

First Sabbath

Memory Gem: "Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

Volody and the Beasts

What's that lying there on the ground? Ten-year-old Volody reached down and picked up a book that someone must have thrown away. The cover read: Holy Bible. The Ukrainian boy had never been in a church, but he'd heard the Bible talked about miracles, and supernatural things interested him. He picked up the Bible, a children's story version without chapters and verses, and took it home.

Over the next few days Volody read portions of the Bible he'd found. Still, the God of the Bible seemed far away, not really someone to whom a 10-year-old Ukrainian boy could relate. Volody set the Bible aside and didn't think much about it.

One day as Volody waited in line to buy some bread for his mother, a nearby poster caught his eye. *What in the world is this about?* Volody wondered. On the poster were weird, frightening-looking monsters—some of them with more than one head! Studying the poster more closely, he saw the poster mentioned the Bible! According to the poster, those monsters had something to do with prophecies in the Bible book of Daniel.

I don't care about the Bible, but I've got to learn more about those monsters! Volody told himself. Besides, the speaker was an American. Government officials had warned, "Those Americans are real devils!" Others had said, "They have horns and tails!" Since Volody didn't have any other way of knowing, he was determined to find out the truth. Volody noted the time and place of the first meeting. *I have to see all this for myself!* he thought.



When the date arrived, Volody found a seat and eagerly awaited the presentation. What would the American really look like? But when the speaker appeared, he didn't have either a tail or horns! In fact, he looked a lot like a normal human being!

Volody stayed for the presentation and learned that those beasts represented some important things that would happen in the future. This was called "prophecy."

As if that news weren't enough, Volody heard the speaker talk about Jesus. It turned out that hundreds of Bible prophecies related to Him! The American talked about how Jesus loved people so much that He had died for them—including Volody! Even more stunning, he learned that Jesus was coming back to take people to heaven! More Bible prophecies told about this future event. For some reason it seemed that the Bible that Volody had found hadn't included that part.

Eventually Volody found the Seventh-day Adventist church in town and began learning more about prophecy and Jesus Christ. He accepted Jesus as his Savior and promised to serve Him no matter what. There would come times when that wouldn't be easy, but Volody kept his promise.

Volody learned a lot about the future when he attended those prophecy meetings, but there was something in his own future that he couldn't see. Eventually Volody became a Seventh-day Adventist pastor and moved to the United States. So far, the only Americans he's seen with horns and a tail have been at Halloween. They represent the devil, and Volody wants nothing to do with him!*

*Story adapted from Ellen Weaver Bailey, "Volody and the Weird Beasts," *Guide*, April 23, 2016.

THINK IT THROUGH

- Why has God sent prophets?
- Can you think of a Bible prophecy? Who delivered the message? What was it about?
- Would you like to be a prophet? Why or why not?

DO IT!

Just for fun, write down exactly what you think will be the first words you hear tomorrow *anywhere outside of your own home*. Listen carefully! Were you right? If so, does this make you a prophet? Why or why not?

Amaze a friend by showing them the prophecy of Cyrus in Isaiah 45:1-3. What was their response? Why do you think the person reacted the way they did? ☺

Sunday

Memory Gem: "For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21).

Held at Gunpoint!

Diane stared down the barrels of three machine guns. "We're going to fill you full of holes!" shouted one of the guerrilla soldiers. This country had been in a state of unrest for some time, and now Diane was experiencing it firsthand.

She'd been on a bus returning from visiting an orphanage. In the early-morning darkness, soldiers had stepped out onto the muddy jungle road and stopped the bus.

"Did you hear they bombed the communication tower in San Luis?" one passenger had whispered. "Yes, and over to the east they killed some people!" another had said.

The guerrilla soldiers had climbed onto the bus. "Everyone get out!" one of the soldiers had ordered. Machine gun-toting soldiers outside had yanked open the bus's door.

One by one the passengers had jumped to the ground through the rear exit. Then Diane's turn had come, and she had jumped too. That's when the soldier had told Diane that they were going to be shot.

But now Diane looked back at the bus's rear door and saw a stooped-over, old woman standing in it. Suddenly Diane heard a calm voice inside her mind say, *Help that old woman*. Courageously, Diane turned her back on the machine guns and said to the old woman, "*Venga, senora*." ("Come, let me help you down.") Diane helped the old woman to the ground as the guerrilla soldiers looked on in bewilderment.

Diane continued helping others to the ground: children, a mother with a baby, and another older woman. After she finished, Diane turned to see the soldiers standing by, their machine guns hanging limply by their sides.

There would be more excitement before their ordeal was over, but none of the passengers lost their lives. Thanks to Diane listening to a still small voice, her actions foiled the soldiers' evil plans to

take her life. It's always best to follow that heavenly voice's instructions!*

*Story adapted from Diane Aguirre, "Guerrillas, Machine Guns, and God," *Guide*, September 12, 2015.

THINK IT THROUGH

- Think about a time when you were asked to deliver a message. Was it a written or spoken message? Were you successful?
- Can you think of a time someone told you something you didn't want to hear? What did you do?
- Why do you think God uses prophets instead of just giving us messages directly?

DO IT!

Gather a few friends and whisper a message into the first person's ear. (The message can't be repeated.) Do this for each person and see how accurate the message is when it gets to the last person. What helps a prophet's message not to get mixed up?

Ask a parent or other loved one to share a time when they received a life-changing message. Were they glad they did what the message told them to do? Why or why not? ©



Monday

Memory Gem: "You will know them by their fruits" (Matt. 7:16).

The War That Never Happened

Mike was a prophet. At least, that's what plenty of people thought.

One day Mike carefully wrote the following mysterious prophecy:

*"Mars and the scepter will be in conjunction,
A calamitous war under Cancer.*

A short time afterward a new King will be anointed,

Who will bring peace to the earth for a very long time."

What could this strange prophecy mean? "Mars" and a "scepter"? Was a war going to end with everyone getting cancer? Who was this "new king"?

This wasn't the first prophecy to come from Mike, whose actual name was Michel de Nostredame. The man was a French physician who lived from 1503 to 1566. Eventually he simply became known as Nostradamus.

Nostradamus wrote a book containing 942 four-line poetic prophecies called "quatrains." The book, whose English title is simply *The Prophecies*, is still being used—and believed—by many people. All the "prophecies" in the book sound pretty weird, just like the one above.

So what about the above prophecy? Can you figure out what event it's predicting? Through the centuries some people have made a few suggestions. One of the most recent involved some folks saying "Mars" was the planet Mars, and the "scepter" referred to the planet Jupiter. These two planets would supposedly be "in conjunction," or "lined up," in space on June 21, 2002. That's when a terrible war would begin!

Except that it didn't happen.

Actually, lots of experts agree that the prophecies of Nostradamus can mean, well, pretty much anything you want them to mean!

It's important to remember that telling the future isn't always a prophet's main job. They might also write, preach, or deliver God's message in some other way.

But how do you know if a prophet is really God's messenger? Here are four ways to help you know whether a prophet's message is from heaven—or somewhere else.

BIBLE. The prophet Isaiah wrote, "To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20). In other words, a person's prophecy must match what the Bible says on the subject.

ACTIONS. "You will know them by their fruits" (Matthew 7:16). How does the person claiming to be a prophet live their life? Does the person cheat? Does the person use foul language? A true prophet's life will show the fruits of the Spirit mentioned in Galatians 5:22, 23, traits such as love, gentleness, and self-control. In other words, what Jesus is like!

RESULTS. "When the word of the prophet comes to pass, the prophet will be known as one whom the Lord has truly sent" (Jeremiah 28:9). In other words, how do things turn out after the prophet delivers their message? Does the prophecy come true?

JESUS. "By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God" (1 John 4:2). What does the prophet say about Jesus? If it's something like "Well, Jesus was a good teacher, but He wasn't God's Son," run the other direction!

DID YOU KNOW?

In the United States a man named Harold Camping claimed to know the date of Jesus' return. He gained many followers, even after Jesus didn't return on three different dates: September 6, 1994; May 21, 2011; and October 21, 2011.

A few false prophets are mentioned in the Bible, including one named Hananiah. You can read about him in Jeremiah 28:15-17.

THINK IT THROUGH

- Why would someone who's not a real prophet claim to be one?
- Do you think Satan might be behind certain false prophecies? Why or why not?
- How do you think you'd react if someone came and told you they were a prophet sent by God? ☺



Tuesday

Memory Gem: "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

Cracking the Code

What a strange stone! Pierre must have thought. It was July 1799. A man named Pierre-François Bouchard was helping to rebuild an ancient Egyptian fort near the town of Rosetta in Egypt. Suddenly he noticed something sticking out of the ground. It turned out to be a large black slab of stone. The stone had writing on it!

Later people began studying the one-ton, black rock slab, which contained portions of messages written in three different languages, or "scripts." The first language was Greek, and the second was an Egyptian language called Demotic. The third set of scripts was Egyptian hieroglyphics, a system of writing based on symbols and pictures.

The experts were excited! They realized that the three different languages must be telling the same story! Until then, no one had figured out the secret to understanding these super-old Egyptian word pictures. But now, by using the first two languages as their "code key," they would finally be able to understand the meaning of the third language: hieroglyphics!

It took a long time to figure out the entire Rosetta Stone, but it was worth it. Thanks to its

discovery, the ancient “code” of Egyptian hieroglyphics had been broken at last!

Just as people needed the Rosetta Stone to understand hieroglyphics, we need the right information to understand prophecy *properly*. Without the right information to understand prophecy, we'll end up *wrongly* dividing (translating) the word of truth (the Bible)! Too many people drift from the Bible when they try to figure out a prophecy and end up with some pretty wacky interpretations!

Here are a few tips to help keep *you* on the right track when reading a prophecy:

Always pray for the Holy Spirit to help you understand a prophet's message. Accept all the heavenly help you can get!

Know your Bible. Even if it seems hard to figure out a prophecy, it will help if you know the general idea behind the Bible's main message about God: He loves you and He wants to someday take you to heaven. The Bible is the foundation to help you understand more and more as you grow and grow!

Try a more kid-friendly Bible. It might help the text make more sense to you.

Ask for help from people you trust. Prophecies can be confusing! If you can't figure out a prophet's message, or if you've heard two different interpretations, get help from someone whom you know loves Jesus.

Don't think you have to know it all now. Each day ask God to show you what you need to know about Him. When the time is right, He'll bring understanding to your mind—one prophecy at a time.

DID YOU KNOW?

The words on the Rosetta Stone are actually pretty boring. It's a copy of a decree celebrating the day Ptolemy V Epiphanes became king of Egypt.

Egypt shows up in many Bible prophecies, including this one in Hosea 11:1: “When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son.” Where did Joseph and Mary take Jesus to escape King Herod? Yep—Egypt! From there, the little family went to live in Nazareth, which is when Jesus was “called” out of Egypt.

THINK IT THROUGH

- Have you ever made an exciting discovery? Did it help you in some way? If so, how?
- How do you feel when you can't understand something? What do you do about it?
- Can you think of a Bible prophecy that's easy to understand? What does it mean to you? ☺

Wednesday

Memory Gem: “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9).

Krystal's Courage

Krystal* was very bright. In fact, if grades meant anything, Krystal was the brightest student in her class.

One day Krystal was startled by words spoken by her teacher, Mr. Campbell. “You've gotten too used to getting good grades,” the teacher said harshly to Krystal. “Well, let me tell you something—I'm going to do all I can to fix that ‘problem.’”

Stunned, Krystal tried to figure out why Mr. Campbell was being so unkind to her. One of the few Christians in her public school, Krystal wondered if her faith had something to do with Mr. Campbell's attitude.

As the weeks went by, Mr. Campbell continued to make life difficult for Krystal. One day in class the topic turned to how life came to be. Most of her classmates seemed to believe in evolution. One said he believed in creation, but the six days mentioned in the Bible had to actually be millions of years. Finally Krystal spoke up.

“I believe what the Bible says about creation,” she said. “It says, ‘In six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is—’”

“Wait!” Mr. Campbell rudely interrupted. “Are you trying to tell us you actually believe that nonsense?”

“Yes,” Krystal replied. “If God is who He says He is, why couldn't He create the world in six days? Why would He need millions of years? Just because we can't understand that kind of power doesn't mean it doesn't exist.”

“That's crazy talk!” Mr. Campbell said with a sneer. “What about the dinosaurs? What happened to them?” he asked.

When Krystal explained her belief in Noah's flood, Mr. Campbell threw back his head and laughed. “You really believe that? How stupid can you get?”

Something evil seemed to come over Mr. Campbell just then. He rushed into the school hallway. Spotting a couple of teachers and a group of students, he shouted, “You have to come in here

and listen to what Krystal believes!" Soon the room was filled with teachers and students all making fun of Krystal.

Despite all the trouble Mr. Campbell kept causing, Krystal's grades remained better than anyone else's. This meant she would be giving a speech the last weekend of school.

One day the principal called her aside. "Now, Krystal, I know you're a Christian, but you can't include a prayer in your speech. It's against the law."

But Krystal knew that wasn't true. "No, Mr. Sheffield, the law says I can have a prayer as long as school officials don't tell us what to say." The principal knew he was defeated.

When the day of the speech came, Krystal walked to the podium and bowed her head and prayed. After saying "Amen," she went on to give a powerful talk.

Later Krystal was congratulated by family, friends, classmates, and others. How thankful she was that the God who created her had helped her to stay strong for Him.†

* Names have been changed

† This story was adapted from Richard G. Edison, "Krystal's Clear Conviction," *Guide*, Mar. 11, 2006.

THINK IT THROUGH

- Have you ever heard of Ellen White before? If so, what do you think?
- If you know something about Ellen White's work, what words come to mind when you think of her? Be honest and share and discuss your response at family worship or Sabbath School.
- What situations in your life and around the world do you think could use some heavenly wisdom? Where can you find out if Ellen White wrote something about these kinds of situations?

DO IT!

Take a walk in a park, in the woods, or in another nature setting. List at least five things you see that make it hard for you to believe in evolution.

During the next few weeks, write down some problems you're having in your life. Either by yourself or with the help of a friend and/or trusted adult, see if you can find some help with some of these problems in the writings of Ellen White. Your Sabbath School teacher or pastor can help. If you have Internet access, you can check there as well.

Read or watch a video about dinosaurs. Does what you read match up with what Ellen White and the Bible say? ©

Thursday

Memory Gem: "Your sons and daughters shall prophesy; your old men shall dream dreams" (Joel 2:28).

The Police Sergeant's Dream

Several police officers in South Auckland, New Zealand, were tired of having so much crime in their area. "What can we do to help change things?" they asked each other.

"What if we could give first-time criminals something to read that would help them make better choices in the future?" the senior sergeant asked. As the officers talked further, they came up with an idea for a magazine about criminals who'd given their lives to Jesus. They would call the magazine *Crime 2 Christ*. Everyone was excited about the idea for the new magazine, but their police department didn't have enough money to fund this.

Then one night that same police sergeant had a strange dream. In the dream was a woman who was going to have a baby. Above the woman were written the words "Seventh-day Adventist."

Suddenly the sergeant awoke. *I must write down what I've just dreamed*, he told himself. After he'd written the dream, he went back to sleep.

The next morning at the police station the sergeant told the others what he thought the dream meant. "I believe the Seventh-day Adventist Church will 'give birth' to this magazine project," he said.

"I'm a Seventh-day Adventist," one of the officers said excitedly, "and I know of a local Adventist church that would be interested in helping!"

Soon the police sergeant met with Pastor Hurlow of the nearby Papatoetoe Seventh-day Adventist



Church. “Yes,” the pastor said with a smile, “we’d like to help with this magazine project.” But Pastor Hurlow explained that while the church would help with writing and other tasks, they couldn’t provide any money for the project.

The very next day a woman walked into the police station and asked to speak with the senior sergeant. When the man appeared, the woman said, “God sent me here. I don’t know why, but tell me what you are doing in the community.”

After the sergeant told her about the magazine project, the woman said, “Now I know why God sent me here to talk with you. We’d like to donate some money. I’ll go pray and talk to some people. Then we’ll get back with you.”

A few days later the woman returned to the police station. “I have NZ\$10,000 ready for you to use on your magazine project,” she said with a smile. This was enough to print the first issue of the magazine! “Oh,” the woman added. “I also have more money for your next issue.”

The first issue of *Crime 2 Christ* included the story of Amos, a founding member of a huge gang called The Head Hunters, and a woman who went from a life of crime to following Jesus Christ. Many people have been baptized because they read something in *Crime 2 Christ* magazine that touched their heart.

When God gives someone a dream, He also helps to make it come true!

* Story adapted from Andrew McChesney, “The Policeman’s Dream,” am.adventistmission.org.

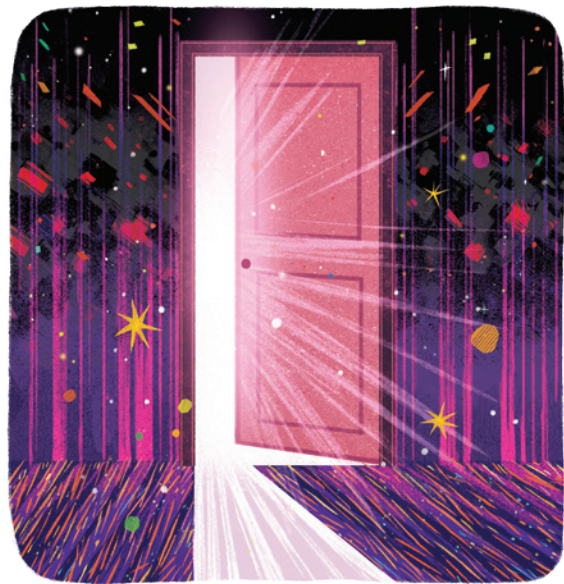
DID YOU KNOW?

The Bible says that dreams still play a role in prophecy. (See today’s Memory Gem.)

Since a prophet’s job may include more than telling the future, such as teaching, preaching, even dreaming, God might someday choose *you* to be a prophet—even if you can’t tell the future!

THINK IT THROUGH

- What are some ways to help know whether or not a person’s dream (or other special message) is really from God?
- Since the gift of prophecy can include teaching and preaching, are *all* teachers and preachers prophets? Why or why not?
- Many Christians believe the “Dark Day” of 1780 was a prophetic sign. (George Washington actually wrote about it.) Today some scientists say it was smoke from a Canadian forest fire that caused the Dark Day. Does this make a difference? Why or why not? ©



Friday

Memory Gem: “These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes” (Rev. 14:4).

The Green Cord Dream

Ellen was discouraged! The 15-year-old girl loved Jesus, but she didn’t feel that she would ever be good enough to please Him. Later Ellen wrote about her feelings during this time. “It seemed to me that my doom was fixed, that the Spirit of the Lord had left me, never to return.”* But one night Ellen had a dream that helped her see things in a whole new light.

In the dream Ellen saw herself in deep sadness. *If only I could see Jesus, He’d help me feel better!* she thought. Just then in the dream an angel appeared. “Do you wish to see Jesus?” the angel asked Ellen. “He is here, and you can see Him if you desire to do so. Take everything you possess and follow me.”

Of course she wanted to see Jesus! So in the dream Ellen gathered up her few possessions and followed the angel. “Keep looking upward,” the angel told Ellen, “or else you might grow dizzy and fall.”

What a dream Ellen was having! Her heart seemed full of joy as she followed the angel up a steep stairway. At last Ellen stood before a door. “Leave your things here,” the angel said to Ellen in the dream. With that, the angel swung open the door . . . and there stood Jesus!

Ellen could hardly believe it! Suddenly she fell at her Savior’s feet. Jesus came near to Ellen, and with a gentle smile on His face, He placed His

hand on the girl's head. "Fear not," He told Ellen.

Ellen felt too filled with joy to speak. In the dream she seemed to know that she'd reached the safety and peace of heaven itself! Jesus' loving eyes were still upon her, and Ellen's heart bubbled up with joy. Now Ellen realized that it was only by trusting in Jesus that she would one day live in heaven.

Soon in the dream the angel guide opened the door. Ellen and the angel left the presence of Jesus, but something had changed—something too wonderful for words.

Now something else most unusual happened in the dream. The angel handed Ellen a green cord. "Place this next to your heart," the angel instructed. "When you wish to see Jesus, take the green cord and stretch it all the way out. Do this often, because you don't want the cord to get knotted up," the angel said. To Ellen, the green cord represented faith and trusting in Jesus.

In the dream Ellen placed the cord near her heart and joyfully went down the narrow stairway. Along the way, she praised God and excitedly told everyone she met along the way where they could find Jesus.

When Ellen awoke, the world seemed brighter, and she had a peace in her heart that hadn't been there before. And it was all because of Jesus!

* Ellen G. White, *Early Writings* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1882, 1945), p. 79. See also pages 80 and 81.

THINK IT THROUGH

- What is the main point of the "green cord dream"?
- Has Ellen White affected your life? If so, how?
- Why do you think some people choose to not pay attention to Ellen White's messages?

DO IT!

Using a shoelace, yarn, or something similar, make your own "green cord." Keep it where it will help to remind you that any time is a good time to trust in Jesus! Perhaps attach a favorite Bible promise to the cord.

Cut a piece of cardboard about seven inches (17.78 centimeters) tall and five inches (12.7 centimeters) wide. Cut a door that can open, leaving about a half-inch "door frame." (See illustration.) Draw or find a nice picture of Jesus and glue it to the backside of the doorframe. If you wish, you can cut a window in the door to show Jesus' face. Now, whenever you open the door, Jesus will be waiting for you! ©

Second Sabbath

Memory Gem: "For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10).

The Incredible Vision

On a Sunday afternoon in Lovett's Grove, Ohio, James White had just finished giving a funeral sermon. Ellen, his wife, stepped to the front of the little schoolhouse where the funeral had been held. She wanted to offer her own words of encouragement. But God had something special planned for this moment in history.

Ellen suddenly went into vision, something she'd done many times before. In this vision God showed her scenes from the invisible battle taking place between Jesus and Satan. She saw how Satan had once been a respected angel in heaven, along with how he'd sinned and been cast to earth. As Ellen remained in vision, scenes passed before her. She saw Jesus' death on Calvary, and how Sunday would replace the true Sabbath as God's special day. Ellen was also shown how Satan would try to trick people into thinking dead people went straight to heaven, and that they could talk with these "departed" loved ones!

Finally after two hours, Ellen's vision ended—but not before God told her something else. She was to write out this vision, which would become known as the "great controversy" vision. God also told her that Satan would try to stop her from sharing what she'd seen in vision. As people left the schoolhouse, some said, "We have seen strange things today!"

Soon James and Ellen White left Ohio and headed for Jackson, Michigan, to visit their friends the Palmers. Shortly after they arrived at the Palmers' home, something happened to Ellen. Later she wrote about it this way: "A strange, cold sensation struck my heart, passed over my head, and down my right side. . . . I tried to use my left arm and limb, but they were perfectly useless."¹

Satan was already trying to stop Ellen from writing out the vision! But thanks to prayer, Ellen slowly got better. She later wrote, "I was shown in vision that in the sudden attack at Jackson, Satan intended to take my life, in order to hinder the



work I was about to write; but angels of God were sent to my rescue.”² “The Lord heard and answered the faithful prayers of His children, and the power of Satan was broken.”³ Eventually Ellen was able to finish writing out the entire vision. You can read what she wrote in a book called *The Great Controversy*.

Today, thanks to the gift of prophecy God gave to Ellen White, God’s end-time people know a lot about how to be ready when Jesus comes again. It’s a special gift to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. But the special insights God gave to Ellen White don’t belong to just one group of people. They’re meant to be shared with the whole world! What an amazing privilege to play a part in making such a difference to others, not only in this lifetime, but forever!

¹ Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1915), p. 162.

² *Ibid.*, p. 163.

³ Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts* (Battle Creek, Mich.: James White, 1860), vol. 2, p. 272.

THINK IT THROUGH

- What would you say if someone told you Ellen White was no longer important?
- Who do you think was most important in Ellen White’s life? Why?

DO IT!

Buy or ask for someone to give you *Steps to Jesus*, a kid-friendly version of Ellen White’s book *Steps to Christ*. Read a few paragraphs each night before you go to bed. It will help you learn to love Jesus more.

Find a few especially meaningful sentences in *Steps to Jesus*, or another Ellen White book. Write the sentences or print them on a computer printer. Cut out small cards from cardboard and glue the sentences on the cardboard. Decorate the cards. You might “laminare” them by placing clear shipping tape on both sides and trimming the edges. Keeps the cards in a special place (consider making a little cardboard “card keeper” for them). Enjoy reading these encouraging quotes from time to time. You might even wish to memorize a few of these special thoughts from God’s end-time messenger, Ellen White.

Keep a written journal of especially meaningful things that Ellen White wrote or said. If you wish, include drawings that illustrate the important points. ©

Randy Fishell is former editor of *Guide* magazine.

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