good of others will be kindled in our hearts."—*The Bible Echo*, October 15, 1892.

- c. Ezekiel 14:12-14 The word of the LORD came again to me, saying, (13) Son of man, when the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out mine hand upon it, and will break the staff of the bread thereof, and will send famine upon it, and will cut off man and beast from it: (14) Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD.
- Ezekiel 33:14-16 Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; (15) If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die. (16) None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live

4. FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE WITH GOD

a. Why were the people of Berea commended? Acts 17:10–12.

“No man can safely trust his soul to the minister, or to men who are learned and talented. Jesus charged the priests and rulers, who were regarded as learned in the Scriptures, as being ignorant both of the Scriptures and the power of God. Those to whom God has intrusted talents are responsible for the use of their gifts, and should study the Bible as a book that may be understood. A single text has proved in the past, and will prove in the future, a savor of life unto life to many a soul. As men diligently search, the Bible will open out new treasures of truth that will be as bright jewels to the mind.”—*The Signs of the Times*, August 20, 1894.

“Unless the mind is used, it will cease to expand; unless the taste is cultivated to love the Bible, it will cease to relish the truths of God’s word. The student can see only to the depth of what he has explored, and he cannot appreciate that which lies beyond the compass of his own narrow boundaries. But his very ignorance will make him conceited, talkative, and boastful. What can I say to you, young men and young women, to arouse you to vigor in your efforts to overcome obstacles? Mental effort will become easier and more satisfactory as you put yourselves to the task of understanding the deep things of God. You should each decide that you will not be a second-class student, that you will not allow others to think for you.”—*The Review and Herald*, May 20, 1890.

a. Acts 17:10-12 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. (11) These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. (12) Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.

4. FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE WITH GOD

- b. What was Timothy told to do while he waited for Paul to return?
1 Timothy 4:13, 15, 16.
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b.1 Timothy 4:13 Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

1 Timothy 4:15-16 Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. (16) Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee

4. FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE WITH GOD

- c. What does Jesus say of those who hear His words and obey them?
Matthew 7:24, 25.
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“Those who hear and obey the words of Christ are building upon the rock, and when the tempest comes, their house will not be overthrown. They will through faith in Christ Jesus gain eternal life.”—*This Day With God*, p. 215.

c. Matthew 7:24-25 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: (25) And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock

5. LOOKING DEEPER

- a. How deeply should we study the Bible? Colossians 3:23; 1 Thessalonians 5:21.
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“There is but little benefit derived from a hasty reading of the Scriptures. One may read the whole Bible through and yet fail to see its beauty or comprehend its deep and hidden meaning. One passage studied until its significance is clear to the mind and its relation to the plan of salvation is evident, is of more value than the perusal of many chapters with no definite purpose in view and no positive instruction gained. Keep your Bible with you. As you have opportunity, read it; fix the texts in your memory. Even while you are walking the streets you may read a passage and meditate upon it, thus fixing it in the mind.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 90.

“You are to offer to God nothing less than your best. You should do better and better work as you put in practice what you learn. You should seek to fathom every subject requiring your investigation, comparing not only the ideas and thoughts of men concerning the matter, but also comparing scripture with scripture, that you may know that you do know every point of the faith. The taxation of your mind will only strengthen your mental powers for greater effort.”—*The Review and Herald*, May 20, 1890.

“An understanding of Bible truth depends not so much on the power of intellect brought to the search as on the singleness of purpose, the earnest longing after righteousness.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 599.

- a. Colossians 3:23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;
1 Thessalonians 5:21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are the conditions to receiving enlightenment from God as we study the Bible?
2. What question should we ask when making any decision?
3. What effect will searching the Scriptures have upon us?
4. What do we become when we are ignorant of our Bible?
5. Instead of reading many Bible chapters without learning anything, how can we discover the deep, hidden truths of the Bible?

How to Study the Bible

“Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding” (Proverbs 4:7).

“ ‘If any would not work, neither should he eat’ (2 Thessalonians 3:10). The same rule applies to our spiritual nourishment; if any would have the bread of eternal life, let him make efforts to obtain it.”—*Faith and Works*, p. 49.

Suggested Reading: *The Great Controversy*, pp. 593–602.

1. THE REQUIRED EFFORT

a. What is required when studying the Bible? Proverbs 2:1–5.

“We cannot obtain wisdom without earnest attention and prayerful study. Some portions of Scripture are indeed too plain to be misunderstood, but there are others whose meaning does not lie on the surface to be seen at a glance. Scripture must be compared with scripture. There must be careful research and prayerful reflection. And such study will be richly repaid. As the miner discovers veins of precious metal concealed beneath the surface of the earth, so will he who perseveringly searches the word of God as for hid treasure find truths of the greatest value, which are concealed from the view of the careless seeker.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 90, 91.

a. Proverbs 2:1-5 My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; (2) So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; (3) Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; (4) If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; (5) Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God

1. THE REQUIRED EFFORT

- b. Can we rest satisfied with what has already been discovered in the Scriptures by ourselves or by others? Matthew 13:52; Proverbs 4:18.
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“We are to discover new aspects of truth in both the Old and the New Testament, to behold the exceeding breadth and compass of truths which we imagine we understand, but of which we have only a superficial knowledge. He who earnestly searches the Scriptures will see that harmony exists between the various parts of the Bible.”—*The Bible Echo*, October 15, 1892.

b. Matthew 13:52 Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.

Proverbs 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

2. SINCERE SEARCHERS WILL BE REWARDED

- a. What is more important than intelligence in order to rightly understand the Bible? Matthew 11:25; Psalm 25:9.
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“It is sometimes the case that men of intellectual ability, improved by education and culture, fail to comprehend certain passages of Scripture, while others who are uneducated, whose understanding seems weak and whose minds are undisciplined, will grasp the meaning, finding strength and comfort in that which the former declare to be mysterious or pass by as unimportant. Why is this? It has been explained to me that the latter class do not rely upon their own understanding. They go to the Source of light, the One who has inspired the Scriptures, and with humility of heart ask God for wisdom, and they receive it. There are mines of truth yet to be discovered by the earnest seeker. Christ represented the truth as treasure hid in a field. It does not lie right upon the surface; we must dig for it. But our success in finding it does not depend so much on our intellectual ability as on our humility of heart and the faith which will lay hold upon divine aid.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 704.

a. Matthew 11:25 At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

Psalms 25:9 The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way

2. SINCERE SEARCHERS WILL BE REWARDED

- b. Who will give us an understanding of essential Bible truths? Proverbs 2:6; Luke 10:21; 24:45. Why isn't it necessary to our salvation to be able to explain everything that is difficult to understand in the Bible?

“Many feel that a responsibility rests upon them to explain every seeming difficulty in the Bible in order to meet the cavils of skeptics and infidels. But in trying to explain that which they but imperfectly understand, they are in danger of confusing the minds of others in reference to points that are clear and easy to be understood. This is not our work. Nor should we lament that these difficulties exist, but accept them as permitted by the wisdom of God. It is our duty to receive His word, which is plain on every point essential to the salvation of the soul, and practice its principles in our life, teaching them to others both by precept and example. Thus it will be evident to the world that we have a connection with God and implicit confidence in His word. A life of godliness, a daily example of integrity, meekness, and unselfish love will be a living exemplification of the teaching of God's word, and it will be an argument in favor of the Bible which few will be able to resist.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 705, 706.

b. Proverbs 2:6 For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.

Luke 10:21 In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.

Luke 24:45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures

3. HAVING A PROPER ATTITUDE

- a. What attitude should we have when we study the Bible? Psalms 10:17; 46:10; Isaiah 57:15.

“We should come with reverence to the study of the Bible, feeling that we are in the presence of God. All lightness and trifling should be laid aside. While some portions of the word are easily understood, the true meaning of other parts is not so readily discerned. There must be patient study and meditation and earnest prayer. Every student, as he opens the Scriptures, should ask for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, and the promise is sure that it will be given.

“The spirit in which you come to the investigation of the Scriptures will determine the character of the assistant at your side. Angels from the world of light will be with those who in humility of heart seek for divine guidance. But if the Bible is opened with irreverence, with a feeling of self-sufficiency, if the heart is filled with prejudice, Satan is beside you, and he will set the plain statements of God’s word in a perverted light.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 107, 108.

a. Psalms 10:17 LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear:

Psalms 46:10 Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

Isaiah 57:15 For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones

3. HAVING A PROPER ATTITUDE

- b. How should we respond to other people's conclusions about what the Bible says? 2 Timothy 2:15; Acts 17:11.
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“Truth is eternal, and conflict with error will only make manifest its strength. We should never refuse to examine the Scriptures with those who, we have reason to believe, desire to know what is truth as much as we do. Suppose a brother holds a view that differs from yours, and he comes to you, proposing that you sit down with him and investigate that point in the light of the Scriptures; should you rise up filled with prejudice and condemn his ideas while refusing to give him a hearing? The only right way would be to sit down as Christians and investigate the position presented in the light of God’s Word, which will reveal truth and unmask error. To ridicule his ideas would not weaken his position, though it were false, or strengthen your position, though it were true. If the pillars of our faith will not stand the test of investigation, it is time that we knew it; for it is foolish to become set in our ideas and think that no one should interfere with our opinions. Let everything be brought to the Bible; for it is the only rule of faith and doctrine.”—*The Bible Echo*, October 15, 1892.

b.2 Timothy 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Acts 17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so

4. UNDERSTANDING GOD'S WORD

- a. How can we be sure that we understand any portion of the Bible correctly? Isaiah 28:10, 13; 2 Corinthians 13:1.
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“The Holy Scriptures ought to be explained by other and clearer texts; . . . this Holy Book is, in all things necessary for the Christian, easy of understanding, and calculated to scatter the darkness. We are resolved, with the grace of God, to maintain the pure and exclusive preaching of His only word, such as it is contained in the biblical books of the Old and New Testaments, without adding anything thereto that may be contrary to it. This word is the only truth; it is the sure rule of all doctrine and of all life, and can never fail or deceive us. He who builds on this foundation shall stand against all the powers of hell, while all the human vanities that are set up against it shall fall before the face of God.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 203.

“The Book of books has the highest claims to our reverent attention. Superficial study cannot meet the claims it has upon us, nor furnish us with the benefit that is promised. We should seek to learn the full meaning of the words of truth and to drink deep the spirit of the holy oracles.”—*The Bible Echo*, October 1, 1892.

“You must dig deep in the mine of truth if you would find its richest treasures. Comparing scripture with scripture, you may find the true meaning of the text; but if you do not make the sacred teachings of God’s Word the rule and guide of your life, the truth will be nothing to you.”—*My Life Today*, p. 22.

a. Isaiah 28:10 For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little: Isaiah 28:13 But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.

2 Corinthians 13:1 This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.

4. UNDERSTANDING GOD'S WORD

- b. How did Jesus use this method to overcome Satan's temptations?
Matthew 4:6, 7; Isaiah 59:19.
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"Temptations often appear irresistible because, through neglect of prayer and the study of the Bible, the tempted one cannot readily remember God's promises and meet Satan with the Scripture weapons. But angels are round about those who are willing to be taught in divine things; and in the time of great necessity they will bring to their remembrance the very truths which are needed."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 600.

b. Matthew 4:6-7 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. (7) Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

Isaiah 59:19 So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.

5. BEGIN WITH PRAYER

- a. Why do we need to pray before we open the Bible? 1 Corinthians 2:11–13; James 1:5; Psalm 10:17.

“Without the guidance of the Holy Spirit we shall be continually liable to wrest the Scriptures or to misinterpret them. . . .

“There is much reading of the Bible that is without profit and in many cases is a positive injury. When the word of God is opened without reverence and without prayer; when the thoughts and affections are not fixed upon God or in harmony with His will, the mind is clouded with doubt; and in the very study of the Bible, skepticism strengthens. The enemy takes control of the thoughts, and he suggests interpretations that are not correct.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 704, 705.

a.1 Corinthians 2:11-13 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. (12) Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. (13) Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

James 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

Psalms 10:17

LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear

5. BEGIN WITH PRAYER

- b. Whose help should we be asking for in prayer? Luke 11:9–13.
What will that Helper do for us? John 16:13; 14:13, 16, 17, 26.
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“The Bible should never be studied without prayer. The Holy Spirit alone can cause us to feel the importance of those things easy to be understood, or prevent us from wresting truths difficult of comprehension. It is the office of heavenly angels to prepare the heart so to comprehend God’s word that we shall be charmed with its beauty, admonished by its warnings, or animated and strengthened by its promises. We should make the psalmist’s petition our own: ‘Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law’ (Psalm 119:18).”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 599, 600.

b.Luke11:9-13 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. (10) For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. (11) If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? (12) Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? (13) If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

John 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

John 14:13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

John 14:16-17 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; (17) Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

John 14:26

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How much attention and focus should I give to studying the Bible?
2. What is more important than intelligence in the study of the Scriptures?
3. How can we guarantee the help of angels in understanding the Bible?
4. Why are we often overcome by temptation?
5. How should we prepare each time before we begin to study the Bible?

Discernment

“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!” (Isaiah 5:20, 21).

“Let God’s people pray to Him for clear spiritual discernment, that they may distinguish the theories of men from the Word of the living God. Let them study the Scriptures.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 18, p. 151.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 668–672.

1. DETERMINE TO LISTEN

- a. How can we be sure that we are hearing the voice of God? John 10:27; Matthew 7:16–20, 24–27; Galatians 5:22, 23.

“The good tree will produce good fruit. If the fruit is unpalatable and worthless, the tree is evil. So the fruit borne in the life testifies as to the condition of the heart and the excellence of the character. Good works can never purchase salvation, but they are an evidence of the faith that acts by love and purifies the soul. And though the eternal reward is not bestowed because of our merit, yet it will be in proportion to the work that has been done through the grace of Christ.

“Thus Christ set forth the principles of His kingdom and showed them to be the great rule of life. To impress the lesson He adds an illustration. It is not enough, He says, for you to hear My words. By obedience you must make them the foundation of your character. Self is but shifting sand. If you build upon human theories and inventions, your house will fall.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 314.

- a. John 10:27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

Matthew 7:16-20 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? (17) Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. (18) A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. (19) Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. (20) Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

Matthew 7:24-27 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: (25) And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. (26) And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: (27) And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, (23) Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law

1. DETERMINE TO LISTEN

- b. What demonstrated that Jesus heard His Father accurately? How should this description of Jesus apply to us also? John 5:19, 20, 36.
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b. John 5:19-20 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. (20) For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

John 5:36 But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.

2. LOOKING AT HISTORY

- a. What has been the varied experience of God's church through the ages with regard to listening to the Lord's voice? 2 Kings 22:13; 23:3; Zechariah 7:11-13; Jeremiah 29:17-19.
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a.2 Kings 22:13 Go ye, enquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us.

2 Kings 23:3 And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all their heart and all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant.

Zechariah 7:11-13 But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. (12) Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts. (13) Therefore it is come to pass, that as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the LORD of hosts:

Jeremiah 29:17-19 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will send upon them the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, and will make them like vile figs, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil. (18) And I will persecute them with the sword, with the famine, and with the pestilence, and will deliver them to be removed to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, and an astonishment, and an hissing, and a reproach, among all the nations whither I have driven them: (19) Because they have not hearkened to my words, saith the LORD, which I sent unto them by my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them; but ye would not hear, saith the LORD

2. LOOKING AT HISTORY

- b. What personal testimony did Jeremiah and David declare of their listening to the voice of God? Jeremiah 15:16; Psalm 119:57-60.
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b. Jeremiah 15:16 Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.

Psalms 119:57-60 CHETH. Thou art my portion, O LORD: I have said that I would keep thy words. (58) I intreated thy favour with my whole heart: be merciful unto me according to thy word. (59) I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. (60) I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments

2. LOOKING AT HISTORY

- c. What can we learn from the experience of Jesus' disciples in listening to God's voice? Mark 7:5–8; Matthew 28:19, 20.

“It was most difficult for [Jesus' disciples] to keep His lessons distinct from the traditions and maxims of the scribes and Pharisees. They had been educated to accept the teaching of the rabbis as the voice of God, and it still held a power over their minds and molded their sentiments. Earthly ideas, temporal things, still had a large place in their thoughts. They did not understand the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, though He had so often explained it to them. Their minds had become confused. They did not comprehend the value of the scriptures Christ presented. Many of His lessons seemed almost lost upon them.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 670.

“In the commission to His disciples, Christ not only outlined their work but gave them their message. Teach the people, He said, ‘to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you’ (Matthew 28:20). The disciples were to teach what Christ had taught. That which He had spoken, not only in person, but through all the prophets and teachers of the Old Testament, is here included. Human teaching is shut out. There is no place for tradition, for man's theories and conclusions, or for church legislation. No laws ordained by ecclesiastical authority are included in the commission. None of these are Christ's servants to teach. ‘The law and the prophets,’ with the record of His own words and deeds, are the treasure committed to the disciples to be given to the world. Christ's name is their watchword, their badge of distinction, their bond of union, the authority for their course of action, and the source of their success. Nothing that does not bear His superscription is to be recognized in His kingdom.”—*Ibid.*, p. 826.

c. Mark 7:5-8 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? (6) He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. (7) Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. (8) For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

Matthew 28:19-20 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

(20) Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

3. LISTENING TO THE VOICE OF CONSCIENCE

- a. From the apostle Paul's experience, how important is it to listen to the voice of our own conscience? Acts 24:16; 1 Timothy 1:19; 1 John 3:21.
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a. Acts 24:16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.

1 Timothy 1:19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:

1 John 3:21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God

3. LISTENING TO THE VOICE OF CONSCIENCE

- b. What will eventually happen if we neglect to follow the voice of conscience? Matthew 6:22, 23; Titus 1:15; 1 Timothy 4:2.

“When a person once neglects to heed the invitations, reproofs, and warnings of the Spirit of God, his conscience becomes seared, and the next time he is admonished, it will be more difficult to yield obedience than before. And thus with every repetition. Conscience is the voice of God, heard amid the conflict of human passions; when it is resisted, the Spirit of God is grieved.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 120.

“Singleness of purpose, wholehearted devotion to God, is the condition pointed out by the Saviour’s words. Let the purpose be sincere and unwavering to discern the truth and to obey it at whatever cost, and you will receive divine enlightenment. Real piety begins when all compromise with sin is at an end. . . .

“But when the eye is blinded by the love of self, there is only darkness. ‘If thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness’ (Matthew 6:23). It was this fearful darkness that wrapped the Jews in stubborn unbelief, making it impossible for them to appreciate the character and mission of Him who came to save them from their sins.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 91, 92.

b. Matthew 6:22-23 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. (23) But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

Titus 1:15 Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

1 Timothy 4:2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron

3. LISTENING TO THE VOICE OF CONSCIENCE

- c. What should we do with each impression or idea that we may have about what God is telling us? John 5:39; Hebrews 4:12.
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“Impressions and feelings are no sure evidence that a person is led by the Lord. Satan will, if he is unsuspected, give feelings and impressions. These are not safe guides. All should thoroughly acquaint themselves with the evidences of our faith, and the great study should be how they can adorn their profession and bear fruit to the glory of God.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 413.

“If you are in doubt upon any subject you must first consult the Scriptures.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 512.

c. John 5:39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

4. HONESTY

- a. What is God's attitude toward any dishonesty? Proverbs 19:5; Acts 5:3-5.

"God hates hypocrisy and falsehood. Ananias and Sapphira practiced fraud in their dealing with God; they lied to the Holy Spirit, and their sin was visited with swift and terrible judgment."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 72.

"From the stern punishment meted out to those perjurers, God would have us learn also how deep is His hatred and contempt for all hypocrisy and deception."—*Ibid.*, p. 75.

"In much of the service professedly done for God, there is self-emulation and self-exultation. God hates pretense. When men and women receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, they will confess their sins, and, pardon, which means justification, will be given them. But the wisdom of the human agents who are not penitent, not humbled, is not to be depended on, for they are blinded in regard to the meaning of righteousness and sanctification through the truth. When men are stripped of self-righteousness, they will see their spiritual poverty. Then they will approach that state of brotherly kindness that will show that they are in sympathy with Christ."—*This Day With God*, p. 326.

a. Proverbs 19:5 A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape.

Acts 5:3-5 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? (4) Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. (5) And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things

4. HONESTY

- b. What can happen when we are not honest with ourselves in the study of Scripture? Ezekiel 14:3, 4. What can we do about this? Verse 6.
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“Take up the Bible without prejudice and in a humble, teachable spirit, and, with the understanding open to the impressions of the Spirit of God, let its convincing power mold the life and conscience.”—*The Bible Echo*, September 2, 1895.

“You should not search for the purpose of finding texts of Scripture that you can construe to prove your theories; for the word of God declares that this is wresting the Scriptures to your own destruction. You must empty yourselves of every prejudice and come in the spirit of prayer to the investigation of the word of God.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 308.

b. Ezekiel 14:3-4 Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be enquired of at all by them? (4) Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the LORD will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols;

Ezekiel 14:6 Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.

5. MEEKNESS AND HUMILITY

- a. What essential character quality must each one of us learn from Jesus? Matthew 11:29; Psalms 22:26; 25:9.

“Meekness and humility will characterize all who are obedient to the law of God.”—*The Signs of the Times*, July 22, 1897.

“If our will is not in accord with the divine requirements, we are to deny our inclinations, give up our darling desires, and step in Christ’s footsteps.”—*The Review and Herald*, October 23, 1900.

“Each must have an individual experience and put forth personal efforts to reach souls. God requires each to put all his powers into the work and, through continual effort, educate himself to do that work acceptably. . . . All the workers must use tact and bring their faculties under the controlling influence of the Spirit of God. They must make it a business to study His word and hear God’s voice addressing them from His living oracles in reproof, in instruction, or in encouragement, and His Spirit will strengthen them, that they may, as God’s workers, advance in religious experience. Thus they will be led on step by step to greater heights, and their joy will be full.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 576, 577.

“If you are willing to learn meekness and lowliness of heart in Christ’s school, He will surely give you rest and peace. It is a terribly hard struggle to give up your own will and your own way. But this lesson learned, you will find rest and peace. Pride, selfishness, and ambition must be overcome; your will must be swallowed up in the will of Christ.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1091.

- a. Matthew 11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.
 Psalms 22:26 The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever.
 Psalms 25:9 The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What evidence demonstrates that we have heard God?
2. What prevented God's people in the past from hearing Him?
3. How can we maintain a good conscience?
4. How do we know if we are being honest with God?
5. What should we do if we find that our will is not in harmony with God's requirements?

Beware of Stubbornness!

“Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him” (Psalm 2:11, 12).

“When the appeals of the Holy Spirit come to the heart, our only safety lies in responding to them without delay. . . . It is unsafe to delay obedience. You may never hear the invitation again.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 281.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 617–622.

1. THE KING WHO REFUSED TO LISTEN

- a. How did God talk to the king of Egypt? Exodus 5:1; 6:10, 11.
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“God spoke to the Egyptian king by the mouth of Moses, giving him the most striking evidences of divine power; but the monarch stubbornly refused the light which would have brought him to repentance. God did not send a supernatural power to harden the heart of the rebellious king, but as Pharaoh resisted the truth, the Holy Spirit was withdrawn, and he was left to the darkness and unbelief which he had chosen.”—*The Review and Herald*, June 20, 1882.

a. Exodus 5:1 And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.

Exodus 6:10-11 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, (11) Go in, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land.

1. THE KING WHO REFUSED TO LISTEN

b. Did God expect Pharaoh to listen? Exodus 3:19.

“God speaks to men through His servants, giving cautions and warnings, and rebuking sin. He gives to each an opportunity to correct his errors before they become fixed in the character; but if one refuses to be corrected, divine power does not interpose to counteract the tendency of his own action. He finds it more easy to repeat the same course. He is hardening the heart against the influence of the Holy Spirit. A further rejection of light places him where a far stronger influence will be ineffectual to make an abiding impression.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 268.

b.Exodus 3:19 And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand.

2. THE PRICE OF REBELLION

a. What was Pharaoh's initial response to God? Exodus 5:2.

“The seeds of rebellion that [Pharaoh] sowed when he rejected the first miracle produced their harvest. As he continued to venture on in his own course, going from one degree of stubbornness to another, his heart became more and more hardened, until he was called to look upon the cold, dead faces of the firstborn.”— *Ibid.*, p. 268.

a. Exodus 5:2 And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.

2. THE PRICE OF REBELLION

- b. How persistent was God in talking to Pharaoh? Exodus 7:15–18; 8:1, 2, 20, 21; 9:1–3; 13; 10:3, 4. Who encouraged Pharaoh to listen to God? Exodus 8:19; 10:7.
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“The Lord gave [Pharaoh] evidence of His power by working signs and miracles before him. The great I AM acquainted Pharaoh with His mighty works, showing him that He was the ruler of heaven and earth, but the king chose to defy the God of heaven. He would not consent to break his proud, stubborn heart even before the King of kings, that he might receive the light; for he was determined to have his own way and work out his rebellion. He chose to do his own will and set aside the command of God, and the very evidence given him that Jehovah was above all the gods of the nations, above all the wise men and magicians, only served to blind his mind and harden his heart.”—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 89.

VERSES ON NEXT PAGE

b. Exodus 7:15-18 Get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning; lo, he goeth out unto the water; and thou shalt stand by the river's brink against he come; and the rod which was turned to a serpent shalt thou take in thine hand. (16) And thou shalt say unto him, The LORD God of the Hebrews hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness: and, behold, hitherto thou wouldest not hear. (17) Thus saith the LORD, In this thou shalt know that I am the LORD: behold, I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood. (18) And the fish that is in the river shall die, and the river shall stink; and the Egyptians shall lothe to drink of the water of the river.

Exodus 8:1-2 And the LORD spake unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me. (2) And if thou refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite all thy borders with frogs:

Exodus 8:20-21 And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh; lo, he cometh forth to the water; and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me. (21) Else, if thou wilt not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies upon thee, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thy houses: and the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground whereon they are.

Exodus 9:1-3 Then the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh, and tell him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. (2) For if thou refuse to let them go, and wilt hold them still, (3) Behold, the hand of the LORD is upon thy cattle which is in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep: there shall be a very grievous murrain.

Exodus 9:13 And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me.

Exodus 10:3-4 And Moses and Aaron came in unto Pharaoh, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me? let my people go, that they may serve me. (4) Else, if thou refuse to let my people go, behold, to morrow will I bring the locusts into thy coast:

Exodus 8:19 Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.

Exodus 10:7 And Pharaoh's servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us? let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God: knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?

2. THE PRICE OF REBELLION

c. What would God have done if Pharaoh had repented? 2 Peter 3:9.

“Had Pharaoh accepted the evidence of God’s power given in the first plague, he would have been spared all the judgments that followed. But his determined stubbornness called for still greater manifestations of the power of God, and plague followed plague, until at last he was called to look upon the dead face of his own firstborn, and those of his kindred; while the children of Israel, whom he had regarded as slaves, were unharmed by the plagues, untouched by the destroying angel. God made it evident upon whom rested His favor, who were His people.”—Ibid.

2 Peter 3:9: The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

3. A WARNING FOR US

- a. What warning should we take from Pharaoh's refusal to listen to God? Hebrews 3:12, 13.

"He who has once yielded to temptation will yield more readily the second time. Every repetition of the sin lessens his power of resistance, blinds his eyes, and stifles conviction. Every seed of indulgence sown will bear fruit. God works no miracle to prevent the harvest. 'Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap' (Galatians 6:7). He who manifests an infidel hardihood, a stolid indifference to divine truth, is but reaping the harvest of that which he has himself sown. It is thus that multitudes come to listen with stoical indifference to the truths that once stirred their very souls. They sowed neglect and resistance to the truth, and such is the harvest which they reap.

"Those who are quieting a guilty conscience with the thought that they can change a course of evil when they choose, that they can trifle with the invitations of mercy, and yet be again and again impressed, take this course at their peril. They think that after casting all their influence on the side of the great rebel, in a moment of utmost extremity, when danger compasses them about, they will change leaders. But this is not so easily done. The experience the education, the discipline of a life of sinful indulgence, has so thoroughly molded the character that they cannot then receive the image of Jesus. . . . Mercy might interpose and give them an opportunity to accept her overtures; but after light has been long rejected and despised, it will be finally withdrawn."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 268, 269.

"One cherished sin will, little by little, debase the character, bringing all its nobler powers into subjection to the evil desire. The removal of one safeguard from the conscience, the indulgence of one evil habit, one neglect of the high claims of duty, breaks down the defenses of the soul and opens the way for Satan to come in and lead us astray."—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 114.

a. Hebrews 3:12-13 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. (13) But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin

3. A WARNING FOR US

- b. If we realize we have the spirit of Pharaoh, what must we do? Isaiah 27:5.
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“Every provision has been made for our infirmities, every encouragement offered us to come to Christ.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 156.

b.Isaiah 27:5 Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me.

4. THE RESULTS OF REFUSING TO LISTEN

- a. In the end, why did Pharaoh do what God had asked? Exodus 12:30–32.

a. Exodus 12:30-32 And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead. (31) And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as ye have said. (32) Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also

4. THE RESULTS OF REFUSING TO LISTEN

- b. Whom did God intend to benefit by His messages to Pharaoh? Exodus 3:19, 20.
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“ ‘For this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee My power’ (Exodus 9:16). Not that God had given [Pharaoh] an existence for this purpose, but His providence had overruled events to place him upon the throne at the very time appointed for Israel’s deliverance. Though this haughty tyrant had by his crimes forfeited the mercy of God, yet his life had been preserved that through his stubbornness the Lord might manifest His wonders in the land of Egypt. The disposing of events is of God’s providence. He could have placed upon the throne a more merciful king, who would not have dared to withstand the mighty manifestations of divine power. But in that case the Lord’s purposes would not have been accomplished. His people were permitted to experience the grinding cruelty of the Egyptians, that they might not be deceived concerning the debasing influence of idolatry. In His dealing with Pharaoh, the Lord manifested His hatred of idolatry and His determination to punish cruelty and oppression.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 267, 268.

b. Exodus 3:19-20 And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand. (20) And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go.

4. THE RESULTS OF REFUSING TO LISTEN

- c. If we are unwilling to listen to God, what can we learn from Pharaoh's example? Proverbs 1:24–28; Zechariah 7:11, 12; Hebrews 12:25.

“God sent [Pharaoh] a message of warning and mercy, but he refused to acknowledge the God of heaven and would not render obedience to His commands. He asked, ‘Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?’ (Exodus 5:2). . . .

“Every additional evidence of the power of God that the Egyptian monarch resisted, carried him on to a stronger and more persistent defiance of God. . . . This case is a clear illustration of the sin against the Holy Ghost. . . . Gradually the Lord withdrew His Spirit. Removing His restraining power, He gave the king into the hands of the worst of all tyrants—self.”—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 89.

c. Proverbs 1:24-28 Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; (25) But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: (26) I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; (27) When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. (28) Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:

Zechariah 7:11-12 But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. (12) Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts.

Hebrews 12:25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:

5. THE PROPHET WHO WOULD NOT LISTEN

- a. How many times did God try to get Balaam's attention? Numbers 22:22–27.
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a. Numbers 22:22-27 And God's anger was kindled because he went: and the angel of the LORD stood in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him. (23) And the ass saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field: and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way. (24) But the angel of the LORD stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall being on this side, and a wall on that side. (25) And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she thrust herself unto the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall: and he smote her again. (26) And the angel of the LORD went further, and stood in a narrow place, where was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left. (27) And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she fell down under Balaam: and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff

5. THE PROPHET WHO WOULD NOT LISTEN

- b. What prevented Balaam from recognizing God's message sooner? 2 Peter 2:20, 21. When we are frustrated and believe things aren't going our way, is God, perhaps, trying to get our attention?
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"Balaam was blinded to the heavenly interposition and knew not that God was obstructing his path."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 441, 442.

"A single cherished sin poisoned the entire character [of Balaam] and caused [his] destruction."—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 114.

"When one clearly sees a duty, let him not presume to go to God with the prayer that he may be excused from performing it. He should rather, with a humble, submissive spirit, ask for divine strength and wisdom to meet its claims."—*Ibid.*, p. 113.

"We are apt to look upon men of experience as safe from the allurements of sinful pleasure. But still we often see those whose early life has been exemplary being led away by the fascinations of sin, and sacrificing their God-given manhood for self-gratification. For a time they vacillate between the promptings of principle and their inclination to pursue a forbidden course; but the current of evil finally proves too strong for their good resolutions, as in the case of the once wise and righteous king, Solomon."—*The Health Reformer*, June 1, 1878.

b.2 Peter 2:20-21 For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. (21) For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How many people does God talk to who are unlikely to listen to Him?
2. In what ways do we defy God like Pharaoh did?
3. What must we do if we have ignored God?
4. How do we harden our heart today against God?
5. What are the similarities and differences between Pharaoh and Balaam?

First Sabbath Offering for a chapel in Washington, D.C.

As a people who are preparing for the second coming of Jesus, we owe a debt of gratitude to our Protestant forefathers who, under the providence of God, founded a country that protects freedom of religion for all individuals—the United States of America. The capital city of this nation is Washington, District of Columbia, whose general area



is home to about 650,000 residents, including the national government officials, foreign diplomats and their families, and a weekly population of more than one million commuters from the Maryland and Virginia suburbs. This makes it the 23rd most populous city within the United States, and the seventh largest metropolitan area. This large center of population with its economic, political, and cultural commerce is a fertile ground for the spreading of the gospel.

The work of reformation began in Washington, D.C. area in the late 1970s with only a handful of members. As time progressed, in 1980 a small house was purchased in Temple Hills, Maryland (a suburb of the District) and repurposed as a church building. As time passed, this small chapel has served as a beacon of light in this large area. Many brethren have come through Temple Hills and helped build the ministry in this area. The chapel, which has been used for many years, accommodates approximately 30 people. However, this has become too small for us to worship. With a growing membership and regularly attending visitors, we are in need of a larger building. After much prayer and fasting, a decision was made to purchase a larger facility, strategically located in this metropolis, permitting us to better fulfill the commission of our Lord to “Go ye therefore, and teach ALL nations.” The proclamation of the gospel must spread to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people that all may have an opportunity to hear and accept the gift of salvation.

We appeal to all Sabbath School students to help us with this project, in raising a new beacon of light in the capital of the United States. May God reward you richly as you donate liberally to His cause. We thank you in advance for your generous contribution to this worthy plan.

Your brethren and sisters from Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

Listening Without Doubting

“Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart” (Psalm 119:2).

“It would be the ruin of many a soul always to have unclouded assurance in joyful feelings that they are accepted to God. Without feeling we must learn to lean upon His word. . . . The doubts and fears against which we have been called to struggle are the precious trials of our faith, God’s workmen that work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”—*The Signs of the Times*, April 18, 1895.

Suggested Reading: *Steps to Christ*, pp. 105–113.

1. WHAT TO DO WITH DOUBT

- a. When doubt confronts us, what can we do to address it? Psalm 37:3-7.
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“Our faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration. Those who wish to doubt will have opportunity; while those who really desire to know the truth will find plenty of evidence on which to rest their faith.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 105.

a. Psalms 37:3-7 Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. (4) Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. (5) Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. (6) And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. (7) Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass

1. WHAT TO DO WITH DOUBT

- b. Why will we not be able to answer every question or resolve every uncertainty? Isaiah 55:8, 9.
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“If it were possible for created beings to attain to a full understanding of God and His works, then, having reached this point, there would be for them no further discovery of truth, no growth in knowledge, no further development of mind or heart. God would no longer be supreme; and man, having reached the limit of knowledge and attainment, would cease to advance. Let us thank God that it is not so.”—Ibid., p. 109.

b. Isaiah 55:8-9 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. (9) For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

2. SOLUTIONS TO DOUBT

- a. How important is it to ask questions and develop our mind intellectually as far as possible? Proverbs 4:7. What example did Jesus provide? Luke 2:52.
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“Under the controlling influence of Christ, the human intellect can achieve wonderful things. The youth should be encouraged to reach the highest standard of intellectual acquirement. If the fear and knowledge of God are made first, there is no danger that the student will soar too high. The knowledge of God, the understanding of His will in His word, as far as human minds may grasp it, incorporated into the thoughts and woven into the character, will make efficient men and women. The study of the word of God will enable us to do His work intelligently and acceptably. The mind will be enriched, enlarged, and broadened. Those who thus constantly study the Word will go upward and forward toward the highest standard, because they are partakers of the divine nature.”—*The Youth's Instructor*, August 31, 1899.

a. Proverbs 4:7 Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.

Luke 2:52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man

2. SOLUTIONS TO DOUBT

b. What is necessary in finding answers to our questions? James 1:5–8.

“Many look to their ministers to bring the light from God to them, seeming to think this a cheaper way than to be to the trouble of going to God for it themselves. Such lose much. If they would daily follow Christ and make Him their guide and counselor, they might obtain a clear knowledge of His will, and thus be gaining a valuable experience. For want of this very experience, brethren professing the truth walk in the sparks of others’ kindling; they are unacquainted with the Spirit of God and have not a knowledge of His will, and are therefore easily moved from their faith. They are unstable, because they trusted in others to obtain an experience for them. Ample provisions have been made for every son and daughter of Adam to obtain individually a knowledge of the divine will, to perfect Christian character, and to be purified through the truth. God is dishonored by that class who profess to be followers of Christ and yet have no experimental knowledge of the divine will or of the mystery of godliness.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 644.

b. James 1:5-8 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. (6) But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. (7) For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. (8) A double minded man is unstable in all his ways

3. REJECTING UNBIBLICAL TRADITIONS

- a. What must be separated from our personal understanding of God's message? Mark 7:6–9.

“The Bible is the rule of life, teaching us of the character we must form for the future, immortal life. Our faith, our practice, may make us living epistles, known and read of all men. Men need not the dim light of tradition and custom to make the Scriptures comprehensible. It is just as sensible to suppose that the sun, shining in the heavens at noon-day, needs the glimmerings of the torchlight of earth to increase its glory. The fables or the utterances of priests or of ministers are not needed to save the student from error. Consult the divine Oracle, and you have light. In the Bible every duty is made plain, every lesson is comprehensible, able to fit men with a preparation for eternal life. The gift of Christ and the illumination of the Holy Spirit reveal to us the Father and the Son. The word is exactly adapted to make men and women and youth wise unto salvation. In the word is the science of salvation plainly revealed. . . . ‘Search the Scriptures,’ for therein is the counsel of God, the voice of God speaking to the soul.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pp. 390, 391.

“Man’s authority bears the signature of man. We are not to permit the rank and file of our people to come under the generalship of the weak, confused sentiments of man. God’s authority is to stand supreme. And I must call upon His people to recognize His authority, which bears the evidence of its divine origin.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 12, p. 69.

a. Mark 7:6-9 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. (7) Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. (8) For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. (9) And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition

3. REJECTING UNBIBLICAL TRADITIONS

- b. When we place tradition above the Word of God, what will we be led to do? Matthew 23:23.
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“When fastings and prayers are practiced in a self-justifying spirit, they are abominable to God. The solemn assembly for worship, the round of religious ceremonies, the external humiliation, the imposed sacrifice—all proclaim to the world the testimony that the doer of these things considers himself righteous. These things call attention to the observer of rigorous duties, saying, This man is entitled to heaven. But it is all a deception. Works will not buy for us an entrance into heaven. The one great Offering that has been made is ample for all who will believe.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 388.

b. Matthew 23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

4. PERSONAL CONVICTION: A PROTECTION AGAINST DOUBT

- a. How can we know the way to heaven? John 14:6; 6:63; 8:31, 32. On the other hand, how will many of us lose heaven?

“My heart is sad when I think how many will miss the way to heaven because they did not study the guide God has given them. There is no possible arrangement whereby these souls can be saved who, having the voice of God speaking to them in His Word, have not interest sufficient to search and become acquainted with the directions God has given them, pointing out the only path that leads heavenward. Well may the apostle ask, ‘How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?’ (Hebrews 2:3). Our youth should be presented with a pledge to sign that they will not touch idle tales, but that they will make diligent search of the Scriptures, that they will give their minds the most nourishing, wholesome food, in order to become strong in contemplating the works of Christ who became surety for the fallen race.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, August 31, 1887.

a. John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

John 6:63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

John 8:31-32 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; (32) And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free

4. PERSONAL CONVICTION: A PROTECTION AGAINST DOUBT

- b. What should we ask of God to protect us from doubting? Psalm 139:23, 24.
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“Let us look closely and critically to ourselves. Are not the vows we entered into at our baptism violated? Are we dead to the world and alive unto Christ? Are we seeking those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God? Is the cable cut which anchored us to the eternal Rock? Are we drifting with the current to perdition? Shall we make no effort to press and urge our passage up stream? Let us not hesitate longer but vigorously apply the oars; and let us do our first works ere we make hopeless shipwreck.”—*The Review and Herald*, June 7, 1887.

“Submit your heart to be refined and purified; then you will become a partaker of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. Then you will ‘be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear’ (1 Peter 3:15). The peace of Christ will be yours.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 333.

b. Psalms 139:23-24 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: (24) And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

5. THE CHANGE WE NEED

- a. What will our experience be like when we overcome doubting?
Matthew 21:21, 22.
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“Through faith in Christ, every deficiency of character may be supplied, every defilement cleansed, every fault corrected, every excellency developed.

“ ‘Ye are complete in him’ (Colossians 2:10).

“Prayer and faith are closely allied, and they need to be studied together. In the prayer of faith there is a divine science; it is a science that everyone who would make his lifework a success must understand. Christ says, ‘What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them’ (Mark 11:24). He makes it plain that our asking must be according to God’s will; we must ask for the things that He has promised, and whatever we receive must be used in doing His will. The conditions met, the promise is unequivocal.”—*Education*, pp. 257, 258.

a. Matthew 21:21-22 Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. (22) And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

5. THE CHANGE WE NEED

- b. What will our attitude be towards our fellow believers? John 17:20, 21.
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“Those who are fighting the battles for the Prince of life must point their weapons of warfare outward, and not form a hollow square and aim their missiles of destruction at those who are serving under the banner of the Prince Emmanuel. We have no time for wounding and tearing down one another.”—*Christ Triumphant*, p. 235.

b. John 17:20-21 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; (21) That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why does God allow the possibility of doubt?
2. What is our own responsibility in removing doubt?
3. What is a common source of doubt?
4. How can we overcome all doubt?
5. What will be the result of being free from doubt?

A History of Listening to God

“Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not” (Proverbs 8:33).

“A portion of [Adam and Eve’s] time was to be occupied . . . in receiving the visits of angels, listening to their instruction, and in happy meditation.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 25.

Suggested Reading: *Education*, pp. 13–19.

1. ADAM AND EVE

a. How did Adam and Eve hear God? Genesis 3:8 (first part).

“Each day’s labor brought [Adam and Eve] health and gladness, and the happy pair greeted with joy the visits of their Creator, as in the cool of the day He walked and talked with them. Daily God taught them His lessons.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 261.

“Face-to-face, heart-to-heart communion with his Maker was [Adam’s] high privilege. Had he remained loyal to God, all this would have been his forever.”—*Education*, p. 15.

a.Genesis 3:8 And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. (first part).

1. ADAM AND EVE

- b. How did Adam and Eve receive divine guidance after sin came into the world? Genesis 3:16–19.
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“Angels informed Adam that, as his transgression had brought death and wretchedness, life and immortality would be brought to light through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

“To Adam were revealed future, important events, from his expulsion from Eden to the Flood, and onward to the first advent of Christ upon the earth.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 51.

b.Genesis 3:16-19 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. (17) And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; (18) Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; (19) In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

2. NOAH AND ABRAHAM HEARD GOD DIRECTLY

- a. How did Noah receive divine guidance? Genesis 6:13–21. How did Noah respond to God’s directions? Verse 22.

“All the communion between heaven and the fallen race has been through Christ. It was the Son of God that gave to our first parents the promise of redemption. It was He who revealed Himself to the patriarchs. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses understood the gospel. They looked for salvation through man’s Substitute and Surety. These holy men of old held communion with the Saviour who was to come to our world in human flesh; and some of them talked with Christ and heavenly angels face to face. . . .

“It was Christ that spoke to His people through the prophets. . . . It is the voice of Christ that speaks to us through the Old Testament.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 366, 367.

a. Genesis 6:13-22 And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. (14) Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. (15) And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. (16) A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it. (17) And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die. (18) But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee. (19) And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female. (20) Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive. (21) And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them. (22) Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.

2. NOAH AND ABRAHAM HEARD GOD DIRECTLY

- b. How did God communicate with Abraham, and what was Abraham's response? Genesis 22:1, 2, 11, 12.
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"God conferred great honor upon Abraham. Angels of heaven walked and talked with him as friend with friend."—*Ibid.*, p. 138.

"Heavenly beings still visit the earth as in the days when they walked and talked with Abraham and with Moses. Amid the busy activity of our great cities, amid the multitudes that crowd the thoroughfares and fill the marts of trade where from morning till evening the people act as if business and sport and pleasure were all there is to life, where there are so few to contemplate unseen realities—even here heaven has still its watchers and its holy ones. There are invisible agencies observing every word and deed of human beings. In every assembly for business or pleasure, in every gathering for worship, there are more listeners than can be seen with the natural sight. Sometimes the heavenly intelligences draw aside the curtain which hides the unseen world that our thoughts may be withdrawn from the hurry and rush of life to consider that there are unseen witnesses to all we do or say."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 176.

b. Genesis 22:1-2 And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. (2) And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. Genesis 22:11-12 And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. (12) And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.

3. MOSES AND AARON

- a. How did God guide Moses at the time when Israel should leave Egypt? Exodus 3:4, 10.
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“Moses held converse with Jesus face to face as one who speaketh with a friend.”—*The Review and Herald*, March 2, 1886.

“It will baffle the keenest intellect to interpret the divine manifestation of the burning bush. It was not a dream; it was not a vision; it was a living reality—something that Moses saw with his eyes. He heard the voice of God calling to him out of the bush, and he covered his face, realizing that he stood in the immediate presence of God. God was conversing with humanity. Never could Moses describe the impression made upon his mind by the sight he then saw, and by the sound of the voice that spoke to him; but this impression was never effaced. Heaven came very near to him as, with reverent awe, he listened to the words, ‘I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’ (Exodus 3:6). What wondrous condescension for God to leave the heavenly courts, and manifest Himself to Moses, talking with him face to face, ‘as a man speaketh unto his friend’ (Exodus 33:11).”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1099.

a. Exodus 3:4 And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.

Exodus 3:10 Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.

3. MOSES AND AARON

b. How did Moses later converse with God? Exodus 33:18, 19.

“Encouraged by the assurance of God’s presence, Moses drew still nearer and ventured to ask for still further blessings. ‘I beseech thee,’ he said, ‘shew me thy glory’ (Exodus 33:18). Think you that God reproved Moses for his presumption? No, indeed. Moses did not make this request from idle curiosity. He had an object in view. He saw that in his own strength he could not do the work of God acceptably. He knew that if he could obtain a clear view of the glory of God, he would be able to go forward in his important mission, not in his own strength, but in the strength of the Lord God Almighty.”—*The Review and Herald*, May 11, 1897.

b.Exodus 33:18-19 And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.
(19) And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.

3. MOSES AND AARON

- c. What are the different ways God used to communicate with Aaron? Exodus 6:13; 8:5; Leviticus 10:8.
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c. Exodus 6:13 And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, and gave them a charge unto the children of Israel, and unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

Exodus 8:5 And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch forth thine hand with thy rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up upon the land of Egypt.

Leviticus 10:8 And the LORD spake unto Aaron, saying,

4. THE ISRAELITES RECOGNIZED GOD'S VOICE

- a. How did God talk to the Israelites near Mount Sinai? Deuteronomy 5:4, 22.
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“God accompanied the proclamation of His law with exhibitions of His power and glory, that His people might never forget the scene, and that they might be impressed with profound veneration for the Author of the law, the Creator of heaven and earth. He would also show to all men the sacredness, the importance, and the permanence of His law.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 309.

a. Deuteronomy 5:4 The LORD talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire,
Deuteronomy 5:22 These words the LORD spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me.

4. THE ISRAELITES RECOGNIZED GOD'S VOICE

- b. What did they prefer instead of talking directly with God? Why? Deuteronomy 5:23–27.
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“The people of Israel were overwhelmed with terror. The awful power of God’s utterances seemed more than their trembling hearts could bear. For as God’s great rule of right was presented before them, they realized as never before the offensive character of sin, and their own guilt in the sight of a holy God. They shrank away from the mountain in fear and awe. The multitude cried out to Moses, ‘Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.’ The leader answered, ‘Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that His fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.’ The people, however, remained at a distance, gazing in terror upon the scene, while Moses ‘drew near unto the thick darkness where God was’ (Exodus 20:19–21).”—Ibid., pp. 309, 310.

b. Deuteronomy 5:23-27 And it came to pass, when ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, (for the mountain did burn with fire,) that ye came near unto me, even all the heads of your tribes, and your elders; (24) And ye said, Behold, the LORD our God hath shewed us his glory and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth. (25) Now therefore why should we die? for this great fire will consume us: if we hear then voice of the LORD our God any more, then we shall die. (26) For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived? (27) Go thou near, and hear all that the LORD our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that the LORD our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it.

4. THE ISRAELITES RECOGNIZED GOD'S VOICE

- c. How did God talk to the Israelites through the centuries? Luke 1:70.
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“Through nature, through types and symbols, through patriarchs and prophets, God had spoken to the world.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 34.

“Oh that thou, a nation favored above every other, hadst known the time of thy visitation, and the things that belong unto thy peace! . . . It is not merely servants, delegates, and prophets, whom thou hast refused and rejected, but the Holy One of Israel, thy Redeemer.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 22.

- c. Luke 1:70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:

5. HEARING GOD IN OUR EXPERIENCE

- a. How does God want to talk to us now? Hebrews 1:2; John 5:39.
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“Adam and Eve received knowledge through direct communion with God; and they learned of Him through His works. . . . But by transgression man was cut off from learning of God through direct communion and, to a great degree, through His works. . . . Nature still speaks of her Creator. Yet these revelations are partial and imperfect. And in our fallen state, with weakened powers and restricted vision, we are incapable of interpreting aright. We need the fuller revelation of Himself that God has given in His written word.”—*Education*, pp. 16, 17.

a. Hebrews 1:2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

John 5:39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

5. HEARING GOD IN OUR EXPERIENCE

- b. What kind of personal experience does God want us to have with His Word? Psalm 34:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 29:13.
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“There is an evidence that is open to all—the most highly educated, and the most illiterate—the evidence of experience. God invites us to prove for ourselves the reality of His word. . . . Instead of depending upon the word of another, we are to taste for ourselves.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 111.

“The Christian knows in whom he has believed. He does not only read the Bible; he experiences the power of its teaching. . . .

“He can testify, ‘I needed help, and I found it in Jesus. . . . Do you ask why I believe in Jesus?—Because He is to me a divine Saviour. Why do I believe the Bible?—Because I have found it to be the voice of God to my soul.’”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 16.

b. Psalms 34:8 O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

Jeremiah 15:16 Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.

Jeremiah 29:13 And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How did sin change communication between God and Adam and Eve?
2. How did God communicate with the early patriarchs?
3. What did Moses realize at the burning bush, and how did he act?
4. How did God talk to Israel during Old Testament times?
5. How can we hear God today?

Jesus Hears His Father

“The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back” (Isaiah 50:4, 5).

“[Jesus] gained knowledge as we may do.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 70.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 68–74.

1. JESUS' METHOD OF LEARNING

a. How did Jesus learn the truth? Hebrews 2:10, 16–18; Matthew 7:7.

a. Hebrews 2:10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

Hebrews 2:16-18 For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. (17) Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. (18) For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

Matthew 7:7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

1. JESUS' METHOD OF LEARNING

b. Who was His teacher? John 5:20.

“The child Jesus did not receive instruction in the synagogue schools. His mother was His first human teacher. From her lips and from the scrolls of the prophets, He learned of heavenly things. The very words which He Himself had spoken to Moses for Israel He was now taught at His mother’s knee. As He advanced from childhood to youth, He did not seek the schools of the rabbis. He needed not the education to be obtained from such sources; for God was His instructor. . . .

“Since He gained knowledge as we may do, His intimate acquaintance with the Scriptures shows how diligently His early years were given to the study of God’s word. And spread out before Him was the great library of God’s created works. He who had made all things studied the lessons which His own hand had written in earth and sea and sky. . . . He studied the life of plants and animals, and the life of man.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 70.

b. John 5:20 For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

2. WHY JESUS DIDN'T ATTEND SCHOOL

- a. Why did Jesus refuse to learn from the rabbis? Romans 10:3; John 7:16.

“In the days of Christ, the educators of the youth were formalists. During His ministry, Jesus declared to the rabbis, ‘Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.’ And He charged them with ‘teaching for doctrines the commandments of men’ (Matthew 22:29; 15:9). Tradition was dwelt upon, amplified, and revered far above the Scriptures. The sayings of men, and an endless round of ceremonies, occupied so large a share of the student’s life, that the education which imparts a knowledge of God was neglected. The great teachers were continually enlarging upon little things, specifying every detail to be observed in the ceremonies of religion, and making its observance a matter of highest obligation. They paid ‘tithe of mint and anise and cummin,’ while they ‘omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith’ (Matthew 23:23). Thus there was brought in a mass of rubbish that hid from the view of the youth the great essentials of the service of God.

“In the educational system there was no place for that personal experience in which the soul learns for itself the power of a ‘Thus saith the Lord,’ and gains that reliance upon the divine word which alone can bring peace and power with God. Busied with the round of forms, the students in these schools found no quiet hours in which to commune with God and hear His voice speaking to their hearts. That which the rabbis regarded as superior education was in reality the greatest hindrance to true education. It was opposed to all real development. Under their training, the powers of the youth were repressed, and their minds were cramped and narrowed.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pp. 438, 439.

“Human nature is ever struggling for expression. He who is made complete in Christ must first be emptied of pride, of self-sufficiency. Then there is silence in the soul, and God’s voice can be heard.”—*The Signs of the Times*, April 9, 1902.

- a. Romans 10:3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

John 7:16 Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me

2. WHY JESUS DIDN'T ATTEND SCHOOL

- b. What did Jesus reject from their teaching? Matthew 15:3, 9; Colossians 2:8.
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b. Matthew 15:3 But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?

Matthew 15:9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

Colossians 2:8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

3. RESPECTFULLY DISAGREEING

- a. How did Jesus respectfully listen and talk to the leaders of His own church when they replaced the gospel with tradition, misleading thousands? Luke 2:46, 47.
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“If Jesus had appeared to be trying to teach [the rabbis], they would have disdained to listen. But they flattered themselves that they were teaching Him, or at least testing His knowledge of the Scriptures. The youthful modesty and grace of Jesus disarmed their prejudices.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 80.

a. Luke 2:46-47 And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. (47) And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

3. RESPECTFULLY DISAGREEING

- b. Who did Jesus consider His family on earth? Matthew 12:50. How did He respond when His own family followed human traditions?
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“The brothers and sisters of Jesus were taught the multitudinous traditions and ceremonies of the rabbis, but Christ himself could not be induced to interest Himself in these matters. While hearing on every hand the reiterated ‘Thou shalt,’ and ‘Thou shalt not,’ He moved independently of these restrictions. The requirements of society and the requirements of God were ever in collision; and while in His youth He made no direct attack upon the customs or precepts of the learned teachers, He did not become a student in their schools.

“Jesus would not follow any custom that would require Him to depart from the will of God, nor would He place Himself under the instruction of those who exalted the words of men above the word of God. He shut out of His mind all the sentiments and formalities that had not God for their foundation. He would give no place for these things to influence Him. Thus He taught that it is better to prevent evil than to attempt to correct it after it has gained a foothold in the mind. And Jesus would not by His example lead others to place themselves where they would be corrupted. Nor would He needlessly place Himself in a position where He would be brought into conflict with the rabbis, which might in after years result in weakening His influence with the people. For the same reasons He could not be induced to observe the meaningless forms or rehearse the maxims that afterward in His ministry He so decidedly condemned.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 439.

- b. Matthew 12:50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother

4. LEARNING FROM THE MASTER

- a. Who was responsible for Jesus' education? Luke 2:49; John 8:28.
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“Though Jesus was subject to His parents, He began at a very early age to act for Himself in the formation of His character. While His mother was His first human teacher, He was constantly receiving an education from His Father in heaven. Instead of poring over the learned lore handed down by the rabbis from century to century, Jesus, under the Divine Teacher, studied the words of God, pure and uncorrupted, and studied also the great lesson-book of nature. . . . He brought a purer atmosphere into the home life. Though He did not place Himself under the instruction of the rabbis by becoming a student in their schools, yet He was often brought in contact with them, and the questions He asked, as if He were a learner, puzzled the wise men; for their practices did not harmonize with the Scriptures, and they had not the wisdom that comes from God. Even to those who were displeased at His noncompliance with popular customs, His education seemed of a higher type than their own.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pp. 439, 440.

a. Luke 2:49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

John 8:28 Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things

4. LEARNING FROM THE MASTER

- b. What should we be learning? Colossians 3:1, 2; Matthew 11:29.
How should we be educated?
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“Every child may gain knowledge as Jesus did. As we try to become acquainted with our heavenly Father through His word, angels will draw near, our minds will be strengthened, our characters will be elevated and refined. We shall become more like our Saviour. And as we behold the beautiful and grand in nature, our affections go out after God. While the spirit is awed, the soul is invigorated by coming in contact with the Infinite through His works. Communion with God through prayer develops the mental and moral faculties, and the spiritual powers strengthen as we cultivate thoughts upon spiritual things.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 70, 71.

“It is the work of true education . . . to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men’s thought. Instead of confining their study to that which men have said or written, let students be directed to the sources of truth, to the vast fields opened for research in nature and revelation.”—*Education*, p. 17.

- b. Colossians 3:1-2 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.
(2) Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.
Matthew 11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls

5. WE TOO CAN HAVE SUCCESS

- a. How did Jesus prepare Himself for His life work? Isaiah 50:4, 5.
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“Communion with God, a complete surrender of the soul to Him, in fulfilling His word irrespective of false education or the customs or traditions of His time, marked the life of Jesus.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 440.

a. Isaiah 50:4-5 The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. (5) The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.

5. WE TOO CAN HAVE SUCCESS

b. How should we study to succeed? Isaiah 55:6, 7.

“To be ever in a bustle of activity, seeking by some outward performance to show their superior piety, was, in the estimation of the rabbis, the sum of religion; while at the same time, by their constant disobedience to God’s word, they were perverting the way of the Lord. But the education that has God back of it, will lead men to seek after God. . . . The infinite is not, and never will be, bound about by human organizations or human plans. Every soul must have a personal experience in obtaining a knowledge of the will and ways of God. In all who are under the training of God is to be revealed a life that is not in harmony with the world, its customs, its practice, or its experiences. Through study of the Scriptures, through earnest prayer, they may hear His message to them, ‘Be still and know that I am God’ (Psalm 46:10). When every other voice is hushed, when every earthly interest is turned aside, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God. Here rest is found in Him.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 440, 441.

b. Isaiah 55:6-7 Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: (7) Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How did Jesus learn?
2. What was wrong with the educational system of His time?
3. How did Jesus show His disagreement with many of the then prevailing customs?
4. How can we improve our mental faculties?
5. How can we be successful like Jesus was?

“Speak, Lord”

“Hear, O my people, and I will speak; . . . I am God, even thy God”
(Psalm 50: 7).

“Be always ready, saying, ‘Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth’
(1 Samuel 3:9).”—*The Review and Herald*, July 26, 1898.

Suggested Reading: *Faith and Works*, pp. 121, 122.

1. MARY, THE HANDMAID OF THE LORD

- a. What was the attitude of Mary when God sent her a message? Luke 1:38.
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“[Notice] the sweet, childlike faith of Mary, the maiden of Nazareth.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 98.

a. Luke 1:38 And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her

1. MARY, THE HANDMAID OF THE LORD

- b. Who also prophesied of Christ to strengthen Mary's faith? Luke 1:41-43, 67-69; 2:25-32, 36-38. Who tried to destroy her faith in Jesus?

"Mary often remonstrated with Jesus and urged Him to conform to the usages of the rabbis. But He could not be persuaded to change His habits of contemplating the works of God and seeking to alleviate the suffering of men or even of dumb animals. When the priests and teachers required Mary's aid in controlling Jesus, she was greatly troubled; but peace came to her heart as He presented the statements of Scripture upholding His practices.

"At times she wavered between Jesus and His brothers, who did not believe that He was the Sent of God; but evidence was abundant that His was a divine character. She saw Him sacrificing Himself for the good of others. His presence brought a purer atmosphere into the home, and His life was as leaven working amid the elements of society."—Ibid., p. 90.

b.Luke 1:41-43 And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: (42) And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. (43) And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

Luke 1:67-69 And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, (68) Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, (69) And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;

Luke 2:25-32 And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. (26) And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. (27) And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, (28) Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, (29) Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: (30) For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, (31) Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; (32) A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

Luke 2:36-38 And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; (37) And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. (38) And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem

2. SAMUEL, A SERVANT OF GOD

a. What experience should be our model every day? 1 Samuel 3:7–10.

“When you place yourselves where you should be in order to hear the voice of God, you will come before Him every day, saying, ‘Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth.’ ‘Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?’ (1 Samuel 3:9; Acts 9:6).”—*General Conference Daily Bulletin*, March 20, 1891.

“We need now to humble our hearts before God. We need now not to wait in a careless attitude, but in an attentive, reverent attitude.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 19, p. 28.

a.1 Samuel 3:7-10 Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him. (8) And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child. (9) Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place. (10) And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.

2. SAMUEL, A SERVANT OF GOD

- b. How should we regard every talent, opportunity, and resource that we have? 1 Chronicles 29:12–14. What can destroy this attitude and ruin our spiritual experience?
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“However large, however small, your talents, remember that what you have is yours only in trust. Thus God is testing you, giving you opportunity to prove yourself true. To Him you are indebted for all your capabilities. To Him belong your powers of body, mind, and soul, and for Him these powers are to be used. Your time, your influence, your capabilities, your skill—all must be accounted for to Him who gives all. He uses his gifts best who seeks by earnest endeavor to carry out the Lord’s great plan for the uplifting of humanity.

“Persevere in the work that you have begun, until you gain victory after victory. Educate yourselves for a purpose. Keep in view the highest standard that you may accomplish greater and still greater good, thus reflecting the glory of God.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, January 25, 1910.

“Self has far more to do with our religious experience than we imagine. When self is crucified, when the stubborn will is subdued, then the language of the heart will be, ‘Not my will, but Thine, be done, O God, whose I am and whom I serve.’ ‘Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.’ None will be as fixed stars, cold and immovable. This selfish, worldly dignity will no longer be maintained. There will be a beautiful blending of purity, elevation and nobility, which is wisdom from above and the meekness and lowliness of Jesus Christ. An innocent lamb was chosen as a representation of Christ.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 12, p. 191.

b.1 Chronicles 29:12-14 Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest overall; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. (13) Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. (14) But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee

3. BE LIKE SAMUEL

- a. What is the source of success for every Christian? 1 Corinthians 15:10.
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“The success of every work depends upon the blessing of God. If the Lord works with you, you will be able to do what He has appointed you to do. With God, one can chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight. But just as long as you maintain this spirit of Pharisism, God’s spirit will not, cannot, work with you, because you do not feel your utter dependence upon Him. When you become learners in the school of Christ, you will have the simplicity and meekness of little children, and will be willing to counsel with your brethren and sisters, and will pray earnestly for help from God. Your ears will then be opened, and you will be enabled to say from the heart, ‘Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth.’”—*The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 410.

a.1 Corinthians 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

3. BE LIKE SAMUEL

- b. What is the source of failure for any Christian? Proverbs 12:15; Isaiah 5:20.
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“God wants to put His spirit upon you; but He cannot do this while you are so full of self. When self dies, you will feel the quickening influence of the spirit of God. God’s people are enjoined to seek for unity. . . . This is no time for alienation and discord, for the indulgence of a selfish, perverse spirit. Will you take yourselves in hand, or will you be ready to regard your stubborn, unyielding disposition as an evidence of faithful integrity? God forbid that you should be blinded, as were the Pharisees, and place good for evil, and evil for good. You will never have any greater evidence than you have had as to where the spirit of God is working. The Lord never proposes to remove all occasion for men to doubt. He will give sufficient evidence to bring the candid mind to a right decision; but if you are determined to have your own way, if you are like Saul, unwilling to change your course because of pride and stubbornness of heart, because of ignorance of your own condition of spiritual destitution, you will not recognize the light. You will say with Saul, ‘I have done the commandment of the Lord’ (1 Samuel 15:13).”—Ibid., pp. 410, 411.

b. Proverbs 12:15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.

Isaiah 5:20 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

4. AN ADMONITION

- a. What will happen to those who rely on human reasoning instead of following the counsel from God? Proverbs 1:24–26.

“As we ponder the solemn words of warning addressed to Israel, we are in imagination brought before the great white throne, where in the presence of the assembled universe, every man will be judged according to the deeds done in the body. . . .

“None then to pity the folly of those who have despised and forsaken God. None to relieve their distress. They have forsaken their true and loving Friend, to follow the path of convenience and worldly pleasure. They intended at some time to return to God. But the world, with its follies and deceptions, absorbs the attention. Frivolous amusements, pride of dress, indulgence of appetite, harden the heart and numb the conscience, so that the voice of truth is not heard. Duty is a despised word. Things of infinite value are lightly esteemed, until the heart loses all desire to sacrifice for Him who has given so much for man. But in the reaping time they must gather the crop sown. . . .

“ ‘Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore they shall eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices’ (Proverbs 1:28–31).”—*The Signs of the Times*, August 18, 1881.

a. Proverbs 1:24-26 Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; (25) But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: (26) I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;

4. AN ADMONITION

b. What is the promise to those who listen to God? Proverbs 1:33.

“Can we ever find a surer guide than the Lord Jesus? True religion is embodied in the Word of God and consists in being under the guidance of the Holy One in thought, word, and deed. He who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life takes the humble, earnest, wholehearted seeker, and says, Follow Me. He leads him in the narrow way to holiness and heaven. Christ has opened this path for us at great cost to Himself. We are not left to stumble our way along in darkness. Jesus is at our right hand, proclaiming, ‘I am the Way.’ And all who decide to follow the Lord fully will be led in the royal path, yea more, in the path cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in.”—*The Review and Herald*, March 29, 1906.

b. Proverbs 1:33 But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.

5. AN APPEAL

a. What can we learn from David's prayer? Psalm 119:33–38.

“The sinner who refuses to give himself to God is under the control of another power, listening to another voice, whose suggestions are of an entirely different character. Passion controls him, his judgment is blinded, reason is dethroned, and impetuous desires sway him, now here, now there. The truth will have but little influence over him, for there is in human nature, when separated from the Source of truth, a continual opposition to God’s will and ways. The physical, mental, and moral being are all under the control of rash impulses. The affections are depraved, and every faculty entrusted to man for wise improvement is demoralized. The man is dead in trespasses and sins. Inclination moves, passion holds the control, and his appetites are under the sway of a power of which he is not aware. He talks of liberty, of freedom of action, while he is in most abject slavery.”—*The Review and Herald*, February 17, 1891.

a. Psalms 119:33-38 HE. Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end. (34) Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. (35) Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight. (36) Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness. (37) Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way. (38) Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear.

5. AN APPEAL

- b. Explain how we can avoid being overcome by the enemy. James 4:7-10; Philippians 4:13.
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“Those who claim to be Christians are in continual need of a power outside of, and beyond, themselves. They need to watch unto prayer, and to place themselves under the guardianship of God, else they will be overcome by the enemy. The Christian must look to God, as a servant to his master, as a handmaid to her mistress, saying, ‘Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?’ (Acts 9:6).”—Ibid.

b. James 4:7-10 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (8) Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. (9) Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. (10) Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What can we learn from Mary?
2. What can we learn from Samuel's experience as a young child?
3. How do we show that we are learners in the school of Christ?
4. How can we walk in the royal pathway?
5. How can we hear God and have His power in our life?

First Sabbath Offerings



JULY 4
for a church renovation
in Hungary
(See p. 4.)

AUGUST 1
for missionary schools
(See p. 25.)



SEPTEMBER 5
for a chapel in
Washington, D.C.
(See p. 51.)