

- Song 50 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“A True Friend Gives Upbuilding Counsel”:** (10 min.)
 Job 33:1-5—Elihu showed respect for Job (w95 2/15 29 ¶3-5)
 Job 33:6, 7—Elihu was humble and kind (w95 2/15 29 ¶3-5)
 Job 33:24, 25—Elihu encouraged Job even while giving counsel (w11 4/1 23 ¶3; w09 4/15 4 ¶8)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Job 33:24, 25—What might have been the “ransom” that Elihu mentioned? (w11 4/1 23 ¶3-5)

Job 34:36—To what extent was Job to be tested, and what does that teach us? (w94 11/15 17 ¶10)

What does this week’s Bible reading teach me about Jehovah?

What points from this week’s Bible reading can I use in the field ministry?

- **Bible Reading:** Job 33:1-25 (4 min. or less)

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** Offer the 2016 regional convention invitation using the sample presentation. (2 min. or less)
- **Return Visit:** fg lesson 12 ¶4-5—Demonstrate how to make a return visit on someone who accepted the convention invitation. Lay the groundwork for the next visit. (4 min. or less)
- **Bible Study:** jl lesson 11—Encourage the student to attend an upcoming convention. (6 min. or less)

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 124
- **“Convention Reminders”:** (8 min.) Talk. Play the video *Convention Reminders*. (Go to tv.jw.org, and look under VIDEO ON DEMAND > OUR ACTIVITIES.) Encourage all to finalize their plans to attend all three days. Outline local arrangements for the invitation campaign.
- **Local needs:** (7 min.)
- **Congregation Bible Study:** ia chap. 14 ¶1-13 (30 min.)
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 21 and Prayer

Convention Reminders

As at other times, we want to be guided by love for God and neighbor during the convention season. (Mt 22:37-39) First Corinthians 13:4-8 describes love in action: “Love is patient and kind. . . . [It] does not behave indecently, does not look for its own interests, does not become provoked. . . . Love never fails.” As you watch the video *Convention Reminders*, think about ways you can show love for others at the convention.

HOW CAN WE SHOW LOVE . . .



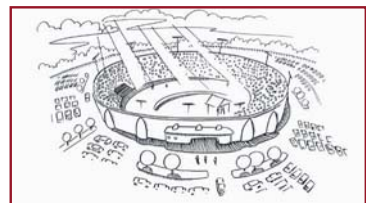
when saving seats?



when the musical program is about to begin?



at our lodgings in the convention city?



by volunteering to help?

1. Jehovah our God has wisely provided
For us all,
One and all,
A pattern of love, that we may be guided,
Lest we should fall,
Lest we should fall.
Come follow God's way, so warm and inviting;
The way that is right, to fine works inciting;
The roadway to peace, God's people uniting.
God's way is love.
Yes, God's way is love.
2. When we walk God's way, our love for our brother
Will be true,
Warm and true;
Will make us alert to help one another
In all we do,
In all we do;
Will help us forgive each small imperfection,
Will help us to have true tender affection,
Will help us to be our Father's reflection,
Showing our love,
Our brotherly love.
3. Our love for our God impels us to serve him
All our days,
All our days.
We gladly obey with heartfelt devotion,
Singing his praise,
Singing his praise.
So may we proclaim his name to each hearer;
May they come to see the truth ever clearer.
May his service grow still dearer and dearer,
For that is love.
Yes, that is true love.

- 33** "But now, Job, please hear my words;
Listen to everything I say.
- 2** Look, please! I must open my mouth;
My tongue* must speak.
- 3** My words declare the uprightness of my heart,^a
And my lips sincerely tell what I know.
- 4** God's own spirit made me,^b
And the Almighty's own breath brought me to life.^c
- 5** Reply to me if you are able;
Present your arguments before me; take your position.
- 6** Look! I am just like you before the true God;
From the clay I too was shaped.^d
- 7** So no fear of me should terrify you,
And no pressure from me should overwhelm you.
- 8** But you said in my hearing,
Yes, I kept hearing these words,
- 9** 'I am pure, without transgression;^e
I am clean, without error.^f
- 10** But God finds reasons to oppose me;
He considers me his enemy.^g
- 11** He puts my feet in stocks;
He scrutinizes all my paths.^h
- 12** But you are not right in saying this, so I will answer you:
God is far greater than mortal man.ⁱ
- 13** Why do you complain against Him?^j
Is it because he did not answer all your words?^k
- 14** For God speaks once and a second time,
But no one pays attention,
- 15** In a dream, a vision of the night,^l

33:2 *Lit., "My tongue with my palate."

CHAP. 33

- a Mt 12:34
Lu 6:45
- b Ps 119:73
- c Ge 2:7
Ec 12:7
Ac 17:25
- d Ge 2:7
- e Job 10:7
Job 16:16, 17
Job 23:11
- f Job 29:14
- g Job 13:24
Job 16:9
Job 19:11
- h Job 13:27
Job 14:16
Job 31:4
- i Job 12:13
Ps 8:4
Isa 40:25
Isa 55:9
- j Isa 45:9
Ro 9:20
- k Job 13:24
- l Nu 12:6
Da 4:5
- Second Col.
- a Job 36:10
- b Ge 20:6, 7
Mt 27:19
- c Da 4:24, 25
- d Ge 31:24
- e Ps 107:17, 18
- f Job 14:13
- g Job 19:25
Mt 20:28
- h 2Ki 5:14
- i De 34:7
Job 42:16
Ps 103:3-5

When deep sleep falls upon people
While they sleep in their beds.

- 16** Then he uncovers their ears^a
And impresses* his instruction upon them,
- 17** To turn a person away from wrongdoing^b
And to protect a man from pride.^c
- 18** God spares his soul* from the pit,^d
His life from perishing by the sword.^e
- 19** A person is also reproved by pain on his bed
And by the constant distress of his bones,
- 20** So that his very being* loathes bread,
And he^f rejects even fine food.^g
- 21** His flesh wastes away from sight,
And his bones that were hidden now protrude.*
- 22** His soul* draws near to the pit;^h
His life to those who bring death.
- 23** If there is a messenger* for him,
One advocate out of a thousand,
To tell to man what is upright,
- 24** Then God shows him favor and says,
'Spare him from going down into the pit!ⁱ
I have found a ransom!^g
- 25** Let his flesh become fresher* than in youth,^h
Let him return to the days of his youthful vigor.ⁱ

33:16 *Lit., "puts a seal on." 33:18, 22 *Or "life." 33:18, 22, 24 #Or "grave." 33:18 ^Or "by a weapon (missile)." 33:20 *Lit., "his life." #Or "his soul." 33:21 *Or "are laid bare." 33:23 *Or "an angel." 33:25 *Or "healthier."

- 26 He will entreat God,^a
 who will accept him,
 And he will see His face
 with shouts of joy,
 And He will restore His righ-
 teousness to mortal man.
- 27 That person will declare*
 to men,
 'I have sinned^b and distorted
 what is right,
 But I did not receive what
 I deserved.'[#]
- 28 He has redeemed my soul*
 from going into the pit,^{#c}
 And my life will see the
 light.'
- 29 Indeed, God does all these
 things
 Twice, three times, for
 a man,
- 30 To bring him* back from
 the pit,[#]
 So that he may be enlight-
 ened with the light of life.^d
- 31 Pay attention, Job!
 Listen to me!
 Keep silent, and I will
 continue speaking.
- 32 If you have something to say,
 reply to me.
 Speak, for I want to prove
 you right.
- 33 If you have nothing to say,
 you should listen to me;
 Keep silent, and I will teach
 you wisdom."
- 34** So Eli'hu continued to say
 in reply:
- 2 "Listen to my words, you
 who are wise;
 Hear me, you who know
 so much.
- 3 For the ear tests words
 Just as the tongue* tastes
 food.
- 4 Let us evaluate for ourselves
 what is right;

33:27 *Lit., "sing." #Or possibly, "And it did not profit me." 33:28 *Or "life." 33:28, 30 #Or "grave." 33:30 *Or "his soul." 34:3 *Lit., "palate."

CHAP. 33

a Ps 30:8

b 2Sa 12:13
Ps 32:5
Pr 28:13
Lu 15:21
1Jo 1:9c Ps 19:14
Isa 38:17

d Ps 56:13

Second Col.

CHAP. 34

a Job 29:14
Job 33:9

b Job 27:2

c Job 9:17, 18

d Pr 1:10, 15
Pr 4:14e Job 9:22-24
Job 35:3f Ge 18:25
2Ch 19:7
Ps 92:15g De 32:4
Ro 9:14
Heb 6:10h 1Ch 28:9
Ps 62:12
Pr 24:12
Jer 32:19
Eze 33:20
Ro 2:6
2Co 5:10
Ga 6:7
1Pe 1:17
Re 22:12

i Jas 1:13

j Ps 89:14
Ps 97:2
Ps 99:4
Ro 2:11k Ps 104:29
Ec 12:7
Isa 42:5
Ac 17:25l Ge 3:19
Ps 146:4
Ec 3:20

Let us decide among
 ourselves what is good.

- 5 For Job has said, 'I am in
 the right,^a
 But God has denied me
 justice.'^b
- 6 Would I lie about what my
 own judgment should be?
 My wound is incurable,
 though there is no
 transgression.'^c
- 7 What other man is like Job,
 Who drinks up derision like
 water?
- 8 He is in company with
 wrongdoers
 And in association with
 wicked men.^d
- 9 For he has said, 'A man does
 not benefit
 From trying to please God.'^e
- 10 So listen to me, you men
 of understanding:^{*}
 It is unthinkable for the true
 God to act wickedly,^f
 For the Almighty to do
 wrong!^g
- 11 For he will reward a man
 according to what he does^h
 And bring upon him the
 consequences of his ways.
- 12 For a certainty, God does not
 act wickedly;ⁱ
 The Almighty does not
 pervert justice.^j
- 13 Who put him in charge
 of the earth,
 And who appointed him
 over the whole world?^{*}
- 14 If he fixes his attention*
 on them,
 If he gathers their spirit
 and breath to himself,^k
- 15 All humans* would perish
 together,
 And mankind would return
 to the dust.^l
- 16 So if you have understand-
 ing, pay attention to this;

34:10 *Lit., "heart." 34:13 *Or "the inhabited earth." 34:14 *Lit., "his heart." 34:15 *Lit., "flesh."

Listen carefully to what I say.

- 17 Should someone who hates justice be in control, Or would you condemn a powerful one who is righteous?
- 18 Would you say to a king, 'You are good for nothing,' Or to nobles, 'You are wicked'?'^a
- 19 There is One who does not show partiality to princes And who does not favor the rich over the poor,^{*b} For they are all the work of his hands.^c
- 20 They may die suddenly,^d in the middle of the night;^e They shake violently and pass away; Even the powerful are removed, but not by human hands.^f
- 21 For God's eyes are upon the ways of a man,^g And He sees all his steps.
- 22 There is no darkness or deep shadow Where wrongdoers can conceal themselves.^h
- 23 For God has not set an appointed time for any man To appear before him in judgment.
- 24 He breaks the powerful without needing to investigate And sets up others in their place.ⁱ
- 25 For he knows what they are doing;^j He overthrows them during the night, and they are crushed.^k
- 26 He strikes them for their wickedness, In a place where all can see,^l
- 27 Because they have turned away from following him^m And have no regard for any of his ways;ⁿ
- 28 They cause the poor to cry out to him,

34:19 *Or "the noble over the lowly."

CHAP. 34

- a Ex 22:28
Ec 8:2-4
Ec 10:20
- b De 10:17
2Ch 19:7
Ac 10:34
Ro 2:11
Eph 6:9
- c Job 31:13-15
Pr 22:2
- d Ps 73:3,19
Ac 12:21-23
- e Ex 12:29
Da 5:30
- f 1Sa 25:38
- g Ge 6:5
2Ch 16:9
Job 31:4
Pr 5:21
Pr 15:3
Jer 16:17
Jer 32:19
1Pe 3:12
- h Ps 139:11, 12
Isa 29:15
Jer 23:24
Am 9:3
Heb 4:13
- i Eze 21:26, 27
Da 2:21
Da 4:25
- j Ho 7:2
- k 1Sa 4:17
Da 5:30
- l Nu 12:10
- m 1Sa 15:11
- n Ps 28:5

Second Col.

- a Ex 22:22, 23
Jas 5:4
- b Job 13:16
Job 27:8
- c Da 9:7
Ro 3:23
- d Job 35:16
Job 38:2
Job 42:3
- e Job 10:1
Job 19:6
- f Job 35:2

CHAP. 35

- g Job 10:7
Job 16:16, 17
Job 34:5

So that he hears the outcry of the helpless.^a

- 29 When God remains silent, who can condemn him? When he hides his face, who can see him? Whether toward a nation or a man, the result is the same,
- 30 So that a godless person* may not rule^b Or lay snares for the people.
- 31 For will anyone say to God, 'I have been punished, although I have committed no offense;^c
- 32 Teach me what I have failed to see; If I have done anything wrong, I will not do it again'?
- 33 Should he reward you on your terms when you reject his judgment? You must decide, not I. So tell me what you know so well.
- 34 Men of understanding* will say to me—Any wise man who hears me—
- 35 'Job speaks without knowledge,^d And his words lack insight.'
- 36 Let Job be tested* to the limit Because his replies are like those of wicked men!
- 37 He adds rebellion to his sin;^e He scornfully claps his hands before us And multiplies his words against the true God!"^f
- 35** E-li'hu continued his response:
- 2 "Are you so convinced that you are right that you would say, 'I am more righteous than God'?"^g

34:30 *Or "an apostate." 34:34 *Lit., "heart." 34:36 *Or possibly, "My father, let Job be tested."

- 3** For you say, ‘What does it matter to you?’
Am I better off than if I had sinned?’^a
- 4** I will reply to you
And to your companions^b
with you.
- 5** Look up to heaven and see,
Observe the clouds,^c which
are high above you.
- 6** If you sin, how do you hurt him?^d
If your transgressions multiply,
what do you do to him?^e
- 7** If you are righteous, what do you give him;
What does he receive from you?^f
- 8** Your wickedness affects only
a human like yourself,
And your righteousness,
a son of man.
- 9** People cry out when under
great oppression;
They cry for relief from
the domination* of the
powerful.^g
- 10** But no one says, ‘Where is
God, my Grand Maker,^h
The one causing songs to be
sung in the night?’ⁱ
- 11** He teaches us^j more than
the beasts of the earth,^k
And he makes us wiser than
the birds of the heavens.
- 12** People cry out, but he does
not answer,^l
Because of the pride of
the wicked.^m
- 13** Surely God does not hear
an empty cry;ⁿ
The Almighty does not pay
attention to it.
- 14** How much less, then, when
you complain that you do
not see him!^o
Your legal case is before
him, so you should wait
anxiously for him.^p

35:3 *Likely referring to God. 35:9
*Lit., “arm.” 35:13 *Or “a lie.”

CHAP. 35

- a Job 9:22-24
Job 34:9
Ps 73:13
- b Job 2:11
- c Ps 68:34
- d Pr 8:36
Pr 9:12
- e Pr 19:3
- f Ro 11:35
- g Pr 29:2
- h Isa 51:12, 13
1Pe 4:19
- i Ps 42:8
Ps 149:5
Ac 16:25
- j Ps 94:12
Isa 48:17
- k Ge 1:26
- l Ps 18:41
- m Pr 1:28, 29
1Pe 5:5
- n Pr 15:29
Isa 1:15
Jer 11:11
- o Job 9:11
- p Ps 37:5

Second Col.

- a Ps 103:10-12
- b Job 34:35
Job 38:2

CHAP. 36

- c De 32:4
Ps 11:7
Ps 139:14
Da 9:14
Re 15:3
- d 1Sa 2:3
Job 37:16
- e Ps 24:8
Ps 99:4
Jer 32:18
- f Ps 9:17
Ps 68:2
2Pe 2:9
- g Ps 10:14
Ps 140:12
Pr 22:22, 23
- h Ps 33:18
Ps 34:15
- i Ps 78:70, 71
Ps 113:7, 8
Isa 9:7
- j Eze 18:30

- 15** For he has not angrily called
for an accounting;
Nor has he taken note of
your extreme rashness.^a

- 16** Job opens his mouth wide
in vain;
He multiplies words without
knowledge.”^b

36 E-li’hu continued:

2 “Be patient with me
a little longer while
I explain,

For I still have words to
speak on God’s behalf.

- 3** I will speak comprehensively
about what I know,
And I will ascribe righteous-
ness to my Maker.^c

- 4** Truly my words are not false;
The One perfect in knowl-
edge^d is here before you.

- 5** Indeed, God is mighty^e and
rejects no one;
He is great in his power of
understanding.^{*f}

- 6** He will not preserve the lives
of the wicked,^f
But he gives justice to the
afflicted.^g

- 7** He does not take his eyes off
the righteous;^h
He enthrones them with
kings,^{*i} and they are
exalted forever.

- 8** But if they are bound in
shackles
And caught in ropes of
affliction,

- 9** He reveals to them what they
have done,
Their transgressions caused
by their pride.

- 10** He opens their ears to
correction
And tells them to turn away
from wrongdoing.^j

- 11** If they obey and serve him,
They will live out their days
in prosperity,

36:5 *Lit., “heart.” 36:7 *Or possibly,
“He enthrones kings.”

And their years will be pleasant.^a

- 12** But if they do not obey, they will perish by the sword^{*b} And die without knowledge.
- 13** The godless* at heart will harbor resentment. They do not cry for help even when he binds them.
- 14** They die* while still young,^c Spending[#] their life among male temple prostitutes.^d
- 15** But God* rescues the afflicted during their affliction; He opens their ear when they are oppressed.
- 16** He draws you away from the brink of distress^e To a broad space, free of restriction,^f With rich food on your table as consolation.^g
- 17** Then you will be satisfied with the judgment on the wicked,^h When judgment is rendered and justice is upheld.
- 18** But take care that rage does not lead you into spitefulness,^{*i} And do not let a large bribe lead you astray.
- 19** Would your cry for help Or any of your strenuous efforts keep you from distress?^j
- 20** Do not long for the night, When people vanish from their place.
- 21** Beware that you do not turn to wrongdoing, Choosing this instead of affliction.^k
- 22** Look! God is exalted in his power; What instructor is like him?

36:12 *Or "by a weapon (missile)."
36:13 *Or "apostate." **36:14** *Or "Their soul dies." [#]Or possibly, "Ending."
36:15 *Lit., "He." **36:18** *Or "spiteful handclapping."

CHAP. 36

- a Jer 26:13
 b Job 33:16-18
 Isa 1:19, 20
 Ro 2:8
 c Ps 55:23
 d 1Ki 14:24
 e Isa 30:21
 f Ps 18:19
 g Isa 55:2
 h Pr 2:22
 Jer 25:31
 i Pr 19:19
 Pr 29:22
 j Job 34:20
 Ps 33:16
 Pr 11:4
 k Heb 11:24, 25

Second Col.

- a Isa 40:14
 b Job 34:10
 Ro 9:14
 c Ps 92:5
 Ps 104:24
 d Ex 15:1
 e Ps 145:3
 Ps 148:13
 Re 15:3
 f Ps 90:2
 Ps 102:25-27
 1Ti 1:17
 Heb 1:10-12
 g Ge 2:6
 Am 5:8
 h Pr 3:20
 Isa 55:10
 Jer 14:22
 i 2Sa 22:12
 j Job 37:3
 k Ac 14:17
 l 2Sa 22:15
 Ps 18:14
 Ps 144:6

- 23** Who has directed* his way^a Or said to him, 'What you have done is wrong?'^b
- 24** Remember to magnify his activity,^c Of which men have sung.^d
- 25** All mankind has seen it, Mortal man looks on from a distance.
- 26** Yes, God is greater than we can know;^e The number of his years is beyond comprehension.^{*f}
- 27** He draws up the drops of water;^g They condense into rain from his mist;
- 28** Then the clouds pour it down;^h They shower down upon mankind.
- 29** Can anyone understand the layers of clouds, The thundering from his tent?^{*i}
- 30** See how he spreads his lightning^{*j} over it And covers the depths[#] of the sea.
- 31** By these he sustains* the peoples; He gives them food in abundance.^k
- 32** With his hands he covers the lightning, And he directs it against its target.^l
- 33** His thunder tells about him, Even the livestock tell who* is coming.
- 37** "At this my heart pounds And leaps from its place.
- 2** Listen carefully to the rumbling of his voice And the thunder that comes from his mouth.
- 36:23** *Or possibly, "criticized; called him to account for." **36:26** *Or "is unsearchable." **36:29** *Lit., "booth."
36:30 *Lit., "light." [#]Lit., "roots."
36:31 *Or possibly, "pleads the cause of." **36:33** *Or possibly, "what."

- 3** He unleashes it under the entire heavens
And sends his lightning^a
to the ends of the earth.
- 4** After that is a roaring sound;
He thunders with a majestic voice,^b
And he does not hold it back
when his voice is heard.
- 5** God thunders with his voice^c
in a wonderful way;
He does great things that
are beyond our understanding.^d
- 6** For he says to the snow,
'Fall to the earth,'^e
And to the downpour of rain,
'Pour down mightily.'^f
- 7** God puts a stop to all human activity*
So that every mortal man
will know His work.
- 8** The wild animals go into
their dens
And remain in their lairs.
- 9** The storm wind blows from
its chamber,^g
And the cold comes from
the north winds.^h
- 10** By the breath of God, the ice
is produced,ⁱ
And the broad waters are
frozen solid.^j
- 11** Yes, he weighs down the
clouds with moisture;
He scatters his lightning^k
in the clouds;
- 12** They swirl around where he
directs them;
They carry out whatever he
commands^l on the surface
of the inhabited earth.*
- 13** Whether it is for
punishment*^m or for the
sake of the land
Or for loyal love, he causes
it to happen.ⁿ

37:7 *Lit., "puts a seal on the hand of every human." 37:12 *Or "of the productive land of the earth." 37:13 *Lit., "a rod."

CHAP. 37

- a Job 37:11
Ps 97:4
- b Job 40:9
Ps 29:3
Ps 68:33
- c 2Sa 22:14
- d Ec 3:11
Re 15:3
- e Ps 147:16
- f Am 9:6
- g Ps 104:3
- h Pr 25:23
- i Ps 147:16
- j Job 38:29, 30
- k Job 37:3
- l Ps 148:8
- m Ex 9:23
1Sa 12:17, 18
- n 1Ki 18:45
Job 36:29, 31
Job 38:25-27
Jas 5:17, 18

Second Col.

- a Ps 111:2
Ps 145:5
- b Job 36:29
- c Job 36:4
Ps 18:30
Ps 104:24
- d Lu 12:55
- e Isa 44:24
- f Ro 11:34
- g 1Ch 16:27
Ps 8:1
- h Ps 145:3
Ec 3:11
Ro 11:33
- i 1Ch 29:11
Job 36:22
Isa 40:26
- j De 32:4
Ps 33:5
Ps 37:28
- k Ps 11:7
Ps 71:19
- l Ps 33:8
Pr 1:7
Mt 10:28

- m Pr 3:7
Mt 11:25
Ro 11:20
Ro 12:16
1Co 1:26

- 14** Listen to this, Job;
Stop and consider carefully
the wonderful works
of God.^a
- 15** Do you know how God
controls* the clouds
And how he causes the
lightning to flash from
his cloud?
- 16** Do you know how the clouds
float?^b
These are the wonderful
works of the One perfect
in knowledge.^c
- 17** Why does your clothing
become hot
When the earth is still be-
cause of the south wind?^d
- 18** Can you, with him, spread
out* the skies^e
As solid as a metal mirror?
- 19** Tell us what we should say
to him;
We cannot answer because
we are in the dark.
- 20** Should he be told that I want
to speak?
Or has anyone said some-
thing that should be
communicated to him?^f
- 21** They cannot even see the
light,*
Though it is bright in the sky,
Until a wind passes by and
clears away the clouds.
- 22** Out of the north comes
golden splendor;
God's majesty^g is awe-
inspiring.
- 23** Understanding the Almighty
is beyond our reach;^h
He is great in power,ⁱ
And he never violates his
justice^j and abundant
righteousness.^k
- 24** Therefore, people should
fear him.^l
For he does not favor any
who think that they are
wise."^m

37:15 *Or "commands." 37:18 *Or "beat out." 37:21 *That is, of the sun. 37:24 *Lit., "who are wise of heart."

- Song 50 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“A True Friend Gives Upbuilding Counsel”:** (10 min.)
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HOW CAN WE SHOW LOVE . . .



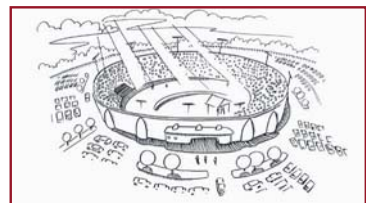
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JOB 33-37 | A True Friend Gives Upbuilding Counsel

When Elihu entered the conversation, his counsel was completely different from that of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, both in content and in the way he dealt with Job. He proved himself to be a true friend and an effective counselor, worthy of imitation.



QUALITIES OF AN EFFECTIVE COUNSELOR

- PATIENT
- ATTENTIVE
- RESPECTFUL
- HUMBLE
- APPROACHABLE
- EMPATHETIC
- BALANCED
- KIND
- GOD-ORIENTED

ELIHU SET A GOOD EXAMPLE

32:4-7, 11, 12; 33:1

- Elihu waited patiently for the older men to finish speaking before he spoke
- By listening attentively, he had a better understanding of the issues at hand before giving counsel
- He used Job's name and spoke to him as a friend

33:6, 7, 32

- Elihu was humble and kind, admitting his own imperfection
- He was empathetic to Job's suffering

33:24, 25; 35:2, 5

- Elihu kindly showed Job that his viewpoint was unbalanced
- Elihu helped Job to see that his own righteousness was not the most important thing
- Elihu's sound counsel prepared the way for Job to receive additional instruction from Jehovah himself

How to Give Counsel

Elihu's counsel was completely different from that of Job's three companions, both in content and in the way Elihu dealt with Job. He used Job's name and spoke to him as a friend, not as Job's judge. "Now, however, O Job, please hear my words, and to all my speaking do give ear. Look! I am to the true God just what you are; from the clay I was shaped, I too." (Job 33:1, 6) Elihu was also quick to commend Job for his upright course. "I have taken delight in your righteousness," he reassured Job. (Job 33:32) Apart from this kindly manner of counseling, Elihu was successful for other reasons.

Having waited patiently until the others had finished speaking, Elihu was better able to grasp the issues before offering counsel. Granted that Job was a righteous man, would Jehovah punish him? "Far be it from the true God to act wickedly, and the Almighty to act unjustly!" Elihu exclaimed. "He will not take away his eyes from anyone righteous."—Job 34:10; 36:7.

Was the righteousness of Job really the main issue? Elihu drew Job's attention to an unbalanced viewpoint. "You have said, 'My righteousness is more than God's,'" he explained. "Look up to heaven and see, and behold the clouds, that they are indeed higher than you." (Job 35:2, 5) Just as the clouds are much higher

than we are, so Jehovah's ways are higher than our ways. We are not in a position to judge the way he does things. "Therefore let men fear him. He does not regard any who are wise in their own heart," Elihu concluded.—Job 37:24; Isaiah 55:9.

w95 2/15 29 ¶3-5

(see above)

w11 4/1 23 ¶3

Job, however, did make a serious mistake. As he seemingly inched closer to death, he became overly concerned with vindicating himself, "declaring his own soul righteous rather than God." (Job 32:2) God's spokesman Elihu reproved Job. But Elihu also conveyed to Job a positive message from God: "Let him [Job] off from going down into the pit [the common grave]! I have found a ransom! Let his flesh become fresher than in youth; let him return to the days of his youthful vigor." (Job 33:24, 25) Those words must have filled Job with hope. He did not have to continue suffering right down to his death. If Job would repent, God would be pleased to accept a ransom in his behalf and set him free from his calamities.*

[Footnote] The word "ransom" used here means "covering." (Job 33:24; footnote) In Job's case, the

ransom might have been an animal sacrifice, which God would accept to cover, or atone for, Job's error.—Job 1:5.

w09 4/15 4 ¶8

⁸ Next, we read of Elihu, who had also come to visit Job. Elihu first listened to the arguments presented by Job and his three companions. Although younger than the other four men, Elihu showed greater wisdom. He addressed Job considerately, using Job's personal name. Elihu commended Job for his upright course. But he also said that Job had focused too much on trying to prove his own faultlessness. Then Elihu assured Job that serving God faithfully is always worthwhile. (*Read Job 36:1, 11.*) What a fine example for those who need to offer counsel today! Elihu showed patience, listened carefully, commended where possible, and offered upbuilding counsel.—Job 32:6; 33:32.

w11 4/1 23 ¶3-5

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Job humbly accepted correction, and he repented. (Job 42:6) Jehovah evidently accepted a ransom in Job’s behalf, allowing it to cover his error and open the way for God to restore and reward him. Jehovah “blessed the end of Job afterward more than his beginning.” (Job 42:12-17) Imagine Job’s relief when, among other blessings, his loathsome disease cleared up and his flesh, in effect, became “fresher than in youth”!

The ransom that God accepted in Job’s behalf had limited value, for the man remained imperfect and later died. We have a much better ransom available to us. Jehovah lovingly gave his Son, Jesus, as a ransom for us. (Matthew 20:28; John 3:16) All who put faith in that ransom have the prospect of living forever on a paradise earth. In that coming new world, God will release faithful humans from the aging process. Why not learn more about how you may live to see the time

when old ones will see their “flesh become fresher than in youth”?

w94 11/15 17 ¶10

¹⁰ Elihu corrected Job for saying that there is no profit in taking pleasure in God by maintaining integrity. Said Elihu: “Far be it from the true God to act wickedly, and the Almighty to act unjustly! For according to the way earthling man acts he will reward him.” Job acted rashly in emphasizing his own righteousness, but he did so without adequate knowledge and insight. Elihu added: “Let Job be tested out to the limit over his replies among men of hurtfulness.” (Job 34:10, 11, 35, 36) Similarly, our faith and integrity can be fully proved only if we are ‘tested to the limit’ in some way. Nevertheless, our loving heavenly Father will not let us be tempted beyond what we can bear.—1 Corinthians 10:13.

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- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

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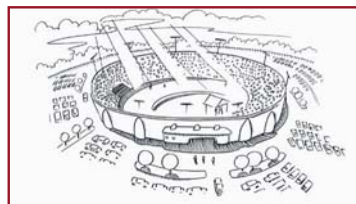
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FREE PUBLIC EVENT

Israelite King David prayed:

**“WITH SOMEONE LOYAL
YOU ACT IN LOYALTY.”**

—2 Samuel 22:26.

- Why does God expect us to be loyal?
- How can being loyal improve our lives?
- How will God “act in loyalty” toward us?

A free public event will answer those questions.
This is your invitation.

We warmly invite you to attend a three-day **convention** presented by Jehovah's Witnesses. It is entitled

REMAIN LOYAL TO JEHOVAH!

CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

- **Friday:** By way of talks and short videos, learn how **Jesus Christ** set a perfect example as God's "loyal one." —Acts 2:27.
- **Saturday:** See what the Bible book of **Job** teaches us about remaining loyal despite intense suffering.
- **Sunday:** By means of a gripping feature-length film, observe how **King Hezekiah** "held fast to Jehovah" while being besieged by his enemies. —2 Kings 18:6.

WHO MAY ATTEND?

Everyone. You won't be charged admission, and no collection will be taken.

TIME AND LOCATION

See a complete program schedule and watch a video about our conventions at www.jw.org.

FIND A LOCATION NEAR YOU

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(Look under ABOUT US > CONVENTIONS)



- Without obligation, I request a copy of the publication shown here.
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How Can You Draw Close to God?



1. Does God listen to all prayers?

God invites people of all nations to draw close to him in prayer. (Psalm 65:2) Yet, he does not listen to, or accept, *all* prayers. For example, the prayers of a man who mistreats his wife can be hindered. (1 Peter 3:7) Also, when the Israelites persisted in badness, God refused to hear their prayers. Clearly, prayer is a privilege. Nevertheless, God will accept the prayers of even gross sinners if they repent.

📖 *Read Isaiah 1:15; 55:7.*

2. How should we pray?

Prayer is part of our worship, so we should pray only to our Creator, Jehovah. (Matthew 4:10; 6:9) Also, since we are imperfect, we should pray in the name of Jesus because he died for our sins. (John 14:6) Jehovah does not want us to repeat memorized or written prayers. He wants us to pray from our heart. 📖 *Read Matthew 6:7; Philippians 4:6, 7.*

Our Creator can hear even silent prayers. (1 Samuel 1:12, 13) He invites us to pray on every occasion, such as at the beginning and the end of the day, at mealtimes, and when we face problems. 📖 *Read Psalm 55:22; Matthew 15:36.*

3. Why do Christians meet together?


Drawing close to God is not easy because we live among people who lack faith in God and ridicule his promise of peace on earth. (2 Timothy 3:1, 4; 2 Peter 3:3, 13) So we need the encouraging association of fellow believers, and they need us. 📖 *Read Hebrews 10:24, 25.*




Associating with people who love God helps us to draw close to God. The meetings of Jehovah’s Witnesses provide fine opportunities to benefit from the faith of others.

 *Read Romans 1:11, 12.*

4. How can you draw close to God?


You can draw close to Jehovah by meditating on what you have learned from his Word. Contemplate his activities, his advice, and his promises. Prayerful meditation builds appreciation in our heart for God’s love and wisdom.  *Read Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:1-3.*

You can be close to God only if you trust in him, if you have faith in him. But faith is like a living thing that needs feeding. You must constantly feed your faith by reviewing the basis for your beliefs.

 *Read Matthew 4:4; Hebrews 11:1, 6.*

5. How will drawing close to God benefit you?

Jehovah cares for those who love him. He can protect them from anything that could jeopardize their faith and their hope of everlasting life. (Psalm 91:1, 2, 7-10) He warns us against ways of life that threaten our health and happiness. Jehovah teaches us the best way of life.

 *Read Psalm 73:27, 28; James 4:4, 8.*



Mexico



Germany



Botswana



Nicaragua



Italy

Why Do We Attend Large Assemblies?

Why is there such joy on the faces of these people? They are attending one of our assemblies. Like God’s servants in the past, who were instructed to assemble three times a year, we look forward to meeting together in larger groups. (Deuteronomy 16:16) Every year, we have three events: a **special assembly day**, a two-day **circuit assembly**, and a three-day **district convention**. How do we benefit from these gatherings?

They strengthen our Christian brotherhood. Just as the Israelites rejoiced at praising Jehovah “among the congregated throngs,” we too enjoy worshipping him together at special events. (Psalm 26:12; 111:1) These gatherings create an opportunity to meet and associate with Witnesses from other congregations or even from other lands. At midday, we enjoy a meal together at the assembly location, adding to the friendly atmosphere of these spiritual occasions. (Acts 2:42) There we experience firsthand the love that unites our “whole association of brothers” in the world.—1 Peter 2:17.

They help us to make spiritual progress. The Israelites also benefited by having “understood the words” of the Scriptures that were expounded to them. (Nehemiah 8:8, 12) We too appreciate the Bible instruction that we receive at our assemblies. Each program is based on a Scriptural theme. Through interesting talks, symposiums, and reenactments, we learn how to do God’s will in our life. We are encouraged when we hear the experiences of those who are successfully meeting the challenge of living as Christians in these difficult times. At district conventions, costume dramas bring Bible accounts to life and teach us practical lessons. At every assembly, a baptism is held for those who want to symbolize their dedication to God.

FIND OUT MORE

If you would like to get to know our brotherhood better, please attend our next assembly. Your Bible teacher can show you the printed program from the last one so that you can see the sort of subjects that are discussed. Mark on your calendar when and where the next assembly will be held, and attend it if you can.



- Why are the assemblies happy occasions?
- How might you benefit from attending an assembly?

124 Receive Them With Hospitality **(Acts 17:7)**

- 1. Jehovah shows sincere hospitality.
He cares for all without partiality.
He gives both rain and sun,
withholding these from none;
He fills our hearts with food and good cheer.
Whenever we show favor to lowly ones,
We imitate our God as beloved sons.
Our Father will repay the goodness we display,
Our kindness that is truly sincere.**
- 2. We never know the good that may come about
When we see those in need and we help them out.
Though strangers they may be, in hospitality,
We lend a hand to care for their needs.
Like Lydia of old, we say: 'Be my guest.'
When they come to our home,
they find peace and rest.
Our Father is aware of all those ev'rywhere,
Who imitate his merciful deeds.**

(See also Acts 16:14, 15; Rom. 12:13; 1 Tim. 3:2; Heb. 13:2; 1 Pet. 4:9.)

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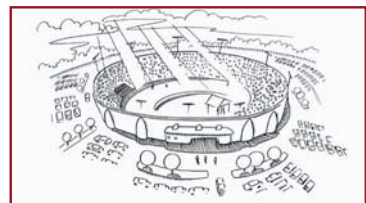
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He Learned a Lesson in Mercy

JONAH would have plenty of time to think. Before him lay a journey of more than 500 miles, an overland trek that would take him about a month, perhaps even longer. To begin, he had to choose between the shorter routes and the safer ones and then steadily make his way through valleys and over mountain passes beyond counting. He likely had to skirt the vast Syrian Desert, ford such rivers as the mighty Euphrates, and seek shelter among foreigners in the towns and villages of Syria, Mesopotamia, and Assyria. As the days passed, he thought about the destination that he so dreaded, the city that drew closer with each step he took—Nineveh.

² One thing Jonah knew for certain: He could not turn around and run away from this assignment. He had tried that before. As we saw in the preceding

- 1. What kind of journey lay ahead of Jonah, and how did he feel about his destination?**
- 2. How had Jonah learned that he could not run away from his assignment?**

chapter, Jehovah patiently taught Jonah by means of a windstorm at sea and a miraculous rescue involving a huge fish. Three days later, Jonah was vomited out alive onto a beach, an awed and more compliant man.—Jonah, chaps. 1, 2.

³ When Jehovah ordered Jonah to Nineveh the second time, the prophet obediently headed east on this long journey. (*Read Jonah 3:1-3.*) However, had he allowed Jehovah’s discipline to work a thorough change in him? For instance, Jehovah had shown him mercy, saving him from drowning, holding back punishment for his rebellion, and giving him a second chance to carry out this assignment. After all of this, had Jonah learned to show mercy to others? Learning to show mercy is often difficult for imperfect humans. Let us see what we can gather from Jonah’s struggle.

A Message of Judgment and a Surprising Response

⁴ Jonah did not see Nineveh as Jehovah did. We

3. What quality had Jehovah shown toward Jonah, yet what question arises?

4, 5. Why did Jehovah refer to Nineveh as “the great city,” and what does that teach us about him?



read: “Now Nineveh herself proved to be a city great to God.” (Jonah 3:3) Three times, the record of Jonah quotes Jehovah as referring to “Nineveh the great city.” (Jonah 1:2; 3:2; 4:11) Why was this city great, or important, to Jehovah?

⁵ Nineveh was ancient, being among the first cities that Nimrod established after the Flood. It was vast, a metropolitan region that evidently included several other cities, requiring a man three days to walk from one end to the other. (Gen. 10:11; Jonah 3:3) Nineveh was impressive, with stately temples, mighty walls, and other edifices. But none of these factors made the city important to Jehovah God. What mattered to him were the people. Nineveh had a huge population for that time. Despite the people’s badness, Jehovah cared about them. He values human life and the potential that each individual has for repenting and learning to do what is right.

⁶ When Jonah finally entered Nineveh, its sizable population of more than 120,000 may have made

6. (a) Why might Jonah have found Nineveh intimidating? (See also footnote.) (b) What do we learn about Jonah from the preaching work that he carried out?



Jonah needed courage and faith to preach in Nineveh

the place only more intimidating.* He walked for a day, penetrating ever deeper into that teeming metropolis, perhaps looking for a suitable central location to start spreading his message. How would he reach these people? Had he learned to speak the Assyrian tongue? Or did Jehovah grant him that ability through a miracle? We do not know. It may be that Jonah made his proclamation in his native Hebrew and used an interpreter to relate it to the Ninevites. At any rate, his message was simple and not likely to win him any favor: “Only forty days more, and Nineveh will be overthrown.” (Jonah 3:4) He spoke out boldly and repeatedly. In doing so, he showed remarkable courage and faith, qualities that Christians today need more than ever.

⁷ Jonah’s message got the Ninevites’ attention. No doubt he braced himself for a hostile and violent response. Instead, something remarkable happened.

* It has been estimated that Samaria, the capital of the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel, may have had some 20,000 to 30,000 inhabitants in Jonah’s day—less than a fourth of Nineveh’s population. In its heyday, Nineveh may have been the largest city in the world.

7, 8. (a) How did the people of Nineveh respond to Jonah’s message? (b) What did the king of Nineveh do in response to Jonah’s proclamation?

People listened! His words spread like wildfire. Before long, the whole city was talking about Jonah's prophecy of doom. (*Read Jonah 3:5.*) Rich and poor, strong and weak, young and old were all caught up in the same repentant spirit. They abstained from food. News of this popular movement soon reached the ears of the king.

⁸ The king too responded to Jonah's proclamation. Struck with godly fear, he rose up from his throne, removed his luxurious robes of state, put on the same rough clothing that his people were wearing, and even "sat down in the ashes." With his "great ones," or nobles, he issued a decree that turned the fast from a spontaneous popular movement into an official action of state. He ordered that all wear sackcloth, even the domestic animals.* He humbly acknowledged that his people were guilty of badness and violence. Expressing hope that the true God would soften upon seeing their repentance, the king said: "God may . . . turn back from his burning anger, so that we may not perish."—Jonah 3:6-9.

* This detail may seem odd, but it is not without precedent in ancient times. Greek historian Herodotus noted that the ancient Persians grieved over the death of a popular general by including their livestock in the customs of mourning.

⁹ Some critics express doubt that such a change of heart could have occurred so quickly among the Ninevites. However, Bible scholars have noted that a movement of that kind was not out of keeping with the superstitious and volatile nature of people of such cultures in ancient times. Further, we know that such critics are mistaken, for Jesus Christ himself later referred to the repentance of the Ninevites. (*Read Matthew 12:41.*) Jesus knew what he was talking about, for he had been alive in heaven to witness those events as they unfolded. (John 8:57, 58) The truth is, we should never assume that it is impossible for people to repent—no matter how vicious they may seem to us. Only Jehovah can read what lies within the human heart.

A Contrast Between Divine Mercy and Human Rigidity

¹⁰ How did Jehovah react to the Ninevites' repentance? Jonah later wrote: "The true God got to see

9. Critics have expressed what doubt regarding the Ninevites, but how do we know that the critics are mistaken?

10, 11. (a) How did Jehovah respond to the repentance of the Ninevites? (b) Why can we be sure that Jehovah's judgment was not in error?

their works, that they had turned back from their bad way; and so the true God felt regret over the calamity that he had spoken of causing to them; and he did not cause it.”—Jonah 3:10.

¹¹ Does this mean that Jehovah decided that his own judgment about Nineveh had been in error? No. The Bible explains that Jehovah’s justice is perfect. (*Read Deuteronomy 32:4.*) Jehovah’s righteous anger against Nineveh simply abated. He observed the change in those people and saw that the punishment he had intended to bring on them would no longer be fitting. This was an occasion to show divine mercy.

¹² Jehovah is nothing like the rigid, cold, even harsh God so often portrayed by religious leaders. On the contrary, he is reasonable, adaptable, and merciful. When he determines to bring punishment on the wicked, he first uses his representatives on earth to issue warnings, for he is eager to see the wicked do what the Ninevites did—repent and change their ways. (Ezek. 33:11) Jehovah told his **12, 13. (a) How does Jehovah show that he is reasonable, adaptable, and merciful? (b) Why was Jonah’s prophecy not a false one?**

prophet Jeremiah: “At any moment that I may speak against a nation and against a kingdom to uproot it and to pull it down and to destroy it, and that nation actually turns back from its badness against which I spoke, I will also feel regret over the calamity that I had thought to execute upon it.”—Jer. 18: 7, 8.

¹³ Was Jonah’s prophecy a false one? No; it fulfilled its purpose as a warning. That warning was based on the Ninevites’ bad ways, which subsequently changed. Should the Ninevites resume their wicked ways, God would bring the same judgment against them. That is exactly what happened later on.—Zeph. 2:13-15.

¹⁴ How did Jonah react when destruction did not come at the time he expected it to? We read: “To Jonah, though, it was highly displeasing, and he got to be hot with anger.” (Jonah 4:1) Jonah even uttered a prayer that sounds like a rebuke of the Almighty! Jonah suggested that he should have stayed home, on his own ground. He claimed that he knew all

14. How did Jonah react to Jehovah’s mercy on Nineveh?

Happy, the Merciful!

(Matthew 5:7)

1. How happy are the merciful!

In God's eyes they are beautiful.
They tell to all who love the right
That God in mercy takes delight.
Through Jesus, mercy God displayed,
Provision for our ransom made.
He offers mercy to the meek
Because he knows our frame is weak.

2. Those merciful like God are blessed;

Through sins forgiven they have rest.
They benefit by mercy shown,
Since Christ appeared before God's throne.
This mercy they would gladly share
By preaching God's Word ev'rywhere,
By telling men, "Be of good cheer
Because the Kingdom now is here."

3. The meek will see Jehovah's love

When they are judged by him above.
His mercy they will really know,
Since they, like him, true mercy show.
So merciful let's strive to be
And cultivate that quality.
Our God and Christ have shown the way;
May we show mercy ev'ry day.

FEBRUARY 2016

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
APRIL 4–MAY 1, 2016



COVER IMAGE:

BENIN

In Hétin, a village in a marshy area, most houses are on stilts and pirogues are the main means of transportation. The 215 publishers and 28 pioneers in three congregations there were delighted that 1,600 attended the Memorial in 2014

POPULATION

10,703,000

PUBLISHERS

12,167

REGULAR PIONEERS

1,492

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ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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Ever Loyal
(Psalm 18:25)

1. Ever loyal to Jehovah,
Loyal love we wish to show.
As a people, dedicated,
His commands we want to know.
His advice will never fail us,
And his counsel we obey.
He is loyal; we can trust him.
From his side we'll never stray.
2. Ever loyal to our brothers,
Sticking close in times of need.
Ever caring, always trusting,
Ever kind in word and deed.
We show honor to our brothers
And respect them from the heart.
Let the Bible draw us closer;
From their side we'll never part.
3. Ever loyal to their guidance
When our brothers take the lead.
When they give us clear direction,
May our mind and heart give heed.
Then the blessing from Jehovah
Will be ours to make us strong.
When we're loyal, ever faithful,
To Jehovah we'll belong.

Learn From Jehovah's Loyal Servants

“What is Jehovah requiring of you? Only to exercise justice, to cherish loyalty, and to walk in modesty with your God!”—MIC. 6:8.

SONGS: 63, 43

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

Who deserves our loyalty?

Why was Jonathan's reaction to David so different from Abner's?

What qualities will help us to be loyal to God, and how?

IN THE dead of night, David and Abishai silently make their way through 3,000 sleeping troops. At the center of the camp, the two men find King Saul fast asleep. He has journeyed to the Judean wilderness in order to find David and kill him. Abishai whispers: “Let me
1, 2. How did David show that he was loyal to God? (See opening picture of the standard edition.)

pin [Saul] to the ground with the spear just once, and I will not need to do it twice.” David’s reply is astonishing! “Do not harm him, for who can lift his hand against the anointed of Jehovah and remain innocent? . . . It is unthinkable from Jehovah’s standpoint for me to lift my hand against the anointed of Jehovah!” —1 Sam. 26:8-12.

2 David understood what loyalty to God involves. He had no intention of harming Saul. Why not? Because Saul was God’s anointed king over Israel. Loyal servants of Jehovah respect those whom he appoints. Indeed, Jehovah requires that all of his people “cherish loyalty.”—Read Micah 6:8.

3 Abishai showed respect for David. To illustrate: In an attempt to cover up his adultery

3. How was Abishai loyal to David?

with Bath-sheba, David had Abishai's brother Joab arrange to have her husband, Uriah, killed in battle. (2 Sam. 11:2-4, 14, 15; 1 Chron. 2:16) Abishai may have known something about this, but he continued to respect David as the king appointed by God. Moreover, Abishai never tried to use his power as a military leader to seize Israel's throne. Rather, he defended David against traitors and other enemies.—2 Sam. 10:10; 20:6; 21:15-17.

4 David's refusal to harm King Saul showed that David was one of Jehovah's loyal servants. As a youth, David was moved to face the Philistine giant Goliath, who brazenly dared to "taunt the battle line of the living God"! (1 Sam. 17:23, 26, 48-51) When David became

4. (a) How was David an example of loyalty to God?
(b) What other examples will we consider?

king and committed gross sins involving adultery and murder, he accepted reproof from the prophet Nathan and repented. (2 Sam. 12: 1-5, 13) In his old age, David continued to demonstrate loyalty to God. For example, he made generous contributions toward the construction of Jehovah's temple. (1 Chron. 29: 1-5) Yes, David made serious mistakes, but he was loyal to God. (Ps. 51:4, 10; 86:2) As we consider other accounts about David and his contemporaries, let us seek answers to these questions: What loyalties should take priority? Being loyal requires that we display what qualities?

WHICH LOYALTY SHOULD BE FIRST?

5 When Abishai crept into Saul's camp, he did not have his loyalties in the proper order.

5. What lesson do we learn from Abishai's mistake?

Out of loyalty to David, Abishai was eager to kill King Saul, but David restrained him, realizing that it would be wrong to lift one's hand "against the anointed of Jehovah." (1 Sam. 26: 8-11) From that incident, we learn an important lesson: Although we can properly have several loyalties in our heart, the correct order of their importance should be determined by our application of Bible principles.

6 Loyalty springs from the heart, but the human heart is treacherous. (Jer. 17:9) Thus, one who is loyal to God could easily feel strong ties of loyalty to a close friend or relative even if that person is practicing what is bad. Especially when someone close to us abandons the truth must we remember that Jehovah always

6. Although it is natural to be loyal to our family and friends, why must we be careful?

merits our primary loyalty.—Read Matthew 22:37.

7 A conflict of loyalties may arise when a close relative is disfellowshipped. For example, a sister named Anne^[1] received a telephone call from her disfellowshipped mother. The mother wanted to visit Anne because she felt pained by her isolation from the family. Anne was deeply distressed by the plea and promised to reply by letter. Before writing, she reviewed Bible principles. (1 Cor. 5:11; 2 John 9-11) Anne wrote and kindly reminded her mother that *she* had cut *herself* off from the family by her wrongdoing and unrepentant attitude. “The only way you can relieve your pain is by returning to Jehovah,” Anne wrote.—Jas. 4:8.

7. How did one sister stay loyal to God in a difficult situation?

8 The loyalty of David’s contemporaries highlights three qualities that can help us to prove ourselves loyal to God. Those qualities are humility, kindness, and courage. Let us consider them one by one.

LOYALTY TO GOD REQUIRES HUMILITY

9 When David held Goliath’s severed head in his hand and spoke with King Saul, at least two men must have been watching. One was Saul’s son Jonathan, who made a covenant of friendship with David. The other was the army chief Abner. (1 Sam. 17:57–18:3) Abner later supported Saul’s efforts to kill David. “Ruthless men seek my life,” wrote David. (Ps. 54:3; 1 Sam. 26:1-5) Why was Jonathan’s reaction to David so different from Abner’s?

-
- 8.** What qualities will help us to be loyal to God?
 - 9.** Why did Abner try to kill David?

Like Jonathan, Abner knew that God had chosen David to rule as king of Israel. After Saul's death, Abner could have shown humility and proved his loyalty to God by supporting David, not Saul's son Ish-bosheth. Later, when Abner had relations with King Saul's concubine, he may have been seeking the throne for himself.—2 Sam. 2:8-10; 3:6-11.

10 Lack of humility prevented David's son Absalom from being loyal to God. Why, "Absalom acquired for himself a chariot and horses and 50 men to run before him"! (2 Sam. 15:1) He also stole the people's loyalty. Like Abner, Absalom sought to kill David, even though he knew that Jehovah had appointed David as Israel's king.—2 Sam. 15:13, 14; 17:1-4.

10. Why was Absalom not loyal to God?

11 The examples of Abner and Absalom make it clear that inordinate ambition can easily cause a person to become disloyal to God. Surely, no faithful servant of Jehovah would pursue such a selfish and wicked course. However, a desire for wealth or a prestigious career in this world can also have a spiritually detrimental effect on a Christian. In some undisclosed way, the prophet Jeremiah's secretary, Baruch, temporarily lost his focus. This was Jehovah's message to Baruch: "Look! What I have built up I am tearing down, and what I have planted I am uprooting—the entire land. But you are seeking great things for yourself. Stop seeking such things." (Jer. 45:4, 5) Baruch accepted the correction. And how wise it

11. How can we benefit from Bible accounts about Abner, Absalom, and Baruch?

is to keep those words of God in mind as we await the end of this wicked world!

12 Daniel, a brother in Mexico, needed to choose between being loyal to God and seeking his own selfish interests. He wanted to marry a girl who was not a believer. Says Daniel: “I continued writing to her even after I entered the pioneer service. But finally, I humbled myself and told an experienced elder that I was disturbed by a conflict of loyalties. He helped me to see that to be loyal to God, I needed to stop writing to her. After many prayers and tears, that is what I did. Soon my joy in the ministry increased.” Daniel later married a fine Christian sister and now serves as a circuit overseer.

12. Show why we cannot be loyal to God when we are selfish.

LOYALTY TO GOD HELPS US TO BE KIND

13 Loyalty to Jehovah can sometimes affect our loyalty to humans. The prophet Nathan remained loyal to David even while maintaining loyalty to God. Nathan learned that David had committed adultery and had arranged for the woman's husband to die in battle. When Jehovah sent Nathan to rebuke David, the prophet obeyed and acted courageously, even though he was loyal to David. Nathan presented the reproof with wisdom and kindness. To help David see the seriousness of his sins, Nathan used an illustration showing the injustice of a rich man who took a poor man's lamb. When David expressed outrage at what the rich man had done, Nathan told him: "You are the man!" David got the point!—2 Sam. 12:1-7, 13.

13. How did Nathan stay loyal to both God and David when David sinned?

14 Kindness can help you to deal with a conflict of loyalties. For example, you may have definite knowledge that a certain fellow believer is guilty of serious misconduct. You may feel loyal to him, especially if he is a close friend or a relative. But if you were to cover up the wrongdoing, you would be disloyal to God. Of course, your loyalty to Jehovah should come first. So like Nathan, be kind yet firm. Urge your friend or relative to seek the help of the elders. If he or she does not do so within a reasonable period of time, loyalty to God should move you to report the matter to the elders. In doing this, you are being loyal to Jehovah and kind to your friend or relative, for Christian elders will try to readjust such an individual with mildness. —Read Leviticus 5:1; Galatians 6:1.

14. How can you be loyal to both Jehovah and your friend or relative?

LOYALTY TO GOD REQUIRES COURAGE

15 A man named Hushai needed courage to be loyal to God. Hushai was a loyal friend of King David. However, his loyalty was tested when David's son Absalom won the heart of many and sought to take Jerusalem and the throne. (2 Sam. 15:13; 16:15) David fled the city, but what would Hushai do? Would he switch his loyalty to Absalom, or would he follow the elderly king who was fleeing for his life? Resolved to be loyal to the king appointed by God, Hushai met David on the Mount of Olives.—2 Sam. 15:30, 32.

16 David asked Hushai to go back to Jerusalem, to pretend to be Absalom's friend, and to frustrate the advice of Ahithophel. Risking his very life, Hushai proved loyal to Jehovah

15, 16. Why did Hushai need courage to be loyal to God?

and did what David asked him to do. Just as David had prayed, the counsel of courageous Hushai did frustrate that of Ahithophel. —2 Sam. 15:31; 17:14.

17 We need courage to be loyal to Jehovah. Many of us have courageously stood firm against pressure from family members, workmates, or secular authorities in order to prove ourselves loyal to God. In Japan, for example, Taro had from childhood centered his life on being loyal and obedient to his parents. He did not do so merely out of obligation. He really wanted to make his parents happy. So when they opposed his association with Jehovah's Witnesses, he found it especially painful to tell them that he had decided to attend Christian meetings. Says Taro: "They were so angry that

17. Why do we need courage to be loyal?

for years, I was forbidden to visit them at home. I prayed for courage to stick to my decision. Now their attitude has softened, and I can visit them regularly.”—Read Proverbs 29:25.

18 Like David, Jonathan, Nathan, and Hushai, may we experience the deep satisfaction of proving ourselves loyal to Jehovah. On the other hand, let us learn a lesson from the disloyalty of Abner and Absalom. Surely we want to stick to Jehovah, as David did. As imperfect humans, we cannot avoid making mistakes. However, we can prove that loyalty to Jehovah has first place in our heart.

18. How have you benefited from this study?

ENDNOTE:

[1] (paragraph 7) Some names have been changed.

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43 *Stay Awake, Stand Firm, Grow Mighty* (1 Corinthians 16:13)

1. Stay awake, stand firm, grow mighty,
Be determined to endure.
Carry on as men of courage,
For the victory is sure.
We obey Christ Jesus' clear command,
Under him we firmly take our stand.

(CHORUS)

*Stay awake, stand firm, and grow mighty!
Carry on right to the end!*

2. Stay awake, and keep your senses,
Always ready to obey.
Stay alert to Christ's direction
Through his faithful slave today.
Heed the counsel of the older men,
Who protect his sheep and truth defend.

(Chorus)

3. Stay awake, remain united
As the good news we defend.
Though our enemies will fight it,
We will preach until the end.
Join the shout of praise throughout the land.
Look! Jehovah's day is soon at hand!

(Chorus)