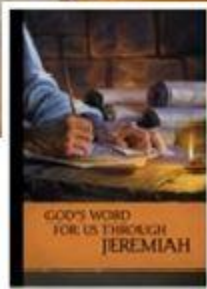
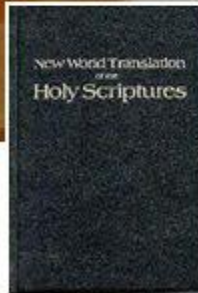
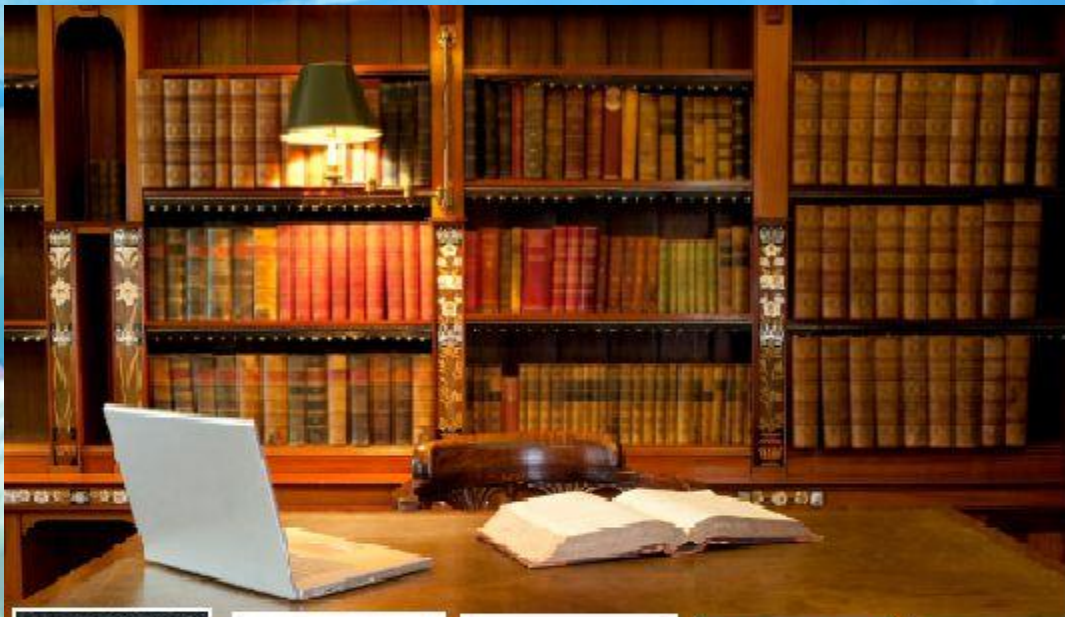


MID-WEEK MEETING FILE



April 15-19, 2013

WEEK STARTING APRIL 15

Song 6 and Prayer

□ Congregation Bible Study:

jr chap. 8 ¶1-7 (30 min.)

□ Theocratic Ministry School:

Bible reading: Luke 13-17 (10 min.)

No. 1: Luke 16:16-31 (4 min. or less)

No. 2: Does Our Imperfect State Mean That We Are Worthless to God?—Ps. 103:8, 9, 14; Gal. 6:9 (5 min.)

No. 3: Are All Humans Children of God?—*rs* p. 303 ¶3—p. 304 ¶4 (5 min.)

□ Service Meeting:

Song 95

10 min: Question Box. Discussion.

10 min: Ways to Expand Your Ministry —Part 2. Talk based on the *Organized* book, page 112, paragraph 3, to page 114, paragraph 1. Interview one or two pioneers regarding how they were able to make adjustments in order to pioneer.

10 min: Do You Witness at Your Workplace? Discussion based on the following questions. (1) Why is it good for your workmates to know that you are one of Jehovah's Witnesses? (2) How can you let them know? (3) What situations at work provide opportunities to give a witness? (4) Why is it good to keep a Bible and some publications at your workplace if possible? (5) Why is it best to avoid prolonged witnessing during the time you should be working? (6) What good experiences have you had witnessing at work?

Song 45 and Prayer

QUESTION BOX

■ What Bible principles apply to the use of cell phones while attending Christian meetings and sharing in the ministry?

“For Everything There Is an Appointed Time.” (Eccl. 3:1): Cell phones give people the ability to text or speak with one another at virtually any time. However, there are occasions when Christians do not want to be distracted by their phone. For instance, our meetings are a time to worship Jehovah, receive spiritual instruction, and enjoy an interchange of encouragement. (Deut. 31:12; Ps. 22:22; Rom. 1:11, 12) Could we turn off our phone when we arrive and retrieve our messages after leaving the meeting? If the possibility of an emergency requires that we leave our phone on, we should put it on a setting that will not disturb others.

“Do All Things for the Sake of the Good News.” (1 Cor. 9:23): At times, there are valid uses of a cell phone in the ministry. For example, a brother taking the lead might use it to check on those preaching

in other parts of the territory. Publishers sometimes use their cell phone to call an interested person or Bible student before making a visit, especially if the person lives some distance away. If we have a phone with us, we should take precautions to prevent it from interrupting us while we are speaking with a householder. (2 Cor. 6:3) While waiting on other publishers, rather than phoning or texting a friend, would it not be better to keep our attention focused on the ministry and those with whom we are working?

Be Considerate of Others. (1 Cor. 10:24; Phil. 2:4): Never would we want to be lax about being on time for the meetings for field service with the idea that we can always phone or text someone to find out where the group is witnessing. When we arrive late, the group must often be reorganized. Of course, circumstances beyond our control may occasionally cause us to be late. However, when we make it a habit to arrive on time, we show consideration for Jehovah's arrangement, the brother taking the lead, and our fellow publishers.

6 *The Prayer of God's Servant* (Ephesians 6:18)

1. Heavenly Father, Sovereign Lord,
 May your great name forever be adored.
Your tender mercies long will endure,
 Ever so faithful, ever so sure.
Ever faithful, ever sure,
 All your mercies will endure.
2. Love for the truth within us instill.
 Help us, O God, to carry out your will.
All your commandments we want to keep,
 Finding and feeding your precious sheep.
Finding, feeding your dear sheep,
 Your commands we want to keep.
3. Wisdom we seek from heaven above.
 Please grant this gift, and fill our hearts with love.
Help us our love and mercy to show,
 Helping all men our great God to know.
Helping all our God to know,
 May our love and mercy show.

(See also Ps. 143:10; John 21:15-17; Jas. 1:5.)

WILL YOU “KEEP LIVING,” AS DID JEREMIAH?

AFTER Joshua urged the Israelites to choose whom they would serve, he said: “As for *me and my household*, we shall serve Jehovah.” (Josh. 24:15) Joshua was determined to be loyal to God, and he was sure that his family too would be loyal. Much later, as Jerusalem’s destruction neared, Jeremiah told King Zedekiah that if he surrendered to the Babylonians, “*you yourself and your household* will certainly keep living.” (Jer. 38:17) The king’s bad choice affected him, his wives, and his sons. He watched his sons be killed; then he was blinded and taken captive to Babylon.—Jer. 38:18-23; 39:6, 7.

² In each of those two italicized phrases, one person was directly involved. But his family was also mentioned. That is logical. Each adult is responsible to God. Yet, most Israelites were part of a family. The family is important for Christians too. We see that from what we read in the Bible and from what we consider at Christian meetings regarding marriage, child rearing, and respect for family members.—1 Cor. 7:36-39; 1 Tim. 5:8.

AN UNUSUAL COMMAND

³ Jeremiah was one who did “keep living” in his day.

1, 2. Why is it logical to give attention to both the individual and the family?

3, 4. In what ways was Jeremiah’s situation different from most, and how did he benefit?

He survived Jerusalem’s destruction, though his personal situation was different from most. (Jer. 21:9; 40:1-4) God had told him not to marry or have offspring or share in some other common aspects of Jewish life at that time.—*Read Jeremiah 16:1-4.*

⁴ In Jeremiah’s day and culture, it was normal to marry and to have children. Most Jewish men did, thus keeping the ancestral land in the tribe and family.* (Deut. 7:14) Why not Jeremiah? Because of what lay ahead, God told him not to share in normal occasions for sorrow or rejoicing. He was not to comfort mourners or to eat with them after a funeral; nor was he to take part in the levity of Jewish weddings. Such feasting and rejoicing would soon end for all. (Jer. 7:33; 16:5-9) Jeremiah’s course gave credence to his message and underscored how grave the coming judgment would be. Eventually that calamity arrived. Can you imagine the feelings of those who were reduced to cannibalism or those who saw loved ones become mere carrion? (*Read Jeremiah 14:16; Lam. 2:20.*) Thus, unmarried Jeremiah was not to be pitied. Though the 18-month siege and its carnage would wipe out families, Jeremiah would be spared the loss of a mate or children.

⁵ Could it be said, though, that Jeremiah 16:5-9 applies to us? No. Christians are urged “to comfort those in any sort of tribulation” and to “rejoice with people who rejoice.” (2 Cor. 1:4; Rom. 12:15) Jesus attended a wedding and contributed to the rejoicing. Nevertheless, what lies ahead for this wicked system of things is

* In the Hebrew Scriptures, there is no word for “bachelor.”

5. What bearing do the directions found at Jeremiah 16:5-9 have on Christians?



serious. Christians may even face hardships and deprivations. Jesus stressed the need to be ready to do what it takes to endure and keep faithful, as did our brothers who fled Judea in the first century. Hence, staying single, getting married, or having children merits serious thought.—*Read Matthew 24:17, 18.*

⁶ What relevance is there in God’s command that Jeremiah not marry or have children? Today, some loyal Christians are unmarried or have no children. What might they learn from Jeremiah’s case? And why should even Christians who are married and have children give attention to this feature of Jeremiah’s life?

⁷ Consider first that Jeremiah was to remain childless. Jesus did not command his followers to abstain from having children. Yet, it is noteworthy that he pronounced “woe” on pregnant women or those nursing a baby when tribulation came on Jerusalem in 66-70 C.E. That time would be especially difficult for them, giv-

6. Who can benefit from reflecting on God’s direction to Jeremiah?

7. That Jeremiah was to remain childless merits what consideration today?

en their situation. (Matt. 24:19) We now face a greater tribulation. This should add a dimension for Christian couples who are deciding whether to have children. Do you not agree that it seems harder and harder to deal with these critical times? And couples have admitted that it has been very challenging to raise children who will "keep living" through the end of the present system. While each couple must decide if they will have children, Jeremiah's case is worth considering. But what of God's command that he not even get married?

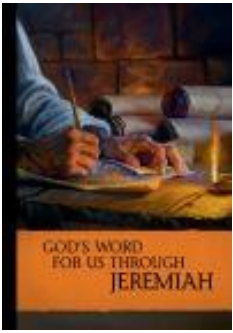
Jeremiah received what unusual command, and what should that move us to consider?

LEARN FROM JEREMIAH'S SINGLENESS

⁸ In telling Jeremiah not to marry, God did not establish a norm that all his servants were to follow. Marriage is good. Jehovah initiated human marriage to populate the earth and to be a source of abundant satisfaction and delight. (Prov. 5:18) Still, not all were married. There may have been some eunuchs associated with God's people while Jeremiah was prophesying.* In addition, you can be sure that there were widows and widowers. So Jeremiah was not the only true worshipper who did not have a mate. Of course, he had a reason for not marrying, and so do some Christians today.

* Isaiah prophetically addressed literal eunuchs in his day, who would have a limited share in Israelite worship. He foretold that by obedience eunuchs would gain "something better than sons and daughters," receiving "a name to time indefinite" in God's house. —Isa. 56:4, 5.

8. Why can we say that marrying is not a necessity in order to please God?



Paragraph 1

(Joshua 24:15) Now if it is bad in YOUR eyes to serve Jehovah, choose for yourselves today whom YOU will serve, whether the gods that YOUR forefathers who were on the other side of the River served or the gods of the Am'or-ites in whose land YOU are dwelling. But as for me and my household, we shall serve Jehovah.”

(Jeremiah 38:17) Jeremiah now said to Zed-e-ki'ah: “This is what Jehovah, the God of armies, the God of Israel, has said, ‘If you will without fail go out to the princes of the king of Babylon, your soul will also certainly keep living and this city itself will not be burned with fire, and you yourself and your household will certainly keep living.

(Jeremiah 38:18-23) But if you will not go out to the princes of the king of Babylon, this city must also be given into the hand of the Chal-de'ans, and they will actually burn it with fire, and you yourself will not escape out of their hand.”¹⁹ Then King Zed-e-ki'ah said to Jeremiah: “I am in fright of the Jews that have fallen away to the Chal-de'ans, for fear that they might give me into their hand and they might actually deal abusively with me.”²⁰ But Jeremiah said: “They will do no such giving. Obey, please, the voice of Jehovah in what I am speaking to you, and it will go well with you, and your soul will continue to live.”²¹ But if you are refusing to go out, this is the thing that Jehovah has caused me to see:²² And, look! all the women that have been left remaining in the house of the king of Judah are being brought out to the princes of the king of Babylon, and they are saying, ‘The men at peace with you have allured you and prevailed over you. They have caused your foot to sink down into the very ooze; they have retreated in the opposite direction.’²³ And all your wives and your sons they are bringing out to the Chal-de'ans, and you yourself will not escape out of their hand, but by the hand of the king of Babylon you will be seized, and because of you this city will be burned with fire.”

(Jeremiah 39:6, 7) And the king of Babylon proceeded to slaughter the sons of Zed-e-ki'ah in Rib'lah before his eyes, and all the nobles of Judah the king of Babylon slaughtered.⁷ And the eyes of Zed-e-ki'ah he blinded, after which he bound him with copper fetters, in order to bring him to Babylon.

Paragraph 2

(1 Corinthians 7:36-39) But if anyone thinks he is behaving improperly toward his virginity, if that is past the bloom of youth, and this is the way it should take place, let him do what he wants; he does not sin. Let them marry.³⁷ But if anyone stands settled in his heart, having no necessity, but has authority over his own will and has made this decision in his own heart, to keep his own virginity, he will do well.³⁸ Consequently he also that gives his virginity in marriage does well, but he that does not give it in marriage will do better.³⁹ A wife is bound during all the time her husband is alive. But if her husband should fall asleep [in death], she is free to be married to whom she wants, only in [the] Lord.

(1 Timothy 5:8) Certainly if anyone does not provide for those who are his own, and especially for those who are members of his household, he has disowned the faith and is worse than a person without faith.

Paragraph 3

(Jeremiah 21:9) The one sitting still in this city will die by the sword and by the famine and by the pestilence; but the one who is going out and who actually falls away to the Chal-de'ans who are laying siege against YOU will keep living, and his soul will certainly come to be his as a spoil.”

(Jeremiah 40:1-4) The word that occurred to Jeremiah from Jehovah after Neb-u'zar-ad'an the chief of the bodyguard sent him from Ra'mah, when he took him while he was bound with handcuffs in the midst of all the exiles of Jerusalem and of Judah, who were being taken into exile in Babylon.² Then the chief of the bodyguard took Jeremiah and said to him: “Jehovah your God himself spoke this calamity against this place,³ that Jehovah might bring [it] true and do just as he has spoken, because YOU people have sinned against Jehovah and have not obeyed his voice. And this thing has happened to YOU.⁴ And now, look! I have let you loose today from the handcuffs that were upon your hands. If it is good in your eyes to come with me to Babylon, come, and I shall keep my eye upon you. But if it is bad in your eyes to come with me to Babylon, refrain. See! The entire land is before you. To wherever it is good and right in your eyes to go, go there.”

(Jeremiah 16:1-4) And the word of Jehovah continued to occur to me, saying: ² “You must not take for yourself a wife, and you must not come to have sons and daughters in this place. ³ For this is what Jehovah has said concerning the sons and concerning the daughters that are born in this place, and concerning their mothers who are giving them birth and concerning their fathers who are causing their birth in this land, ⁴ ‘With deaths from maladies they will die. They will not be bewailed, neither will they be buried. As manure upon the surface of the ground they will become; and by the sword and by famine they will come to an end, and their dead bodies will actually serve as food for the flying creatures of the heavens and for the beasts of the earth.’

Paragraph 4

(Deuteronomy 7:14) The most blessed of all the peoples you will become. There will not prove to be in you a male or a female without offspring, nor among your domestic animals.

(Jeremiah 7:33) And the dead bodies of this people must become food for the flying creatures of the heavens and for the beasts of the earth, with nobody to make [them] tremble.

(Jeremiah 16:5-9) “For this is what Jehovah has said, ‘Do not enter into the house of a mourners’ feast, and do not go to bewail and do not sympathize with them.’ “‘For I have taken away my peace from this people,’ is the utterance of Jehovah, ‘even loving-kindness and mercies. ⁶ And they will certainly die, the great ones and the small ones, in this land. They will not be buried, neither will people beat themselves for them, nor will anyone make cuts upon himself or make himself bald for them. ⁷ And they will not deal out to them any bread on account of mourning to comfort someone over the dead; neither will they give them the cup of consolation to drink on account of one’s father and on account of one’s mother. ⁸ And you must enter no house of banqueting at all to sit down with them to eat and to drink.’ ⁹ “For this is what Jehovah of armies, the God of Israel, has said, ‘Here I am causing to cease out of this place before the eyes of YOU people and in YOUR days the voice of exultation and the voice of rejoicing, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride.’

(Jeremiah 14:16) And the very people to whom they are prophesying will become people cast out into the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword, with no one to do the burying of them—they, their wives and their sons and their daughters. And I will pour out upon them their calamity.’

(Lamentations 2:20) See, O Jehovah, and do look to the one to whom you have dealt severely in this manner. Should the women keep eating their own fruitage, the children born fully formed, Or in the sanctuary of Jehovah should priest and prophet be killed?

Paragraph 5

(Jeremiah 16:5-9) “For this is what Jehovah has said, ‘Do not enter into the house of a mourners’ feast, and do not go to bewail and do not sympathize with them.’ “‘For I have taken away my peace from this people,’ is the utterance of Jehovah, ‘even loving-kindness and mercies. ⁶ And they will certainly die, the great ones and the small ones, in this land. They will not be buried, neither will people beat themselves for them, nor will anyone make cuts upon himself or make himself bald for them. ⁷ And they will not deal out to them any bread on account of mourning to comfort someone over the dead; neither will they give them the cup of consolation to drink on account of one’s father and on account of one’s mother. ⁸ And you must enter no house of banqueting at all to sit down with them to eat and to drink.’ ⁹ “For this is what Jehovah of armies, the God of Israel, has said, ‘Here I am causing to cease out of this place before the eyes of YOU people and in YOUR days the voice of exultation and the voice of rejoicing, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride.’

(2 Corinthians 1:4) who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those in any sort of tribulation through the comfort with which we ourselves are being comforted by God.

(Romans 12:15) Rejoice with people who rejoice; weep with people who weep.

(Matthew 24:17, 18) Let the man on the housetop not come down to take the goods out of his house; ¹⁸ and let the man in the field not return to the house to pick up his outer garment.

Paragraph 7

(Matthew 24:19) Woe to the pregnant women and those suckling a baby in those days!

py are those slaves whom the master on arriving finds watching!^a Truly I say to you, He will gird^b himself and make them recline at the table and will come alongside and minister to them.^c

38 And if he arrives in the second watch, even if in the third, and finds them thus, happy are they!^d **39** But know this, that if the householder had known at what hour the thief would come, he would have kept watching and not have let his house be broken into.^e **40** You also, keep ready, because at an hour that you do not think likely the Son of man is coming.^f

41 Then Peter said: "Lord, are you saying this illustration to us or also to all?" **42** And the Lord said: "Who really is the faithful steward,^g the discreet^h one, whom his master will appoint over his body of attendants to keep giving them their measure of food supplies at the proper time?ⁱ **43** Happy is that slave, if his master on arriving finds him doing so!^j **44** I tell you truthfully, He will appoint him over all his belongings.^k **45** But if ever that slave should say in his heart, 'My master delays coming,'^l and should start to beat the menservants and the maidservants, and to eat and drink and get drunk,^m **46** the master of that slave will come on a day that he is not expecting him and in an hour that he does not know,ⁿ and he will punish him with the greatest severity and assign him a part with the unfaithful ones.^o **47** Then that slave that understood the will of his master but did not get ready or do in line with his will will be beaten with many strokes.^p **48** But the one that did not understand^q and so did things deserving of strokes will be beaten with few.^r Indeed, everyone to whom much was given, much will be demanded^s of him; and the one whom people

CHAP. 12

a Mt 24:46

Mt 25:10

b Joh 13:4

c Mt 20:28

2Ti 4:8

d Mr 13:35

e Mt 24:43

1Th 5:2

2Pe 3:10

Re 16:15

f Mt 24:44

Mt 25:13

Mr 13:13

2Pe 3:12

Re 3:3

g Ge 24:2

1Co 4:2

2Th 2:15

1Pe 4:10

h Ge 41:33

De 1:13

i Mt 24:45

Mt 25:21

Lu 19:17

j Mt 24:46

k Mt 24:47

l Mt 24:48

m Mt 24:49

n Mt 24:50

o Mt 24:51

Re 21:8

p De 25:2

Joh 9:41

Jas 1:22

Jas 4:17

q Le 5:17

r 1Ti 1:13

s Mt 25:29

Second Col.

a Joh 15:2

b Mt 10:34

c Mt 20:22

Mr 10:38

Joh 12:27

d Mic 7:6

Mt 10:34

Joh 7:43

Joh 9:16

e Mt 10:36

f Mt 10:35

g Mt 16:2

h Mt 16:3

Lu 19:42

i Lu 21:30

1Co 6:5

j Pr 25:8

Mt 5:25

k Mt 18:34

Mr 12:42

CHAP. 13

1 Ac 5:37

put in charge of much, they will demand more than usual of him.^a

49 "I came to start a fire^b on the earth, and what more is there for me to wish if it has already been lighted? **50** Indeed, I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and how I am being distressed until it is finished!^c **51** Do you imagine I came to give peace on the earth? No, indeed, I tell you, but rather division.^d **52** For from now on there will be five in one house divided, three against two and two against three.^e **53** They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against her mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."^f

54 Then he went on to say also to the crowds: "When you see a cloud rising in western parts, at once you say, 'A storm is coming,' and it turns out so.^g **55** And when you see that a south wind is blowing, you say, 'There will be a heat wave,' and it occurs. **56** Hypocrites, you know how to examine the outward appearance of earth and sky, but how is it you do not know how to examine this particular time?^h **57** Why do you not judge also for yourselves what is righteous?ⁱ **58** For example, when you are going with your adversary at law to a ruler, get to work, while on the way, to rid yourself of the dispute with him, that he may never hale you before the judge, and the judge deliver you to the court officer, and the court officer throw you into prison.^j **59** I tell you, You will certainly not get out from there until you pay over the last small coin of very little value."^k

13 At that very season there were certain ones present that reported to him about the Gal-i-le'ans^l whose blood Pilate

had mixed with their sacrifices. **2** So in reply he said to them: "Do you imagine that these Galileans were proved worse sinners^a than all other Galileans because they have suffered these things? **3** No, indeed, I tell you; but, unless you repent, you will all likewise be destroyed.^b **4** Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, thereby killing them, do you imagine that they were proved greater debtors than all other men inhabiting Jerusalem? **5** No, indeed, I tell you; but, unless you repent, you will all be destroyed in the same way."^c

6 Then he went on to tell this illustration: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard,^d and he came looking for fruit on it,^e but found none.^f **7** Then he said to the vinedresser, 'Here it is three years^g that I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, but have found none. Cut it down!^h Why really should it keep the ground useless?' **8** In reply he said to him, 'Master, let it aloneⁱ also this year, until I dig around it and put on manure; **9** and if then it produces fruit in the future, well and good; but if not, you shall cut it down.'^j

10 Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. **11** And, look! a woman with a spirit^k of weakness for eighteen years, and she was bent double and was unable to raise herself up at all. **12** When he saw her, Jesus addressed her and said to her: "Woman, you are released^l from your weakness."^m **13** And he laid his hands on her; and instantly she straightened up,ⁿ and began to glorify God. **14** But in response the presiding officer of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus did the cure on the sabbath, began to say to the crowd: "There are six days on which work ought

to be done;^a on them, therefore, come and be cured, and not on the sabbath day."^b **15** However, the Lord answered him and said: "Hypocrites,^c does not each one of you on the sabbath untie his bull or his ass from the stall and lead it away to give it drink?^d **16** Was it not due, then, for this woman who is a daughter of Abraham,^e and whom Satan held bound, look! eighteen years, to be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?" **17** Well, when he said these things, all his opposers began to feel shame;^f but all the crowd began to rejoice at all the glorious things done by him.^g

18 Therefore he went on to say: "What is the kingdom of God like, and with what shall I compare it?^h **19** It is like a mustard grain that a man took and put in his garden, and it grew and became a tree, and the birds of heavenⁱ took up lodging in its branches."^j

20 And again he said: "With what shall I compare the kingdom of God? **21** It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three large measures of flour until the whole mass was fermented."^k

22 And he journeyed through from city to city and from village to village, teaching and continuing on his journey to Jerusalem.^l

23 Now a certain man said to him: "Lord, are those who are being saved few?"^m He said to them:

24 "Exertⁿ yourselves vigorously to get in through the narrow door,^o because many, I tell you, will seek to get in but will not be able,^p **25** when once the householder has got up and locked the door, and you start to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, 'Sir, open to us.'^q But in answer he will say to you, 'I do not know where you are from.'^r

26 Then you will start saying, 'We ate and drank in front of you, and you taught in our

CHAP. 13
a Joh 9:2
b Ac 3:19
c Eze 18:30
d Isa 5:1
e Hab 3:17
Mr 11:13
f Mt 21:19
g Le 19:23
h Joh 15:2
i Ex 32:11
Joe 2:17
j 2Pe 3:9
k Ac 16:16
l Isa 61:1
Lu 4:18
m Lu 4:39

Second Col.

a Ex 20:9
Ex 23:12
Ex 35:2
b De 5:14
Mt 12:10
Mr 3:2
Joh 5:16
c Mt 23:28
Lu 12:1
d Lu 14:5
e Lu 19:9
f 1Pe 3:16
g Lu 9:43
h Mt 13:31
Mr 4:30
i Eze 17:23
Eze 31:6
Da 4:12
j Mt 13:32
Mr 4:32
k Mt 13:33
l Mt 9:35
Mr 6:6
m Mt 7:14
Mt 19:25
n Isa 55:6
o Mt 7:13
Php 3:12
p Joh 7:34
Ro 9:31
1Ti 6:12
q Mt 25:11
Lu 6:46
r Ps 32:6
Isa 55:6

broad ways.^a **27** But he will speak and say to you, 'I do not know where you are from. Get away from me, all you workers of unrighteousness!'^b **28** There is where your weeping and the gnashing of your teeth^c will be, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God,^d but yourselves thrown outside. **29** Furthermore, people will come from eastern parts and western, and from north and south,^e and will recline at the table in the kingdom of God.^f **30** And, look! there are those last who will be first, and there are those first who will be last."^g

31 In that very hour certain Pharisees came up, saying to him: "Get out and be on your way from here, because Herod wants to kill you." **32** And he said to them: "Go and tell that fox,^h 'Look! I am casting out demons and accomplishing healing today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be finished.'ⁱ **33** Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the following day, because it is not admissible for a prophet to be destroyed outside of Jerusalem.^j **34** Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the killer^k of the prophets and stoner^l of those sent forth to her—how often I wanted to gather your children together in the manner that a hen gathers her brood of chicks under her wings,^m but you people did not want it!ⁿ **35** Look! Your house^o is abandoned to you. I tell you, You will by no means see me until you say, 'Blessed is he that comes in Jehovah's name!'"^p

14 And on an occasion when he went into the house of a certain one of the rulers of the Pharisees on the sabbath to eat a meal,^q they were closely watching him.^r **2** And, look! there was before him a certain

CHAP. 13

- a Mt 7:22
- Tit 1:16
- b Ps 6:8
- Mt 7:23
- c Isa 65:14
- Mt 8:12
- Mt 13:42
- d Mt 8:11
- e Ge 28:14
- Ps 107:3
- Isa 49:12
- Isa 59:19
- f Lu 14:15
- Lu 22:16
- Ac 2:39
- Re 5:9
- g Mt 19:30
- Mr 10:31
- h Zep 3:3
- i Heb 2:10
- j Mt 16:21
- k Ne 9:26
- Isa 1:21
- l 2Ch 24:21
- m Isa 40:11
- n Mt 23:37
- o Le 26:31
- 1Ki 9:7
- Ps 69:25
- Isa 1:7
- Jer 12:7
- Jer 22:5
- Mic 3:12
- p Ps 118:26
- Mt 21:9
- Mt 23:39
- Lu 19:38
- Joh 12:13

CHAP. 14

- q Lu 7:36
- Lu 11:37
- r Ps 37:32
- Jer 20:10

Second Col.

- a Mt 12:10
- Lu 6:9
- Lu 13:15
- Joh 7:23
- b Ex 23:5
- De 22:4
- c Mt 12:11
- Lu 13:15
- d Mt 22:46
- e Mt 23:6
- Lu 11:43
- Lu 20:46
- f Pr 25:6
- g Pr 25:7
- h Mt 23:12
- Lu 18:14
- i Pr 15:33
- Jas 4:10
- 1Pe 5:5
- j Ps 18:27
- Pr 29:23
- Mt 23:12
- Jas 4:6
- k Ne 8:10
- Job 31:16
- Pr 3:28

man who had dropsy. **3** So in response Jesus spoke to those versed in the Law and to the Pharisees, saying: "Is it lawful on the sabbath to cure or not?"^a

4 But they kept silent. With that he took hold of the man, healed him and sent him away. **5** And he said to them: "Who of you, if his son or bull falls into a well,^b will not immediately pull him out on the sabbath day?"^c **6** And they were not able to answer back on these things.^d

7 He then went on to tell the invited men an illustration, as he marked how they were choosing the most prominent places for themselves, saying to them:^e **8** "When you are invited by someone to a marriage feast, do not lie down in the most prominent place.^f Perhaps someone more distinguished than you may at the time have been invited by him, **9** and he that invited you and him will come and say to you, 'Let this man have the place.' And then you will start off with shame to occupy the lowest place.^g **10** But when you are invited, go and recline in the lowest place,^h that when the man that has invited you comes he will say to you, 'Friend, go on up higher.' Then you will have honor in front of all your fellow guests."ⁱ

11 For everyone that exalts himself will be humbled and he that humbles himself will be exalted."^j

12 Next he proceeded to say also to the man that invited him: "When you spread a dinner or evening meal, do not call your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors. Perhaps sometime they might also invite you in return and it would become a repayment to you.

13 But when you spread a feast, invite poor people, crippled, lame, blind;^k **14** and you will be happy, because they have nothing with which to repay you. For

you will be repaid in the resurrection^a of the righteous ones.”

15 On hearing these things a certain one of the fellow guests said to him: “Happy is he who eats bread in the kingdom of God.”^b

16 Jesus said to him: “A certain man was spreading a grand evening meal, and he invited many.^c **17** And he sent his slave out at the hour of the evening meal to say to the invited ones, ‘Come,^d because things are now ready.’ **18** But they all in common started to beg off.^e The first said to him, ‘I bought a field and need to go out and see it; I ask you, Have me excused.’^f **19** And another said, ‘I bought five yoke of cattle and am going to examine them; I ask you, Have me excused.’^g **20** Still another said, ‘I just married^h a wife and for this reason I cannot come.’ **21** So the slave came up and reported these things to his master. Then the householder became wrathful and said to his slave, ‘Go out quickly into the broad ways and the lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and crippled and blind and lame.’ⁱ **22** In time the slave said, ‘Master, what you ordered has been done, and yet there is room.’ **23** And the master said to the slave, ‘Go out into the roads^j and the fenced-in places, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.’^k **24** For I say to you people, None of those men that were invited shall have a taste of my evening meal.’^l

25 Now great crowds were traveling with him, and he turned and said to them: **26** “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own soul,^m he cannot be my disciple.ⁿ **27** Whoever is not carrying his torture stake and com-

CHAP. 14

- a Joh 5:29
- Joh 11:24
- Ac 24:15
- b Lu 13:29
- Re 19:9
- c Mt 22:2
- d Pr 9:5
- e Mt 22:3
- f Mt 6:24
- Lu 8:14
- 1Ti 6:9
- 2Ti 4:10
- g Mt 22:5
- h De 24:5
- 1Co 7:33
- i Mt 22:9
- Mt 28:19
- Ac 13:46
- 1Co 1:26
- j Mt 22:10
- k 2Co 5:20
- l Mt 21:43
- Mt 22:8
- Heb 3:19
- m Re 12:11
- n De 33:9
- Mt 10:37
- Lu 18:29
- Joh 12:25

Second Col.

- a Mt 16:24
- Mr 8:34
- Lu 9:23
- Ga 6:14
- b Pr 24:27
- Mt 21:33
- c Pr 20:18
- d Isa 33:7
- e Mt 19:27
- Lu 9:62
- Pph 3:7
- f Mt 5:13
- Mr 9:50
- Col 4:6
- g Mt 13:43
- Mr 4:9
- Re 2:29

CHAP. 15

- h Mt 9:10
- Mr 2:15
- Lu 5:29
- Lu 19:2
- i 1Ti 1:15
- j Mt 9:11
- Lu 5:30
- Ac 11:3
- k Eze 34:11
- Mt 18:12
- Lu 19:10
- 1Pe 2:25
- l Mt 18:13

ing after me cannot be my disciple.^a **28** For example, who of you that wants to build a tower does not first sit down and calculate the expense,^b to see if he has enough to complete it? **29** Otherwise, he might lay its foundation but not be able to finish it, and all the onlookers might start to ridicule him, **30** saying, ‘This man started to build but was not able to finish.’ **31** Or what king, marching to meet another king in war, does not first sit down and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand troops to cope with the one that comes against him with twenty thousand?^c **32** If, in fact, he cannot do so, then while that one is yet far away he sends out a body of ambassadors and sues for peace.^d **33** Thus, you may be sure, none of you that does not say good-bye to all his belongings^e can be my disciple.

34 “Salt, to be sure, is fine. But if even the salt loses its strength, with what will it be seasoned?^f **35** It is suitable neither for soil nor for manure. People throw it outside. Let him that has ears to listen, listen.”^g

15 Now all the tax collectors^h and the sinnersⁱ kept drawing near to him to hear him. **2** Consequently both the Pharisees and the scribes kept muttering, saying: “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”^j **3** Then he spoke this illustration to them, saying: **4** “What man of you with a hundred sheep, on losing one of them, will not leave the ninety-nine behind in the wilderness and go for the lost one until he finds it?^k **5** And when he has found it he puts it upon his shoulders and rejoices.^l **6** And when he gets home he calls his friends and his neighbors together, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, because I have found

my sheep that was lost.^a **7** I tell you that thus there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner that repents^b than over ninety-nine righteous ones who have no need of repentance.^c

8 "Or what woman with ten drachma coins, if she loses one drachma coin, does not light a lamp and sweep her house and search carefully until she finds it? **9** And when she has found it she calls the women who are her friends and neighbors together, saying, 'Rejoice with me, because I have found the drachma coin that I lost.' **10** Thus, I tell you, joy arises among the angels of God over one sinner that repents."^d

11 Then he said: "A certain man had two sons.^e **12** And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the part of the property that falls to my share.'^f Then he divided his means of living^g to them. **13** Later, after not many days, the younger son gathered all things together and traveled abroad into a distant country, and there squandered his property by living a debauched life.^h **14** When he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred throughout that country, and he started to be in need. **15** He even went and attached himself to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to herd swine.ⁱ **16** And he used to desire to be filled with the carob pods which the swine were eating, and no one would give him anything.^j

17 "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many hired men of my father are abounding with bread, while I am perishing here from famine! **18** I will rise and journey^k to my father and say to him: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.^l **19** I am no longer worthy of being called your son.

CHAP. 15

a Mt 18:14
Ro 12:15
1Pe 2:25

b Eze 33:11
Lu 5:32

c Pr 30:12

d Mt 9:13
Mr 2:17

e Mt 21:28

f De 21:17

g Pr 13:22

h Pr 29:3
Lu 15:30

i Le 11:7

j Pr 23:21

k Eph 4:17
1Pe 4:3

l 2Ch 7:14
Ps 32:5
Pr 28:13
Lu 18:13
1Jo 1:9

Second Col.

a Ps 51:4

b 2Co 7:10

c Zec 3:4

d Ge 41:42
Es 8:8

e Mt 22:4

f Joh 5:25
Ro 6:13
Eph 2:1
Eph 2:5
Re 3:1

g Heb 12:23

h Joh 10:16

i Isa 25:6

j Mt 20:11

k Mt 20:12

l Re 7:13

m Pr 29:3

n Re 7:14

o Joh 17:10
Ro 8:17

Make me as one of your hired men."^o **20** So he rose and went to his father. While he was yet a long way off, his father caught sight of him and was moved with pity, and he ran and fell upon his neck and tenderly kissed him. **21** Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.^a I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Make me as one of your hired men.'^b **22** But the father said to his slaves, 'Quick! bring out a robe, the best one, and clothe^c him with it, and put a ring^d on his hand and sandals on his feet. **23** And bring the fattened^e young bull, slaughter it and let us eat and enjoy ourselves, **24** because this my son was dead and came to life^f again; he was lost and was found.'^g And they started to enjoy themselves.

25 "Now his older son^g was in the field; and as he came and got near the house he heard a music concert and dancing. **26** So he called one of the servants to him and inquired what these things meant. **27** He said to him, 'Your brother^h has come, and your fatherⁱ slaughtered the fattened young bull, because he got him back in good health.'^j **28** But he became wrathful and was unwilling to go in. Then his father came out and began to entreat him.^j **29** In reply he said to his father, 'Here it is so many years I have slaved for you and never once did I transgress your commandment, and yet to me you never once gave a kid for me to enjoy myself with my friends.^k **30** But as soon as this your son^l who ate up your means of living with harlots^m arrived, you slaughtered the fattened young bull for him.'ⁿ **31** Then he said to him, 'Child, you have always been with me, and all the things that are mine are yours;^o **32** but we just had to enjoy ourselves and rejoice, because this

your brother was dead and came to life, and he was lost and was found.'"^a

16 Then he went on to say also to the disciples: "A certain man was rich and he had a steward,^b and this one was accused to him as handling his goods wastefully.^c **2** So he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Hand in the account^d of your stewardship, for you can no longer manage the house.' **3** Then the steward said to himself, 'What am I to do, seeing that my master^e will take the stewardship away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, I am ashamed to beg. **4** Ah! I know what I shall do, so that, when I am put out of the stewardship, people will receive me into their homes.'^f **5** And calling to him each one of the debtors of his master he proceeded to say to the first, 'How much are you owing my master?' **6** He said, 'A hundred bath measures of olive oil.' He said to him, 'Take your written agreement back and sit down and quickly write fifty.'^g **7** Next, he said to another one, 'Now you, how much are you owing?' He said, 'A hundred cor measures of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your written agreement back and write eighty.'^h **8** And his master commended the steward, though unrighteous, because he acted with practical wisdom;ⁱ for the sons of this system of things are wiser in a practical way toward their own generation than the sons of the light are.^j

9 "Also, I say to you, Make friends^k for yourselves by means of the unrighteous riches,^l so that, when such fail, they may receive you into the everlasting dwelling places.^m **10** The person faithful in what is least is faithful also in much, and the person unrighteous in what is least is unrighteous also

CHAP. 15
a Lu 15:24

CHAP. 16
b Ge 15:2
Ge 24:2

c 1Co 4:2

d Mt 18:23
Mt 25:19
1Pe 4:5

e Mt 24:50

f Pr 19:6

g Pr 19:8

h Joh 12:36
Eph 5:8
1Th 5:5

i Ec 11:1
Lu 19:8

j Mt 19:21
Lu 12:20
1Ti 6:17

k Mt 25:34
Joh 14:2

Second Col.

a Mt 25:21
Lu 19:17

b Eph 3:8
Re 3:18

c Lu 12:48
1Co 4:2

d Mt 6:24

e Isa 53:3
f Mt 6:2
Mt 23:28
Lu 10:29
Lu 18:9

g 1Sa 16:7
1Ch 28:9
2Ch 6:30
Pr 15:11
Ac 1:24

h 1Pe 5:5

i Mt 11:13

j Mt 11:12

k Ps 102:26
Heb 1:11

l Mt 5:18

m Mt 5:17

n Mt 5:32
Mt 19:9
Mr 10:11

o Mt 13:34

p Mt 23:5

q Ro 7:4

in much.^a **11** Therefore, if you have not proved yourselves faithful in connection with the unrighteous riches, who will entrust you with what is true?^b **12** And if you have not proved yourselves faithful in connection with what is another's,^c who will give you what is for yourselves? **13** No house servant can be a slave to two masters; for, either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will stick to the one and despise the other. You cannot be slaves to God and to Riches."^d

14 Now the Pharisees, who were money lovers, were listening to all these things, and they began to sneer at him.^e **15** Consequently he said to them: "You are those who declare yourselves righteous before men,^f but God knows your hearts;^g because what is lofty among men is a disgusting thing in God's sight.^h

16 "The Law and the Prophets were until John.ⁱ From then on the kingdom of God is being declared as good news, and every sort of person is pressing forward toward it.^j **17** Indeed, it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away^k than for one particle^l of a letter of the Law to go unfulfilled.^m

18 "Everyone that divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he that marries a woman divorced from a husband commits adultery.ⁿ

19 "But a certain man^o was rich, and he used to deck himself with purple and linen, enjoying himself from day to day with magnificence.^p **20** But a certain beggar named Laz'a-rus used to be put at his gate, full of ulcers **21** and desiring to be filled with the things dropping from the table of the rich man. Yes, too, the dogs would come and lick his ulcers. **22** Now in course of time the beggar died^q

and he was carried off by the angels to the bosom^a position of Abraham.^b

"Also, the rich man died^c and was buried. **23** And in Ha'des he lifted up his eyes, he existing in torments,^d and he saw Abraham afar off and Laz'a-rus in the bosom position with him. **24** So he called and said, 'Father Abraham,^e have mercy on me and send Laz'a-rus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue,^f because I am in anguish in this blazing fire.'^g **25** But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that you received in full your good things in your lifetime, but Laz'a-rus correspondingly the injurious things. Now, however, he is having comfort here but you are in anguish.^h **26** And besides all these things, a great chasmⁱ has been fixed between us and you people,^j so that those wanting to go over from here to you people cannot, neither may people cross over from there to us.'^k **27** Then he said, 'In that event I ask you, father, to send him to the house of my father, **28** for I have five brothers, in order that he may give them a thorough witness, that they also should not get into this place of torment.' **29** But Abraham said, 'They have Moses^l and the Prophets;^m let them listen to these.'ⁿ **30** Then he said, 'No, indeed, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them they will repent.' **31** But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses^o and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.'"

17 Then he said to his disciples: "It is unavoidable that causes for stumbling should come.^p Nevertheless, woe to the one through whom they come!^q **2** It would be of more advantage to him if a millstone were suspended from his neck and he were thrown into the sea^r than

CHAP. 16

- a Joh 1:18
- b Isa 63:16
- Mt 8:11
- c Ro 7:6
- d Ac 5:33
- e Isa 51:2
- Mt 3:9
- f Isa 65:13
- g Ac 7:54
- h Ro 11:22
- i Ps 36:6
- j 1Co 1:23
- k 2Co 6:14
- 1 De 18:18
- m 1Pe 1:10
- n Lu 24:27
- o Joh 5:46

CHAP. 17

- p 1Co 11:19
- q Mt 26:24
- Jude 11
- Re 2:14
- r Re 18:21

Second Col.

- a Mt 18:6
- Mr 9:42
- b Pr 17:10
- Mr 8:33
- c Le 19:17
- Pr 19:11
- Mt 18:15
- d Isa 55:7
- Mt 6:12
- Mt 18:22
- Col 3:13
- 1Pe 4:8
- e Mr 9:24
- Eph 2:8
- Heb 12:2
- f Mt 17:20
- Mt 21:21
- Mr 9:23
- Mr 11:23
- g Job 22:3
- Ps 16:2
- Ro 3:12
- Ro 11:35
- 1Co 9:16
- h Lu 9:51
- Joh 4:4
- i Le 13:46
- Mt 8:2
- j Mt 9:27
- Mt 20:30
- k Le 13:2
- Le 13:49
- Le 14:2
- De 24:8
- Mt 8:4
- Lu 5:14
- 12Ki 5:14
- m Ps 50:15
- Ps 103:1

for him to stumble one of these little ones.^a **3** Pay attention to yourselves. If your brother commits a sin give him a rebuke,^b and if he repents forgive him.^c **4** Even if he sins seven times a day against you and he comes back to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him."^d

5 Now the apostles said to the Lord: "Give us more faith."^e

6 Then the Lord said: "If you had faith the size of a mustard grain, you would say to this black mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea!' and it would obey you."^f

7 "Who of you is there that has a slave plowing or minding the flock who will say to him when he gets in from the field, 'Come here at once and recline at the table'?" **8** Rather, will he not say to him, 'Get something ready for me to have my evening meal, and put on an apron and minister to me until I am through eating and drinking, and afterward you can eat and drink'?" **9** He will not feel gratitude to the slave because he did the things assigned, will he? **10** So you, also, when you have done all the things assigned to you, say, 'We are good-for-nothing slaves.^g What we have done is what we ought to have done.'"

11 And while he was going to Jerusalem he was passing through the midst of Sa-mar'i-a and Gal'i-lee.^h **12** And as he was entering into a certain village ten leprousⁱ men met him, but they stood up afar off. **13** And they raised their voices and said: "Jesus, Instructor, have mercy^j on us!" **14** And when he got sight of them he said to them: "Go and show yourselves to the priests."^k Then as they were going off their cleansing occurred.^l **15** One of them, when he saw he was healed, turned back, glorifying^m God with a

loud voice. **16** And he fell upon his face at Jesus' feet,^a thanking him; furthermore, he was a Sa-mar'i-tan.^b **17** In reply Jesus said: "The ten were cleansed, were they not? Where, then, are the other nine? **18** Were none found that turned back to give glory to God but this man of another nation?" **19** And he said to him: "Rise and be on your way; your faith has made you well."^c

20 But on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming,^d he answered them and said: "The kingdom of God is not coming with striking observableness, **21** neither will people be saying, 'See here!' or, 'There!'^e For, look! the kingdom of God is in YOUR midst."^f

22 Then he said to the disciples: "Days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of man but you will not see it.^g **23** And people will say to you, 'See there!' or, 'See here!'^h Do not go out or chase after them.ⁱ **24** For even as the lightning,^j by its flashing, shines from one part under heaven to another part under heaven, so the Son of man^k will be. **25** First, however, he must undergo many sufferings and be rejected by this generation.^l **26** Moreover, just as it occurred in the days of Noah,^m so it will be also in the days of the Son of man:ⁿ **27** they were eating, they were drinking, men were marrying, women were being given in marriage, until that day when Noah entered into the ark, and the flood arrived and destroyed them all.^o **28** Likewise, just as it occurred in the days of Lot:^p they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building. **29** But on the day that Lot came out of Sod'om it rained fire and sulphur from heaven and destroyed them all.^q **30** The same way it will be

CHAP. 17

- a Mt 8:2
- b 2Ki 17:24
Joh 4:9
- c Mt 9:22
Mr 5:34
Lu 7:50
- d Mt 24:3
- e Mt 24:23
Mr 13:21
- f Mt 12:28
Mt 21:5
- g Mt 9:15
Lu 5:35
Joh 8:56
- h Mt 24:23
Mr 13:21
Lu 21:8
- i 1Jo 4:1
- j Mt 24:27
- k Da 7:13
- l Mr 8:31
Mr 9:31
Lu 9:22
- m Ge 6:5
- n Mt 24:37
- o Ge 7:7
Mt 24:38
- p Ge 19:15
- q Ge 19:24

Second Col.

- a Mt 24:30
Mr 13:26
 - 1Co 1:7
Col 3:4
2Th 1:7
2Th 2:8
Re 1:7
 - b Ge 19:26
 - c Mt 10:39
Mt 16:25
Mr 8:35
Lu 9:24
Joh 12:25
 - d Mt 24:40
 - e Mt 24:41
 - f Job 39:30
 - g Mt 24:28
- CHAP. 18
- h Ps 55:16
Ro 12:12
 - Eph 6:18
Php 4:6
Col 4:2
1Th 5:17
 - i Lu 11:8
 - j Lu 11:7
 - k Jg 16:16
 - l 1Sa 24:12
Isa 40:27
Jer 20:12
 - m 2Pe 3:9
Re 6:10

on that day when the Son of man is to be revealed.^a

31 "On that day let the person that is on the housetop but whose movable things are in the house not come down to pick these up, and the person out in the field, let him likewise not return to the things behind. **32** REMEMBER the wife of Lot.^b **33** Whoever seeks to keep his soul safe for himself will lose it, but whoever loses it will preserve it alive.^c **34** I tell you, In that night two men will be in one bed; the one will be taken along, but the other will be abandoned.^d **35** There will be two women grinding at the same mill; the one will be taken along, but the other will be abandoned."^e **36** — **37** So in response they said to him: "Where, Lord?" He said to them: "Where the body is,^f there also the eagles will be gathered together."^g

18 Then he went on to tell them an illustration with regard to the need for them always to pray and not to give up,^h **2** saying: "In a certain city there was a certain judge that had no fear of God and had no respect for man. **3** But there was a widow in that city and she kept goingⁱ to him, saying, 'See that I get justice from my adversary at law.' **4** Well, for a while he was unwilling, but afterward he said to himself, 'Although I do not fear God or respect a man, **5** at any rate, because of this widow's continually making me trouble,^j I will see that she gets justice, so that she will not keep coming and pummeling^k me to a finish.'" **6** Then the Lord said: "HEAR what the judge, although unrighteous, said!^l **7** Certainly, then, shall not God cause justice^l to be done for his chosen ones who cry out to him day and night, even though he is long-suffering^m toward them? **8** I tell you, He will cause jus-

*** w08 3/15 p. 30 pars. 1-8 Highlights from the Book of Luke

Scriptural Questions Answered: **TMS REVIEW:**

8. In what sense are Christ's followers to "hate" their relatives? (Luke 14:26)
[Apr. 15, w08 3/15 p. 32 par. 1; w92 7/15 p. 9 pars. 3-5]

14:26—In what sense are Christ's followers to "hate" their relatives? In the Bible, "hate" can refer to loving a person or an object to a lesser degree than another. (Gen. 29:30, 31) Christians are to "hate" their relatives in the sense of loving them less than they do Jesus.—Matt. 10:37.

*** w92 7/15 p. 9 pars. 3-5 Christ Hated Lawlessness—Do You? ***

³ What does it mean to hate? In God's Word, "hate" is used in three distinct ways. There is the hatred motivated by malice and that seeks to harm its object. Christians must avoid this kind of hatred. It is the kind that prompted Cain to kill his righteous brother Abel. (1 John 3:12) This is also the kind of hatred that the religious leaders had for Jesus Christ.—Matthew 26:3, 4.

⁴ Further, the word "hate" is used in the Scriptures in the sense of loving less. For example, Jesus said: "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own soul, he cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:26) Clearly, Jesus simply meant loving these less than we love him. Jacob 'hated Leah,' but he actually loved her less than he did Rachel.—Genesis 29:30, 31.

⁵ Then there is the meaning of the word "hate" with which we are especially concerned here. It has the thought of having such an intense feeling of dislike for or strong aversion to someone or something that we avoid having anything to do with such a person or thing. In Psalm 139 this is spoken of as "a complete hatred." There David said: "Do I not hate those who are intensely hating you, O Jehovah, and do I not feel a loathing for those revolting against you? With a complete hatred I do hate them. They have become to me real enemies."—Psalm 139:21, 22.

17:34-37—Who are "the eagles," and what is "the body" where they gather together? Those "taken along," or delivered, are likened to farsighted eagles. "The body" they gather to is the true Christ at his invisible presence and the spiritual food that Jehovah provides for them.—Matt. 24:28.

Lessons for Us:

14:28, 29. We are wise to live within our means.

*** w12 10/15 p. 31 par. 15 Let Your Yes Mean Yes ***

¹⁵ Proving true to our dedication vow means that we must also be faithful in other important matters. For example: Are you married? Then continue to honor the precious vow you made to love and cherish your marriage mate. Have you signed a business contract or filled out an application form for theocratic privileges? Then be true to your commitments and to what you have promised. Have you accepted an invitation to a meal by someone of humble means? Then do not cancel it if a seemingly better invitation is made by someone else. Or have you promised someone you met in the house-to-house ministry that you would call again to give that person further spiritual help? Then by all means let your Yes mean Yes, and Jehovah will bless your ministry.—**Read Luke 16:10.**

*** w12 4/15 p. 16 Maintain a Complete Heart Toward Jehovah ***

2 Exercise: To be healthy, our literal heart at times needs to pump vigorously. Similarly, zealous participation in the ministry—perhaps exerting ourselves by stepping up our activities—keeps our figurative heart in good condition.—**Luke 13:24**; Phil. 3:12.



*** w12 3/15 pp. 25-26 pars. 1-4 Do Not Look at “the Things Behind” ***

“REMEMBER the wife of Lot.” (Luke 17:32) That warning given by Jesus Christ nearly 2,000 years ago is now more important than ever. But what did Jesus mean by this solemn warning? His Jewish audience needed no further explanation. They knew what had happened to Lot’s wife. While fleeing Sodom with her family, she had disobediently looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt.—*Read Genesis 19:17, 26.*

² But why did Lot’s wife look back? Was she curious about what was happening? Did she turn back because of disbelief or lack of faith? Or, rather, was hers a longing gaze for all the things that she had left behind in Sodom?

(Luke 17:31) Whatever the reason for her looking back, she paid for her disobedient act with her life. Just think of it! She died the same day as those perverted inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. No wonder Jesus said: “Remember the wife of Lot”!

³ We too are living at a time when it is vital that we do not look back in a figurative sense. Jesus emphasized this point when he answered a man who had asked if he could return to his family to say good-bye before becoming a disciple. Jesus said: “No man that has put his hand to a plow and looks at the things behind is well fitted for the kingdom of God.” (Luke 9:62) Was Jesus being harsh or unreasonable in answering this way? No, for he knew that the man’s request was merely an excuse to evade responsibility. Jesus described such procrastination as looking at “the things behind.” Does it matter whether the person plowing looks momentarily at what is behind or actually puts down the plow and turns around? Either way he is distracted from what he should be doing, and his work may be affected negatively.



⁴ Rather than turning our attention to the past, we must keep our eyes focused on what is yet ahead. Notice how this is clearly expressed at Proverbs 4:25: “As for your eyes, straight ahead they should look, yes, your own beaming eyes should gaze straight in front of you.”

*** w12 4/15 p. 16 par. 13 Maintain a Complete Heart Toward Jehovah ***

¹³ The lesson is obvious. It is commendable if we share regularly in such wholesome and satisfying activities as attending congregation meetings and participating in field service. But serving Jehovah with a complete heart involves more. (2 Chron. 25:1, 2, 27) If deep down in his heart a Christian continues to love “the things behind”—that is, certain aspects of the world’s way of life—he is in danger of losing his good standing with God. (Luke 17:32) Only if we truly “abhor what is wicked [and] cling to what is good” will we be “well fitted for the kingdom of God.” (Rom. 12:9; Luke 9:62) All of us, therefore, need to make sure that nothing in Satan’s world, no matter how useful or pleasant it may seem to be, holds us back from being wholehearted in caring for Kingdom interests.—2 Cor. 11:14; *read Philipians 3:13, 14.*

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM LOT AND HIS FAMILY?

WHY DID JESUS MENTION LOT’S WIFE?

CLUE: LUKE 17:28-32.

WHAT THINGS DOES THE BIBLE WARN YOU NOT TO LOOK AT?

CLUE: PSALM 101:3.

WHY SHOULD YOU LISTEN TO YOUR PARENTS WHEN THEY TELL YOU NOT TO DO SOMETHING?

CLUE: EPHESIANS 6:1-3.



<http://www.jw.org/en/bible-teachings/family/children/illustrated-bible-stories/lot-and-family/>



***** w10 6/15 pp. 13-14 par. 15 Keep Building Up the Congregation *****

It saddens us when individuals have to be disfellowshipped. They may have brought dishonor upon God's name and discredited the congregation. They may even have sinned against us personally. Yet, when the elders appointed to examine the case determine, in line with Jehovah's direction, that a repentant sinner ought to be readmitted to the congregation, it indicates that he has been forgiven by Jehovah. (Matt. 18:17-20) Should we not seek to imitate Him? Indeed, to be harsh and unforgiving would be tantamount to opposing Jehovah. In order to contribute to the peace and unity of God's congregation and to have Jehovah's approval, should we not, rather, 'confirm our love' for sinners who truly repent and are reinstated?—Matt. 6:14, 15; **Luke 15:7.**

***** w10 4/1 p. 7 What Jesus Taught About God *****

Merciful and willing to forgive Jesus knew that imperfect humans need Jehovah's abundant mercy. In his parable of the prodigal son, Jesus compared Jehovah to a compassionate, forgiving father who opens his arms to receive back a repentant son. (**Luke 15:11-32**) Jesus' words thus assure us that Jehovah looks for any change of heart on the part of a sinful human that would provide a basis for Him to show mercy. Jehovah is eager to forgive a repentant sinner. "I tell you," explained Jesus, "that thus there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner that repents than over ninety-nine righteous ones who have no need of repentance." (**Luke 15:7**) Who would not feel drawn to such a merciful God?

***** Iv chap. 16 p. 183 par. 2 Oppose the Devil and His Crafty Acts *****

² While we may witness baptisms a few times a year in our locality, the angels are privileged to observe them much more often. Can you imagine how much "joy in heaven" there must be as they see thousands of individuals worldwide added to the visible part of Jehovah's organization each week? (**Luke 15:7, 10**) No doubt, the angels are thrilled to observe this increase!—Haggai 2:7.

***** w11 10/15 p. 11 par. 12 Is Your Recreation Beneficial? *****

¹² So, then, when it comes to spending time on recreation, we do well to count the cost in advance. (**Luke 14:28**) We need to determine how much of our time a certain leisure activity will *cost*. Next, we must decide how much of our time it is *worth*. If pursuing a form of recreation will mean neglecting such important activities as personal Bible study, family worship, attending Christian meetings, or sharing in Kingdom preaching, it is not worth the price. (Mark 8:36) But if an occasional leisure activity energizes us to keep on pursuing Kingdom interests, we may well decide that the time we spend on that type of recreation is worthwhile.

***** w10 8/1 p. 17 How to Find Happiness *****

Generosity brings happiness. (Acts 20:35) For example, Jesus said: "When you spread a feast, invite poor people, crippled, lame, blind; and you will be *happy*, because they have nothing with which to repay you." (**Luke 14:13, 14**) Happiness comes, not to those who seek it for themselves, but to those who seek it for others.



*** km 4/08 p. 1 par. 1 “Show Yourselves Thankful” ***

¹ When Jesus healed ten lepers, only one of them returned to express gratitude. Jesus asked: “The ten were cleansed, were they not? Where, then, are the other nine?” (Luke 17:11-19) How important it is for us to be appreciative and to show ourselves thankful for every good gift and perfect present bestowed upon us by our generous and loving heavenly Father, Jehovah God!—Col. 3:15; Jas. 1:17.

*** w11 2/15 p. 4 Teach Your Children to Be Respectful ***

How do your children view what they are learning at school? Do they express appreciation for what their teachers are doing for them? As a parent, do you express such appreciation? Your children will tend to reflect the same attitude toward their schoolwork and teachers that you display. Why not encourage them to make a practice of thanking their teachers? Expressing gratitude for services rendered is an excellent way to show respect, whether to a teacher, a doctor, a shopkeeper, or anyone else. (Luke 17:15, 16) Young Christians who stand out among their schoolmates because of politeness and good conduct are to be commended.

*** km 8/03 p. 1 pars. 4-5 Work That Refreshes ***

⁴ **Christ’s Yoke Is Kindly:** While Christians are exhorted to ‘exert themselves vigorously,’ Jesus does not demand more than we are able to give. (Luke 13:24) Indeed, he lovingly invites us to ‘get under his yoke with him.’ (Matt. 11:29, ftn.) Those who must contend with difficult circumstances can be confident that their whole-souled service, even if limited, is well-pleasing to God.—Mark 14:6-8; Col. 3:23.

⁵ How refreshing it is to serve a God who appreciates whatever we do for the sake of his name! (Heb. 6:10) May we always strive to give him our best.

*** w12 6/15 p. 31 Be Wise—Seek “Skillful Direction” ***

Like a strategist organizing a battle, we do well to anticipate potential dangers to our spirituality. (Prov. 22:3) For example, you may have to decide whether to accept a new job or a promotion at work. You would logically consider pay, travel time to and from work, and other details. However, there are other points to keep in mind: Will the type of work be compatible with Bible principles? How might the hours, such as with shift work, affect my Christian activities?—Luke 14:28-30.

*** w10 11/15 p. 3 par. 5 Young Ones—Be Guided by God’s Word ***

⁵ Really, obeying your parents’ rules is like paying off a debt that you owe to a bank—the more reliable you are in making your payments, the more inclined the bank will be to extend credit to you. Similarly, you owe your parents respect and obedience. (Read Proverbs 1:8.) The more obedient you are, the more likely your parents will be to extend greater freedom to you. (Luke 16:10) Of course, if you continually break the rules, do not be surprised if your parents reduce or even close down your “line of credit.”



DRAW CLOSE TO GOD

He Remembers That “We Are Dust”

“I HAD not believed that Jehovah could fully forgive me, and I thought that I would carry this burden for the rest of my life.” So wrote one Christian woman regarding her past mistakes. Truly, a guilty conscience is a heavy burden to carry. The Bible, however, offers comfort that can ease the pain of repentant sinners. Consider the words of the psalmist David found at Psalm 103:8-14.

David knew that “Jehovah is merciful” and does not “keep finding fault” with us. (Verses 8-10) When God finds a basis to show mercy, he does so completely and unstintingly. David, an eloquent poet, uses three similes to illustrate God’s far-reaching mercy toward us.

“As the heavens are higher than the earth, his loving-kindness is superior toward those fearing him.” (Verse 11) When we look up at the night sky, we cannot fathom the great distance between the starry heavens and the earth. David thus impresses upon us the magnitude of Jehovah’s mercy, a facet of his loyal love. This mercy is for “those fearing” God—those who have “a humble, hearty reverence of his authority,” says one scholar.

“As far off as the sunrise is from the sunset, so far off from us he has put our transgressions.” (Verse 12) Other translations say, “as far as the east is from the west.” How far is that? As far as we can imagine. One Bible reference work says: “Fly as far as the wing of imagination can bear you, and if you journey through space eastward, you are further from the west at every beat of your wing.” David here tells us that when God forgives our sins, he puts them as far away from us as we can possibly imagine.

“As a father shows mercy to his sons, Jehovah has shown mercy to those fearing him.” (Verse 13) David, a father himself, knew what a

loving father feels in his heart. Such a father is moved to show compassion to his children, especially when they are in pain. David assures us that our loving heavenly Father shows mercy to his earthly children, especially when their repentant hearts are “broken and crushed” because of their sins.—Psalm 51:17.

Following the three similes, David reveals what moves Jehovah to show mercy to imperfect humans: *“He himself well knows the formation of us, remembering that we are dust.”* (Verse 14) Jehovah knows that we are creatures made of

“I am starting to feel that I really can draw closer to Jehovah, and I feel that a weight has been lifted off me”

dust, having frailties and limitations. Taking into consideration our sinful nature, Jehovah is “ready to forgive”—as long as we show heartfelt repentance.—Psalm 86:5.

Is your heart touched by David’s words about Jehovah’s mercy? The woman quoted at the outset made a study of what the Bible says about God’s readiness to forgive, and she was moved to say: “I am starting to feel that I really can draw closer to Jehovah, and I feel that a weight has been lifted off me.”* Why not learn more about God’s mercy and how you can receive it? Perhaps you too will feel that a weight is being lifted off you.

* See chapter 26, “A God Who Is ‘Ready to Forgive,’” of the book *Draw Close to Jehovah*, published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.

SUGGESTED BIBLE READING FOR AUGUST:
■ **Psalms 87-118**

today of the old geographical races. As we would expect, divergence appears to be correlated with the degree of isolation. . . . When race formation took place on the continents, with the bottlenecking of thousands of populations in isolated gene pools all over the world, the gene-frequency differences we now see were established. . . . The paradox which faces us is that each group of humans appears to be externally different yet underneath these differences there is fundamental similarity.” (*Heredity and Human Life*, New York, 1963, H. L. Carson, pp. 151, 154, 162, 163) (Thus, early in human history, when a group of people were isolated from others and married within the group, certain distinctive combinations of genetic traits were emphasized in their offspring.)

Does the Bible teach that blacks are cursed?

That idea is based on a misunderstanding of Genesis 9:25, where Noah is quoted as saying: “Cursed be Canaan. Let him become the lowest slave to his brothers.” Read it carefully; it says nothing about skin color. The curse was because Ham’s son Canaan had evidently performed some shocking act deserving of a curse. But who were Canaan’s descendants? Not blacks, but lighter-skinned peoples living to the east of the Mediterranean Sea. Because of their depraved practices, demonistic rites, idolatry, and child sacrifice, they came under divine judgment, and God gave to Israel the land occupied by the Canaanites. (Gen. 10:15-19) Not all the Canaanites were destroyed; some were put at forced labor, in fulfillment of the curse.—Josh. 17:13.

From which of Noah’s offspring did the blacks descend? “The sons of Cush [another one of Ham’s sons] were Seba and Havilah and Sabtah and Raamah and Sabteca.” (Gen. 10:6, 7) Later Biblical references to Cush are usually equivalent to Ethiopia. Seba is later used when referring to another people in the eastern part of Africa and evidently close to Ethiopia.—Isa. 43:3, footnote in *NW Reference edition*.

Are all humans children of God?

Being children of God is not something that we imperfect humans are entitled to by birth. But we are all the offspring of Adam, who when

created in perfection was a “son of God.”—Luke 3:38.

Acts 10:34, 35: “God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him.”

John 3:16: “God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that *everyone* exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life.” (Exercising genuine faith in him is necessary in order for any of us to attain to the kind of relationship with God that Adam lost. That privilege is open to people of all races.)

1 John 3:10: “The children of God and the children of the Devil are evident by this fact: Everyone who does not carry on righteousness does not originate with God, neither does he who does not love his brother.” (So God does not view all humans as his children. From a spiritual standpoint, those who deliberately practice what God condemns have the Devil as their father. See John 8:44. However, true Christians reflect godly qualities. From among these, God has selected a limited number to rule as kings with Christ in heaven. These are referred to by God as his “children” or his “sons.” For further details, see the main heading “Born Again.”)

Rom. 8:19-21: “The eager expectation of the creation is waiting for the revealing of the sons of God . . . The creation itself also will be set free from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God.” (Relief for mankind will come when “the sons of God,” after receiving heavenly life, are ‘revealed’ as taking positive action on behalf of mankind under the direction of Christ. After faithful ones on earth [referred to as “the creation” in this scripture] have attained to human perfection and have demonstrated unshakable loyalty to Jehovah as Universal Sovereign, then they too will enjoy the fine relationship of children of God. People of all races will share in this.)

Will people of all races ever truly be united as brothers and sisters?

To those who would be his true disciples, Jesus said: “All you are brothers.” (Matt. 23:8) Later he added: “By this all will know that you

95 “Taste and See That Jehovah Is Good” (Psalm 34:8)

1. Our service to God we cherish;
We value our priv’lege to preach.
We buy out the time and give God our best,
For many we still need to reach.

(CHORUS)

*God’s Word invites us: ‘Come taste and see—
See that Jehovah is good.’
Godly devotion brings greatest gain,
We know we’ve done all we could.*

2. For those in the full-time service,
Rich blessings and treasures abound.
By trusting in God to care for their needs,
In all things contentment is found.

(Chorus)

provide a letter of recommendation. This letter is required whether you are serving as an elder, a ministerial servant, a pioneer, or a publisher. The service committee will send a letter of recommendation along with your inquiry directly to the branch office of the country where you desire to serve.

If serving where the need is greater is something that you would like to do, why not discuss the matter with the elders in your congregation? They may be able to help you determine how to go about making such a move or how to qualify for such service sometime in the future.

WORKING WITH A FOREIGN-LANGUAGE CONGREGATION

In order to expand your ministry, you may wish to consider learning another language, including a sign language. In some bilingual families, both parents and youths are serving in foreign-language congregations to care more fully for Kingdom interests. If you have the goal of learning to preach in another language, why not speak with the elders and the circuit overseer? They may be able to offer suggestions and needed encouragement. In some cases, under the direction of the branch office, circuits have organized language classes to help reach the local immigrant population.

AUXILIARY, REGULAR, AND SPECIAL PIONEER SERVICE

All publishers should be acquainted with the general requirements for auxiliary, regular, and special pioneer service as well as other branches of full-time service. From time to time, *Our Kingdom Ministry* sets out additional specific information. A pioneer publisher must be an exemplary baptized Christian

whose personal circumstances allow him or her to spend the specified number of hours each month in publicly preaching the good news. The Congregation Service Committee approves applications for auxiliary pioneer service, whereas regular and special pioneers are appointed by the branch office.

Auxiliary pioneers may be appointed for a minimum of one month, for any number of consecutive months, or on a continuous basis, according to their circumstances. Many Kingdom publishers enjoy serving as auxiliary pioneers on special occasions, such as during the Memorial season or the month of the circuit overseer's visit. Some choose vacation months. Baptized, school-age publishers may wish to enroll as auxiliary pioneers during months they have time off from school. Whatever your personal circumstances, if you are maintaining a clean moral standing, can arrange to meet the specified hour requirement in the field ministry, and believe that you could serve one or more months as an auxiliary pioneer, the congregation elders will be pleased to consider your application for this privilege of service.

To qualify for appointment as a *regular pioneer*, you must currently be in a position to reach the yearly field service requirement. *Our Kingdom Ministry* suggests a monthly goal of hours that will assist you in fulfilling this responsibility. As a regular pioneer, you must always work in close cooperation with the congregation where you are serving. Zealous pioneers are a real blessing to a congregation, generating enthusiasm for the field ministry and even encouraging others to take up the pioneer service. Before the elders recommend that you be appointed as a regular pioneer, however, you must be baptized for at least

six months, have good morals, and show yourself to be an exemplary publisher. You must be able to follow a practical schedule that will enable you to spend the required number of hours in field service.

Special pioneers are usually selected from among regular pioneers who have demonstrated their effectiveness in the ministry and who are able to serve wherever the branch office chooses to assign them. Often this is an isolated area where they can find interest and form new congregations. At times, special pioneers are assigned to congregations that need help in covering their territory regularly. Some special pioneers who are also elders have been assigned to help small congregations, even where there is not a particular need for more workers in the field. Special pioneers receive a modest reimbursement for necessary living expenses.

MINISTERIAL TRAINING SCHOOL

The steady increase in new congregations being formed each year gives evidence of Jehovah's blessing upon the efforts of his people to preach the good news of the Kingdom. (Acts 16:5) With the increase in congregations, the need for additional elders and ministerial servants also grows. Single brothers who qualify are encouraged to fill this need by saying to Jehovah: "Here I am! Send me." (Isa. 6:8) Many have responded in this way by applying to attend the Ministerial Training School, which is reserved for single ministerial servants and elders who are willing and able to serve where the need is greater. Such ones can learn more about the requirements by attending the meetings for brothers interested in the Ministerial Training School when these are held at circuit assemblies.

1. Move ahead, move ahead to maturity!
It's the will of our God that we gain ability.
Try your best to improve in your ministry,
Then our God your work will bless.
There's a place in the service for all.
It's the work Jesus did, you'll recall.
Look to God that you thus at no time may fall,
Standing firm for righteousness.

2. Move ahead, move ahead, boldly witnessing!
Everlasting good news to all sorts of people bring.
Join in praise to Jehovah, our God and King,
As we preach from door to door.
Wicked foes try to cause us to fear.
Don't shrink back, but let ev'ryone hear
Joyful news that the Kingdom of God is here.
Teach the truth yet more and more.

3. Move ahead, move ahead, always follow through,
And improve in your skills
for there's so much work to do.
Let God's spirit keep on motivating you.
Find the joy that is divine.
Love the people you work hard to find.
Keep returning to reach heart and mind.
And assist all good progress each day to make,
So the light of truth will shine.