

General Church Education



Family Lesson: I Samuel 9-10
The
Choosing of Saul

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The Choosing of Saul
I Samuel 9, 10

Family Talk:
THE CHOOSING OF SAUL –
SEEKING AFTER GOOD THINGS

Rev. Donald Rose

This story begins by telling about a man who had a son named Saul. Saul's father had some donkeys which got lost, so he sent his son to seek after them.

Some things we seek after in life we care about more than others. Would the man be seeking after those donkeys if his son were lost? Of course not, and that is why, after they had searched for a while, Saul said to his servant, "Come, let us return, lest my father cease caring about the donkeys and become worried about us" (*I Samuel 9:5*).

Samuel knew that they were seeking the donkeys, but there were much more important things to be thinking about. The Lord once said to people who were anxious about food and clothing:

"Your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (*Matthew 6:32, 33*).

Saul was introduced to new hopes and plans that he had not thought of before. He had not realized that he was destined to serve his nation as king. One of the reasons this story touches us is that there is a heavenly destiny and use for each of us in the Lord's kingdom of the heavens. There are important things ahead for us of which we hardly dream while we pursue our way and seek various things.

The Lord does say to us, **"Seek, and you shall find."** And He teaches us along the way to keep lifting our minds to seek higher things. Once, when people came seeking for the Lord, He said to them that they were seeking Him because He had given bread to eat, but there were higher reasons to seek for Him.

"Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you"
(*John 6:27*).

We are reminded of the saying in Isaiah:

“Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen diligently to Me, and eat that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live.”
(Isaiah 55:2, 3)

In our lives we seek after many things, and the Lord, our heavenly Father, knows that we need them. He tells us stories about people who seek, saying:

“The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it” (Matthew 13:45, 46).

He has given us this true story of Saul seeking for donkeys, and He gives the beautiful Psalm which says:

*One thing I have desired of the Lord,
That will I seek;
That I may dwell in the house of the Lord
All the days of my life,
To behold the beauty of the Lord,
And to inquire in His temple (Psalm 27:4).*



The Choosing of Saul

I Samuel 9 and 10

LEVEL 1 – SAUL’S DONKEYS

SAUL LOOKS FOR THE DONKEYS

The donkeys that belonged to Saul’s father were lost. He sent Saul and a servant to look for them.



Look at the picture on the next page. Can you help Saul find the donkeys?

Color the donkeys. Color the rest of the picture if you wish.

Saul lost his donkeys.
Can you find them?



The Choosing of Saul
I Samuel 9 and 10
LEVEL 2 – FINDING THE DONKEYS

Saul Searches for his Father's Donkeys

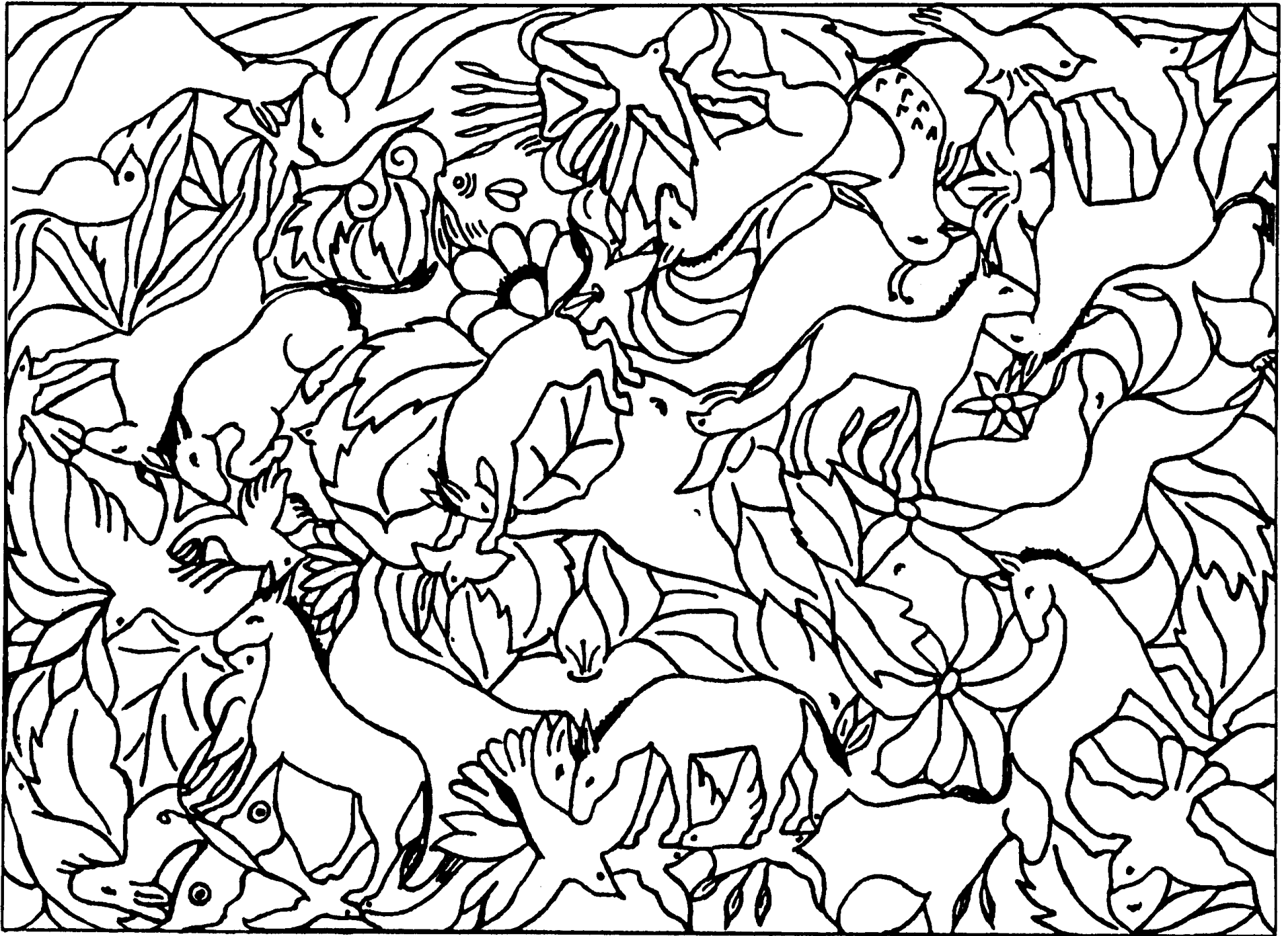
Saul's father's donkeys were lost. Saul tried to find them. He looked in the mountains of Ephraim. He looked in the land of Shalisa. He looked in the land of Shaalim. He looked in the land of Benjamin. Saul could not find the donkeys.



Can you find the donkeys that are hidden in the picture on the next page?

Color the donkeys. Color the rest of the picture.

Later, Samuel told Saul that the donkeys had been found.



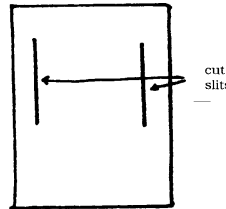
The choosing of Saul
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LEVEL 3 – SAUL’S SELECTION AS KING

Materials Needed

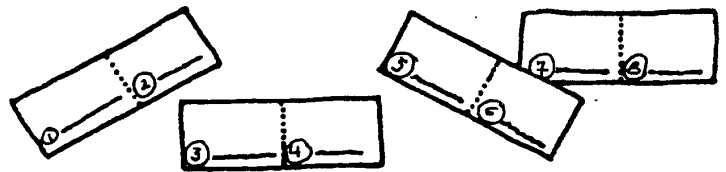
Scissors, Tape
 Pen or Pencil

Today you are going to make a “TV set” to show the story of Saul's selection as king.

Cut the two slits marked on page 2.



Cut along the dotted line on page 3 and page 4. You will have four strips.

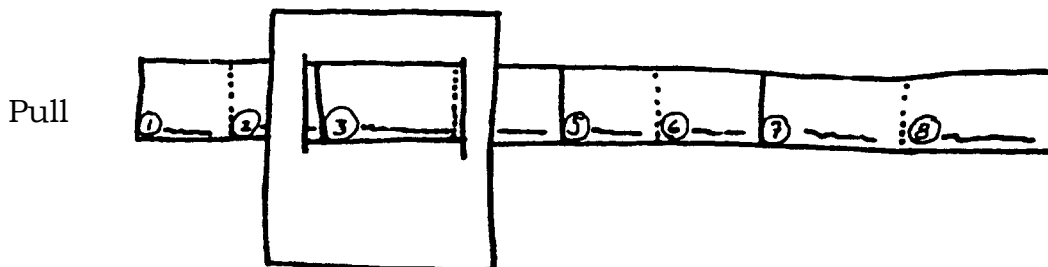


Tape the strips together as shown.



You will see that now you have one long strip divided into eight parts. Each part tells some of the story of Saul’s trip to find his father’s donkeys. On the trip he did not find the donkeys, but found that he was going to be king.

Draw a picture in each part, showing the part of the story told there. Remember to put background in your pictures. When you are finished, pull the strip through the “TV” like this:



It will look like you are telling Saul's story on TV.



1. Kish had a son named Saul who was taller than any of his people.

2. Saul and a servant went to look for some donkeys Kish had lost. The donkeys were not in the mountains.

3. The servant said: ALet's ask the man of God for help. I will give him this piece of silver.≡

4. They met Samuel coming out of the city.

5. Samuel told Saul that his father's donkeys had gone home. He invited Saul to dinner.

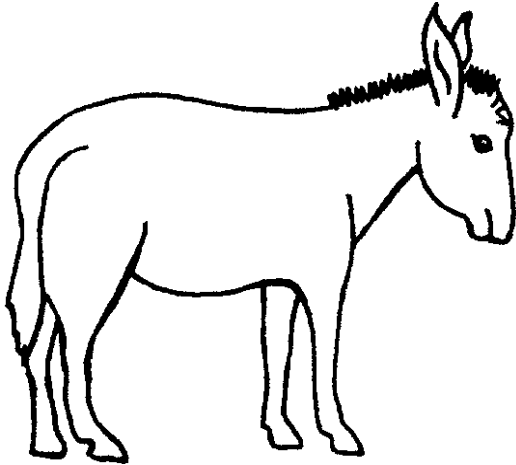
6. The next morning Samuel poured oil on Saul's head. This was a sign that he was to be king.

7. Later Samuel called all the people together. They drew lots to see who the Lord would choose as king.

8. Saul was chosen, but he was hiding. When he was brought out, the people saw that he stood much taller than themselves, so they shouted, ALong live the king!≡

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LEVEL 4 – DONKEYS AND HORSES



This chapter begins with the story of a young man named Saul going out to try to find some donkeys. They belonged to his father and had gone astray.

This happened in the middle of another story—the children of Israel wanted a king.

What is there about the two stories which is similar? How is looking for lost donkeys like looking for a king?

The answer lies in the meaning of both a donkey and a king in the stories of the Word.

Wanting a king

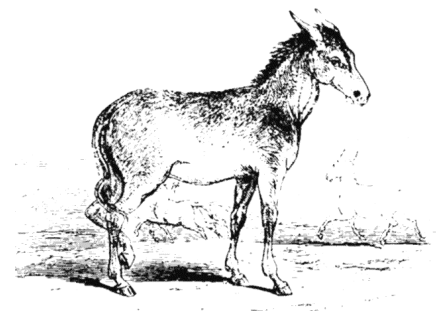
Let's think first about the king. The children of Israel had been ruled by priests until this time. The high priest was the spiritual leader, and they also saw him as a worldly leader because they knew that the Lord was the real ruler. But all the nations around them had kings, and they started to want to be like their neighbors. So they asked Samuel, the high priest, if they could have a king. Samuel warned them that a king would be a hard ruler, but they still wanted one. So the Lord told Samuel they could have one.

This is a picture of something that happens with us. It is a picture of a time in our lives when we are tired of doing things because we are told, and want to be able to decide for ourselves what is right. It is an important step in growing up.

So looking for a king is a picture of our wanting to direct our lives by our own thinking. Only later will we learn to let the Lord direct our lives.

Looking for donkeys

What about looking for donkeys? Is this story just in there to show us what Saul had been doing before he was chosen to be king? Of course not. You know that nothing is in the Word by accident.

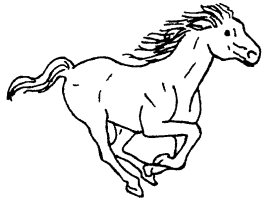


Donkeys and Horses

Think about donkeys and horses for a minute. What do they do better than all other animals? They carry people and loads on their backs and they pull wagons and plows.

Even in this modern day when we use machines to do most of our work for us, we measure the power of the machine in “horse power.” Some animals are valued for the things we get from them, like wool from sheep; but horses and donkeys are valuable for the work they do.

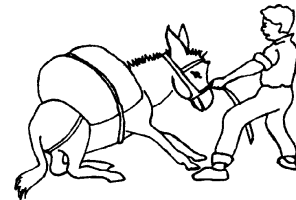
Things in the world around us picture what can go on in the world inside our mind. (We call these correspondences). A horse or donkey *works*. What *works* in our minds? What would you be doing if you were sitting completely still, and when someone came into the room, you said, “Don't bother me, I am working?” You might be thinking about homework, or thinking about a problem. You are sitting still, but you certainly are working. Our thoughts and our ability to understand things are the work parts of our minds. Horses and donkeys stand for our thinking and understanding.



The difference between horses and donkeys

Now let's think about the difference between a horse and a donkey. The horse is larger and stronger, but more sensitive and needs better food and care. The donkey is more surefooted on a rough path, and has more endurance. The horse pays careful attention to

his rider, so much so that a skilled horseman seems to become one with his animal in a race or competition. The donkey is not as responsive, looking downward to the road. It is more interested in the way it wants to go even if that is not what the rider wants. That is why donkeys are considered to be so stubborn.



Our understanding—Is it like a horse or a donkey?

Which kind of understanding would be like a horse and which like a donkey? One kind of thinking is about ourselves or the things in the world. Another is about the Lord and heaven. A donkey, which looks at the ground and wants its own way, is like worldly thoughts. A horse, which looks up and responds to the rider, is like thoughts that look to the Lord and respond to His Word.

How is looking for donkeys like wanting a king?

The children of Israel were thinking about a king in a worldly way. They wanted one because other nations had one, and they liked Saul as a candidate for king because he was tall and handsome.

Wanting a king is wanting to rule our own lives. When we begin wanting to rule our own life, we all start by looking for donkeys—looking for worldly ideas.

But it is only a step along the way to true adulthood, when we allow the Lord to direct our lives. Then our minds can ride on a horse—a true understanding of the Lord's way. The Lord should be our King!

Application

- In each of the following quotes from the Word, fill in the blank with either “donkey” or “horse” (“horses”).
 - In each place, think about what the animal is doing. Is it something that looks more like a picture of what worldly thinking is like (donkey), or is it something that looks more like a picture of what heavenly thinking is like (horse).
 - Check your answers in the Word.
1. “Now the _____ saw the Angel of the Lord standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand, and the _____ turned aside out of the way and went into the field. So Balaam struck the _____ to turn her back onto the road” (*Numbers 22:23*).
 2. “Suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with _____ of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven” (*II Kings 2:11*).
 3. “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a _____, A colt, the foal of a _____” (*Zechariah 9:9*).
 4. “And I looked and beheld a white _____. And he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him and he went forth conquering and to conquer” (*Revelation 6:2*).
 5. “Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a _____ tied, and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to me” (*Matthew 21:2*).

6. “Issachar is a strong _____, lying down between two burdens”
(*Genesis 49:14*).
7. “Then I saw heaven opened, and behold a white _____. And he
who sat on him was called Faithful and True” (*Revelation 19:11*).
8. “Now the _____ of Kish, Saul’s father, were lost” (*I Samuel 9:3*).
9. “In that day ‘*HOLINESS OF THE LORD*’ shall be engraved on the bells of the
_____” (*Zechariah 14:20*).
10. “They will carry their riches on the backs of young _____”
(*Isaiah 30:6*).
11. “Binding his _____ to vine, and his _____’s colt
to the choice vine, He washed his garments in wine” (*Genesis 49:11*).
12. “You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his
maidservant, nor his ox, nor his _____, nor anything that is your
neighbor’s” (*Exodus 20:17*).
13. “And he saw a chariot with a pair of _____ men,
A chariot of _____ .and a chariot of camels” (*Isaiah 21:7*).

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LEVEL 5 – LOOKING AND FINDING

LOOKING FOR ONE THING
and
FINDING SOMETHING ELSE

Looking for donkeys

It just happened that the donkeys belonging to Kish got lost and that Kish sent his son Saul to look for them. Saul's search finally brought him to Samuel. Before Saul arrived, hoping to get help in what he was looking for, the Lord said to Samuel:

“Tomorrow about this time I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him commander over My people Israel” (*Samuel 9:16*).

Finding something else

Looking for one thing, Saul found something else. He found a new chapter in his life opening up, which he never would have expected.

A word coined way back in the 1700's is “serendipity.” It is used for fortunate discoveries that come by accident. As one dictionary defines this word: “The faculty of making happy and unexpected discoveries by accident.”

Well, it could **look like** an accident when you come upon something that makes a big difference for good in your life.

Step back from your life and consider. If the Lord knows you better than you know yourself, knows your needs and your prospects and is working towards your happiness, will there not most likely be serendipitous things in your life?

The most striking example, of course, is the finding of a partner to marry. It is no wonder that a favorite passage for so many people is number 229 of *Conjugal Love*, which talks about a boy and girl meeting in heaven. It reads as follows:

“They are continually educated for their marriage under the Lord's auspices, the boy and the girl not knowing it. And after the time is completed, she, the virgin then marriageable, and he, the youth then ripe for marriage, somewhere meet as if by fate, see each other, and then instantly, as from a certain instinct, they know that they are mates, and as if from a kind of dictate they think inwardly within The

them, the youth, “She is mine,” and the virgin, “He is mine.” And after this thought has been seated for some time in the mind of each they deliberately speak to each other, and betroth themselves. It is said, as if by fate, instinct, and dictate, though the meaning is by the Divine Providence, because so long as this is unknown it thus appears; for the Lord opens their internal similitudes so that they may see each other...It is said they meet as if by fate...though what is meant is by Divine Providence, because when this is unknown, it so appears” (*Conjugal Love* 229).

There will always be room to say that something was mere chance. It is right, the Writings say, for you to be in total freedom to ascribe something either to Providence or to chance (*Arcana Coelestia* 5508:2). In fact, it is a law of Divine Providence that people should not observe Divine Providence as it is working, but that they should nevertheless know about it, and in looking back be able to see it (*Divine Providence* 175).

Application

Here is an exercise in the matter of acknowledging Divine Providence and lifting your thought to awareness and gratitude for the gifts of the Lord’s Providence. Complete the worksheet below:

- 1. Name one or more things that came along in your life which were good for you but which you were not looking for.

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.....
.....

- 2. Name one or more examples of this you know in someone else’s life.

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.....
.....

3. Name something that was unfortunate but led to valuable things. (Bad things that happen are called permissions of evil. They are permitted because we must be free. Still if we work with the Lord good can come out of the evil.)

4. Name one or more things in your life that you are hoping eventually to find.

Finally, reflect that in your search for good things, the Lord will help you in ways you would not have predicted, and lead you to things the value of which you may not yet realize.

“...when the Lord is with any one, He leads him, and provides that all things that happen, whether sad or joyful, befall him for good; this is the Divine providence” (*Arcana Coelestia* 6303).

“Peace has in it confidence in the Lord, that He rules all things and provides all things, and that He leads to a good end” (*Arcana Coelestia* 8455).