

UNDERSTANDING THE HOLY SPIRIT - II HOW TO KNOW WHEN GOD IS SPEAKING TO YOU

The aim of this study is to enhance our ability to recognize the leading of the Holy Spirit and to help us PRIORITIZE our lives so that we are more in harmony with our heavenly Father's daily plan for us. The Holy Spirit is also be referred to as the voice of God to the soul. This voice we hear speaking to our consciences urging us forward in the path of duty. Hence it is verily true that the voice of duty is the voice of God.

The Holy Spirit strives with every man. It is the voice of God speaking to the soul.
{RH, July 27, 1897 par. 8}

The voice of duty is the voice of God in our souls. Obedience to its claims brings us into living personal agreement with the highest law in the universe--brings man into alliance with God. {RH, June 7, 1887 par. 14} ***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. {RH, December 29, 1910 par.10}

Many would be greatly blessed to study carefully the words that follow in this study. It is quite often the case that the cause of much unnecessary stress and heartache is rampant, general ignorance of or confusion regarding personal duty. There are a great number of people who have taken upon themselves or created for themselves duties which God has not assigned them. On the other hand, there are probably just as many neglecting those very duties that would please God and be a blessing to others around them.

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. {SpTA10 37.3}

Many gather to themselves burdens that the merciful heavenly Father did not place on them. ***Duties He never designed them to perform chase one another wildly.*** God desires us to realize that we do not glorify His name when we take so many burdens that we are overtaxed and, becoming heart-weary and brain-weary, chafe and fret and scold. **We are to bear only the responsibilities that the Lord gives us,** trusting in Him, and thus keeping our hearts pure and sweet and sympathetic.--Review and Herald, Oct. 31, 1907.

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 or compromise, lest its promptings cease and will and impulse control. The word of the Lord comes to us all who have not resisted His Spirit by determining not to hear and obey. This voice is heard in warnings, in counsels, in reproof. {5T 68.4}

The voice of duty is the voice of God. It is the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking to our consciences and will always be in harmony with the word of God. Thank God that we can know with certainty what is our duty and thus be safeguarded from manufacturing heavy or additional crosses for ourselves.

All are to be guided in the path of duty by the plain word of God. -Letter 172, 1907.

The Bible is a chart, pointing out the waymarks of truth. Those who are acquainted with this chart will be enabled to tread with certainty ***the path of duty***, wherever they may be called to go.
{ST, March 21, 1906 par. 7}

There are many who desire ***an evidence from the Lord*** as to what course they shall pursue. ***They want some tangible proof that they are in the path of duty.***
{ST, April 11, 1892 par. 8}

The best evidence that we can have is the word of God. {ST, April 11, 1892 par. 9}

In the Bible ***every duty*** is made plain. {ST, October 10, 1906 par. 1}

HUMAN DISPOSITION TOWARD DUTY

Duty is a despised word. {ST, August 18, 1881 par. 10}

Viewed from a human stand-point, the path of duty and righteousness is not a path of peace and safety. By faith we must follow as the Lord leads us onward. But could we always discern the everlasting arms around and beneath us, there would be no occasion for the exercise of faith. The way of God's choosing may seem dark, yet it is the surest way to the light. ***In the midst of apparent disaster and defeat***, God's providence is working out his purposes. {ST, July 26, 1883 par. 12}

Those who work from a noble standpoint and with unselfish motives will be consecrated to God, body, soul, and spirit. They will not exalt self; they will not feel competent to take responsibilities; but they will not refuse to bear burdens, for they will have a desire to do all that they are capable of doing. These will not study their own convenience; the question with them will be: ***What is duty?*** {5T 428.2}

THE LAW OF DUTY TO GOD

The law of duty to God is supreme. It claims authority over reason and conscience, over talents and possessions. It will admit no rival, and will not for one moment abate its high demands. It enters into no compromise with any oppressive power of earth.

--Letter 21a, Jan. 11, 1893

Many people's lives seem to be a tangled mess because their priorities are mixed up. When the duties that our heavenly Father has assigned us are clearly understood, we are better able to set priorities in our lives which bring us into harmony with heaven and minimize confusion and distress. We become more keen to recognize and appreciate the leading and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Let us consider the duties which our heavenly Father has identified as the priorities that we should have.

ORGANIZING PRIORITIES CORRECTLY - DUTIES THAT ARE FIRST

A. Ecclesiastes 12:13 - Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this [is] the whole [duty] of man.

Obedience to God is the first duty of the Christian. {4T 610.2}

The first four of the Ten Commandments outline our duty to our Maker. He who is false to his God cannot be true to his neighbor. He who loves God supremely will love his neighbor as himself. {9T 211.4}

B. It is *the first and highest duty* of every rational being to learn from the Scriptures what is truth, and then to walk in the light and encourage others to follow his example. {GC 598.2}

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

C. *Our first duty*, one which we owe to God, to ourselves, and to our fellow men, is to *obey the laws of God, which include the laws of health*. If we are sick we impose a weary tax upon our friends and unfit ourselves for discharging our duties to our families and to our neighbors. And when premature death is the result of our violation of nature's law, we bring sorrow and suffering to others; we deprive our neighbors of the help we ought to render them in living; we rob our families of the comfort and help we might render them, and rob God of the service He claims of us to advance His glory. {3T 164,165}

For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit,
which are God's.

1 Corinthians 6:20

Attention to health is one of our most important duties. We owe this to ourselves, to society, and to God. --Letter 6, 1885.

Our first duty to God and our fellow-beings is in self-development.

{HR, April 1, 1877 par. 4}

It is not only the privilege, but *the sacred duty*, of all to understand the laws God has established in their being, and to be so governed by these laws as to bring their habits into harmony with them. {HR, September 1, 1871 par. 15}

HOW TO RELATE TO DUTIES - IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES

1. Do that which presents itself in its time, demanding the first attention. ***Do not pass by the first duty to do the second.*** One duty accomplished prepares the way for the Lord's blessing. And ***the second duty is more easy if the first has been faithfully performed.*** The burden is off the soul. The heart is filled with the peace and gladness of Christ. Letter *June 26, 1902.*

2. ***When a duty presents itself, we should not delay to meet its demands.*** Delay gives time for doubts to arise, unbelief creeps in, the judgment is perverted, the understanding darkened; and at length the reproofs of God's Spirit do not reach the heart of the deluded one, who has become so blinded as to feel that ***they cannot possibly be intended for him or apply to his case.*** {ST, July 22, 1886 par. 12}

3. We are to perform each day's duties as faithfully ***as though that day were to be our last.*** {RH, October 25, 1881 par. 4}

The faithful discharge of today's duties will be the best preparation for tomorrow's trials.
--Letter 141, Jan. 30, 1896

4. Happiness that is sought only from selfish motives, ***outside of the path of duty,*** is ill-balanced, fitful, and transitory, and when it is over, the soul is filled with loneliness and sorrow. {RH, January 14, 1890 par. 5}

5. ***Every duty performed,*** every sacrifice made ***in the name of Jesus,*** brings an exceeding great reward. In the very act of duty, God speaks, and gives His blessing.--Testimonies, vol. 4, p. 145.

Every duty that is performed in love to Jesus, in simplicity and humility, divested of all selfishness, has its effect on the character and shapes it after the divine Model.
{ST, December 18, 1893 par. 9}

6. ***The Lord tests our ability by giving us small duties to perform first.*** If we turn from these with dissatisfaction and murmuring, no more will be intrusted to us until we cheerfully take hold of these small duties, and do them well; then higher and greater responsibilities will be committed to us. {HR, March 1, 1872 par. 11}

He who faithfully performs small duties will be prepared to answer the demands of larger responsibilities. The man who is kind and courteous in the daily life, who is generous and forbearing in his family, whose constant aim it is to make home happy, will be the first to deny self and make sacrifices when the Master calls. {YI, January 17, 1901 par. 3}

7. The path of duty should be followed; not the path of inclination and of choice. {RH, June 22, 1886 par. 5}

8. ***If the motive*** of all our life is to serve and honor Christ and bless humanity in the world, then the dreariest path of duty will become a bright way,--a path cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in. {RH, July 5, 1887 par. 13}

There are those who are continuing to live their lives and make daily choices as if our heavenly Father had not left definite instructions for the course that they should pursue. Yet, this is not true. Everyone has duties appointed by God and the voice of duty is the voice of God.

VARIOUS DUTIES APPOINTED BY GOD

Parents

Our great adversary is constantly working with power to allure the youth to self-indulgence, pride, and extravagance, that their minds and hearts may be so fully taken up with these things that there will be no place for God in their affections. He is by these means warping the character and dwarfing the intellect of the youth of this generation. ***It is the duty of parents to counteract his working.*** {CSW 139.1}

It is the duty of parents ***to see that their children form habits conducive to health,*** thereby saving much distress. {4T 502.1}

It is the duty of Christian parents, morning and evening, by earnest prayer and persevering faith, ***to make a hedge about their children.*** {CT 110.1}

Whenever possible, it is the duty of parents ***to make homes in the country*** for their children.
--Letter 268, 1906.

It is ***the first duty*** of parents ***to make the precious truths of salvation very plain and simple and attractive to their children.*** {BEcho, December 15, 1892 par. 8}

Children should be taught that they are only probationers here, and educated to become inhabitants of the mansions which Christ is preparing for those who love him and keep his commandments. ***This is the highest duty which parents have to perform.*** {CTBH 144.2}

It is the duty of parents ***to watch the going out and coming in of their children.*** {4bSG 143.1}

It is the duty of parents ***to educate, restrain, discipline their children.*** {PH096 47.1}

It is the duty of parents to watch lest surrounding influences have an injurious effect upon their children. It is their duty ***to select the society for them and not suffer them to choose for themselves.*** {1T 399.3}

It is the duty of those who claim to be Christians ***to present to the world well-ordered, well-disciplined families,***--families that will show the power of true Christianity. If parents fail to make the effort required to do this, ***their children should be placed under the care of those who will feel it their duty to do the work*** which the parents have neglected.
{RH, April 13, 1897 par. 7}

It is the duty of parents ***to have their children in perfect subjection,*** having all their passions and evil tempers subdued. {RH, October 14, 1875 par. 4}

Parents should feel it a sacred duty ***to instruct their children in the statutes and requirements of God as well as in the prophecies.***--Review, Oct. 21, 1884

While the spirit of love should pervade the household, ***it is the duty of parents not to be ruled, but to rule.*** {RH, August 30, 1881 par. 7}

The circle of family and neighborhood duties is the very first field of effort for those who would work for the uplifting of their fellow men. There is no more important field of effort than that committed to the founders and guardians of the home. No work entrusted to human beings involves greater or more far-reaching results than does the work of fathers and mothers.

{MH 350.2}

It is the duty of fathers and mothers ***to care for their children***, but when the latter refuse to respect parental authority and to observe the rules of the family, ***they should be left to bear their own burdens in life***. Parents cannot enjoy the favor of God while they permit their children to trample upon his law. Angels will not abide in the house where strife exists, where God's name is blasphemed, and his authority defied. {ST, February 9, 1882 par. 11}

Parents, if you wish to save your children, separate them from the world, ***keep them from the company of wicked children***; for if you suffer them to go with wicked children, you cannot prevent them from partaking of their wickedness and being corrupted. It is your solemn duty to watch over your children, ***to choose the society at all times for them***.

{RH, September 19, 1854 par. 13}

Parents have a sacred duty to perform in ***teaching their children to help bear the burdens of the home, to be content with plain and simple food and neat and inexpensive dress***. The requirements of the parent should always be reasonable; kindness should be expressed not by foolish indulgence, but by wise direction. {Educational Messenger, July 31, 1908 par. 5}

May God pity the parents who do not teach their children, by precept and by example, the way of the Lord; for they will have a fearful account to give to the Judge of all the earth for their wicked neglect of ***duty to their children and to society***. They should present to their children the divine warnings against sin, and teach them the importance of implicit obedience. They should show them the danger of joining hands with the world if they ever expect to become children of God.

{ST, April 8, 1886 par. 14}

The Lord speaks to fathers and mothers by all the lessons of the gospel; he admonishes them by the agony and death of his own beloved Son; he warns them by the terrors of his judgments upon the impenitent nations of the past, and entreats them by all the rewards of eternity, to bring up their children in the fear and nurture of the Lord. {ST, January 5, 1891 par. 6}

To many parents the Judge will say in that day, "You had my Word, plainly setting forth your duty. Why have you not obeyed its teachings? ***Knew you not that it was the voice of God***? Did I not bid you search the Scriptures, that you might not go astray? Not only have you ruined your own souls, but by your pretensions to godliness, ***you have misled many others***. You have no part with me. Depart, Depart?" {RH, September 15, 1904 par. 16}

The highest duty of parents is to give their children a religious training. To allow a child to follow his natural impulses is to allow him to deteriorate and to become proficient in evil. The results of wrong training begin to be revealed in childhood. In early youth a selfish temper is developed and as the youth grows to manhood he grows in sin. A continual testimony against parental neglect is borne by children who have been permitted to follow a course of their own choosing. Such a downward course can be prevented only by surrounding them with influences that will counteract evil. From infancy to youth and from youth to manhood, a child should be under influences for good. {RH, September 15, 1904 par. 1}

VARIOUS DUTIES APPOINTED BY GOD

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

God cannot prosper those who go directly contrary to the plainest duty specified in His word, *the duty of children to their parents*. {3T 232.1}

The highest duty that devolves upon youth is in their own homes, *blessing father and mother, brothers and sisters, by affection and true interest*. {3T 80.2}

The word of God abounds in precepts and counsels enjoining respect for parents. It impresses upon the young the sacred duty of *loving and cherishing those who have guided them through infancy, childhood, and youth, up to manhood and womanhood*, and who are now in a great degree dependent upon them for peace and happiness. The Bible gives no uncertain sound on this subject; nevertheless, its teachings have been greatly disregarded.
{RH, January 26, 1886 par. 3}

It is the duty of the youth *to encourage sobriety*. Lightness, jesting, and joking will result in barrenness of soul and the loss of the favor of God. {2T 236.2}

Cultivate affection for your parents; seek to make them happy. This is the duty that God has enjoined upon you. "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." I have seen children who seemed to have no affection to give to their parents; no expressions of love and endearment, which are due them, and which they would appreciate; but they lavish an abundance of affection and caresses to select ones for whom they show preference. Is this as God would have it?--No, no. Bring all the rays of sunshine, of love, and of affection into the home circle. Your father and mother will appreciate these little attentions you can give. Your efforts to lighten the burdens, and to repress every word of fretfulness and ingratitude, show that you are not a thoughtless child, and that you do appreciate the care and love that has been bestowed upon you in the years of your helpless infancy and childhood. {YI, April 21, 1886 par. 6}

God is a God of order, and it is the duty of the youth *to observe strict rules*; for such practices will work for their advantage. {YI, September 7, 1893 par. 5}

It is the duty of every youth *to place himself decidedly and without reserve on the side of Christ*, in order that he may develop a character that will be after the similitude of Christ's, and grow up to the full stature of a man in Christ Jesus. {YI, April 26, 1894 par. 1}

FAMILIES

To become intelligent upon the subject of hygiene is the duty of every family professing to believe present truth. {CTBH 155.1}

It is the duty of everyone in the family *to be pleasant, to speak kindly*. Children are to respect and reverence their parents, and parents are to manifest patience, kindness, and affection for their children. Each one should seek in every possible way to please and make happy the members of the family circle. {ST, November 14, 1892 par. 7}

VARIOUS DUTIES APPOINTED BY GOD

CHRISTIANS

The living Christian loves duty, and enjoys even the severities which he must bear, if he is a soldier of the cross of Christ. {RH, December 2, 1875 par. 6}

The Christian's first duty *is in the home*. {ST, November 9, 1891 par. 3}

It is the duty of God's children *to be missionaries for Him*, to become acquainted with those who need help. --Testimonies, vol. 4, pp. 68, 69.

But be sure that those who are neglectful of their duty in the home circle *are not* prepared to work for other souls. {RH, September 15, 1891 par. 2}

It is the duty of every Christian *to acquire habits of order, thoroughness, and dispatch*.
{COL 344.1}

It is the duty of every Christian *to see that his example and influence are on the side of reform*.
{CTBH 30.2}

It is the duty of all *to study the various points of our faith*, that they may be prepared to give a reason for the hope that is within them, with meekness and fear.
-- Review and Herald, April 1, 1880

It is the duty of everyone *to follow Christ, without undue anxiety as to the work assigned to others*. {DA 816.2}

Christians should regard it as a religious duty *to repress a spirit of envy or emulation*.
{5T 242.1}

It is the duty of all who have learned the way of life *to teach others what it means to believe in the Word of God*. --Review and Herald, May 9, 1912.

It is the duty of every believer *to fulfil faithfully his baptismal vows*.
{AUCR, October 7, 1907 par. 14}

Self-denial in dress is a part of our Christian duty. {BEcho, September 19, 1898 par. 6}

The present duty of every true child of God is *to wait patiently, to watch vigilantly, to work faithfully*, until the coming of the Lord, that we may be prepared for the solemn event.
{GCB, October 1, 1896 par. 1}

It is the duty of everyone who professes to be a Christian *to keep his thoughts under the control of reason and oblige himself to be cheerful and happy*. --Letter 1, March 29, 1883

It is the duty of God's children *to be cheerful*. {RH, April 28, 1859 par. 6}

It is the duty of every child of God to inquire, *Wherein am I separate from the world?*
{4bSG 68.1}

It is the effect of sin to deaden the moral perceptions, so that the wrongdoer does not realize the enormity of transgression, and without the convicting power of the Holy Spirit he remains in partial blindness to his sin. It is the duty of Christ's servants ***to show these erring ones their peril.*** {PP 361.2}

It is the duty of every child of God ***to store his mind with divine truth;*** and the more he does this, the more strength and clearness of mind he will have to fathom the deep things of God. And his growth in grace will be more and more vigorous, as the principles of truth are carried out in his daily life. {ST, March 10, 1887 par. 13}

It is the duty of the servant of Christ, under every circumstance, ***to ask himself, What can I do to help others ?*** Having done his best, he is to leave the consequences with God. {9T 56.4}

It is the duty of every Christian ***to seek a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures.***
{RH, October 9, 1883 par. 1}

It is the duty of true Christians ***to practice temperance in eating, in drinking, and in dressing.***
{RH, December 1, 1885 par. 7}

It is the duty of every Christian ***to vindicate the honor of God by winning souls to Christ.***
{RH, May 21, 1901 par. 14}

It is the duty of every Christian ***to follow closely the example of Christ;*** to cultivate peace and hope and joy, which will be manifested in unfeigned cheerfulness, and habitual serenity.
{ST, June 15, 1882 par. 6}

It is the duty of every Christian ***to maintain the honor of God*** by his own unselfish, spotless life, and ***fearlessly to condemn sin*** in all its forms. {ST, July 27, 1882 par. 26}

It is the duty of every Christian ***to see and understand how to live and die."***
{ST, September 20, 1883 par. 5}

It is the duty of every one who claims to believe on Jesus Christ ***to become a worker for God.***
{PH007 27.1}

On all Christians rests a solemn duty ***to economize,*** that they may be better able to help those in need. {RH, November 17, 1904 par. 9}

On every Christian man and woman rests the solemn duty of ***regulating and contracting personal expenses,*** that by so doing they may be able to help the needy, feed the hungry, and clothe the naked.--Manuscript 106, 1901. {RH, March 20, 1958 par. 14}

A solemn duty rests upon every one who believes in Christ, ***to go outside the church and seek in every way to save souls.*** To be a Christian means to be Christlike, and upon all Christians rests the burden of working as Christ worked. {ST, November 29, 1899 par. 1}

Even if the end were not near, it would be the duty of every Christian ***to be true to his profession of faith,*** and by an example of simplicity and self-denial, ***to rebuke the pride and selfishness of the ungodly.*** {RH, March 28, 1882 par. 1}

VARIOUS DUTIES APPOINTED BY GOD

THE CHURCH

It is the duty of all, not only of those who occupy the position of watchmen on the walls of Zion, but of the laymen also, **to do their utmost to advance the cause of God and save their fellow-men.** {GW92 465.2}

It is the duty of each church **to make careful, judicious arrangements for the care of its poor and sick.**--Letter 169, 1901

The children are God's property, and it is the duty of every church member **to take an interest in their salvation.**-- Ms. 47, 1908.

Those who have been brought together in church capacity have bound themselves by their act in joining the church **to keep evil speaking out of their ranks.** It is the duty of those in responsible positions in the church **to closely guard this matter to see that order and harmony are preserved in the church** --Manuscript 26, July 15, 1886,

It is the duty of those who stand as leaders and teachers of the people **to instruct church members how to labor in missionary lines,** and then to set in operation the great, grand work of proclaiming widely this message, that must arouse every unworked city before the crisis shall come, when, through the working of satanic agencies, the doors now open to the message of the third angel shall be closed. --Manuscript 61, Sept. 17, 1909,

If unsound doctrine is introduced, the safety of the flock of Christ will be endangered; and it is the duty of those in authority, who are jealous for the truth as it is in Jesus, **to make a firm, decided protest.** {RH, January 16, 1900 par. 7}

In these last days it is our duty **to ascertain the full meaning of the first, second, and third angels' messages.**--Ms. 15, 1896.

HOW TO BE PREPARED FOR DUTY

By prayer man is braced for duty and prepared for trial. Morning and evening our earnest prayers should ascend to God for His blessing and guidance. {ST, January 29, 1902 par. 2}

The strength gained by prayer gives a preparation for duty and fills the heart with peace. {ST, January 29, 1902 par. 9}

Secret prayer must be maintained; **to neglect this duty** would be to throw aside one's weapons before going into battle. {RH, April 24, 1883 par. 6}

To discharge every duty that devolves upon those who are entrusted with sacred responsibility, in the right manner, **calls for humble prayer,** and **a close examination of self** and **study of the life of Christ.** --Letter 11, 1895.

By communing with God in prayer, and by exercising trusting faith, with thankfulness of heart, we are prepared to go forth, in the name and the efficiency of Christ, **to any duty,** any trial, to which we may be called.--Ms 146, 1902.

WARNINGS THAT CANNOT BE IGNORED WITHOUT CONSEQUENCE

Love has a twin sister, which is duty. *Love and duty stand side by side.* {3T 195.1}

The voice of duty is the voice of God. {RH, March 2, 1905 par. 13}

The voice of God is heard, but *we may be so far away from Him, that we can only hear the echo.* There are words of instruction coming from God day by day, and in an hour that we know not He may give words to His chosen messengers for us which we lose for want of discernment and appreciation. Then we go stumbling along in the uncertainty of night, and know not at what we stumble. There is a brightening glory for us as we advance, but which we shall never see unless we do advance. We may catch a few sparks, but that is all. The brightness of the heavenly glory we do not see. Letter 147, 1897, pp. 6, 7.

When we deviate from the plain path of duty, *a train of circumstances will arise that seems irresistibly to draw us farther and farther from the right.* Needless intimacies with those who have no respect for God will seduce us ere we are aware. {CTBH 115.2}

Angels of God will preserve his people while they walk in the path of duty; but *there is no assurance of such protection for those who deliberately venture upon Satan's ground.* {CTBH 115.3}

It is an important duty for all to become familiar with the tenor of their conduct from day to day *and the motives which prompt their actions.* They need to become acquainted with the particular motives which prompt particular actions. Every action of their lives is judged, not by the external appearance, but from the motive which dictated the action.--3T 507

Our duty is not decided by what others may plan for us. The question for each to settle is, In doing this, shall I be merely gratifying my own wishes, or *is it a duty the Lord has appointed for me? Is this His way, or a way of my own choosing?*--Manuscript 35, 1896.

Unless we ourselves do our duty to those around us, *the day of God will come upon us as a thief.* Confusion fills the world, and a great terror is soon to come upon human beings. The end is very near. We who know the truth should be preparing for what is soon to break upon the world as an overwhelming surprise. {RH, November 22, 1906 par. 6}

In the discharge of our duties we are *neither to despise nor to fear our enemies.* {7T 107.2}

"God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are." This prayer represents the prayers of many. They think that *because they perform outward religious duties,* they are entitled to the approval of God. Like the Pharisee, they say, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are." But they are self-centered and self-sufficient, and, altho they pray, they are unblest of God. He says to them: "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked; I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see." {ST, October 21, 1897 par. 4}

The Saviour seeks to impress our minds with the necessity of charity, love, that earnest prayer that will ascend to God from *hearts that are sincere in their religious duties.* {YI, June 15, 1899 par. 1}

SOME WHO NEED SPECIAL PRAYER

There is a disposition with many to be impetuous, headstrong, willful. They have not heeded the unerring counsel of the Word of God. They have not battled with self, and obtained precious victories. ***Their proud, unbending will has driven them from the path of duty*** and obedience to wander about in the wilderness of disappointment.--Letter 3, 1886.

Those who are at variance in almost everything else, will unite in ***persecuting the few who dare to pursue the straightforward path of duty***. {SW, April 12, 1904 par. 7}

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. "My people would not hearken to my voice," he says; "so I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust; and they walked in their own counsels." Ps. 81:11,12. {SW, September 1, 1908 par. 7}

In the face of the most positive commands of God, ***men will follow their own inclination, and then dare to pray over the matter***, and endeavor to prevail upon God to allow them to go contrary to his expressed will. They have exercises of mind which they consider a most wonderful experience which God has given them; but God is not pleased with such prayers, and it is not God who gives them the "wonderful experience." {SW, September 1, 1908 par. 5}

It is right here that we have met with the greatest difficulties in religious matters. The plainest facts may be presented, and the clearest truths brought before the mind, sustained by the Word of God. but ear and heart are closed, and the all-convincing argument is "***my experience***." Some will say, "***The Lord has blessed me in believing and doing as I have***; therefore I cannot be in error." Thus the most elevating, sanctifying truths of the Bible are rejected for what they are pleased to call their experience. {SW, September 1, 1908 par. 2}

While we are in this world, we must secure by the sweat of our brow the bread that we eat. Many are inclined to divorce temporal business from spiritual service. Many think that the time devoted to temporal things is lost. They think that if they could devote their time wholly to ***religious duties***, they would be much more fervent and earnest in religious things. But Christ has left us no such example. He was a true worker, in temporal as well as spiritual things; and into all he did, he brought a determination to do his Father's will. It is not God's intention that the business of life shall stand still, ***that all duties shall be regarded as unimportant*** but the ministry, and the lines of work embraced by the ministry. {SpM 93.4}

Very many who are seeking for happiness will be disappointed in their hopes, because they seek it amiss, and are indulging in sinful tempers and selfish feelings. By neglecting to discharge the little duties and observe the little courtesies of life, they violate the principles on which happiness depends. ***True happiness is not to be found in self-gratification, but in the path of duty***.--Signs of the Times, Nov. 11, 1886.

God points out the path of duty, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it." In that path lie self-denial and the cross, but it is only path of peace and safety. But there are many who are turning their backs on this path, and are walking in the companionship of self,--a companionship that they have every reason to dread. {RH, November 24, 1910 par. 4}

Oh Lord, please help us to take up only the duties which you plan for us. Forgive us for neglecting our duties. In Jesus name, Amen.

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR DUTY

The eagle of the Alps is sometimes beaten down by the tempest into the narrow defiles of the mountains. Angry storm-clouds shut in this mighty bird of the forest, their dense, dark masses separating her from the sunny heights where she has built her nest. For a time her efforts to escape seem fruitless. She dashes to and fro, beating the air with her strong wings, and waking the echoes of the mountains with her cries. At length, with a scream of triumph, she darts upward, and, piercing the clouds, she is once more in the clear sunlight, with the darkness and tempest far beneath. Ever thus, by mighty efforts, have God's chosen servants urged their way upward, breasting opposition, reproach, and persecution, in their conflicts with principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places. {ST, July 26, 1883 par. 13}

When the path of duty is obstructed by difficulties the most formidable, when it seems that the soul must give up in despair, *the glory hidden behind the cloud* that has darkened the way shines forth in all its brightness. {ST, October 21, 1880 par. 11}

Views of heavenly things do not incapacitate men and women for the duties of this life, but rather render them more efficient and faithful. Although the grand realities of the eternal world seem to charm the mind, engross the attention, and enrapture the whole being, yet with spiritual enlightenment there comes a calm, heaven-born diligence, that *enables the Christian to take pleasure in the performance of the commonplace duties of life*. Our daily cares and responsibilities are tests by which it is manifested whether or not we will be found faithful in little things, that we may be intrusted with greater responsibilities. "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." He who has faithfully employed his talents for his Master, will hear from his lips the words of approbation, "*Well done, thou good and faithful servant*; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." {RH, January 7, 1890 par. 12}

A FEW OTHER WAYS TO RECOGNIZE WHEN GOD IS SPEAKING

The Holy Spirit is not a servant, but a controlling power. He causes the truth to shine into minds, *and speaks through every discourse where the minister surrenders himself to the divine working*. It is the Spirit that surrounds the soul with a holy atmosphere, and speaks to the impenitent through words of warning, pointing them to Him who takes away the sin of the world. {GW 155.2}

God speaks through his appointed agencies, and let no man, or confederacy of men, insult the Spirit of God by refusing to hear *the message of God's word from the lips of his chosen messengers*. By refusing to hear the message of God, men close themselves in a chamber of darkness. They shut their own souls away from vast blessings, and rob Christ of the glory that should come to him, by showing disrespect to his appointed agencies. {RH, September 12, 1893 par. 4}

The Lord speaks *to His delegated servants*. He will give them the very message He wants them to have.--Letter 23, 1885.

God speaks to men *through His servants, giving cautions and warnings, and rebuking sin*. {PP 268.2}

God speaks to *whom He will* to carry His message. --Letter 19d, 1892.

God speaks to the human family *in language they can comprehend*. {PH086 33.2}

God speaks *through the men who understand the guiding of the Holy Spirit.*
Sanitarium, Calif, Nov. 2, 1906. B.280'07

When God speaks, *He means what He says.* {1T 518.2}

When God speaks, *it is enough.* {ST, January 13, 1881 par. 16}

When God speaks to man, *his voice is to be heard, and his word is to be obeyed.*
{ST, October 1, 1894 par. 1}

God speaks *in his word*, and fulfills this word in the world. {RH, February 6, 1900 par. 11}

In the history of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar, *God speaks to nations of today.*
{ST, July 20, 1891 par. 6}

Often the Lord speaks *in judgment* to repress iniquity. {RH, August 31, 1905 par. 3}

The Lord speaks to *the heart that humbles itself before Him.*
--Review and Herald, Dec. 15, 1896.

There are recorded in Genesis *various ways* in which God speaks to the heathen.--Ms 117, 1898.

God speaks to His people in blessings bestowed; and when these are not appreciated, *He speaks to them in blessings removed*, that they may be led to see their sins, and return to Him with all the heart. {PP 470.2}

The Lord speaks to human beings in imperfect speech, in order that the degenerate senses, the dull, earthly perception, of earthly beings may comprehend His words. --Letter 121, 1901.

God speaks to us *through His providential workings and through the influence of His Spirit upon the heart.* {SC 87.2}

Through nature and revelation, through *His providence*, and by the influence of His Spirit, God speaks to us. {SC 93.1}

God speaks to us today, *in the warnings, counsels, and reproofs given to ancient Israel.*
{ST, August 18, 1881 par. 12}

Satan trembles when the voice of God speaks through his instruments, *giving cautions and warnings, and rebuking sin.* {RH, June 20, 1882 par. 11}

God speaks to all men *through his providence in nature.* He makes known to all that he is the living God. {ST, August 12, 1889 par. 7}

God speaks *to our senses in His created works.*--Manuscript 25, 1890.

God speaks to families who have refused to recognize Him, *sometimes in the whirlwind and storm, sometimes face to face* as He talked with Moses.--Ms 84b, 1897.

Heavenly Father, please help us to recognize and obey your voice when you speak to us. Help us to know that we are being guided by the Holy Spirit. In Jesus name, Amen.