

- Song 107 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Let Us Go Up to the Mountain of Jehovah”:** (10 min.)
[Play the video *Introduction to Isaiah*.]
Isa 2:2, 3—“The mountain of the house of Jehovah” represents pure worship (*ip-1* 38-41 ¶6-11; 44-45 ¶20-21)
Isa 2:4—Worshippers of Jehovah do not learn war anymore (*ip-1* 46-47 ¶24-25)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
Isa 1:8, 9—How was the daughter of Zion “left like a shelter in a vineyard”? (*w06* 12/1 8 ¶5)

Isa 1:18—What is meant by Jehovah’s words: “Let us set matters straight between us”? (*w06* 12/1 9 ¶1; *it-2* 761 ¶3)

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:** (4 min. or less) Isa 5:1-13

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Prepare This Month’s Presentations:** (15 min.) Discussion based on “Sample Presentations.” Play each presentation video, and then discuss the highlights. Encourage publishers to build their own presentation.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 139
- **Local Needs:** (7 min.) As an option, discuss the lessons learned from the *Yearbook*. (*yb16* 32 ¶3-34 ¶1)
- **“Improving Our Skills in the Ministry—Reaching the Heart With ‘Keep Yourselves in God’s Love’”:** (8 min.) Discussion. Encourage those who have the Bible Study student assignments this month to apply the points found on pages 261-262 of the *Ministry School* book.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *kr* chap. 5 ¶1-9
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 154 and Prayer
Reminder: Play the new song through once before singing.

IMPROVING OUR SKILLS IN THE MINISTRY

Reaching the Heart With “Keep Yourselves in God’s Love”



The “*God’s Love*” book should be studied to completion. Even after the student’s baptism, you may count the time, the return visits, and the study until the book is completed.

WHY IMPORTANT: People must learn Jehovah’s standards and conform to them in order to worship him acceptably. (Isa 2:3, 4) The “*God’s Love*” book, our second study publication, helps Bible students to discern how godly principles relate to daily life. (Heb 5:14) We must try to reach the heart when we teach them so that they may have the proper motivation to make changes.—Ro 6:17.

HOW TO DO IT:

- Prepare well, keeping the needs of your student in mind. Formulate viewpoint questions that will help you to draw out his thoughts and feelings about the material.—Pr 20:5; *be* 259
- Use the boxes throughout the book to help your student see the value of applying Bible principles
- Help your student to reason on matters of conscience, but do not make decisions for him.—Ga 6:5
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107 *Come to Jehovah's Mountain* **(Isaiah 2:2-4)**

- 1. Raise your eyes and behold,
Far above the highest hill.
There stands Jehovah's mountain
Lifted up in this day.
People come from afar,
Ev'rywhere from sea to sea,
Calling to one another,
'Come serve God and obey.'
Now the time has arrived
For the small, a great nation to be.
As we grow and we thrive,
God's direction and blessing we see.
Millions now come to God
And accept his sov'reignty.
Loyal they vow to be
And from his side never stray.**

2. Jesus gave the command
To go forth and preach the word.
Good news about the Kingdom
Reaches all men today.
Christ now rules from on high,
Urging all to take his side.
Meek ones who hear his voice
Let God's Word show them the way.
What a joy to behold
How a great crowd continues to grow!
Yes, we all have a share,
Helping others Jehovah to know.
Let us lift up the voice,
Calling out for all to hear,
'Come to Jehovah's mountain,
Here forever to stay.'

(See also Ps. 43:3; 99:9; Isa. 60:22; Acts 16:5.)

ISAIAH 1-5

1 The vision that Isaiah the son of A'moz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uz·zi'ah, Jo'tham, A'haz, and Hez·e·ki'ah, kings of Judah:

2 Hear, O heavens, and pay attention, O earth,
For Jehovah has spoken:
“Sons I have brought up and raised,
But they have revolted against me.

3 A bull well knows its buyer,
And a donkey the manger of its owner;
But Israel does not know me,
My own people do not behave with
understanding.”

4 Woe to the sinful nation,
The people weighed down with error,
A brood of wicked men, corrupt children!
They have abandoned Jehovah;
They have treated the Holy One of Israel with
disrespect;
They have turned their backs on him.

5 Where will you be struck next as you add to your
rebellion?
The whole head is sick,
And the whole heart is diseased.

⁶ From the sole of the foot to the head, nothing is healthy.

There are wounds and bruises and open sores
—They have not been treated or bound up or softened with oil.

⁷ Your land is desolate.

Your cities are burned with fire.

Foreigners devour your land right in front of you.
It is like a wasteland overthrown by foreigners.

⁸ The daughter of Zion has been left like a shelter in a vineyard,

Like a hut in a cucumber field,

Like a city under siege.

⁹ Unless Jehovah of armies had left us a few survivors,

We should have become just like Sod'om,

And we should have resembled Go-mor'rah.

¹⁰ Hear the word of Jehovah, you dictators of Sod'om.

Pay attention to the law of our God, you people of Go-mor'rah.

¹¹ “Of what benefit to me are your many sacrifices?” says Jehovah.

“I have had enough of your burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed animals,

And I have no delight in the blood of young bulls
and lambs and goats.

¹² When you come to appear before me,
Who has required this from you,
This trampling of my courtyards?

¹³ Stop bringing in any more worthless grain
offerings.

Your incense is detestable to me.

New moons, sabbaths, the calling of
conventions

—I cannot put up with the use of magical power
along with your solemn assembly.

¹⁴ I have hated your new moons and your festivals.
They have become a burden to me;
I am tired of bearing them.

¹⁵ And when you spread out your palms,
I hide my eyes from you.
Although you offer many prayers,
I am not listening;
Your hands are filled with blood.

¹⁶ Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean;
Remove your evil deeds from my sight;
Stop doing bad.

¹⁷ Learn to do good, seek justice,
Correct the oppressor,
Defend the rights of the fatherless child,

And plead the cause of the widow.”

¹⁸ “Come, now, and let us set matters straight between us,” says Jehovah.

“Though your sins are like scarlet,
They will be made as white as snow;
Though they are as red as crimson cloth,
They will become like wool.

¹⁹ If you show willingness and listen,
You will eat the good things of the land.

²⁰ But if you refuse and rebel,
You will be devoured by the sword,
For the mouth of Jehovah has spoken it.”

²¹ How the faithful city has become a prostitute!
She was full of justice;
Righteousness used to lodge in her,
But now murderers.

²² Your silver has become dross,
And your beer is diluted with water.

²³ Your princes are stubborn and partners with
thieves.

Every one of them loves a bribe and chases
after gifts.

They do not grant justice to the fatherless,
And the legal case of the widow never reaches
them.

²⁴ Therefore the true Lord, Jehovah of armies,

The Powerful One of Israel, declares:
“Ah! I will rid myself of my adversaries,
And I will take revenge on my enemies.

²⁵ I will turn my hand against you,
I will smelt away your dross as with lye,
And I will remove all your impurities.

²⁶ I will restore your judges as in the beginning
And your advisers as at the start.
After this you will be called City of
Righteousness, Faithful Town.

²⁷ With justice Zion will be redeemed,
And her people who return, with righteousness.

²⁸ The rebels and the sinners will be broken together,
And those leaving Jehovah will come to their
finish.

²⁹ For they will be ashamed of the mighty trees that
you desired,
And you will be disgraced because of the
gardens that you chose.

³⁰ For you will become like a big tree with withering
leaves,
And like a garden without water.

³¹ The strong man will become tow,
And his work a spark;
Both of them will go up in flames together,
With no one to extinguish them.”

2 This is what Isaiah the son of A'moz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem:

2 In the final part of the days,
The mountain of the house of Jehovah
Will become firmly established above the top of
the mountains,
And it will be raised up above the hills,
And to it all the nations will stream.

3 And many peoples will go and say:
“Come, let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah,
To the house of the God of Jacob.
He will instruct us about his ways,
And we will walk in his paths.”
For law will go out of Zion,
And the word of Jehovah out of Jerusalem.

4 He will render judgment among the nations
And set matters straight respecting many
peoples.
They will beat their swords into plowshares
And their spears into pruning shears.
Nation will not lift up sword against nation,
Nor will they learn war anymore.

5 O house of Jacob, come,
Let us walk in the light of Jehovah.

6 For you have forsaken your people, the house of
Jacob,

Because they have become full of things from
the East;
They practice magic like the Phi-lis'tines,
And they abound with the children of foreigners.

⁷ Their land is filled with silver and gold,
And there is no limit to their treasures.
Their land is filled with horses,
And there is no limit to their chariots.

⁸ Their land is filled with worthless gods.
They bow down to the work of their own hands,
To what their own fingers have made.

⁹ So man bows down, he becomes low,
And you cannot possibly pardon them.

¹⁰ Enter into the rock and hide yourself in the dust
Because of the terrifying presence of Jehovah
And his majestic splendor.

¹¹ The haughty eyes of man will be brought low,
And the arrogance of men will bow down.
Jehovah alone will be exalted in that day.

¹² For it is the day belonging to Jehovah of armies.
It is coming upon everyone who is haughty and
lofty,
Upon everyone, whether exalted or lowly,

¹³ Upon all the cedars of Leb'a-non that are lofty and
exalted
And upon all the oaks of Ba'shan,

- 14 Upon all the lofty mountains
And upon all the high hills,
- 15 Upon every high tower and every fortified wall,
- 16 Upon all the ships of Tar'shish
And upon all desirable boats.
- 17 Man's haughtiness will be brought down,
And the arrogance of men will bow low.
Jehovah alone will be exalted in that day.
- 18 The worthless gods will completely disappear.
- 19 And people will enter into the caves of the rocks
And into the holes in the ground,
Because of the terrifying presence of Jehovah
And his majestic splendor,
When he arises to make the earth tremble in
terror.
- 20 In that day men will take their worthless gods of
silver and of gold
That they had made for themselves to bow
down to
And throw them away to the shrewmice and to
the bats,
- 21 In order to enter into the holes in the rocks
And into the clefts of the crags,
Because of the terrifying presence of Jehovah
And his majestic splendor,

When he arises to make the earth tremble in
terror.

²² For your own sakes, quit trusting in mere man,
Who is only the breath in his nostrils.
Why should he be taken into account?

3 For look! the true Lord, Jehovah of armies,
Is removing from Jerusalem and Judah every
kind of support and supply,
All support of bread and water,

² Mighty man and warrior,
Judge and prophet, diviner and elder,

³ Chief of 50, dignitary, and adviser,
The expert magician and the skilled charmer.

⁴ I will make boys their princes,
And the unstable will rule over them.

⁵ The people will oppress one another,
Each one his fellow man.
The boy will assault the old man,
And the lightly esteemed one will defy the
respected one.

⁶ Each one will take hold of his brother in his father's
house and say:
"You have a cloak—you be our commander.
Take charge of this overthrown pile of ruins."

⁷ But he will protest in that day:

“I will not be your wound dresser;
I have no food or clothing in my house.
Do not make me commander over the people.”

⁸ For Jerusalem has stumbled,
And Judah has fallen,
Because in word and deed they are against
Jehovah;
They behave defiantly in his glorious presence.

⁹ The expression of their faces testifies against
them,
And they proclaim their sin like Sod'om;
They do not try to hide it.
Woe to them, for they are bringing disaster on
themselves!

¹⁰ Tell the righteous that it will go well for them;
They will be rewarded for what they do.

¹¹ Woe to the wicked one!
Disaster will befall him,
For what his hands have done will be done to
him!

¹² As for my people, their taskmasters are abusive,
And women rule over them.
My people, your leaders are causing you to
wander,
And they confuse the direction of your paths.

¹³ Jehovah is taking his position to accuse;

He is standing up to pass sentence on peoples.

¹⁴ Jehovah will enter into judgment with the elders
and princes of his people.

“You have burned down the vineyard,
And what you have stolen from the poor is in
your houses.

¹⁵ How dare you crush my people
And grind the faces of the poor in the dirt?”
declares the Sovereign Lord, Jehovah of
armies.

¹⁶ Jehovah says: “Because the daughters of Zion are
haughty,
Walking with their heads high,
Flirting with their eyes, skipping along,
Making a tinkling sound with their anklets,

¹⁷ Jehovah will also strike the head of the daughters
of Zion with scabs,
And Jehovah will make their forehead bare.

¹⁸ In that day Jehovah will take away the beauty of
their bangles,
The headbands and the crescent-shaped
ornaments,

¹⁹ The earrings, the bracelets, and the veils,

²⁰ The headdresses, the ankle chains, and the
breastbands,
The perfume receptacles and the charms,

- ²¹ The finger rings and the nose rings,
²² The ceremonial robes, the overtunics, the cloaks,
and the purses,
²³ The hand mirrors and the linen garments,
The turbans and the veils.
²⁴ Instead of balsam oil, there will be a rotten smell;
Instead of a belt, a rope;
Instead of a beautiful hairstyle, baldness;
Instead of a rich garment, a garment of
sackcloth;
And a brand mark instead of beauty.
²⁵ By the sword your men will fall,
And your mighty men in battle.
²⁶ Her entrances will mourn and grieve,
And she will sit on the ground desolate.”

4 And seven women will grab hold of one man in that day, saying:

“We will eat our own bread
And wear our own clothing;
Only let us be called by your name
To take away our disgrace.”

² In that day what Jehovah makes sprout will be splendid and glorious, and the fruitage of the land will be the pride and beauty of the survivors of Israel.

³ Whoever remains in Zion and is left over in Jerusalem

will be called holy, all of those in Jerusalem written down for life.

⁴ When Jehovah washes away the filth of the daughters of Zion and rinses away the bloodshed of Jerusalem from her midst by the spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning, ⁵ Jehovah will also create over the whole site of Mount Zion and over the place of her conventions a cloud and smoke by day and a bright flaming fire by night; for over all the glory there will be a shelter. ⁶ And there will be a booth for shade by day from the heat, and for refuge and protection from storms and the rain.

5 Let me sing, please, to my beloved
A song about my loved one and his vineyard.
My beloved had a vineyard on a fruitful hillside.

² He dug it up and rid it of stones.
He planted it with a choice red vine,
Built a tower in the middle of it,
And hewed out a winepress in it.
Then he kept hoping for it to produce grapes,
But it produced only wild grapes.

³ “And now, you inhabitants of Jerusalem and men
of Judah,
Please judge between me and my vineyard.

⁴ What more could I have done for my vineyard
That I have not already done?

Why, when I hoped for grapes,
Did it produce only wild grapes?

⁵ Now, please, let me tell you
What I will do to my vineyard:
I will remove its hedge,
And it will be burned down.
I will break down its stone wall,
And it will be trampled on.

⁶ I will make it a wasteland;
It will not be pruned or hoed.
It will be overgrown with thornbushes and
weeds,
And I will command the clouds not to send any
rain on it.

⁷ For the vineyard of Jehovah of armies is the house
of Israel;
The men of Judah are the plantation he was
fond of.
He kept hoping for justice,
But look! there was injustice;
For righteousness,
But look! a cry of distress.”

⁸ Woe to those who join one house to another house
And who annex one field to another field
Until there is no more room
And you live by yourselves on the land!

- ⁹ Jehovah of armies has sworn in my ears
That many houses, though great and beautiful,
Will become an object of horror,
Without an inhabitant.
- ¹⁰ For ten acres of vineyard will produce but one bath
measure,
And a ho'mer measure of seed will produce only
an e'phah.
- ¹¹ Woe to those who get up early in the morning to
drink alcohol,
Who linger late into the evening darkness until
wine inflames them!
- ¹² They have harp and stringed instrument,
Tambourine, flute, and wine at their feasts;
But they do not consider the activity of Jehovah,
And they do not see the work of his hands.
- ¹³ So my people will go into exile
For lack of knowledge;
Their glorious men will go hungry,
And all their people will be parched with thirst.
- ¹⁴ So the Grave has enlarged itself
And has opened its mouth wide without limit;
And her splendor, her noisy multitudes, and her
revelers
Will certainly go down into it.
- ¹⁵ And man will bow down,

Man will be brought low,
And the eyes of the haughty will be brought low.

¹⁶ Jehovah of armies will be exalted by his judgment;
The true God, the Holy One, will sanctify himself
through righteousness.

¹⁷ And the lambs will graze as in their pasture;
Foreign residents will feed on the desolate
places of well-fed animals.

¹⁸ Woe to those who drag along their guilt with ropes
of deception
And their sin with wagon cords;

¹⁹ Those who say: "Let Him speed up his work;
Let it come quickly that we may see it.
Let the purpose of the Holy One of Israel take
place
That we may know it!"

²⁰ Woe to those who say that good is bad and bad is
good,
Those who substitute darkness for light and light
for darkness,
Those who put bitter for sweet and sweet for
bitter!

²¹ Woe to those wise in their own eyes
And discreet in their own sight!

²² Woe to those who are mighty in drinking wine

And to the men who are masters at mixing
alcoholic drinks,

²³ Those who acquit the wicked for a bribe
And who deny justice to the righteous!

²⁴ Therefore, just as the tongue of fire consumes the
stubble
And dry grass shrivels in the flames,
Their very roots will rot,
And their blossoms will scatter like powder,
Because they rejected the law of Jehovah of
armies
And disrespected the word of the Holy One of
Israel.

²⁵ That is why the anger of Jehovah burns against his
people,
And he will stretch out his hand against them
and strike them.
The mountains will quake,
And their corpses will be like refuse in the
streets.
In view of all this, his anger has not turned back,
But his hand is still stretched out to strike.

²⁶ He has raised up a signal to a distant nation;
He has whistled for them to come from the ends
of the earth;
And look! they are coming very swiftly.

- 27 None among them are tired or stumbling.
No one is drowsy or sleeps.
The belt around their waist is not loosened,
Nor are their sandal laces broken.
- 28 All their arrows are sharp,
And all their bows are bent.
The hooves of their horses are like flint,
And their wheels like a storm wind.
- 29 Their roaring is like that of a lion;
They roar like young lions.
They will growl and seize the prey
And carry it off with no one to rescue it.
- 30 In that day they will growl over it
Like the growling of the sea.
Anyone who gazes at the land will see
distressing darkness;
Even the light has grown dark because of the
clouds.

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ISAIAH 1-5 | “Let Us Go Up to the Mountain of Jehovah”



2:2, 3

“In the final part of the days”

- The time in which we now live

“The mountain of the house of Jehovah”

- Jehovah’s elevated pure worship

“To it all the nations will stream”

- Those embracing pure worship gather in unity

“Come, let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah”

- True worshippers invite others to join them

“He will instruct us about his ways, and we will walk in his paths”

- By means of his Word, Jehovah instructs us and helps us to walk in his paths

2:4

“Nor will they learn war anymore”

- Isaiah described a conversion of weapons of war into farming implements, indicating that Jehovah’s people would pursue peace. What were these tools in Isaiah’s day?

“Swords into plowshares”

- 1 A plowshare was the part of a plow that cut the surface of the soil. Some were made of metal.—1Sa 13:20

“Spears into pruning shears”

- 2 A pruning shear was perhaps a sickle-shaped metal blade fastened to a handle. This tool was used to prune vines.—Isa 18:5



December 5-11

Treasures From God's Word

“Let Us Go Up to the Mountain of Jehovah”

Isaiah 2:2, 3—“The mountain of the house of Jehovah” represents pure worship

Reference: ip-1 38-41 **paragraphs 6-11**.

6 When is Isaiah's prophecy to be fulfilled? “In the final part of the days.” The *New International Version* reads: “In the last days.” The Christian Greek Scriptures foretold features that would identify this period. Included among them are wars, earthquakes, pestilences, food shortages, and “critical times hard to deal with.” (**2 Timothy 3:1-5; Luke 21:10, 11**) The fulfillment of such prophecies gives abundant evidence that we are living “in the final part of the days,” the last days of this present world system. Logically, then, we would expect to see fulfilled in our time the things that Isaiah foretold.

A Mountain in Which to Worship

7 In a few words, Isaiah paints a vivid prophetic picture. We see a lofty mountain, crowned by a glorious house, the temple of Jehovah. This mountain towers above surrounding mountains and hills. Yet, it is not foreboding or intimidating; it is appealing. Peoples of all

nations yearn to ascend to the mountain of the house of Jehovah; they *stream* to it. This is easy to visualize, but what does it mean?

8 In Isaiah's day hills and mountains are often associated with worship. For example, they serve as sites for idolatrous worship and for sanctuaries of false gods. (Deuteronomy 12:2; Jeremiah 3:6) However, the house, or temple, of Jehovah adorns the summit of Mount Moriah in Jerusalem. Faithful Israelites journey to Jerusalem three times a year and ascend Mount Moriah to worship the true God. (Deuteronomy 16:16) So the streaming of the nations to "the mountain of the house of Jehovah" pictures the gathering of many peoples to true worship.

9 Today, of course, God's people do not gather at a literal mountain with a temple of stone. Jehovah's temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by Roman armies in 70 C.E. Besides, the apostle Paul made it clear that the temple in Jerusalem and the tabernacle that preceded it were pictorial. They represented a greater, spiritual reality, "the true tent, which Jehovah put up, and not man." (Hebrews 8:2) That spiritual tent is the arrangement for approaching Jehovah in worship based on the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ. (Hebrews 9:2-10, 23) In harmony with this, "the mountain of the house of Jehovah" mentioned at Isaiah 2:2 represents the exalted pure worship of Jehovah in

our time. Those embracing pure worship do not gather at any geographic location; they gather in unity of worship.

The Elevating of Pure Worship

10 The prophet says that “the mountain of the house of Jehovah,” or pure worship, would become “firmly established above the top of the mountains” and be “lifted up above the hills.” Long before Isaiah’s time, King David brought the ark of the covenant up to Mount Zion in Jerusalem, which was located 2,500 feet [760 meters] above sea level. There the ark rested until it was transferred to the completed temple on Mount Moriah. (2 Samuel 5:7; 6:14-19; 2 Chronicles 3:1; 5:1-10) Thus, by Isaiah’s day the sacred ark had already been physically elevated and placed in the temple, in a position higher than the many surrounding hills used for false worship.

11 Of course, in a spiritual sense, Jehovah’s worship has always been superior to the religious practices of those who serve false gods. During our day, however, Jehovah has exalted his worship heaven high, above all forms of unclean worship, yes, far above all “the hills” and “the top of the mountains.” How so? Largely through the gathering together of those who want to worship him “with spirit and truth.”—John 4:23.

Reference: *ip-1* 44-45 paragraphs 20-21.

20 Jehovah does not let his people wander about like lost sheep. Through the Bible and Bible-based publications, he imparts to them his “law” and his “word” so that they learn his ways. This knowledge equips them to “walk in his paths.” Out of hearts filled with appreciation and in harmony with divine direction, they speak to one another about the ways of Jehovah. They gather together at large conventions and in smaller groups—at Kingdom Halls and in private homes—so as to listen to and learn the ways of God. (**Deuteronomy 31:12, 13**) Thus they imitate the pattern of the early Christians, who met together to encourage and incite one another to abound in “love and fine works.”—**Hebrews 10:24, 25**.

21 They invite others to “go up” to the exalted worship of Jehovah God. How well this harmonizes with the command Jesus gave to his disciples just before his ascension to heaven! He told them: “Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you.” (**Matthew 28:19, 20**) With divine backing, Jehovah’s Witnesses obediently go throughout the earth, teaching and making disciples, baptizing them.

Isaiah 2:4—Worshippers of Jehovah do not learn war anymore

Reference: *ip-1* 46-47 paragraphs 24-25.

24 The nations as a whole will never achieve this lofty goal. It is simply beyond their reach. Isaiah's words are fulfilled by individuals from many nations, who are united in pure worship. Jehovah has "set matters straight" among them. He has taught his people to live at peace with one another. Truly, in a divided and strife-ridden world, they have figuratively beaten their "swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears." How?

25 For one thing, they do not take sides in the wars of the nations. Shortly before Jesus' death, armed men came to arrest him. When Peter lashed out with a sword to defend his Master, Jesus said to him: "Return your sword to its place, for all those who take the sword will perish by the sword." (Matthew 26:52) Since then, Jesus' footstep followers have beaten their swords into plowshares and have refrained from taking up weapons to kill their fellow man and from supporting war efforts in other ways. They "pursue peace with all people."—Hebrews 12:14.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

Isaiah 1:8, 9—How was the daughter of Zion “left like a shelter in a vineyard”?

Reference: w06 12/1 8 **paragraph 5**.

This means that during the Assyrian invasion, Jerusalem will look extremely vulnerable, like a mere booth in a vineyard or an easily collapsible hut in a cucumber field. But Jehovah comes to her aid and thus does not allow her to become like Sodom and Gomorrah.

Isaiah 1:18—What is meant by Jehovah’s words: “Let us set matters straight between us”?

Reference: w06 12/1 9 **paragraph 1**.

This is not an invitation to talk things over and reach a mutual agreement by having give-and-take discussions. Instead, the verse refers to establishing a forum of justice in which the righteous Judge, Jehovah, gives Israel an opportunity to change and cleanse herself.

Reference: *it-2* 761 **paragraph 3**.

Steps necessary for attaining reconciliation. Since God is the offended party whose law has been and is being violated, it is man who must become reconciled to God, not God to man. (**Psalm 51:1-4**) Man does not meet God on equal terms, nor is God's stand as to what is right subject to change, emendation, or modification. (**Isaiah 55:6-11**; **Malachi 3:6**; compare **James 1:17**.) His conditions for reconciliation are therefore nonnegotiable, not subject to question or compromise. (Compare **Job 40:1, 2, 6-8**; **Isaiah 40:13, 14**.) While many translations render Isaiah 1:18 to read, "Come now, and let us reason together, says the LORD" (*King James Version*; *AT*; *JP*; *RS*), a more appropriate and consistent translation is: "Come, now, you people, and let us set matters straight ["let us settle the dispute," *Ro*] between us,' says Jehovah." The fault producing the disharmony lies entirely with man, not with God.— Compare **Ezekiel 18:25, 29-32**.



Our Christian Life and Ministry

MEETING WORKBOOK

Sample Presentations



AWAKE!

Question: Most people want to have good health. What do you think we can do to protect ourselves from getting sick?

Scripture: Pr 22:3

Offer: This issue of *Awake!* discusses steps that we can take to be shrewd and reduce the risk of disease.



WHY STUDY THE BIBLE? (Video)

Question: Do you think that God controls the world? [Allow for response.] What the Bible says may surprise you. This brief video explains. [Play the video.]

Offer: Chapter 11 of this book discusses why God has allowed suffering and what he intends to do about it. [Offer the *Bible Teach* or *Teach Us* book.]



TEACH THE TRUTH

Question: Is our suffering caused by God or by other factors?

Scripture: Job 34:10

Truth: God is never the cause of our suffering. Rather, suffering comes from the Devil, from humans who make bad choices, and sometimes from being in the wrong place at the wrong time. When we suffer, God is there to support us. He really cares about us.

BUILD YOUR OWN PRESENTATION

Question:

Scripture:

Offer:

- Song 107 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Let Us Go Up to the Mountain of Jehovah”:** (10 min.)
[Play the video *Introduction to Isaiah*.]
Isa 2:2, 3—“The mountain of the house of Jehovah” represents pure worship (*ip-1* 38-41 ¶6-11; 44-45 ¶20-21)
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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:** (4 min. or less) Isa 5:1-13

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Prepare This Month’s Presentations:** (15 min.) Discussion based on “Sample Presentations.” Play each presentation video, and then discuss the highlights. Encourage publishers to build their own presentation.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 139
- **Local Needs:** (7 min.) As an option, discuss the lessons learned from the *Yearbook*. (*yb16* 32 ¶3-34 ¶1)
- **“Improving Our Skills in the Ministry—Reaching the Heart With ‘Keep Yourselves in God’s Love’”:** (8 min.) Discussion. Encourage those who have the Bible Study student assignments this month to apply the points found on pages 261-262 of the *Ministry School* book.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *kr* chap. 5 ¶1-9
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 154 and Prayer
Reminder: Play the new song through once before singing.

IMPROVING OUR SKILLS IN THE MINISTRY

Reaching the Heart With “Keep Yourselves in God’s Love”



The “*God’s Love*” book should be studied to completion. Even after the student’s baptism, you may count the time, the return visits, and the study until the book is completed.

WHY IMPORTANT: People must learn Jehovah’s standards and conform to them in order to worship him acceptably. (Isa 2:3, 4) The “*God’s Love*” book, our second study publication, helps Bible students to discern how godly principles relate to daily life. (Heb 5:14) We must try to reach the heart when we teach them so that they may have the proper motivation to make changes.—Ro 6:17.

HOW TO DO IT:

- Prepare well, keeping the needs of your student in mind. Formulate viewpoint questions that will help you to draw out his thoughts and feelings about the material.—Pr 20:5; *be* 259
- Use the boxes throughout the book to help your student see the value of applying Bible principles
- Help your student to reason on matters of conscience, but do not make decisions for him.—Ga 6:5
- Tactfully determine if your student needs help to apply certain Bible principles. Kindly encourage him to make changes based on his love for Jehovah.—Pr 27:11; Joh 14:31

139 *Teach Them to Stand Firm*

(Matthew 28:19, 20)

1. What a joy to teach Jehovah's sheep
And to see how they have grown.
We have seen how he has guided them
As they've made the truth their own.

(CHORUS)

*Jehovah, may you hear our prayer
And keep them in your watchful care.
In Jesus' name, for them we plead: May they succeed;
May ev'ry one of them stand firm.*

2. Ev'ry day we said a prayer for them,
As their faith was under test.
We made time to teach and care for them;
They've grown strong, and they've been blessed.

(Chorus)

3. May they all maintain their confidence,
Trust in God and in his Son.
Through endurance and obedience,
May their race for life be won.

(Chorus)

entity. We are pleased to report that on May 27, 2015, the Moscow Department of the Russian Federation Ministry of Justice registered a new Local Religious Organization of Jehovah's Witnesses in Moscow.

Taxation

The legal entities used by Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide are generally tax-exempt, as are most religious and charitable organizations. At times, however, governments refuse to recognize our tax-exempt status.

- In **Sweden**, the authorities assert that Bethel is a commercial business "employing" Bethelites and not a religious community of special full-time ministers. The state has assessed tens of thousands of euros in employer/employee taxes against Bethel and individual Bethelites. To address this issue, Witnesses in Sweden have filed claims in domestic courts and have submitted six separate applications to the ECHR.

Neutrality and Conscientious Objection to Military Service

Jehovah's people take seriously the Bible's command to "beat their swords into plowshares" and not "learn war anymore." (Isa. 2:4) They maintain their neutrality even though some governments make no provision for alternative civilian service.

- Current legislation in **South Korea** does not recognize the right of conscientious objection. Over the past 60 years, more than 18,000 Witness men have been imprisoned for refusing military service. Almost every Witness in the country has experienced the imprisonment of a friend or a family member. In 2004 and 2011, the Constitutional Court of South Korea held that such imprisonment is constitutional. In July 2015, however, the Court conducted a public hearing to examine the matter again. Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide pray for a resolution

to this long-standing issue so that young brothers in South Korea will no longer face imprisonment for their faith.

- Three of Jehovah's Witnesses in **Eritrea** have begun their 22nd year in confinement for conscientious objection to military service. Paulos Eyassu, Negede Teklemariam, and Isaac Mogos have never been formally charged or had the opportunity to defend themselves in a court of law. Along with over 50 other brothers and sisters, they continue to maintain their integrity despite harsh treatment and deplorable prison conditions. We are confident that Jehovah 'hears the sighing' of those imprisoned for their faith and will act in their behalf. —Ps. 79:11.

- In **Ukraine**, Vitaliy Shalaiko was summoned in August 2014 to report for military service during mobilization. As a conscientious objector, he refused military service but expressed his willingness to perform alternative civilian service. The prosecutor charged Brother Shalaiko with evading military mobilization, but both the trial and appellate courts found him not guilty. The appeal court reasoned that concern for State security is not a justification for limiting guaranteed rights and

Ukraine: Vitaliy Shalaiko enjoys sharing in the ministry



that “the right to conscientious objection cannot be restricted in the interests of national security.” The prosecutor appealed again. On June 23, 2015, the High Specialized Court of Ukraine for Civil and Criminal Cases upheld the decisions of the lower courts. It thus confirmed that the right to conscientious objection and alternative service applies even during national emergencies.

Regarding the positive outcome of the case, Brother Shaliko says: “I was strengthened by the words of Jeremiah 1:19. I was prepared for any outcome—the most important thing was to be faithful to Jehovah. I am sure that he will never abandon me but will give me the power to remain faithful. However, the outcome was beyond all my expectations. I was acquitted in all three court instances. And during all the hearings, I felt the support of the brothers. I never felt abandoned.”

Neutrality and Patriotic Ceremonies

Patriotic ceremonies present another challenge to Christian neutrality. Young ones in particular may be pressured to compromise their integrity to Jehovah, as school authorities may try to force students to sing the national anthem or salute the flag.

- In the Karongi District of **Rwanda**, school officials charged several Witness students with disrespecting the national anthem because they refused to sing it. The students were expelled from school and even jailed. On November 28, 2014, the Intermediate Court of Karongi exonerated the students and ruled that their refusal to sing the national anthem was not an act of disrespect. In other African countries, such as **Cameroon**, the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, **Equatorial Guinea**, and **Malawi**, young Witnesses have faced the same issue and in some cases have also been expelled from school. Our brothers in these countries are making efforts to inform government officials and school authorities regarding the neutral position of Jehovah’s Witnesses.

- Song 107 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

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- Tactfully determine if your student needs help to apply certain Bible principles. Kindly encourage him to make changes based on his love for Jehovah.—Pr 27:11; Joh 14:31

why their personal conduct can make a difference in answering Satan's challenge to God.—Prov. 27:11.

Help your audience to see that meeting God's requirements is beneficial for them. (Isa. 48:17) One way this can be done is by pointing to the physical and emotional consequences of rejecting God's wisdom, even momentarily. Explain how sin distances us from God, deprives others of the opportunity to learn the truth from us, and otherwise encroaches on their rights. (1 Thess. 4:6) Help your audience to treasure the blessings that they already enjoy as a result of having kept God's laws. Strengthen their appreciation for the fact that walking in Jehovah's righteous ways spares us much adversity. Once a person has faith in the wisdom of God's ways, he will be repulsed by every course in opposition to them. (Ps. 119:104) He will see obedience, not as a burden, but as a way to express loving devotion to Jehovah as a person.

Helping Others to Make an Examination. In order to continue to grow spiritually, people need to become sensitive to what is in their hearts. Explain how the Bible can help them to do this.

Help your listeners to realize that the Bible is more than a record of commandments, counsel, historical events, and prophecies. It also reveals the thinking of God. At James 1:22-25, God's Word is compared to a mirror. By our reaction to what it says and to the way that Jehovah carries out his purpose, the Bible's message shows up what is in our heart. Thus it reveals how God, who is "the examiner of hearts," sees us. (Prov. 17:3) Encourage your listeners to keep this in mind. Urge them to ponder what God has preserved for us in the Bible record and what adjustments they may need to make in their life in order to be more pleasing to him. Help them to view Bible reading as a means of getting Jehovah's estimation of the "thoughts and intentions of the heart" so that they can cooperate with God in making any necessary adjustments.—Heb. 4:12; Rom. 15:4.

Some Bible students may want to act on what they are learning; yet they worry about what other people will think. They may be battling certain strong fleshly desires. Or they may be rationalizing to find some way to serve God while clinging to practices of the world. Point out the dangers of such indecision. (1 Ki. 18:21) Urge them to pray to God to examine and refine their hearts.—Ps. 26:2; 139:23, 24.

Show them that Jehovah understands their struggle and that the Bible explains what is taking place. (Rom. 7:22, 23) Help them to exercise care so that the inclinations of an imperfect heart are not allowed to dominate.—Prov. 3:5, 6; 28:26; Jer. 17:9, 10.

Encourage each one to analyze his motives for doing things. Teach him to ask himself: ‘Why do I want to do this? Will it show Jehovah that I truly appreciate all that he has done for me?’ Work to strengthen the conviction that an approved relationship with Jehovah is the most valuable asset that anyone can possess.

Help your audience to grasp the significance of serving Jehovah with their “whole heart.” (Luke 10:27) This means that all their feelings, desires, and motives must be brought into line with Jehovah’s ways. So teach your listeners to analyze not only what they *do* but also how they *feel* about God’s requirements and what their *motives* are in serving him. (Ps. 37:4) As your students discern areas in which improvement is needed, encourage them to pray to Jehovah: “Unify my heart to fear your name.”—Ps. 86:11.

When a student develops a personal relationship with Jehovah, he will obey God as a result of faith and not simply because of your urgings. He will then, on his own, “keep on making sure of what is acceptable to the Lord.” (Eph. 5:10; Phil. 2:12) Such heartfelt obedience delights Jehovah.—Prov. 23:15.

Bear in mind that Jehovah is the one who estimates hearts and draws people into a relationship with him. (Prov. 21:2; John 6:44) Our role is one of cooperation. (1 Cor. 3:9) It is “as though God were making entreaty *through* us.” (2 Cor. 5:20; Acts 16:14) Jehovah does not coerce anyone to accept the truth, but as we use the Scriptures, he may cause our listeners to realize that what they are hearing is the answer to their questions—or their prayers. Approach every teaching opportunity with this awareness, and earnestly ask Jehovah for his guidance and help.—1 Chron. 29:18, 19; Eph. 1:16-18.

EXERCISES:

(1) Read Matthew 6:21, and analyze how this text applies in your life. Read also verses 19 and 20, and consider what adjustments your heart moves you to make. (2) Analyze what motivated you to start serving Jehovah. What motivates you at present? What motivations that will please Jehovah do you want to strengthen?

5 The King Shines Light on the Kingdom

FOCUS OF CHAPTER

God's people come to recognize vital truths about the Kingdom, its rulers, and its subjects, as well as the requirement of loyalty

IMAGINE that an experienced guide is leading you on a tour of a wondrous and beautiful city. The city is new to you and to those with you, so you hang on to the guide's every word. At times, you and your fellow tourists wonder excitedly about some of the city's features that you have not yet seen. When you ask your guide about such things, however, he withholds his comments until key moments, often just when a certain sight is coming into view. In time, you grow ever more impressed with his wisdom, for he tells you what you need to know right when you need to know it.

² True Christians are in a situation similar to that of the tourists. We are eagerly learning about the

1, 2. In what sense did Jesus prove to be a wise guide?

most wondrous of cities, “the city having real foundations,” the Kingdom of God. (Heb. 11:10) When Jesus was on earth, he personally guided his followers, leading them to a deeper knowledge of that Kingdom. Did he answer all their questions and tell them everything about that Kingdom at once? No. He said: “I still have many things to say to you, but you are not able to bear them now.” (John 16:12) As the wisest of guides, Jesus never burdened his disciples with knowledge that they were not prepared to handle.

³ Jesus spoke the words recorded at John 16:12 on the final night of his earthly life. After his death, how would he continue to teach faithful people about God’s Kingdom? He assured his apostles: “The spirit of the truth . . . will guide you into all the truth.”*^[1] (John 16:13) We may think of the holy spirit as a patient guide. The spirit is Jesus’ means of teaching his followers whatever they need to know

*[1] According to one reference work, the Greek word for “guide” in that verse means “to show the road.”

3, 4. (a) How has Jesus continued to teach faithful people about God’s Kingdom? (b) What will we consider in this chapter?

about God’s Kingdom—right when they need to know it.

⁴ Let us consider how Jehovah’s holy spirit has been guiding sincere Christians into greater knowledge about that Kingdom. First, we will consider our understanding of when God’s Kingdom began to rule. Then, we will examine the identity and hopes of the Kingdom’s rulers and its subjects. Finally, we will see how Christ’s followers gained a clearer understanding of what loyalty to the Kingdom requires.

Understanding a Pivotal Year

⁵ As we saw in Chapter 2 of this book, the Bible Students spent decades pointing out that the year 1914 would be significant in fulfilling Bible prophecy. However, at that time they believed that Christ’s presence had begun in 1874, that he had begun to rule in heaven in 1878, and that the Kingdom would not be fully set up until October 1914. The harvest would extend from 1874 to 1914 and would culminate

5, 6. (a) The Bible Students held what mistaken views about the establishment of the Kingdom and the harvest? (b) Why should such mistaken views not cast doubt on whether Jesus was guiding his followers?

in the gathering of the anointed to heaven. Do mistaken ideas such as these cast doubt on whether Jesus was guiding those faithful ones by means of holy spirit?

⁶ Not at all! Think again of our opening illustration. Would the premature ideas and eager questions of the tourists cast doubt on the reliability of their guide? Hardly! Similarly, although God's people sometimes try to work out details of Jehovah's purpose before it is time for the holy spirit to guide them to such truths, it is clear that Jesus is leading them. Thus, faithful ones prove willing to be corrected and humbly adjust their views.—Jas. 4:6.

⁷ In the years following 1919, God's people were blessed with more and more flashes of spiritual light. **(Read Psalm 97:11.)** In 1925, a landmark article appeared in *The Watch Tower*, entitled "Birth of the Nation." It laid out convincing Scriptural evidence that the Messianic Kingdom had been born in 1914, fulfilling the prophetic picture of God's heavenly woman giving birth, as recorded in Revelation

7. God's people were blessed with what flashes of spiritual light?

chapter 12.*[2] The article further showed that the persecution and trouble that came upon Jehovah's people during those war years were clear signs that Satan had been hurled down from heaven, "having great anger, knowing that he has a short period of time."—Rev. 12:12.

⁸ How important is the Kingdom? In 1928, *The Watch Tower* began to stress that the Kingdom was more important than personal salvation by means of the ransom. Indeed, it is by means of the Messianic Kingdom that Jehovah will sanctify his name, vindicate his sovereignty, and carry out all his purposes regarding mankind.

⁹ Who would rule with Christ in that Kingdom? Who would be the earthly subjects of that Kingdom? And what work should occupy Christ's followers?

The Harvest Work Focuses on the Anointed

¹⁰ Decades before 1914, true Christians already understood that 144,000 faithful followers of Christ

*[2] Before then, it was thought that the vision pointed to a war between pagan Rome and papal Rome.

**8, 9. (a) How did the importance of God's Kingdom come to the fore?
(b) What questions will we consider?**

10. What have God's people long understood about the 144,000?

154 *We Will Keep Enduring* (Matthew 24:13)

1. How can we endure

When trials come, as Jesus said?
Through his pain he saw
The joy of better things ahead.
God's promise, God's justice,
Were thoughts on which he fed.

(CHORUS)

*We need to have endurance.
Our faith we must defend.
His love is our assurance.
So we will keep enduring to the end.*

2. Though the passing years

May bring us sorrow, bring us pain;
There beyond the tears,
We see the life that we can gain.
To be there, feel free there,
Determined we remain.

(Chorus)

3. We will not give up

Nor see the need for doubt or fear.
Faithfully we'll serve
Until Jehovah's day is here.
Let's keep on enduring.
That time is very near.

(Chorus)

OCTOBER 2016

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
NOVEMBER 28–DECEMBER 25, 2016



COVER IMAGE:
LUXEMBOURG

Brothers working business territory witness to a mechanic in an auto repair garage. They use the tract *How Do You View the Bible?* to draw his attention to God's Word

POPULATION
562,958

PUBLISHERS
2,058

MEMORIAL ATTENDANCE
(2015)
3,895

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8 WEEK OF **NOVEMBER 28–DECEMBER 4**
“Do Not Forget Kindness to Strangers”

13 WEEK OF **DECEMBER 5-11**
**Maintain Your Spiritual Health
While Serving in a Foreign Field**

In recent years, the makeup of our congregations has become more diverse and international. The first article helps us to show genuine concern for those from a foreign background who attend meetings in our congregation. The second article discusses how those serving in a foreign field can maintain their spiritual health.

18 Do You “Safeguard Practical Wisdom”?

21 WEEK OF **DECEMBER 12-18**
**Strengthen Your Faith
in What You Hope For**

26 WEEK OF **DECEMBER 19-25**
**Exercise Your Faith
in Jehovah’s Promises**

These articles examine the two aspects of faith that are described at Hebrews 11:1. The first article shows how our faith can grow and remain strong. The second article shows how true faith is much more than just a mental understanding of the blessings that Jehovah has in store for us.

31 DID YOU KNOW?

This publication is not for sale. It is provided as part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations.

To make a donation, please visit www.jw.org.



Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*.

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142 *Preaching to All Sorts of People*

(1 Timothy 2:4)

1. We really want to imitate our God,
To be impartial, as we know he is.
To save all sorts of people is his will;
He welcomes all to come and to be his.

(CHORUS)

*It's the person, not the place;
It's the heart and not the face.
God's message to all people we extend.
So because we really care,
We keep preaching ev'rywhere:
"All sorts of people can become God's friend."*

2. It doesn't matter where they may be found
Or what at first they might appear to be.
What really counts is what they are at heart—
The inner self, the one Jehovah sees.

(Chorus)

3. Jehovah welcomes all who make the choice
To leave the world and all its ways behind.
This we have learned, and this we want to share,
And so we preach to people of all kinds.

(Chorus)

Maintain Your Spiritual Health While Serving in a Foreign Field

“In my heart I treasure up your saying.”
—PS. 119:11.

SONGS: 142, 92

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

What helped Daniel and the writer of Psalm 119 to maintain their spiritual health?

How can those serving in a foreign field maintain their spiritual health?

While serving in a foreign field, how can parents train their children spiritually?

THOUSANDS of Jehovah’s Witnesses today are taking an active part in the fulfillment of the vision to declare the good

1-3. (a) Whatever our circumstances, what should be our priority? (b) What specific challenges do those learning a new language face, and what questions does this raise? (See opening picture of the standard edition.)



Maintain Your Spiritual Health While Serving in a Foreign Field



Make an effort to learn the local language and to participate in the meetings
(See paragraphs 16, 17)

news “to every nation and tribe and tongue and people.” (Rev. 14:6) Are you among those who are learning another language? Are you perhaps serving as a missionary or a need-greater in a foreign land, or have you begun attending meetings in a foreign-language congregation in your homeland?

2 As God’s servants, all of us need to give priority to our spiritual health and that of our family. (Matt. 5:3) At times, though, we may find it difficult to engage in meaningful personal study because of our busy routine. But those serving in a foreign field face yet other challenges.

3 In addition to learning a new tongue, those serving in a foreign field also need to make sure that they regularly feed their

heart with solid spiritual food. (1 Cor. 2:10)
How can they do that if they are unable to grasp fully the language spoken in the congregation? And why should Christian parents make sure that God's Word reaches their children's hearts?

A THREAT TO SPIRITUAL HEALTH

4 The inability to grasp God's Word in a foreign language can pose a real threat to our spiritual health. In the fifth century B.C.E., Nehemiah showed concern when he learned that some children among the Jews who had returned from Babylon could not speak the Hebrew language. (Read Nehemiah 13:23, 24.) These children were actually losing their identity as God's servants

4. What could pose a threat to our spirituality? Give an example.

because they could not fully understand the meaning of God's Word.—Neh. 8:2, 8.

5 Some Christian parents serving in a foreign-language field have come to realize that their children's interest in the truth has waned. Because of not fully understanding what was said at the meetings, the children were not really touched by the spiritual program that was being presented at the Kingdom Hall. "When talking about spiritual matters," says Pedro,^[1] who moved his family to Australia from South America, "the heart and emotions should be involved."—Luke 24:32.

6 When we read in a foreign tongue, our heart may not be as involved as it would be

5, 6. What have some parents serving in a foreign-language field come to realize, and why?

in our own language. Moreover, the inability to communicate well in another language can be mentally and spiritually draining. So while keeping alive our desire to serve Jehovah in a foreign-language field, we do well to safeguard our spiritual health.—Matt. 4:4.

THEY SAFEGUARDED THEIR SPIRITUAL HEALTH

7 When Daniel and his companions were exiled, the Babylonians tried to assimilate them into their culture by teaching them “the language of the Chaldeans.” Moreover, the court official in charge of their training gave them Babylonian names. (Dan. 1:3-7) The name given to Daniel referred to Bel, the main divinity of Babylon. King Nebu-

7. How did the Babylonians attempt to assimilate Daniel into their culture and religion?

chadnezzar likely wanted to impress Daniel with the idea that his God, Jehovah, had been subjected by Babylon's god.—Dan. 4:8.

8 Although Daniel was offered food to eat from the king's delicacies, he “resolved in his heart” that he would not “defile himself.” (Dan. 1:8) Because he kept studying “the sacred books” in his mother tongue, he maintained his spiritual health while living in a foreign land. (Dan. 9:2, ftn.) Thus, some 70 years after his arrival in Babylon, he was still known by his Hebrew name.—Dan. 5:13.

9 The writer of Psalm 119 found strength

8. What helped Daniel to maintain his spiritual health while living in a foreign land?

9. As reflected in Psalm 119, what effect did God's Word have on the writer of the psalm?

in God's Word to stand out as different. He had to put up with the scornful attitude of some members of the royal court. (Ps. 119: 23, 61) Yet, he allowed God's sayings to touch his heart deeply.—Read Psalm 119: 11, 46.

MAINTAIN YOUR SPIRITUAL HEALTH

10 Although we may be very busy with theocratic and secular responsibilities, we all need to make time for personal study and family worship. (Eph. 5:15, 16) Our aim, though, should not be simply to cover a certain number of pages or solely to prepare comments to participate at meetings. We want to make sure that we allow God's

10, 11. (a) As we study God's Word, what should be our aim? (b) How can we reach our goal? Illustrate.

Word to reach our heart and strengthen our faith.

11 To reach that goal, we should find a balance between keeping in mind the needs of others when studying and reflecting on our own spiritual needs. (Phil. 1:9, 10) We must recognize that when we prepare for the ministry, for the meetings, or for a talk, we may not necessarily apply what we read to ourselves. To illustrate: Although a chef has to taste dishes before serving them, he cannot live merely on the food he samples. If he wants to remain healthy, he has to prepare nutritious meals for himself. Similarly, we should strive to nourish our heart with spiritual food that fills our personal needs.

12 Many among those serving in a foreign-language field find it beneficial to study the Bible regularly in the ‘language of their birth.’ (Acts 2:8, ftn.) Even missionaries recognize that to remain strong in their foreign assignment, they cannot rely merely on the basic understanding of the spiritual food they get at the meetings.

13 Alain, who has been learning the Persian language for about eight years, admits: “When I prepare for meetings in Persian, I tend to focus on the language itself. Since my mind is mainly involved in an intellectual exercise, my heart is not necessarily touched by the spiritual thoughts I am read-

12, 13. Why do many of those serving in a foreign-language field find it beneficial to study regularly in their mother tongue?

ing. That is why I regularly set aside time to study the Bible and other publications in my mother tongue.”

REACH YOUR CHILDREN’S HEARTS

14 Christian parents do well to make sure that God’s Word gradually reaches their children’s minds and hearts. After serving in a foreign-language field for over three years, Serge and his wife, Muriel, noticed that their 17-year-old son lacked joy in theocratic activities. “It annoyed him to go out in the ministry in another language, whereas before he loved preaching in his native language, French,” says Muriel. “When we realized that this situation had hindered our son from making spiritual advancement,”

14. Of what should parents make sure, and why?

explains Serge, “we decided to move back to our former congregation.”

15 What factors might influence parents to move back to a congregation that uses the language their children best understand? First, they should determine whether they really have enough time and resources to instill love for Jehovah in their children while at the same time teaching them a foreign tongue. Second, they may notice in their children a lack of interest in spiritual activities or in the foreign-language field in which they are serving. In such circumstances, Christian parents might consider moving back to a congregation that uses the lan-

15. (a) What factors might influence parents to move back to a congregation that uses the language their children best understand? (b) What admonition does Deuteronomy 6:5-7 give to parents?

guage their children best understand until their children take a firm stand for the truth.
—Read Deuteronomy 6:5-7.

16 On the other hand, some parents have found ways to instruct their children in their native tongue while attending meetings at a foreign-language congregation or group. Charles, a father of three girls ranging from 9 to 13 years of age, attends a Lingala-speaking group. He explains: “We made the decision to conduct study sessions and family worship with the children in our native language. But we also include practice sessions and games in Lingala so that they can learn this language while having fun.”

17 Kevin, a father of two girls, aged five

16, 17. How have some parents managed to train their children spiritually while in a foreign field?

and eight, has taken measures to compensate for their lack of understanding at meetings held in a foreign language. He explains: “My wife and I have a personal study with both girls in French, their mother tongue. We also set the goal of attending a meeting in French once a month, and we take advantage of our vacations to visit conventions held in our native language.”

18 Of course, it is up to each family to determine what will be most beneficial for the spiritual health of their children.[2] (Gal. 6:5) Muriel, quoted earlier, admits that she and her husband had to sacrifice their preferences for the spiritual benefit of their

18. (a) What principle found at Romans 15:1, 2 can help you to determine what will be in the best interests of your children? (b) What suggestions have other parents offered? (See endnote.)

son. (Read Romans 15:1, 2.) In retrospect, Serge thinks that they made the right decision. He states: “From the time we moved back to a French-speaking congregation, our son blossomed spiritually and got baptized. He is now serving as a regular pioneer. He is even considering returning to a foreign-language group!”

LET GOD’S WORD REACH YOUR HEART

19 In his love, Jehovah has made his Word, the Bible, available in hundreds of languages so that ‘all sorts of people may come to an accurate knowledge of the truth.’ (1 Tim. 2:4) He knows that humans can better fill their spiritual need when they read his thoughts in the language of their heart.

19, 20. How can we show our love for God’s Word?

20 Whatever our personal circumstances, though, we should be determined to feed our heart with solid spiritual food. By regularly studying the Scriptures in the language of our heart, we will maintain our spiritual health and that of our family and we will show that we truly treasure God’s sayings.—Ps. 119:11.

ENDNOTES:

[1] (paragraph 5) Names have been changed.

[2] (paragraph 18) For a discussion of Bible principles that can help your family, see the article “Raising Children in a Foreign Land—The Challenges and the Rewards” in the October 15, 2002, issue of *The Watchtower*.

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“Preach the Word”

(2 Timothy 4:2)

1. God has commanded us this day;
 He has given us a charge to obey.
 At all times, be ready to impart
 The reason for the hope within your heart.

(CHORUS)

*So preach the Word,
 Oh, how vital that all hear!
 Preach the Word,
 As this system's end draws near.
 Preach the Word,
 Help the meek to understand.
 Preach the Word,
 Throughout the land!*

2. Seasons of trouble we will face;
 Opposition may bring shame and disgrace.
 Though preaching may out of season seem,
 Our trust is in our God, who is supreme.

(Chorus)

3. Seasons of favor we will see,
 And the need for us to teach, there will be.
 The way to salvation we proclaim
 And help to sanctify Jehovah's name.

(Chorus)