

The Happiest People in the Word.

Youth's Bible Study Course

"Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Psalms 16:11.

Lesson 4: Rejoiceth Greatly to Hear His Voice

Memory Verse: "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled." John 3:29.

One of my favorite morning hymns, that brings Christ near to me is this:

"I come to the garden alone,
While the dew is still on the roses;
And the voice I hear, Falling on my ear;
The Son of God discloses.
And He walks with me, and He talks with me,
And He tells me I am His own,
And the joy we share as we tarry there,
None other has ever known."
By C. Austin Miles.

How we love to sing it, but do we hear God's voice falling on our ears? Does He walk with us and talk with us?

In John 10:2-4 we read: "He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice; and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice."

When Moses drew near to the burning bush "God called unto him out of the midst of the bush." Exodus 3:4.

Isaiah "heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Isaiah 6:8.

While Jeremiah talked with God, the Lord said to him, "Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee." Jeremiah 1:7.

When Paul prayed, the Lord said unto him, "My grace is sufficient for thee." 2 Corinthians 12:9.

Notice those words "called," "heard," "said." Now tell me, did these good men have a monopoly in hearing the voice of God?

"The Lord will teach us our duty just as willingly as He will teach someone else. If we come to Him in faith, He will speak His mysteries to us personally." *Desire of Ages*, p. 668.

Job refers to prayer as "communion." "If we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved?" Job 4:2. So does Moses: "And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, . ."Exodus 25:22. So does Samuel "And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where thou art, and I will commune with my father of thee; and what I see, that I will tell thee." 1 Samuel 19:3. And so does Sister White. "As you seek unto those living springs, you will, through the Holy Spirit, be brought into communion with Christ." *Mount of Blessing*, p. 36.

Now tell me, is communion a monolog, [one person] or a dialog [more than one]? Is just 'saying our prayers' communion? Or should there be conversation both ways? Herein lies the secret of the mystery of joyfulness of prayer. If we could only learn to hear His voice as God talks to us, we would certainly rejoice greatly. Again and again we are assured of the possibility and the necessity of knowing God's voice as He seeks to lead us through these last days.

"To His faithful followers Christ has been a daily companion and familiar friend. They have lived in close contact, in constant communion with God.... They are prepared for the communion of heaven; for they have heaven in their hearts." *Messages to Young People*, p. 166.

"All who are under the training of God need the quiet hour for communion with their own hearts, with nature, and with God. . . . We must individually hear Him speaking to the heart. When every 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.'" *Counsels on Health*, p. 163.

Let us now study the science of hearing the voice of God as we commune with Him in prayer.

In *Messages to Young People*, page 156, we read: "There are three ways in which the Lord reveals His will to us to guide us.... God reveals His will to us in His word, the Holy Scriptures. His voice is also revealed in His providential workings; and it will be recognized if we do not separate our souls from Him by walking in our

ways, doing according to our own wills, and following the promptings of an unsanctified heart, until the senses have become so confused that eternal things are not discerned, and the voice of Satan is so disguised that it is accepted as the voice of God. 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."

In Steps to Christ, in the chapter "A Knowledge of God," these same three ways are emphasized as those by which God seeks to make known His voice and His will to us: (1) through the Bible, (2) through His providential workings, and (3) through impressions made by the Holy Spirit upon our hearts. Let us study the last way first, for it is easiest to understand: God speaks to us through impressions made upon our hearts by His Holy Spirit.

Isaiah speaks of hearing "a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it." Isaiah 30:21. Elijah calls it the "still small voice." 1 Kings 19:12. We commonly call it the voice of conscience.

Now, we are not born with fully developed consciences; conscience is developed by the standards of the homes in which we live, the church we attend, and the school that we go to. Conscience is not infallible, but it is the faculty whereby God tells us those things that are right and wrong. The more we obey this voice, the clearer can we discern its words.

I remember how difficult it was for me to understand a conversation over a telephone after twenty years in the jungles of Burma, where we had no telephones. The still small voice of the telephone was not clear to me, and often I had to ask my secretary to take the message. But by perseverance my ear was tuned to that little voice, till it was no longer difficult to understand perfectly every word.

Even so, we can all hear the still small voice saying right or wrong, but with practice and perseverance we can tune our hearts to receive clearer impressions from the Holy Spirit.

David instructs us in the step that is necessary to prepare our hearts to receive these impressions. "Commit thy way unto the Lord," he says; "trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass." Psalm 37:5. Then he adds, "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him" (verse 7); and still again he says, "Wait on the Lord" (verse 34). In Psalm 27:4 David speaks of one special thing he was praying for; then in

the fourteenth verse he says, "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord."

We have all experienced the unhappy feeling when someone comes to visit us and not only does all the talking, but talks so much that we can't get a word in edgeways. How embarrassing we must make it for God sometimes when we do all the talking and do not wait to let Him speak a single word to us.

In Clifton's Food for Thought, May 15, 1947, I read of a woman who, after returning from a concert in a large opera house of one of our great cities, discovered she had lost a valuable diamond pin. Frantically the woman telephoned the manager of the opera house, and asked whether such a pin had been found. The man asked the number of her seat, then told her to hold the line, and he would have a look. He found the pin, but when he got back to the phone, the woman had hung up. He waited, hoping she would call again; he even advertised that he had found her treasure, but he never heard from her again.

That is the way some of us pray. We call up our heavenly Father and tell Him all our needs; then we grow weary of waiting, and hang up. When the time comes for our prayers to be answered, we are not there.

In the Youth's Instructor, March 1, 1938, I read a beautiful story of a young woman who walked 150 miles to attend one of our schools in the Southern States.

"I'm sorry," said the matron after learning that she had no money at all, "but I'm afraid you'll have to go home again. You see, it is just impossible to work all your way, and our student-aid funds are all used up. If you had half of the fees in cash, or even one third, you might be able to make it. Of course we can arrange for you to stay here tonight, but in the morning you must start back home again."

In the morning the matron called her in to say good-by. "Try again next year," she said.

But the girl who had walked 150 miles replied, "Matron, I just can't go home. I've been praying for a long time that the Lord would open the way for me to attend one of our Christian schools. And I think the Lord has opened the way and let me come."

"Then," said the matron, "If you have that much faith, suppose you go upstairs, find a room that is not occupied just now, and there pray that God will send some money in this morning's mail."

"All right," said the girl, and she turned toward the stairs.

Several hours went by, and the matron really forgot all about the girl. At last the morning mail came. As the matron opened one letter she found a substantial check enclosed. It was from one of our churches in Illinois that had furnished one of the dormitory rooms and had subsidized a student the previous year. It said in part, "We were so pleased with the report of the girl who occupied our room last year that we have decided to support another student this year."

"Go upstairs," said the matron to one of the teachers who was there, "and find out who is occupying that room, please."

The teacher went up and walked along the hall till she found the name plate bearing the name of the church in Illinois. She opened the door, and there in the middle of the floor was the girl who had walked 150 miles to school, still on her knees! And she did stay on in school.

"God longs to lead and guide us,
And take us by the hand;
Would whisper His assurance,
And help us understand.
But in too great a hurry
To linger long in prayer,
We often rise to duty,
And leave Him waiting there."

The night of March 12, 1942, was the darkest, most discouraging night through which I have ever existed. E. M. Meleen, our Burma Union superintendent, W. W. Christensen, F. A. Wyman, H. Baird, and I were caught on the eastern side of the Irrawaddy River while fleeing for our lives from the onrushing Japanese Army. We had two cars loaded with valuable mission equipment, but there was no way to get them across the river. Once across the river, there was a rough bullock-wagon road starting from Pakokku, leading to Ta Mu, three hundred miles north, which was the pass into India.

We had succeeded in hiring two country boats about sixty feet long and nine feet wide, and had tied them together with long bamboo poles, but we couldn't get long planks to run the cars onto the boats. We had found some shorter planks and had tied and trussed them up, but an attempt to load one of the cars almost ended disastrously, and as the sun set that night we sank down in despair, not knowing what to do next.

There was a sawmill in the city, but the owners and workers had evacuated the mill three weeks before. And where they had gone nobody knew. We were tired, exhausted, and discouraged, for we were human. As we lay on our beds stretched out on our suitcases and luggage, we could hear the boisterous Burmese boatmen laughing as they said, "They're stuck! They're stuck! They'll have to leave their cars and luggage here and walk!"

"I'm going to have a wheel," said one.

"And I need a tire," said another.

"I'm going to have one of those suitcases," added still another. And thus they talked, till I felt sick all over. I think I know how the children of Israel felt the night before they crossed over the Red Sea.

Sleep was unthinkable and impossible, but as I lay there in the darkness, as soon as I could think, I thought of prayer. Why, of course, I could pray. I could tell my Father all about it, and maybe He could find a way out, or speak comfort to my tired soul. What could we do without prayer! So I prayed, and just told the Lord all about it. Then I waited to see whether any words of comfort would come to my mind. But my mind was too tired; it couldn't think.

I prayed again, and waiting, tried to remember other troubles from which the Lord had delivered me. Slowly they came to mind. I relived them in thought, and with the reliving of those experiences came peace and confidence. I prayed again, thanking the Lord for the blessings of the past, and added, "Lord, our prayers need not be answered in our way, but in any way that will bring glory and honor to Thy name. Thou hast never forsaken us yet, and as long as Thou art with us, we know it will be all right, even if we do have to leave the cars here!"

Thus I prayed, and recalled the blessed experiences I had had with the Lord, hour after hour. As midnight passed I prayed that God would tell me what to do. Oh, that I might hear His voice, telling me how we could find some planks, but no voice or impression came, except the assurance that God was with us, and had not forsaken us. Two o'clock, three o'clock, four o'clock, then clearly as if a voice were speaking to me came the impression. "Go to the sawmill in the city, the sawmill that was evacuated three weeks ago. Go now!"

I didn't hesitate for a moment. I thanked the Lord for His answer to my prayer, rolled up my bed, walked over to the boats, woke up the head boatman, and said, "I've been talking to my God all night, and He has just told me to go to the sawmill in the city."

The boatman looked puzzled for a second or two, then said, "All right, I'll come with you."

We hired a bullock wagon that was tethered nearby and started off over the sandbank to the little town of Myingyan, three miles away. As we entered the town the sky was just becoming gray. "Of course, it's too early," I said to the boatman. "Even if someone did come today, he wouldn't come yet." But when we got to the sawmill, the great gates were open. We could see no one around, but drove right in. At the far end of the enclosure we could see some piles of long, heavy planks, and in a few minutes had selected four splendid planks eight and one-half inches wide, two and one-half inches thick, and twenty-one feet long. Just then a Burmese lad about fifteen years old stood beside me and said in perfect English, "Do you want to buy those planks, sir?"

I said, "I certainly do, my boy; what time will the clerk come?"

"The clerk will not come, sir," replied the lad, "but I am the son of the mill-owner, and I can sell you that lumber."

"What made you come so early?" I asked as he figured away on the price.

"Sir, it is rather a strange experience. You know, we evacuated to the other side of the river three weeks ago. But this morning quite suddenly at four o'clock my father woke me up and said, 'Son, I've just thought of some important papers that are still in my desk; go now and get them. If you wait till day, people will see you and will want to buy lumber, and you will be detained. So go now, son.' And do you know I had just opened the gates and gone into the office when I heard you drive in."

My eyes were big with wonder as he spoke, and I said, "My boy, it was my God that woke your father up at four o'clock this morning." Then I told him of the experience we had gone through, and told him I was sure it was all God's way of answering prayer.

"Maybe so, sir!" he replied solemnly.

We loaded our planks into our bullock wagon, and drove out of the gate. As we turned south to go to the riverbank, where our car ferry was being built, the son of the mill-owner came out, shut and locked the gates, and turned in the opposite direction, to take the important papers to his father.

I cannot describe the joy that filled my heart. My Lord was so real I could almost feel His presence. I didn't feel like talking, so walked silently along, thanking God

every step of the way, and we walked over a mile before the boatman broke the silence. He touched my hand and solemnly said: "Your God did talk to you, didn't He! He told you what to do, didn't He!"

The planks were at the river's edge by nine-thirty. We had them placed and laced down by ten-thirty, the two cars were both loaded by eleven-thirty, and with the cars and all our luggage on board, we pushed out into the current. We arrived at Pakokku, fifty miles south and on the other side of the river, early the next morning, after sleeping part of the night on a quiet little sandbank. The cars were unloaded, and in ten more days we were at the pass leading into India, out of danger from the Japanese Army.

But what if we hadn't prayed? What if we hadn't waited? What if we hadn't trained our hearts to recognize the impressions of the Holy Spirit? What joy we would have lost!

Now let us consider how the voice of God speaks to us through His Word, the Bible.

Have you ever heard of a blessing box? Here is how to make one; Beautiful promises and blessings are found in the Bible and written on small slips of paper, which are rolled or folded up and placed in a little box. Then a person chooses one of the papers each morning, or when he is discouraged, and the promises are all lovely and encouraging. But shall we expect God to speak only pleasant things and blessings from His Word? Is there no need for direction, correction, and sometimes reproof as we commune with God?

You may have seen people desiring to find God's will, close their eyes, open the Bible, and point to a verse. It may be, if you didn't know any better, that God would even in this way give you some good instruction. But dear Christian young people, how can we limit God to a blindfolded, hit-or-miss program like that? Is the God whom we serve no bigger than that?

Let me read what the messenger of the Lord says: "God's holy, educating Spirit is in His word. A light, a new and precious light, shines forth from every page. Truth is there revealed, and words and sentences are made bright and appropriate for the occasion, as the voice of God speaking to the soul." Messages to Young People, p. 246.

"The words of God are the well-springs of life. As you seek unto those living springs, you will, through the Holy Spirit, be brought into communion with Christ. Familiar truths will present themselves to your mind in a new aspect; texts of

Scripture will burst upon you with a new meaning, as a flash of light; ... and you will know that Christ is leading you; a divine Teacher is at your side. "Mount of Blessing, p. 36.

Here is something reasonable indeed. It is in keeping with the majesty and dignity of heaven, that as we read and study the Word the Spirit of God will emphasize words and sentences appropriate to our needs.

Here is a little formula that may be found most helpful. In 1 Samuel 3:8-10 we read the story of little Samuel's first experience in hearing the voice of God. Three times he heard the voice. Three times he thought it was Eli calling him. Then "Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child" (verse 8), and gave him a little formula to use. Eli said, "Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth" (verse 9). Samuel obeyed. He used those very words, and the great God of heaven spoke to little Samuel, and ever after the voice of God was clearly understood.

I recommend those words to every young person for an experience in joyful communion as you take your Bibles to read, to study lessons, or to read on your way through the Bible. Breathe those words, "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth," and see how the Holy Spirit will make words and sentences bright and appropriate to your needs.

Illustrations of verses of Scripture bursting upon people with new light are uncountable, but here are a few personal experiences.

During the battle for Rangoon, December, 1941, when thousands were fleeing after the first few air raids, and hundreds were dying for lack of food and from the ravages of wild animals, because the paths had not been prepared and food stations established. From the daily reading of one of our women missionaries came the words: "Ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the Lord will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your reward." (Protection from behind) Isaiah 52:12. "And I felt impressed these words were meant for us," she said. And our hearts were calm and peaceful.

As the weeks went by and the boats stopped running, the people of the city began to get panicky, but again in someone's reading came the assurance: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." 1 Corinthians 10:13. As we met together the words seemed to be written specially

for us in this very experience. We took heart, and stayed on. In a few days boats began to run again, and all our women and children got safely away.

When there were only four of us men left, and the city began to crumble around us from the terrible bombings, one came across this verse: "Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come." Ezekiel 11:16. The rest of us had never noticed that verse before. What strength it brought us! We stayed on till the last church members were evacuated and our work was done.

Later when 69 of our missionaries were being brought home, together with 399 other missionaries, on a troopship, news of lurking submarines and an actual depth charge practice one day (if practice it was) made our hearts tremble. Then it was that Brother Dunbar Smith came across these verses: "And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I ... shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord." Ezekiel 37:13, 14.

What a priceless treasure we have in the dear old Book! "When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee." Proverbs 6:22.

"If we will let it speak to us, the Bible will teach us what nothing else can teach. . . The Sacred Word, if made the rule of life, will refine, elevate, and sanctify. It is the voice of God to man." Messages to Young People, p. 257.

Now let us consider how the voice of God is revealed in his providential workings: There's a paragraph from 4 Testimonies, page 462, that says: "We must gather about the cross. Christ and Him crucified must be the theme of contemplation, of conversation, and of our most joyful emotion. . . . We should learn here to talk the language of Canaan."

Have you ever learned to speak another language? Then I'm sure your experience has been the same as mine. When I learned to talk Karen I learned to speak quicker than I learned to hear. In about one year I could teach and preach and pray, but it was three years before I understood everything that was said to me, and did not have to say, "I beg your pardon, please say that again."

So in learning to commune with God, in learning to speak the language of Canaan, it is not surprising that we learn to say our prayers easily enough, but that it takes

more time to discern the voice of God speaking through His Word and to recognize His leadings through the impressions of the Holy Spirit.

There was a time when I used to think that all words had to be heard with the ears to be understood. But I know better now. I have a daughter who became deaf when she was only ten months old. But she has been taught to speak and read lips. Although her ears do not hear words, her eyes see words, and she understands perfectly. It takes a long time to teach a child to read lip movements and to see words, and I think it takes us longer to be able to see the voice of God in the providential circumstances with which He surrounds our lives, than it does to hear the still small voice, or discern the voice of God in the Bible. But we read: "Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see." Luke 10:23. "The righteous shall see it, and rejoice." Psalm 107:42. "And all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." Isaiah 52:10.

We also read of those who have eyes but see not. "Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?" Mark 8:18; "Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding; which have eyes, and see not; which have ears, and hear not:" Jeremiah 5:21. Should we not all pray that little prayer of David's, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law"? Psalm 119:18.

There's a thought in John 13:7 that will help us here. You remember Peter was having difficulty with submitting to having his feet washed by Jesus, and Jesus said to him, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." This little verse shows us that God's thoughts for us are on the hereafter, and on the eternal, but ours are most usually on the present. So we pray and pray earnestly for a door to open, but it doesn't open. Plans have to be changed, and often we think God has forgotten us, failing to see in the closed door God's very answer to our prayer as in the hereafter, because of clearer understanding, we would choose to have it answered.

During the years I have gathered many illustrations of the way God speaks to us through providential circumstances. Let me give you just two or three, which I am sure will help you understand.

In the Review and Herald of November 14, 1935, Steen Rasmussen told a brief story of six of our Seventh day Adventist brethren in Yugoslavia who lost their employment in a mine. He didn't tell us how discouraged they were when they got home, but I suppose they even had the brethren pray for them in prayer meeting, for they went again to the manager of the mine and pleaded to be

reemployed, but without success. You can imagine how disheartened they were. Judging by what you and I usually do, I suppose they wept and felt the Lord had forgotten them, or had turned a deaf ear to their prayers.

But, "a few days after their dismissal, a terrible explosion occurred in the mine where they had been working, killing scores of the workers, among others those who had taken their places." I'm sorry that Brother Rasmussen didn't tell us what they did then, but I know what they did. They went to prayer meeting and gave their testimonies and praised the Lord for saving their lives in His own mysterious way. That's what they did.

Of course, they knew "hereafter" what God was saying in those strange disappointing circumstances, but they also wished they had had more faith, and had been less disappointed at the time. Don't you think so?

Here is another one taken from the Review and Herald, March 12, 1936. H. E. Beddoe tells the story of how he was trying to catch the ten o'clock bus for Havana, while he was auditing the conference books in Cuba. It was most necessary to get that bus, for he had to get his passport from the consulate and leave the next day for Haiti. Several of the office secretaries were helping him to get the work finished up, so he could catch the bus. But he didn't make it.

Now of course he doesn't say how impatient he felt, or whether he grumbled a bit or not; but if ever you have missed a bus or a train, just try to recall how you felt and what you said, for I think we all react more or less the same to such circumstances. But this is what he wrote: "Taking a later bus, I glided over the smooth highway through the land of the Royal Palm. Along about sunset I was dozing, when I noticed my seat mate and fellow passengers leaning to look out the window. Prompted by their curiosity, I looked too, and there it was, the bus I would have taken, turned over at the foot of a steep embankment!"

Then he adds, "Then and there I thanked my heavenly Father for His protecting care." Of course he did. You and I would have praised God too, had we seen what He had saved us from.

But I wonder whether we could ever come to the place where, when we have committed our way unto the Lord, and have done our very best to catch the bus, that we can leave out the impatient words, even thanking God for the disappointment before we know what He has saved us from. How do you suppose God would feel if He heard us say, "Thank you, dear Lord, for saying no this time. I know you are only preparing something much better for me"?

In the Review and Herald, Nov. 25, 1943, Brother Stokes tells the story of his truck stopping stubbornly and compelling them to spend the Sabbath in a little village. There they met a man who had traveled 400 miles to find an Adventist.

Among my clippings I have a story of two Chinese colporteurs, who were put in prison, but were thereby saved during the night from an enemy attack that destroyed the very hotel where they were staying.

I have another story of two children who got lost and had to ask help from strangers to find their way home, but while the strangers were taking the children home they passed one of our evangelistic tents. On the way back they attended the meeting, and subsequently accepted the truth.

But here is one taken from C. L. Paddock's 'Footprints to Success', page 88. It tells of a wreck in the Pacific and how only one survivor was washed ashore on a small uninhabited island. He made a little hut out of the wreckage that washed ashore, and prayed every day that God would send a ship to deliver him.

On the beach he put a blanket on a pole and spent all his spare time, when he was not hunting for wild yams and sea birds' eggs, scanning the horizon looking for some passing ship.

The days wore into weeks, and still he prayed and hoped. Then one day when he returned from a hunting trip he was filled with horror to find his little hut going up in flames. He had had so few comforts, so few possessions, and now all was gone.

Please pause here a moment to imagine what you would have said and how discouraged you would have been. He must have felt just like that too.

But in a few hours a ship appeared in sight! Rushing down to the beach, he lost no time and spared no effort in making signals that he wanted to be taken off the island. The ship came closer. A dinghy put to shore and took him aboard, and the captain said, "Yes, we saw your smoke signal and figured it might possibly be someone in distress after the recent wreck, so we steered straight for your island." His smoke signal? Do you think that man ever praised God for letting his hut catch on fire?

Someone has beautifully put the thought in verse:

"I know not now why schemes were spoiled,
And lofty aspirations foiled.
I know not now why briar and thorn
Should mar ambitions nobly born.

Hereafter I shall know, shall see,
These very things were best for me.

"I know not now why needing aid
It did not come, or was delayed.
I know not now why burning tears
Should fall so often through the years.
Hereafter I shall know, shall see,
These very things were best for me.

"I know not now why friends should fail
And enemies my faith assail,
I know not now why clouds should burst
And flood and tempest do their worst.
Hereafter I shall know, shall see,
These very things were best for me.

"I know not now why came that loss,
And why I needed such a cross.
I know not now the need of pain,
Nor why the weakness should remain,
Hereafter I shall know, shall see,
These very things were best for me.

"I know not now why sorrow's dart
Should penetrate and wound my heart,
I know not now why death drew near,
And led away my loved ones dear,
Hereafter I shall know, shall see,
These very things were best for me.

"O Master, I believe Thy Word,
Hereafter I shall know, O Lord,
Shall fully see Thy plan, Thy care,
Thy skill, Thy love beyond compare.
Hereafter I shall know, shall see,
These very things were best for me."

Once upon a time the king of Syria warred against Israel, and a great host of horses and chariots compassed the city of Dothan about on purpose to capture the prophet Elisha, for he was successfully warning the king of Israel of the movements of the king of Syria. In the morning when Elisha's servant got up and saw the armies surrounding them, he cried, "Alas, my master! how shall we do?" Then "Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." 2 Kings 6:15-17.

"Whatever our situation, if we are doers of His word, we have a Guide to direct our way;" says the servant of the Lord. "Whatever our perplexity, we have a sure Counselor; whatever our sorrow, bereavement, or loneliness, we have a sympathizing Friend." Ministry of Healing, pp. 248, 249. But He can only guide us and counsel us and comfort us if we "know His voice."

My prayer for every Christian young man and young woman is: Lord, I pray Thee open their eyes that they may see Thy hand leading and directing their ways. Train their hearts that they may hear the promptings of Thy Holy Spirit; and illumine the words of the sacred page that they may know Thy voice as Thou dost lead, counsel, and comfort them. Then you will know the fullness of joy in communing with God, and will rejoice greatly to hear His voice.

DEEP ROOTS

Have you heard the sighing, groaning of a tree before a storm,
Heard the scraping of the branches in the bending of its form?
Have you seen it sway and straighten, then be swayed again, again,
Seen the leaves like tiny banners, whipping, dripping in the rain?
Seen it in its strength and beauty stand defiant in the blast,
Seen it proud and undefeated when the mighty winds have passed?

Have you seen a fellow mortal weighted down with many cares,
Heard him sigh when dread disaster came upon him unawares?
Have you seen him bear it bravely, overcoming all his fears?
Seen him turn his face to heaven, gazing upward through his tears?
Seen his countenance of sorrow change and wear the victor's smile,
Seen him stand complete in triumph o'er the bitterness of trial?

Winds have ne'er uprooted timber anchored deep beneath the sod
Strife has never conquered mortals who are rooted deep in God.
Byron E. Debolt.

A traveler crossed a frozen stream
In trembling fear one day.
Later a teamster drove across,
And whistled all the way.
Great faith and little faith alike
Were granted safe convoy.
One had the pangs of needless fear
The other all the joy.

Lesson 4 Quiz:

Write True or False [T or F]:

1. ____ There are no ways that people can hear the voice of God to their hearts.
2. ____ It is possible for us to know the voice of the Lord and not be fooled by counterfeits.
3. ____ Asking the Lord for guidance when we study will bring help from the Holy Spirit.
4. ____ If God does not answer us right away, it means He says "No."
5. ____ God does not always give us everything we think we want.
6. ____ If we want God to hear, we must pray in a church.
7. ____ Sometimes things that seem very bad to us, turn out to be very good.
8. ____ The Lord only guides certain people, like ministers and leaders.
9. ____ To get to know the Lord and His deeper truths we need regular quiet time for prayer and study.
10. ____ God may hear our prayers, but He never talks to us.