

YOUTH messenger

Vol. XXXVIII, No. 2

Recognizing MY FATHER'S VOICE



TESTIMONY • p. 4

Miracles in the Army

DISCIPLESHIP • p. 9

Feeling Loved, Rather Than Living to Be Loved

FAITHBUILDER • p. 12

Stepping Up to Success

BIBLE STUDY • p. 18

Recognizing My Father's Voice

DEVOTIONAL • p. 26

My Dirty Cardigan

NATURE VOICES • p. 28

The Big Brown Dog

PUZZLE • p. 30

Bible Mothers Quiz

POEM • p. 32

God's Love With Skin On

Hello Friends,

When you hear the word “mother” or “father,” what picture comes to your mind?

Do you think of your mother and the loving ways she has treated you all your life?

Do you envision your father with his strong, reassuring voice encouraging you to take on life with full confidence?

During May and June, people in our country are honoring mother and father by celebrating Mother’s Day and Father’s Day and that is wonderful. But the question is how do we treat mom and dad every day of the year? Do we respect them and honor them? Do we look for ways to lift their burdens? Do we listen their advice the first time or do we argue with them, and listen only after we’ve made many blunders?

Our heavenly Father watches how we treat our parents and He marks our actions. But you may say, “My parents are not true Christians, and they don’t deserve my respect.” If they are not genuine Christians, that is sad. But it is still your duty to honor them.

No matter how our mother or father may treat us, let’s always remember that our heavenly Father loves us beyond measure. He that touches you or me, touches the apple of His eye. If our earthly parents are not alive or are not kind to us, remember, “When my father or mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up”(Psalm 27:10).

In this issue of the magazine, we have several articles that describe our Father’s loving character: “Miracles in the Army; Feeling Loved, Rather Than Living to Be Loved; Recognizing My Father’s Voice.” Enjoy them, and allow your heavenly Father to lead your life and hold you in His everlasting arms!

—Liliane Balbach

MIRACLES in the Army

How I Met God

PART III

BY GORAN ANJELIC, CROATIA

After that winter, I decided to surrender my life to the Lord and to make peace with Him. I made a vow with God by baptism, which took place on June 7, 1998, in the Danube river. One week after my baptism, I was drafted into the army in the southern part of Serbia.

When I arrived in the army, I told my superior that I cannot bear arms. He then sent me to see General Zivanovic so he could discuss the problem with me. Three times I went to see this General, and each time he tried to persuade me to take arms so I can avoid going to prison. Each time I refused. Sitting on his desk, was a document stating my refusal to carry weapons, and a call to appear before the court-martial. Each time I was about to sign the document, General Zivanovic would take the pen out of my hand, and send me back to my barrack to think it over.

WHEN I MET THE ROARING LION

He told me, "If you sign that paper and refuse to carry weapons, you will be sentenced to military prison for three years." At that time, I was ready to sign the paper. Every day, I prayed that God would give me strength to endure this trial so that His name would be glorified. The third time when the General Zivanovic called me, he was holding the same document in his hand, and for the last time, he asked me, "Do you want to sign it?" I said, "I will not sign it!" Suddenly, he tore the document and told me, "You can go. I will make sure that you have no military activities on Saturday, and you will not have to go to the court martial. I thanked the Lord for this experience."

My aunt Mira and her two daughters Dragana and Ivana, came for my swearing-in-ceremony. For the next 30 days, after I took my oath, I didn't have



to work on the Sabbath, while the soldiers on duty went to work in town on Saturdays. General Zivanovic commanded the younger officers not to put me on the list for the public work in town. Amazingly, there were always ten soldiers who volunteered to go in my place.

About three kilometers from the city of Pirot where the main barracks were, there was a military shooting facility. After the young soldiers take their oath, they first have to come to this place to become familiar with bullets and flameproof weapons. As I did not carry a rifle, I was standing on the side, while everyone else was shooting the plastic targets.

On that day, General Zivanovic also came to the shooting range. He called me, "Goran, come here." I came to him and addressed him.

Then he said, "Goran, listen to me. This coming Saturday you and I are going to have some

fun! You can wear your military uniform or dress as a civilian. Early in the morning we're going to the Orthodox Church to pray to God. After that, we'll go to a good restaurant to eat some pork. And don't worry, I'll pay for everything."

"After we eat well in the restaurant, we'll go to a night club. You are only a young soldier, so you need this."

I was shocked when I heard this. At the first instant, I imagined myself going to all those places with him on the Sabbath, and realized that I would transgress almost all of God's commandments. The General pressed me to give him an answer immediately.

I told him that I could not go with him and do all those things. He replied, "You can leave for now, but it will be so."

I stood on the side and I wondered, "What happened to



this man? So far, every Saturday he helped me not to work on the Sabbath, and now he is asking me to transgress the Sabbath.”

I went outside and prayed earnestly to the Lord to give me strength to endure. After half an hour, General Zivanovic invited me to come in again and he repeated, “Everything will be just as I said.”

He also added, “Listen to me, if you are not willing to come voluntarily, I will tie you to two armed soldiers and they will lead you.”

To me, this looked like “the devil, as a roaring lion, walking about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

PROTECTED FROM THE WAR ZONE

I walked away, and all afternoon I prayed to God for deliverance. War was raging in Kosovo, and Nis and Pirot

belonged to the Pristina Military District. Unexpectedly, a few days later, we were told that our barracks would be dismantled and we would go to help the barracks in Pristina. All the preparations needed were to be completed by Wednesday, and on Thursday we would be moving to Kosovo.

That morning before the officer on duty started to wake up the army, I heard as if through a dream, someone calling me in the hallway, “Wake up Goran Andjelic, and tell him to take all his belongings to the attic. Then let him go out and wait for further orders.” For a few seconds, those words were a reality to me. At that moment the officer on duty walked into my room and gave me the same orders. While everyone went to breakfast, I was standing in front of the dormitories at the barracks, waiting for further instructions.

After about 15 minutes, another soldier came out as confused as I was. We both did not know what we were waiting for. In the distance, we could see trucks and war equipment being prepared for the move to Kosovo.

After a while, our favorite army general approached us. He drove us to his private vehicle on the parking lot inside the barracks. We got into his car and we went outside the barracks. He told us to go first to the city and then to the shooting range. After walking around the city, we headed towards the shooting range to the same place where General Zivanovic had talked to me before.

While we were driving to the shooting range, the Captain explained that we were going to replace the two soldiers who worked there. They would go to Nis for a review, and would return tonight. Now we learned that we were going to replace these two soldiers briefly. The kind Captain also told us that we can call him for anything we needed whether it be day or night.

When we arrived at the shooting range, we waited a little for the two soldiers to change and soon they left. So, just the two of us were left behind. We felt a little strange that the Captain told us that we would have to work only until the evening, but then he told us to call the main barracks whenever it was needed.

So, what happened next? I stayed there for almost two months until the time of the resettlement. General Zivanovic, who had threatened to take me out on Sabbath to eat pork in a restaurant, and to go to a nightclub was the first one to go to Kosovo. So, thank God, I never saw him again.

It was God who allowed me to remain in this quiet place where there were no guards, where there was no roll call and no military drills, and where I didn't have to carry weapons. There was more food than I and the other soldier could eat. We got a lot of salad, and the other soldier didn't like salad so I had plenty. Since I didn't eat meat, he could eat all he wanted.

While I was working at that shooting facility, I heard that not just any soldier was given that job. It had to be a soldier who had a good connection with the higher-ups. What I realized at that time was that my great connection was with the almighty God! He had arranged to give me this great position. I thank God for that experience.

Are you asking, "What kept you strong in the faith and near to God during those trying days in the army? God's promises! I felt that the promises in Psalm 103 were written especially for me.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his

benefits” (Psalm 103:1, 2). While I was in the army, I was constantly keeping before my mind’s eye the many blessings God had given me. He had forgiven me my sins (Psalm 103:3) and helped me to be baptized.

While my comrades were transferred to Kosovo, where the war was raging, the Lord allowed me to stay in the same location, where it was peaceful and I didn’t have to bear arms. My God had “redeemeth thy [my] life from destruction; who crowneth thee [me] with lovingkindness and tender mercies. Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s” (Psalm 103:4, 5). During that time, God truly provided good vegetarian food for me in great abundance.

“The Lord executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed”

(Psalm 103:6). General Zivanovic was planning to oppress me by forcing me to go to the restaurant with him and eat pork. He then planned to take me to the night club on the Sabbath. He was sure that his plan would work, but the Lord protected me from His schemes and I never saw him again. Truly the Lord was merciful to me. “For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him” (Psalm 103:11, 13).

Although I had lost my mother to an early and sudden death, and although I was not close to my earthly father, my heavenly Father was always by my side, teaching me, coaching me, comforting me and loving me. What else could I ask for? I can just say, “Bless the Lord, O my soul.” 🌿





FEELING *Loved* RATHER THAN *Living* *to Be Loved*

BY KLARA FINARU

If you're like most people, you have probably wondered at one point or another what others think of you, and you hoped it was positive rather than negative. The truth is that many of us aspire to be successful one day so that when our name is spoken people immediately think, "Oh him/her? The student with the 4.0 GPA who was accepted to Yale University? Or the CEO of that huge company? Or perhaps you want to be known as someone who donates thousands to charity or goes on mission trips and volunteers at non-profit organizations.

It is interesting that when we speak with others, we

unconsciously let out what defines us and gives meaning and purpose to our lives. We speak of our accomplishments and dreams as a way of unconsciously validating our importance. This is why the Bible says, "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matthew 12:34). And while there is nothing inherently wrong with any one of these aspirations, if we place our identity in our accomplishments, we may end up spending the majority of our life feeling that we haven't achieved enough.

You may ask yourself, "How can I feel loved and fulfilled in the absence of personal accomplishments or validation

from others?” You may wonder if someone was ever even able to reach such a point. However, one of the best examples of someone who felt loved and fulfilled, no matter what his accomplishments were, was John, the youngest of the twelve disciples.

JOHN'S IDENTITY

We notice that John had not introduce himself by his name or by mentioning one of his accomplishments. Rather, he introduces himself as “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (John 21:20). Why did John mention that fact? Wasn't it obvious that Jesus loved everyone? John felt this was special because Jesus was his identity. John lived feeling loved rather than needing to be loved. John knew that he was unconditionally loved by his Saviour, and therefore had everything his soul needed. He did not live to prove anything to anyone because his validation came from the One who gave His life just for him. John didn't live to make himself a name in the world. John did not live to earn the love of anyone. Instead, he lived knowing that he was continuously loved by the Creator of the universe.

As you read about how close and loving was John's relationship with Jesus, you may think, “I could never be the beloved son or daughter of Jesus because I am not lovable.” Let me ask you then, “Have you ever been given

the nickname the “son or daughter of thunder?” “Of course not,” you say, but when Jesus first met John, He gave him the nickname “the son of thunder.” In fact, John was everything but lovable when he first met Jesus. He was proud, reckless, revengeful, ever pursuing honor thinking that it would give him fulfillment. So, how did Jesus switch from calling John “the son of thunder” to “John, the beloved apostle”?

John was the disciple who had wanted to sit on the right hand of Christ's throne when he would establish His kingdom. When the Samaritans refused to accept Jesus into their town, John asked, “Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?” (Luke 9:54.) John was transformed from the proud and harsh man he once was to a gentle “apostle of love.” The main theme of his letters to the churches was love. How did he have such a transformation? Every single day he lived in the very presence of Love Himself. Every moment he was with Jesus, John let the Saviour's love fill his heart up to overflowing. He felt so complete in that love that he wanted others to experience what he had found.

JOHN'S ONE DESIRE

As John spent more time with Jesus, his one desire became to be like Him. He felt that no other title or accomplishment was greater than this. Hence, he

wrote, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). He spent every opportunity to be as close to Jesus as possible. At the very last dinner the disciples had with Jesus, John was leaning his head on Jesus' chest. And in Jesus' most trying moments as He was hanging on the cross, when the other disciples forsook Him, John still stood closest to the foot of His cross. He stayed with Jesus until His last moments. John was so close to Jesus that he was entrusted with the care of His mother. What greater honor could one attain than to earn the trust of Jesus?

John didn't have any special advantages that are not available to us. He was human just as we are; he had the same struggles as we do. But the transformation which took place in his life can also happen with us.

Just like most of us, John longed for something more than the shallow affection of others; he looked beyond the achievements of this world. He longed to be like Jesus. Since John was the youngest of the disciples, he looked up to Jesus just like a child looks up to his father. John admired Christ's lovely character, wishing so much that he, too, could be filled with some of that

love. But with some of us, the problem is that we find it hard to be changed by Christ. We may say, "Well this is just who I am. I'm a hopeless case." John never felt that way. Instead, with the trusting spirit of a child, he opened his heart to Jesus, allowing every word of Christ to be planted in his heart, until those seeds of love grew bigger and stronger, transforming him into a completely new person.

As I studied the life of John, I wondered what will our relationship with Jesus be when we get to heaven and see Him face to face? Will we be in awe of Him and fall at His feet to worship Him? Or will we just meet Him for morning worship and ask Him for "travelling mercies" before embarking on our journey of exploring the universe? Perhaps, would we come back to worship Him in the evening, according to the routine we are so used to here on earth? Or will we run to Him like a lost child who finally found His Father? Will we hug Him and, together with John, rest our head near His heart because it feels like home. This is the kind of close relationship we should be having with Jesus today even before we meet Him face to face. I'm not really sure what He would say to us. But I hope with all my heart that He will say, "Welcome home, my beloved child." 🚫



Stepping

SUC

Have you ever been tired of school, tired of taking exams and tired of studying? I found myself in that situation. I had just finished my undergraduate degree in nursing while working at the same time. Shortly after, I decided to go for my master's degree.

When I began my Nurse Practitioner's program, I told the Lord, "I give my schooling into your hands. I need your help with my assignments and tests. I am so tired of school." This gave me relief. Now, I didn't have to worry anymore, because my master's degree was in God's hands! Once I surrendered my schooling to the Lord, I did well with my classes, assignments and essays. I was getting mostly A's and spending a fraction of the time on my studies compared to my undergraduate classes.

*To succeed in anything, we
need to make serious personal
effort while asking for
wisdom from above.*

Up to
CESS

BY PAUL MICHAEL BALBACH



TIRED AND JET-LAGGED

While I was working on my master's, everything went fairly smoothly **until** I came to my last class. This class was the final class which I had to take before going to missionary school in Australia. The national average on this exam is 69%; however, my school required students to get at least a 70%. Students were given two attempts at this exam—one at week 5 and the other at week 8.

During the first 5 weeks of the class I studied, as much as I could comfortably fit into my busy work schedule. So far, my efforts combined with God's help, had worked very well for me. However, during the fifth week, I travelled to Australia and had only three days after arriving to take my exam. I was sure I would pass because I was doing well on the practice exams; I also believed that God wanted me to pass so I'd have less homework during the

last three weeks of my nursing class and my first three weeks of missionary school.

Within a few hours of arriving to Australia, tired and jet-lagged as I was, I decided to take my test and get it over with. However, a few minutes into the exam, I realized that the internet was not working correctly. My host family, where I was staying, was not home. After I restarted the internet, it still would not work consistently. Time was passing; I had to figure out what to do. Finally, I was able to purchase internet credit in Australia and use my phone as a hotspot! However, now I had to rush to finish my test on time. I quickly completed all the questions ten minutes before the deadline. I fully expected that God would help me pass, but I failed.

I was shocked! How could God allow me to fail? He had helped me so far to pass all of my exams,

essays and classes. And I did well on my practice exams for this test. So how did I fail?

INTERNET TROUBLE

Now that missionary school started, I was going to be very busy also having to complete my last nursing class. I even had to do an extra 30-page assignment, since I was not able to attend the live 3-day review session in Chicago. But I wasn't worried about it, because I believed that God would help me.

During the first three weeks of missionary school, God helped me with my nursing school assignments and to stay on track with missionary school. But unfortunately, I didn't have much time to study. I was not able to review the previously learned material from my master's program. The night before my final exam, I asked all the missionary school students to pray that I would pass.

I got up the next morning, my second attempt at the final exam. I prayed and did my best to trust in God. As I started the test, however, I realized that each question was taking at least one minute to load. I decided to video the difficulty I was having with the test loading. Unfortunately, the time ran out before I was able to finish the last three questions; I was also unable to review my flagged results. When I finished, I realized again that I did not pass because of the internet difficulty again.

I couldn't understand how God had allowed me to fail, when I was in missionary school and "doing my best." I was very disappointed that I would have to take this class again, and spend another \$4,000 for tuition. After a few hours I started to think . . . "I probably failed because I couldn't finish the test and review my questions. I called my teacher, explained the situation, and she thought I had a chance of retaking the test. So, I submitted an appeal to the school with my video and prayed and waited. The school was taking a while to review my case, since they had several similar cases.

In the meantime, I kept studying, but only as much as comfortably possible without sacrificing fun or friends to study. I also prayed daily to pass the test.

MISSING THE MARK BY 0.5%

At last, I got a response from my school that I was approved to retake this test, seven weeks after the class had finished! By now, I was more prepared, and had good internet at the church in Schofields. I took the test, and felt pretty good about it. After submitting the last question, I didn't wait for the result, but went to another room and prayed, thanking the Lord that I had passed!

When I came back, I couldn't believe my eyes. I had failed by only 0.5%. My score was 0.5% higher than the national average. I wondered, "Why did my school

set the standard 1% above the national average?

ASKING . . . CLAIMING . . . BELIEVING

Since I had to retake the class, it required humility, on my part, to set up my clinicals again, and to tell others that I had to retake the class. But this time, however, I knew I needed to study harder and to continue asking for wisdom from above. I realized that I needed to give it my 110% in studying over the next 3 weeks. I also realized that I needed wisdom—wisdom which I did not have, so I began claiming James 1:5, 6. “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. 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.”

Not only did I ask God for wisdom, I asked for it in faith! I believed that God could give me wisdom as He did to Daniel. As I was doing my part, studying

every spare moment, God did His part. When the day of the final exam arrived, I prayed and left it in God’s hands. However, this time it was different. I was familiar with the content of most of the questions, and when I was done, I found out I had passed!!! But not only did I pass, but I scored 12% higher than the national average!

MY EFFORT AND GOD’S COMBINED

Why did it take me four steps to pass my final exam as a Nurse Practitioner? Why did I have to go through this experience? Maybe I wasn’t studying hard enough on the previous attempts, then I took the test after being jet-lagged, and later I had trouble with the internet. But also, perhaps I didn’t fully trust God. I discovered two important reasons why God had allowed me to go through this experience. I needed to learn that **human effort and divine power combined** are needed for me to be successful in whatever I undertake.





“After we have offered our petitions, we are to answer them ourselves as far as possible, and not wait for God to do for us what we can do for ourselves. The help of God is held in reserve for all who demand it. Divine help is to be combined with human effort, aspiration, and energy.”—*My Life Today*, p. 19.

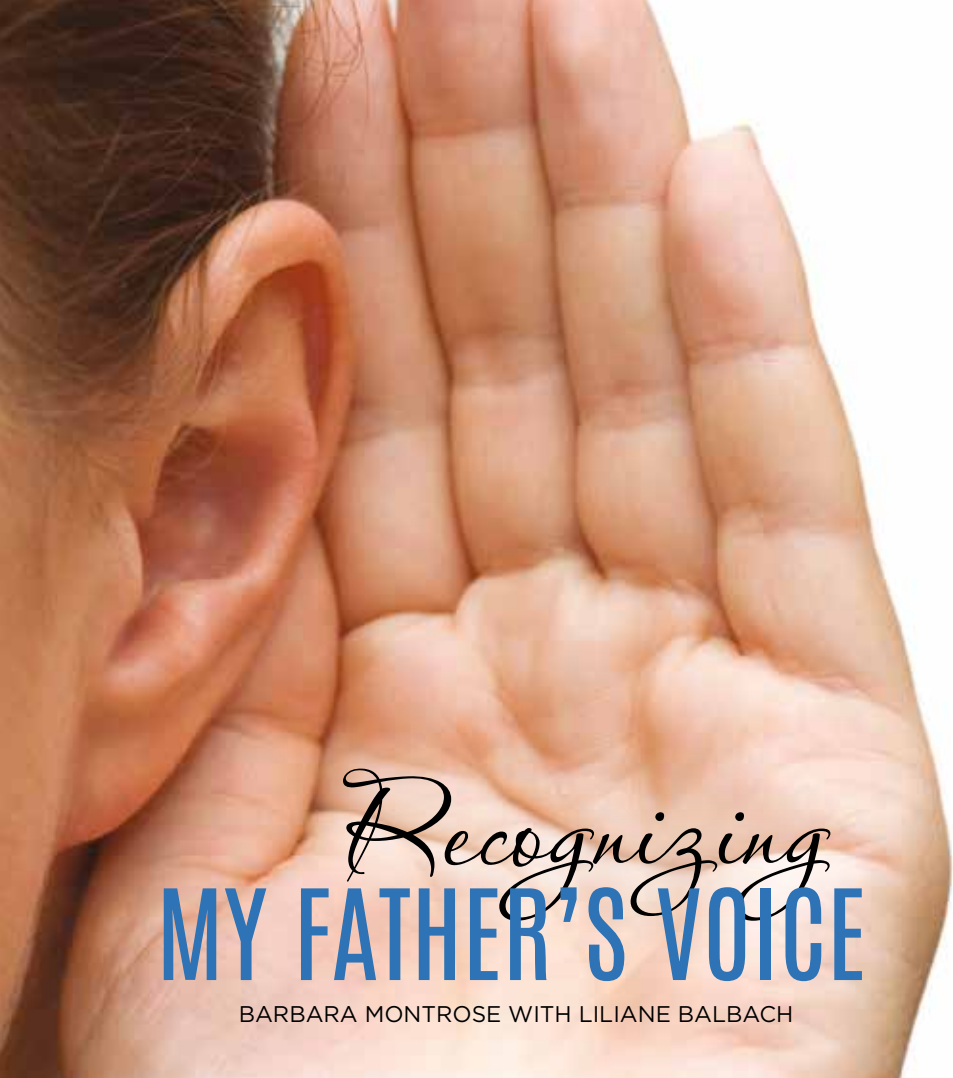
The second reason God didn't let me pass is that He wanted me to share the gospel at the clinic where I had previously worked as an intern. When I returned to this clinic the second time, I shared with the staff about my studies at the missionary school in Australia and left multiple Spirit of Prophecy books with them.

The sweetest success is the one that's most difficult. Our society doesn't reward defeat, and we don't find many failures recorded in history books. But the Bible has many life stories of people who've

failed and later achieved success. As Christians, we must make our failures steppingstones to future success. It took Thomas Edison 1,000 tries before he produced his most memorable invention—the light bulb. When a reporter asked him, “How did it feel to fail 1,000 times?” Edison replied, “I didn't fail 1,000 times; the light bulb was an invention with 1,000 steps.”

Dear friends, when you go through difficult experiences in life remember these precious promises, “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths” (Proverbs 3:5, 6).

“For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again” (Proverbs 24:16). Let us conquer every mistake, every fault, and every difficulty with Christ's help, and allow it to become a stepping-stone to higher success! 🌟



Recognizing
MY FATHER'S VOICE

BARBARA MONTROSE WITH LILIANE BALBACH



What would you do if you were given some negative personal information about your boss and then he asked you to share it with him?

A Truly Unique Voice

Voices! Voices! Voices! There are plenty of them out there, all jostling to be heard. If you turn on the radio, you'll hear a smattering of all kinds of voices. One station screeches out rock lyrics, another bombards you with advertising jingles, another tickles your emotions with gushy sentimental music. One commentator praises this politician while casting an exaggerated blame on his opponent. On another station, a talk-show host is interviewing his favorite expert. All feel that their voice should be heard by everyone. And that's only the radio—not even mentioning the other forms of electronic media and talking to people in person.

So, with so many voices saturating both the airwaves and the actual air, how are we to recognize the voice of our heavenly Father who is all-knowing, all-powerful and who loves us before we were ever born?

1. What do we need to realize about the awesome voice of the One who made us? Psalm 29:4, 5.

2. Describe what the creative, life-giving voice of God can do. Psalm 33:8, 9; John 5:15.

“In the formation of our world, God was not indebted to pre-existing matter. On the contrary, all things, material or spiritual, stood up before the Lord Jehovah at His voice and were created for His own purpose. The heavens and all the host of them, the earth and all things therein, are not only the work of His hand; they came into existence by the breath of His mouth.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 24.

3. What is the first thing we need to do in order to hear and benefit from God’s voice? Psalm 46:10 (first part). Which way did God use to speak to the prophet Elijah? 1 Kings 19:11-13.

“When Elijah sought God in the mountains, a devouring fire swept by; but God was not in the flame. A tempest rose, the thunder rolled, and the lightnings flashed; but God was not in all this. Then there came a still, small voice, and the prophet covered his head before the presence of the Lord. It is the still, small voice of the Spirit of God that has power to convict and convert the soul.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 266. [1892 edition.]

Apply It!

Write an experience when God spoke to you in a “still, small voice.”



Reconnecting With the Father

All week long, the voice was ringing in my ears, “Call your aunt, she is going to die soon.” I had just visited my aunt and knew she was dying from lung cancer. But, now the sweet voice of the Holy Spirit nudged me to call my cousin and see how aunt was doing. I kept on dismissing the “soft voice” thinking, “I will call tomorrow.” Finally, I called on Friday and my cousin told me that aunt Rachel is very weak.

I encouraged my cousin for the passing of her mother. I shared with her how recently the Lord helped my sons and me deal in the last moments of my dying husband. I told her, “You are not alone. Your heavenly Father is with you in the room. He sees and feels the pain and sorrow you and your mom are going through.” She suddenly told me, “Wait, wait, my mom is taking slow breaths. I think she is dying.” I hung up the phone and prayed for my aunt and cousins as they went through their Gethsemane. Ten minutes later, my cousin called me and said, “My mother has passed away. God sent you to call me just a few minutes before to encourage me. Your words comforted me and gave me courage to go through these difficult times. After we hung up, I knelt and thanked God that I had listened to His still small voice, and was able to be of help.

1. When the first couple lived in Eden, what wonderful voice did they hear every day? Genesis 3:8. Why did they begin to avoid this voice? John 3:19, 20.

“Often as [Adam and Eve] walked in the garden in the cool of the day they heard the voice of God, and face to face held communion with the Eternal.”—*Education*, p. 21.

“In his sinless state, man held joyful communion with Him in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. But after his sin he could no longer find joy in holiness, and he sought to hide from the presence of God.”—*The Signs of the Times*, October 25, 1905.

Apply It!

What are some other voices in my life that are making it impossible for me to hear God's voice?



2. Since we know that it is for our best interest to hear God's voice, how only can we develop a real desire to hear Him? Psalm 34:8.

“How shall we know for ourselves God's goodness and His love? The psalmist tells us . . . ‘Taste and see that the Lord is good’ (Psalm 34:8). Instead of relying upon the word of another, taste for yourself.”—*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 252.

Plugged-up Ears

What would you do if you had pain and itching in your ears and hearing loss? Most people would visit a physician and perhaps find out they have a cerum impaction—a built-up of wax that is clogging their ears. Our Creator designed our inner ears in such a way that they virtually clean themselves. He wants us to be able to hear well because He loves us.

But did you know that the so-called people of God have a history of unnaturally “plugging their ears”? No, their ears were not plugged with wax, rather they were practicing sin in their lives and did not want to hear what God had to say about it. Our corrupt human heart naturally wants to do evil, so we may lie to ourselves thinking, “As long as I don’t hear what God says, everything will be all right.” What a dangerous deception!

1. Since we all tend to go astray at times, what message of hope does God give to us? Isaiah 53:6; 30:21.

2. What instruction did Jesus receive from His Father each morning before starting His day? Isaiah 50:4, 5. How did Jesus respond?

Apply It!

What advice did the Lord give you this morning during your morning devotions and prayer? Did you accept His advice?



The Familiar Voice of Duty

Do you ever get telephone calls from people whose voice you recognize? You don't need to ask who is calling or to check your caller ID. Why? Because you know the sound of the person's voice. If we have that kind of close relationship with sinful humans, how much more important it is to be able to recognize the voice of the eternal God, the One who loves you and who never makes a mistake!

1. How does Christ illustrate the wonderful closeness we are to have with Him? John 10:27, 28.

2. Name the ways by which the Lord speaks to people. Why is it so important for us to pay attention? Acts 17:30, 31.

“Through nature and revelation, through His providence, and by the influence of His Spirit, God speaks to us.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 93.

“God has spoken to us through His Word. He has spoken to us through the Testimonies to the church.”—*Evangelism*, p. 260.

Apply It!

Through which of these ways—Bible, Spirit of Prophecy, nature or providence—has the Lord spoken to you?



Sifting Through All the Voices

Most of today's e-mail service providers make it possible for you to be able to get rid of spam—those unwanted messages sometimes sent by pranksters with bad intentions. You can delete these messages after they arrive or even prevent many of them from invading your inbox.

1. **Since we hear so many voices demanding our attention today, what warnings must we keep in mind? Deuteronomy 8:19, 20.**
-
-

“The Lord requires us to obey the voice of duty, when there are other voices all around us urging us to pursue an opposite course. It requires earnest attention from us to distinguish the voice which speaks from God. We must resist and conquer inclination, and obey the voice of conscience without parleying [discussing with the enemy] or compromise, lest its promptings cease and will and impulse control. . . . This voice [Word of God] is heard in warnings, in counsels, in reproof.”
—*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 202.

Apply It!

Write down an experience when you didn't listen to the voice of God, and what happened?



2. **What should we do whenever we don't feel like obeying God's voice? Hebrews 3:14, 15.**
-
-

“True faith asks the Lord, ‘What wilt Thou have me to do?’ and when the way is marked out by the Master, faith is ready to do His will, at whatever hardship or sacrifice.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 183.

In Tune With His Voice

Are you in tune with your heavenly Father's voice like this special child was?

1. How did God speak to a child who was willing to hear and obey His voice while a priest was not willing to listen?
1 Samuel 3:1-12, 15-18.
-
-

Am I Listening?

Am I asking God to help me to really love to hear His voice through the Bible, the Spirit of Prophecy, and through His providence?

Do I enjoy spending time in nature? In which ways has God been speaking to me there?

Am I paying serious attention to the messages that the Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy teach?

Has what I learned from these books helped me in my life?

Do I refuse to be tricked by voices that speak contrary to God's word and His law?

The Dirty Cardigan

BY ANNA KAKNICS FROM HUNGARY

A few years ago, I went on a trip abroad and before my departure I needed to buy some things. I went to a store where I could buy most of the items I needed, and as I went to the cashier, I saw a cute cardigan. Although I really liked it, I didn't need it so decided not to buy it. But as I walked home, I felt a little sad about it.

The next day, I went to the playground with my mom and my sisters. Before we left to return home, my mom put something next to me on the bench and said, "It was in the sand; I had put it by the swing but it seems no one looked for it." As I looked more closely at the dirty piece of clothing, I realized it was the same cardigan that I saw at the store yesterday! It was the same brand and size! I was sure that it was not there accidentally. So, I decided to take it home; I washed it and was thankful to have it.

A few years later, I was organizing my clothes and found that cardigan. I wondered why I didn't wear it all this time. It surprised me that something that I wanted so badly I didn't care for anymore.


I am thankful to the Lord for this little experience because I realized how He shows us our weaknesses in simple ways. I remembered that as I walked home on that shopping day, I was unhappy. Now, I felt ashamed that I wasn't content with the clothes I had but wanted more.

During this little experience I was also able to realize how delusive our desires and wishes truly are. The Bible says, "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof" (1 John 2:16, 17). Often when we see nice things, we want to have them but God knows what we actually need. This is why He tells us, "Be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5). Are you thanking the Lord each day for all the blessings He has given you? Have you asked Him to help you be content with the things you already have? 🙏



The Big Brown DOG

BY STEPHANIE
HAZELHOFF



In the summer of 2008 we had an unexpected visitor come to our home. Our old Labrador Lady, went on her “daily” walk into the woods around our house, and came back with a companion. Her floppy-eared friend was a large dog with a reddish-brown coat, white chest, and white paws. Our parents did not want to add another dog to the existing pets we already had, so we were told not to go near him, that way he would be encouraged to look for another home. For days we attempted to ignore his beautiful brown eyes and floppy ears but he patiently sat by our front door. He refused to leave! He would just sit there quietly with those soft eyes asking to stay with us. No one knows when it happened, but Brutus soon became a beloved member of our family.

Not only did our family fall in love with him but soon the whole neighborhood fell for him as well. Very quickly, Brutus became the neighborhood “mascot.” He considered the neighborhood his and vice versa. Even though everyone in the neighborhood loved him, Brutus was loyal to his adopted family and every night he would come back to our home. Brutus loved us kids just as much as we loved him. When we would go outside, he would show up to either play or just keep an eye on us to make sure nothing bad happened. One day, my little cousin and younger sister went outside to play. We had not seen Brutus all day but when the girls went outside, Brutus suddenly appeared! He laid down where they were playing and kept a sharp eye on them. When the girls went back inside the house he disappeared again. When other stray dogs would come near our home, he would always place himself between us and the unknown dog. He was willing to protect us at all costs!

What made Brutus such a faithful dog? Love is what made him faithful. Brutus loved his family and he was willing to give up everything for us. As I think about the love and devotion of our dog Brutus, I am reminded of God’s faithfulness to us! Our God is faithful and devoted to us in all circumstances. Like the song says,

***Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father,
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.***

But beside being faithful and staying by our side under all circumstances, our God is a God of love. “He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love” (1 John 4:8).

Just as our big brown dog was willing to give his life to protect our family, so God gave up something more precious to save a sinful people. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). God loves us so much that He let His only Son die on the cross. He gave up His Son for a rebellious and sinful person like me! God loves us no matter what. Even when we ignore Him, Jesus is still waiting patiently for us to open the door to Him (Revelation 3:20) and make Him part of our family. Even if we feel unworthy of His love, He still wants us to come back home to Him. He wants to take away our rebellious and sinful heart and to give us a new heart. Will you let Him do that for you today? 🙏

ACROSS

3. This mother was 90 years old when her son was born (Genesis 21:3).
4. This mother had two sons and she moved with her husband to the land of Moab (Ruth 1:2).
5. This mother had twin boys, Esau and Jacob (Genesis 25:20–22, 24–26).
9. This mother was an older woman when her son, John, was born. Her husband became dumb during her pregnancy (Luke 1:57, 60).
11. This young lady became pregnant before she was married to her husband, but she was the mother of Emmanuel (Matthew 1:23).

DOWN

1. This mom prayed for a son. God heard her prayer and she lent him to work for the Lord while he was still very young (1 Samuel 1:20, 27, 28).
2. This mother put her baby Moses in a basket, by the banks of a river, hoping to save his life (Exodus 6:20).
5. This mother was Jacob's favorite wife. She bore him Joseph and Benjamin. (Genesis 30:22–24).
6. This woman was the mother of a good king of Israel (2 Kings 18:1, 2).
7. This mother was an Egyptian who bore a son to Abraham (Genesis 16:15).
8. This mom was not loved by her husband, but the Lord gave her many children (Genesis 29:32).

ANSWERS TO THE PUZZLE

ACROSS
3. Sarah
4. Naomi
5. Rebekah
9. Elisabeth
10. Eve
11. Mary

DOWN
1. Hannah
2. Jochbed
5. Rachel
6. Abi
7. Hagar
8. Leah

Editor Liliane Balbach, **Layout** Bethany Montrose.

Youth Messenger® (USPS 765-030) is published quarterly by the Young People's Department of the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement General Conference as an educational service for our youth worldwide. **Web:** <http://www.sdarm.org>, **e-mail:** info@sdarm.org. The *Youth Messenger* is printed and distributed by Reformation Herald Publishing Association, 5240 Hollins Road, Roanoke, VA 24019-5048. Periodical postage paid at Roanoke, Virginia 24022.

Postmaster: Send address changes to, *Youth Messenger*, P.O. Box 7240, ROANOKE, VA 24019-0240. Manuscripts, inquiries, address changes, subscription requests, and donations should be mailed to the address above. Vol. XXXVIII, No. 2. Copyright © 2019 April–June issue. **Illustrations:** Adobe Stock on front cover and pp. 2–5, 8–14, 16–18, 20–24, 26–29, 32; Goran Andelic on p. 6; Advent Digital Media on p. 9; Dreamstime on pp. 2, 30, 31.

Subscription: United States U.S. \$8.95; single issue U.S. \$2.95; foreign (air mail) U.S. \$17.00.

God's Love With Skin On

Tenderness, love expressed in actions, words and tones
 Often unreturned,
 For many years I never learned
 How her actions, words and tones,
 Had the potential to gain a lifetime of interest,
 A debt that could technically never be repaid
 For no sum of money ever made
 Could replace the love that she gave . . .

She gave,
 More than she ever owned
 For her source of income never dried up
 For she knew how to place her vessel right side up
 To catch all the raindrops that faithfully fell from His heart.

She gave,
 The start of her day, sitting at the feet of her One and only
 For only His heart could impart lessons
 That could be easily translated into acts of service—kindness
 Which had the active potential to send cascades of light that disturbed the blindness
 Of my heart's inward disposition to please itself.

And over time, she learned to say
 Three small words in a multitude of different ways,
 Three small words that made me who I am today
 "I love you"
 I love you too, Mum!

—Jared Chapman