

- Song 21 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Keep On Seeking First the Kingdom”:** (10 min.)
Mt 6:10—The Kingdom was among the first things mentioned in the model prayer, which shows its importance (*bhs* 178 ¶12)
Mt 6:24—We cannot slave for God and for “Riches” (*nwtsty* study note)
Mt 6:33—Jehovah will fill the needs of faithful servants who put Kingdom interests first in their lives (*nwtsty* study note; *w16.07* 12 ¶18)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
Mt 7:12—How can we apply this verse when preparing introductions for the ministry? (*w14* 5/15 14-15 ¶14-16)

Mt 7:28, 29—How were the crowds affected by Jesus’ teaching, and why? (*nwtsty* study notes)

What has this week’s Bible reading taught you about Jehovah?

What other spiritual gems have you discovered in this week’s Bible reading?

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Mt 6:1-18

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Respond to an objection that is common in your territory.
- **First Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. The person you spoke with before is not at home, but a relative answers the door.
- **Second Return Visit Video:** (5 min.) Play and discuss the video.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 118
- **“Stop Worrying”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Begin by playing the video *Lessons From Jesus’ Word Pictures—Observe the Birds and the Lilies*.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *jj* chap. 4
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 132 and Prayer

MATTHEW 6-7 | Keep On Seeking First the Kingdom

In the model prayer, Jesus indicated that matters relating to Jehovah’s purpose and the Kingdom should be our primary concern.

6:9-13

- God’s name
- God’s Kingdom
- God’s will



- Daily bread
- Forgiveness of sins
- Deliverance from temptation



Some things relating to the Kingdom that I can pray for:

- The advancement of the preaching work
- God’s holy spirit to sustain those being persecuted
- God’s blessing on specific theocratic construction projects or preaching campaigns
- God’s wisdom and strength to guide those taking the lead
- Other

21

Keep On Seeking First the Kingdom

(Matthew 6:33)

F B♭ B♭/A Cm/G F7 B♭ Eb/F F7 B♭ B♭/A B♭add9/G B♭/F

Some-thing pre - cious to Je - ho - vah, Bring - ing him such keen de -
 Why be anx - ious for to - mor - row, 'Will we hun - ger, will we
 So de - declare the King - dom good news; Help de - serv - ing ones to

E♭ G/D Cm G7 Cm Cm7 Gm7 C7

light, Is his King - dom by Christ Je - sus, Which will set all mat - ters
 thirst?' For our God will make pro - vi - sion If we seek his King - dom
 see That their hope is in Je - ho - vah And in his The - oc - ra -

F7sus4 F7 *Chorus* B♭ Dm7/A Gm B♭ma7/F F/E♭ E♭ G7 Cm7 F7

right.
 first. Keep on seek - ing first the King - dom And Je - ho - vah's righ - teous -
 cy.

F/B♭ B♭ F7 B♭ B♭/D D° Cm/E♭ E° B♭/F Cm7 F B♭

ness. Sing his praise a - mong the na - tions, Serv - ing him in faith - ful - ness.

(See also Ps. 27:14; Matt. 6:34; 10:11, 13; 1 Pet. 1:21.)

43 "You heard that it was said: 'You must love your neighbor^a and hate your enemy.' 44 However, I say to you: Continue to love your enemies^b and to pray for those who persecute you,^c 45 so that you may prove yourselves sons of your Father who is in the heavens,^d since he makes his sun rise on both the wicked and the good and makes it rain on both the righteous and the unrighteous.^e 46 For if you love those loving you, what reward do you have?^f Are not also the tax collectors doing the same thing? 47 And if you greet your brothers only, what extraordinary thing are you doing? Are not also the people of the nations doing the same thing? 48 You must accordingly be perfect,^g as your heavenly Father is perfect.^g

6 "Take care not to practice your righteousness in front of men to be noticed by them;^h otherwise you will have no reward with your Father who is in the heavens. 2 So when you make gifts of mercy,ⁱ do not blow a trumpet ahead of you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be glorified by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. 3 But you, when making gifts of mercy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your gifts of mercy may be in secret. Then your Father who looks on in secret will repay you.^j

5 "Also, when you pray, do not act like the hypocrites,^k for they like to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the main streets to be seen by men.^k Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. 6 But when you pray, go into your pri-

5:48 *Or "complete." 6:2 *Or "gifts to the poor." See Glossary.

CHAP. 5

- a Le 19:18
- Mr 12:31
- b Pr 25:21
- Ro 12:20
- c Lu 6:27, 28
- Ac 7:60
- Ro 12:14
- d Eph 5:1
- e Lu 6:35
- Ac 14:17
- f Lu 6:32, 33
- g Le 19:2
- De 18:13
- Lu 6:36
- 1Pe 1:16

CHAP. 6

- h Mt 23:5
- i Pr 19:17
- Mt 10:42
- j Lu 18:11
- k Mt 6:16
- Mt 23:5

Second Col.

- a Lu 6:12
- b Lu 12:30
- c Lu 11:2-4
- d Ex 6:3
- Ps 83:18
- e Eze 36:23
- f Da 2:44
- Mt 6:33
- Re 11:15
- g Mt 26:42
- 1Ti 2:4
- Re 4:11
- h Ps 37:10
- Lu 23:43
- Ac 24:15
- i Ps 37:25
- Pr 30:8
- Mt 6:34
- 1Ti 6:8
- j Mt 18:21
- Mr 11:25
- k Mt 26:41
- 1Co 10:13
- Re 3:10
- l Joh 17:15
- 1Jo 5:19
- m Eph 4:32
- Col 3:13
- n Mt 18:35
- Jas 2:13
- o Ac 13:2, 3
- Ac 14:23
- p Isa 58:5
- Lu 18:11, 12
- q Mt 13:22
- Lu 12:20
- Jas 5:3

vate room and, after shutting your door, pray to your Father who is in secret.^a Then your Father who looks on in secret will repay you. 7 When praying, do not say the same things over and over again as the people of the nations do, for they imagine they will get a hearing for their use of many words. 8 So do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need^b even before you ask him.

9 "You must pray, then, this way:^c

"Our Father in the heavens, let your name^d be sanctified.^e 10 Let your Kingdom^f come. Let your will^g take place, as in heaven, also on earth.^h 11 Give us today our bread for this day;ⁱ 12 and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.^j 13 And do not bring us into temptation,^k but deliver^l us from the wicked one.^l

14 "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you;^m 15 whereas if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.ⁿ

16 "When you fast,^o stop becoming sad-faced like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces^o so they may appear to men to be fasting.^p Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. 17 But you, when fasting, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18 so that you may not appear to be fasting to men but only to your Father who is in secret. Then your Father who looks on in secret will repay you.

19 "Stop storing up for yourselves treasures on the earth,^q where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal. 20 Rather, store up for

6:9 *Or "be held sacred; be treated as holy." 6:13 *Or "rescue." 6:16 *Or "they neglect their appearance."

yourselves treasures in heaven,^a where neither moth nor rust consumes,^b and where thieves do not break in and steal. **21** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

22 "The lamp of the body is the eye.^c If, then, your eye is focused,^{*} your whole body will be bright.[#] **23** But if your eye is envious,^{*d} your whole body will be dark. If the light that is in you is really darkness, how great that darkness is!

24 "No one can slave for two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other,^e or he will stick to the one and despise the other. You cannot slave for God and for Riches.^f

25 "On this account I say to you: Stop being anxious^g about your lives^{*} as to what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your bodies as to what you will wear.^h Does not life[#] mean more than food and the body than clothing?ⁱ **26** Observe intently the birds of heaven;^j they do not sow seed or reap or gather into storehouses, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth more than they are? **27** Who of you by being anxious can add one cubit^{*} to his life span?^k **28** Also, why are you anxious about clothing? Take a lesson from the lilies of the field, how they grow; they do not toil, nor do they spin; **29** but I tell you that not even Sol'o-mon^l in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. **30** Now if this is how God clothes the vegetation of the field that is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much rather clothe you, you with little faith? **31** So never be anxious^m

6:22 *Or "clear." Lit., "simple." #Or "full of light." 6:23 *Lit., "bad; wicked." 6:25 *Or "souls." #Or "the soul." 6:27 *See App. B14.

CHAP. 6

a Mt 19:21
Mr 10:21
Lu 12:33, 34
Lu 18:22

b 1Pe 1:3, 4

c Pr 4:25
Lu 11:34
Eph 1:18

d Mt 20:15

e Jas 4:4

f Mt 13:22
Lu 16:13

g Ps 55:22
Php 4:6
1Pe 5:6, 7

h 1Ti 6:8
Heb 13:5

i Lu 12:22-28

j Job 38:41
Ps 147:9
Mt 10:29

k Ps 39:5

l 1Ki 10:4, 5

m Lu 10:41

Second Col.

a Lu 12:29-31

b Ps 37:25

c Ex 16:4, 19

CHAP. 7

d Lu 6:37
Ro 2:1
Ro 14:13

e Mt 18:33, 34
Jas 2:13

f Mr 4:24
Lu 6:38
Ga 6:7

g Lu 6:41, 42

h Pr 9:7
Mt 10:14

i Mr 11:24
Jas 1:5
1Jo 5:14

j Lu 11:9-13

k Joh 14:13
1Jo 3:22

and say, 'What are we to eat?' or, 'What are we to drink?' or, 'What are we to wear?'^a **32** For all these are the things the nations are eagerly pursuing. Your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

33 "Keep on, then, seeking first the Kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you.^b

34 So never be anxious about the next day,^c for the next day will have its own anxieties. Each day has enough of its own troubles.

7 "Stop judging^d that you may not be judged; **2** for with the judgment you are judging, you will be judged,^e and with the measure that you are measuring out, they will measure out to you.^f **3** Why, then, do you look at the straw in your brother's eye but do not notice the rafter in your own eye?^g **4** Or how can you say to your brother, 'Allow me to remove the straw from your eye,' when look! a rafter is in your own eye? **5** Hypocrite! First remove the rafter from your own eye, and then you will see clearly how to remove the straw from your brother's eye.

6 "Do not give what is holy to dogs nor throw your pearls before swine,^h so that they may never trample them under their feet and turn around and rip you open.

7 "Keep on asking, and it will be given you;ⁱ keep on seeking, and you will find; keep on knocking, and it will be opened to you;^j

8 for everyone asking receives,^k and everyone seeking finds, and to everyone knocking, it will be opened. **9** Indeed, which one of you, if his son asks for bread, will hand him a stone? **10** Or if he asks for a fish, he will not hand him a serpent, will he? **11** Therefore, if you, although being wicked, know how to give

good gifts to your children, how much more so will your Father who is in the heavens give good things^a to those asking him!^b

12 "All things, therefore, that you want men to do to you, you also must do to them.^c This, in fact, is what the Law and the Prophets mean.^d

13 "Go in through the narrow gate,^e because broad is the gate and spacious is the road leading off into destruction, and many are going in through it; **14** whereas narrow is the gate and cramped the road leading off into life, and few are finding it.^f

15 "Be on the watch for the false prophets^g who come to you in sheep's covering,^h but inside they are ravenous wolves.ⁱ

16 By their fruits you will recognize them. Never do people gather grapes from thorns or figs from thistles, do they?^j **17** Likewise, every good tree produces fine fruit, but every rotten tree produces worthless fruit.^k **18** A good tree cannot bear worthless fruit, nor can a rotten tree produce fine fruit.^l **19** Every tree not producing fine fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.^m **20** Really, then, by their fruits you will recognize those men.ⁿ

21 "Not everyone saying to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the Kingdom of the heavens, but only the one doing the will of my Father who is in the heavens will.^o **22** Many will say to me in that day: 'Lord, Lord,^p did we not prophesy in your name, and expel demons in your name, and perform many powerful works in your name?'^q **23** And then I will declare to them: 'I never knew you! Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness!'^r

24 "Therefore, everyone who hears these sayings of mine and does them will be like a discreet

CHAP. 7

- a Jas 1:17
- b Lu 11:13
- c Lu 6:31
- d Ro 13:10
Ga 5:14
- e Lu 13:24
- f Ac 14:22
1Pe 4:18
- g Mt 24:11
2Pe 2:1
1Jo 4:1
- h Lu 6:26
- i Ac 20:29, 30
- j Lu 6:44
- k Mt 12:33
- l Lu 6:43
- m Mt 3:10
Lu 13:6, 9
- n Mt 12:33
- o Ro 2:13
Jas 1:22
1Jo 2:17
1Jo 5:3
- p Lu 6:46
- q Jer 14:14
Jer 27:15
- r Lu 13:25-27

Second Col.

- a Lu 6:47-49
Jas 1:25
- b Jas 1:23, 24
- c 1Co 3:13
- d Mr 1:22
Lu 4:32
- e Joh 7:46

CHAP. 8

- f Mr 1:40-44
Lu 5:12-14
- g Mr 1:41
Lu 5:13
- h Isa 53:4
- i Mt 9:30
Mt 12:15, 16
Mr 7:35, 36
- j Le 14:2
Lu 17:14
- k Le 14:3, 4
Le 14:19, 20
- l Lu 7:1-9

man who built his house on the rock.^a **25** And the rain poured down and the floods came and the winds blew and lashed against that house, but it did not cave in, for it had been founded on the rock. **26** Furthermore, everyone hearing these sayings of mine and not doing them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.^b **27** And the rain poured down and the floods came and the winds blew and struck against that house,^c and it caved in, and its collapse was great.^d

28 When Jesus finished these sayings, the effect was that the crowds were astounded at his way of teaching,^e **29** for he was teaching them as a person having authority,^e and not as their scribes.

8 After he came down from the mountain, large crowds followed him. **2** And look! a leper came up and did obeisance* to him, saying: "Lord, if you just want to, you can make me clean."^f

3 So stretching out his hand, he touched him, saying: "I want to! Be made clean."^g Immediately his leprosy was cleansed away.^h **4** Then Jesus said to him: "See that you tell no one,ⁱ but go, show yourself to the priest,^j and offer the gift that Moses appointed,^k for a witness to them."

5 When he entered Ca-per-na-um, an army officer came to him, pleading with him^l **6** and saying: "Sir, my servant is laid up in the house with paralysis, and he is suffering terribly." **7** He said to him: "When I get there, I will cure him." **8** The army officer replied: "Sir, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but just say the word and my servant will be healed. **9** For I too am a man under authority, hav-

8:2 *Or "bowed down."

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- **“Keep On Seeking First the Kingdom”:** (10 min.)
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Mt 6:24—We cannot slave for God and for “Riches” (*nwtsty* study note)
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Mt 7:28, 29—How were the crowds affected by Jesus’ teaching, and why? (*nwtsty* study notes)

What has this week’s Bible reading taught you about Jehovah?

What other spiritual gems have you discovered in this week’s Bible reading?

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MATTHEW 6-7 | Keep On Seeking First the Kingdom

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6:9-13

- God’s name
- God’s Kingdom
- God’s will



- Daily bread
- Forgiveness of sins
- Deliverance from temptation



Some things relating to the Kingdom that I can pray for:

- The advancement of the preaching work
- God’s holy spirit to sustain those being persecuted
- God’s blessing on specific theocratic construction projects or preaching campaigns
- God’s wisdom and strength to guide those taking the lead
- Other

to Jehovah, we can trust that he will hear us even when nobody else does.—Nehemiah 2:1-6.

11 What can we pray for? We can pray for anything that is acceptable to Jehovah. The Bible says: “No matter what we ask according to his will, he hears us.” (1 John 5:14) Can we pray about personal things? Yes. Praying to Jehovah should be like talking to a close friend. We can tell Jehovah anything that’s on our mind and in our heart. (Psalm 62:8) We can pray for him to give us his powerful holy spirit to help us do what’s right. (Luke 11:13) We can also ask Jehovah for wisdom to make good decisions, and we can pray for strength to cope with difficulties. (James 1:5) We should ask Jehovah to forgive our sins. (Ephesians 1: 3, 7) We should also pray for others, including our family and our brothers and sisters in the congregation.—Acts 12:5; Colossians 4:12.

12 What should be most important in our prayers? Jehovah and his will. We should thank him from our heart for everything he has done for us. (1 Chronicles 29:10-13) We know this because when Jesus was on earth, he taught his disciples how to pray. (**Read Matthew 6:9-13.**) He said that they should first pray for God’s name to be sanctified, that is, treated as sacred or holy. Then Jesus showed that we should pray for God’s Kingdom to come and for Jehovah’s will to be done all over the earth. It was only after praying for those very important things that Jesus said that we should pray for our personal

11. What are some things that we can talk to Jehovah about?

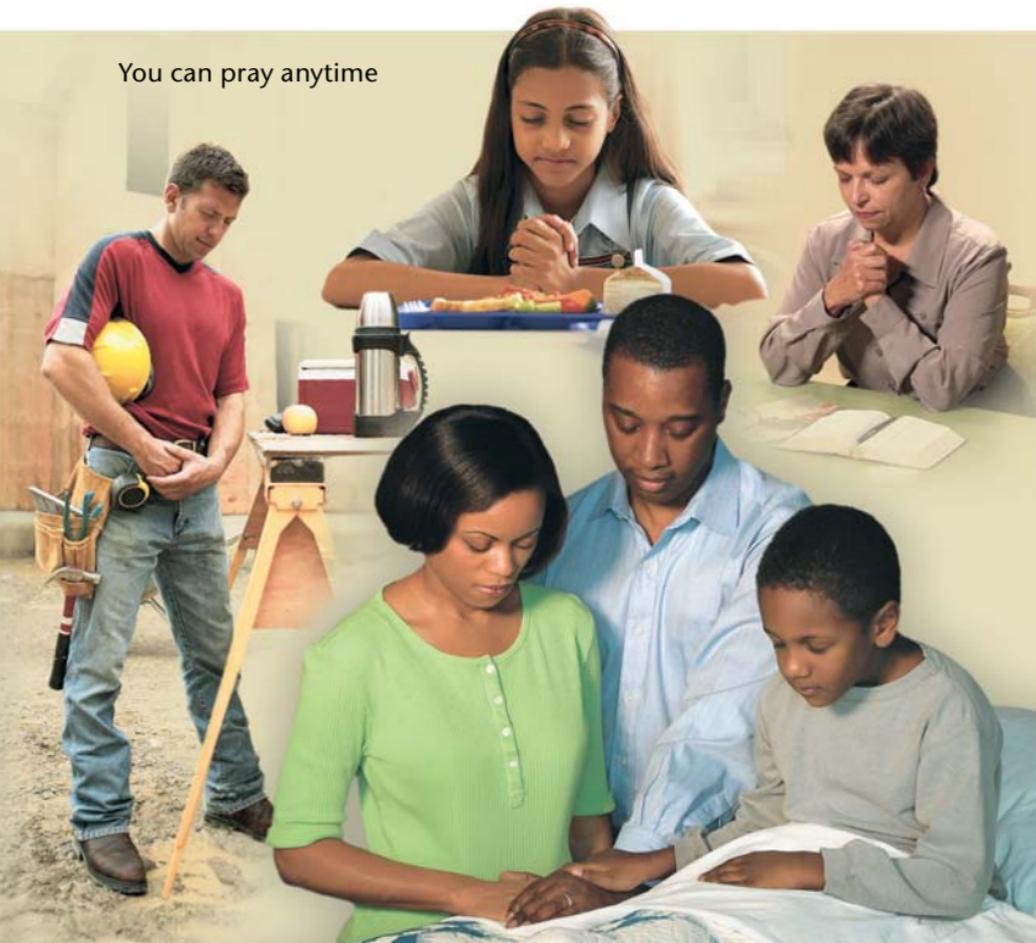
12. What should be most important in our prayers?

needs. When we put Jehovah and his will first in our prayers, we show what is most important to us.

13 How long should our prayers be? The Bible doesn't say. Our prayers can be short or long, depending on the situation. For example, we might say a short prayer before we eat but a longer prayer when we are giving Jehovah thanks or telling him about

13. How long should our prayers be?

You can pray anytime



6:2

gifts of mercy: The Greek word *e-le-e-mo-sy'ne*, traditionally rendered “alms,” is related to the Greek words for “mercy” and “to show mercy.” It refers to money or food freely given to relieve the poor.

blow a trumpet: This would attract attention. Evidently, the trumpeting mentioned here is figurative, the sense being that a person should not publicize his own acts of generosity.

hypocrites: The Greek word *hy-po-kri-tes'* originally referred to Greek (and later Roman) stage actors who wore large masks designed to amplify the voice. The term came to be used in a metaphoric sense to apply to anyone hiding his real intentions or personality by playing false or putting on a pretense. Jesus here calls the Jewish religious leaders “hypocrites.”—Mt 6:5, 16.

Truly: See study note on Mt 5:18.

they have their reward in full: The Greek term *a-pe'kho*, meaning “to have in full,” often appeared on business receipts, with the sense of “paid in full.” The hypocrites gave in order to be seen by men, and they were seen and glorified by men for their charitable giving; thus, they have already received all the reward that they are going to get. They should not expect anything from God.

6:3

do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing: A figure of speech denoting the utmost discretion or secrecy. Jesus' followers are not to advertise their charitable works even to those who are as close to them as the left hand is to the right, that is, even to intimate friends.

6:7

do not say the same things over and over again: Or “do not babble words; do not utter empty repetitions.” Jesus was warning his followers not to pray without thinking. He does not mean that it is wrong to repeat requests. (Mt 26:36-45) It would be wrong, however, to mimic the repetitious prayers of **people of the nations** (that is, Gentiles, or non-Jews) who are in the habit of mindlessly repeating memorized phrases “over and over again.”

6:8

your Father: A few ancient manuscripts have the reading “God your Father,” but the shorter reading, “your Father,” has better manuscript support.

6:9

You: This form of address distinguishes Jesus' listeners from the hypocrites whom he mentioned earlier.—Mt 6:5.

this way: That is, in contrast with the practice of those who were accustomed to saying “the same things over and over again.”—Mt 6:7.

Our Father: By using the plural pronoun “our,” the one praying acknowledges that others too have a close relationship with God and are part of His family of worshippers.—See study note on Mt 5:16.

name: The personal name of God, represented by the four Hebrew letters יהוה (YHWH) and commonly rendered “Jehovah” in English. In the *New World Translation*, the name occurs 6,979 times in the Hebrew Scriptures and 237 times in the Christian Greek Scriptures. (For information on the use of the divine name in the Christian Greek Scriptures, see App. A5 and App. C.) In

the Bible, the term “name” at times also stands for the person himself, his reputation, and all that he declares himself to be.—Re 3:4, fn.

be sanctified: Or “be held sacred; be treated as holy.” This is a petition that all creation, including both humans and angels, hold God's name holy. The petition also includes the thought that God take action to sanctify himself by clearing his name of the reproach that has been heaped on it ever since the rebellion of the first human pair in the garden of Eden.

6:11

our bread for this day: In many contexts, the Hebrew and Greek words for “bread” mean “food.” (Ge 3:19, fn.) Jesus thus indicates that those who serve God can confidently ask him to supply them, not with an excessive amount of provisions, but with adequate food for each day. This request is a reminder that God commanded the Israelites to gather the miraculously provided manna, each one “his amount day by day.”—Ex 16:4.

6:12

forgive: The Greek word literally means “to let go” but can also have the meaning “to cancel a debt,” as at Mt 18:27, 32.

debts: Referring to sins. When sinning against someone, a person incurs a debt to that one, or has an obligation to him, and must therefore seek his forgiveness. Receiving God's forgiveness depends on whether the person has **forgiven** his personal **debtors**, that is, those who have sinned against him.—Mt 6:14, 15; 18:35; Lu 11:4.

6:13

do not bring us into temptation: Or “do not allow us to give in to temptation.” The Bible sometimes speaks of God as causing things that he merely allows to take place. (Ru 1:20, 21) Therefore, Jesus is not saying here that God tempts people to sin. (Jas 1:13) Rather, he encourages his followers to pray for God's help to avoid or endure temptation.—1Co 10:13.

6:14

trespasses: The Greek term for “trespass” may be rendered “a false step” (Ga 6:1) or a blunder, in contrast with walking uprightly in harmony with God's righteous requirements.

6:16

fast: That is, abstain from food for a limited time. (See Glossary.) Jesus never commanded his disciples to fast, nor did he direct them to avoid the practice altogether. Under the Mosaic Law, rightly motivated Jews humbled themselves before Jehovah and showed repentance for sin by means of fasts.—1Sa 7:6; 2Ch 20:3.

they disfigure their faces: Or “they make their faces unattractive (unrecognizable).” People could have done this by not washing or grooming and by sprinkling or smearing ashes on their heads.

6:17

put oil on your head and wash your face: Typically, normal personal grooming was not done while fasting, so Jesus is telling his disciples to avoid making a show of self-denial.

6:22

lamp of the body is the eye: A literal eye that functions properly is to the body like a lighted lamp in a dark place. It

enlightens the entire person. Here “eye” is used in a figurative sense.—Eph 1:18.

focused: Or “clear; healthy.” The basic meaning of the Greek word *ha-plous'* is “single; simple.” It can convey the idea of singleness of mind or devotion to one purpose. For a literal eye to function properly, it must be able to focus on one thing. A person whose figurative eye is “focused” on the one right thing (Mt 6:33) will experience a positive effect on his whole personality.

6:23

envious: Lit., “bad; wicked.” A literal eye that is bad or in an unhealthy condition does not see clearly. Similarly, an envious eye cannot focus on what is truly important. (Mt 6:33) Such an eye is dissatisfied and greedy, distracted and shift. It causes its owner to estimate things incorrectly and pursue a selfish course of life.—See study note on Mt 6:22.

6:24

slave: The Greek verb refers to working as a slave, that is, someone owned by only one master. Jesus was here stating that a Christian cannot give God the exclusive devotion that He deserves and at the same time be devoted to gathering material possessions.

Riches: The Greek word *ma-mo-nas'* (of Semitic origin), traditionally translated “Mammon,” can also be rendered “Money.” “Riches” is here personified as a master, or a kind of false god, though there is no conclusive proof that the word was ever used as the name of a specific deity.

6:25

Stop being anxious: Or “Stop worrying.” The tense of the Greek verb in this prohibition indicates to stop doing an action already in progress. The Greek term for “anxious” can refer to worry that divides a person’s mind and distracts him, robbing him of joy. The same word occurs at Mt 6:27, 28, 31, 34.

lives . . . life: The Greek word *psy-khe'*, traditionally rendered “soul,” here refers to life. The combination **life** (soul) and **body** represents the entire person.

6:27

one cubit: Jesus here uses a word that refers to a short measure of distance (lit., “a forearm”), that is, about 44.5 cm (17.5 in.).—See Glossary, “Cubit,” and App. B14.

his life span: Jesus is evidently depicting life as a journey. His point is that by worrying, a person cannot add even a little to the length of his life.

6:28

Take a lesson: The Greek verb form could also be rendered “Learn well, or thoroughly.”

the lilies of the field: Some identify this flower with the anemone, but it may have included a variety of lilylike flowers, such as tulips, hyacinths, irises, and gladiolus. Some suggest that Jesus referred simply to the many wildflowers growing in the area and therefore translate it “flowers of the field.” This may be inferred, since this phrase is parallel with “vegetation of the field.”—Mt 6:30; Lu 12:27, 28.

6:30

vegetation . . . oven: During the hot summer months, vegetation in Israel withers in as little as two days. Dried flower stalks and

grass were collected from the fields as fuel for the baking ovens.

you with little faith: Jesus applied this expression to his disciples, indicating that their belief or trust was not strong. (Mt 8:26; 14:31; 16:8; Lu 12:28) It implies not an absence of faith but, rather, a deficiency of faith.

6:33

Keep on . . . seeking: The Greek verb form indicates continuous action and could be rendered “Seek continually.” Jesus’ true followers would not seek the Kingdom for a time and then go on to other things. Rather, they must always make it their first concern in life.

the Kingdom: Some ancient Greek manuscripts read “God’s Kingdom.”

his: Refers to God, the “heavenly Father” mentioned at Mt 6:32.

righteousness: Those who seek God’s righteousness readily do his will and conform to his standards of right and wrong. This teaching stood in stark contrast with that of the Pharisees, who sought to establish their own righteousness.—Mt 5:20.

6:34

never be anxious about the next day: The Scriptures encourage proper planning. (Pr 21:5) However, undue anxiety about what *may* happen in the future can adversely affect a person’s relationship with God, causing him to rely on his own wisdom rather than on God’s.—Pr 3:5, 6.

7:4

look!: See study note on Mt 1:20.

7:5

Hypocrite!: At Mt 6:2, 5, 16, Jesus applied this term to the Jewish religious leaders, but here he uses it to address any disciple who fixes his attention on another’s faults while ignoring his own.

7:6

give what is holy to dogs . . . throw your pearls before swine: According to the Mosaic Law, pigs and dogs were unclean. (Le 11:7, 27) It was permissible to throw to dogs the flesh of an animal killed by a wild beast. (Ex 22:31) But Jewish tradition forbade giving to dogs “holy flesh,” that is, meat of animal sacrifices. At Mt 7:6, the expressions “dogs” and “swine” are used figuratively of people who do not value spiritual treasures. Just as swine have no appreciation of the value of pearls, individuals who do not value spiritual treasures may abuse the one sharing them.

7:7

Keep on asking, . . . seeking, . . . knocking: The rendering “keep on” expresses the continuous action indicated by the Greek verb form used here and shows the need for perseverance in prayer. The use of three verbs indicates intensity. Jesus makes a similar point in his illustration at Lu 11:5-8.

7:9

bread . . . stone: Jesus may have contrasted bread with stones because bread was a staple in the diet of the Jews and surrounding peoples and the size and shape of loaves could have reminded people of stones. The answer to Jesus’ rhetorical question is: “It would be unthinkable for a father to do such a thing.”—See study note on Mt 7:10.

7:10

fish . . . serpent: Fish was a staple in the diet of people living around the Sea of Galilee. Some small serpents may have looked like the fish that were often eaten with bread. The rhetorical question implies that it would be unthinkable for a loving parent to do such a thing.

7:11

you, although being wicked: Because of inherited sin, all humans are imperfect and, consequently, comparatively wicked.

how much more so: Jesus often used this line of reasoning. First he presents an obvious fact or a familiar truth, and then he draws an even more convincing conclusion based on that fact, arguing from the lesser to the greater.—Mt 10:25; 12:12; Lu 11:13; 12:28.

7:12

the Law and the Prophets: See study note on Mt 5:17.

7:13

Go in through the narrow gate: In ancient times, roadways with gates were the means of entry into walled cities. The Bible uses such expressions as **road** or “path” or “way” to describe people’s life course and conduct. The image of two contrasting roads pictures life courses that are either approved or disapproved by God, determining whether an individual gains entry into God’s Kingdom.—Ps 1:1, 6; Jer 21:8; Mt 7:21.

broad is the gate and spacious is the road: Although some manuscripts read “broad and spacious is the road,” the longer reading has strong manuscript support and harmonizes with the parallelism at Mt 7:14.—See App. A3.

7:15

in sheep’s covering: Or “in sheep’s clothing,” that is, disguised in figurative garments and exhibiting sheeplike qualities in order to give the impression of being a harmless member of God’s “flock” of worshippers.

ravenous wolves: A metaphor describing those who are extremely covetous and who exploit others for personal gain.

7:16

fruits: Here used figuratively of people’s works, their words, or the results of what they do and say.

7:23

lawlessness: See study note on Mt 24:12.

7:24

discreet: See study note on Mt 24:45.

7:25

rain . . . floods . . . winds: Sudden winter storms are not uncommon in Israel (especially during the month of Tebeth, that is, December/January), bringing high winds, torrential rains, and destructive flash floods.—See App. B15.

7:28

were astounded: The Greek verb used here can be defined “to be filled with amazement to the point of being overwhelmed.”

The continuous verb form implies that his words had a lasting effect on the crowds.

his way of teaching: This expression refers to how Jesus taught, his teaching methods, which included what he taught, the whole body of instruction in the Sermon on the Mount.

7:29

not as their scribes: Rather than quote revered rabbis as an authority, as was the scribes’ custom, Jesus speaks as Jehovah’s representative, **as a person having authority**, basing his teachings on God’s Word.—Joh 7:16.

t, Jesus was so deeply moved by the leper’s plight that he did what other Jews would consider unthinkable—he touched the man. He did so even though he could have cured the leper with just a word.—Mt

8:5-12.

I want to: Jesus not only acknowledged the request but expressed a strong desire to respond to it, showing that he was motivated by more than just a sense of duty.

Treasures From God's Word

w16.07 12 paragraph 18

¹⁸ **Read Matthew 6:33.** Christ's disciples must always make the Kingdom their first concern in life. If we do that, then, as Jesus said, "all these other things will be added" to us. Why could he say that? He explained in the preceding verse: "Your heavenly Father *knows* that you need all these things," meaning the necessities of life. Jehovah can easily anticipate our individual needs regarding food, clothing, and shelter, even before we become aware of them. (Phil. 4:19) He knows which piece of our clothing will wear out next. He knows what our dietary requirements are and what would be adequate shelter for us, given the size of our family. Jehovah will see to it that we have what we really *need*.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

w14 5/15 14-15 paragraphs 14-16

HOW SHOULD I APPROACH PEOPLE?

¹⁴ Imagine that one day we receive a phone call but do not recognize the caller's voice. He is a stranger, but he asks a question about the types of food we prefer. We wonder who the caller is and what he really wants. Out of politeness, perhaps we might briefly converse with him, but then we would likely indicate that we prefer to end the conversation. On the other hand, imagine that the caller identifies himself, lets us know that he works in the field of nutrition, and kindly tells us that he has some helpful information. We would probably be more receptive. After all, we appreciate it when people are straightforward yet tactful when approaching us. How can we extend the same courtesy to those we meet in our ministry?

¹⁵ In many territories, we need to make the purpose of our visit clear to the householder. True, we have valuable information the householder does not have, but suppose we did not really introduce ourselves and merely began our presentation abruptly with a question like this: "If you could solve any problem in the world, what would it be?" We know that the purpose behind such a question is to find out what is on the person's mind and then direct the conversation to the Bible. However, the householder might wonder: 'Who is this stranger, and why is he asking me this question? What is this all about?' So we should try to put the householder at ease. (Phil. 2:3, 4) How can we do so?

¹⁶ One traveling overseer has found the following approach to be effective. After exchanging greetings, he hands the householder a copy of the tract *Would You Like to Know the Truth?* and says: "We're giving one of these to everyone in the area today. It discusses six questions that many people ask. Here is your copy." The brother reports that most people seem to relax a bit once they know the purpose of the visit. At that point, it is often easier to get a conversation under way. The traveling overseer next asks the person: "Have you ever thought about any of these questions?" If the householder chooses one, the brother opens the tract and discusses what the Bible says about that question. Otherwise, he selects a question and continues the discussion without putting the householder on the spot. Of course, there are many ways to start a conversation. In some areas, householders may expect more formalities before we get to the point of our visit. The key is to adjust our presentation to the way that people in our area likely want to be approached.

- Song 21 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Keep On Seeking First the Kingdom”:** (10 min.)
Mt 6:10—The Kingdom was among the first things mentioned in the model prayer, which shows its importance (*bhs* 178 ¶12)
Mt 6:24—We cannot slave for God and for “Riches” (*nwtsty* study note)
Mt 6:33—Jehovah will fill the needs of faithful servants who put Kingdom interests first in their lives (*nwtsty* study note; *w16.07* 12 ¶18)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
Mt 7:12—How can we apply this verse when preparing introductions for the ministry? (*w14* 5/15 14-15 ¶14-16)

Mt 7:28, 29—How were the crowds affected by Jesus’ teaching, and why? (*nwtsty* study notes)

What has this week’s Bible reading taught you about Jehovah?

What other spiritual gems have you discovered in this week’s Bible reading?

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Mt 6:1-18

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Respond to an objection that is common in your territory.
- **First Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. The person you spoke with before is not at home, but a relative answers the door.
- **Second Return Visit Video:** (5 min.) Play and discuss the video.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 118
- **“Stop Worrying”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Begin by playing the video *Lessons From Jesus’ Word Pictures—Observe the Birds and the Lilies*.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *jj* chap. 4
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 132 and Prayer

MATTHEW 6-7 | Keep On Seeking First the Kingdom

In the model prayer, Jesus indicated that matters relating to Jehovah’s purpose and the Kingdom should be our primary concern.

6:9-13

- God’s name
- God’s Kingdom
- God’s will



- Daily bread
- Forgiveness of sins
- Deliverance from temptation



 Some things relating to the Kingdom that I can pray for:

- The advancement of the preaching work
- God’s holy spirit to sustain those being persecuted
- God’s blessing on specific theocratic construction projects or preaching campaigns
- God’s wisdom and strength to guide those taking the lead
- Other



Our Christian Life and Ministry

MEETING WORKBOOK

Sample Conversations

Witnessing near Monrovia, Liberia

●○○ INITIAL CALL

Question: Is the Bible still relevant today?

Scripture: 2Ti 3:16

Link: What is the Bible's message?



○●○ FIRST RETURN VISIT

Question: What is the Bible's message?

Scripture: Mt 6:10

Link: What will God's Kingdom do?



○○● SECOND RETURN VISIT

Question: What will God's Kingdom do?

Scripture: Da 2:44

Link: How will this affect the earth?

Starting this month, the midweek meeting will no longer feature three different sample presentations. Instead, the *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook* will have sample conversations consisting of an opening question, a scripture, and a linking question to pave the way for a return visit. Only one sample conversation video will be played per week. Each publisher can decide which publication from our Teaching Toolbox to use and when to introduce it—whether on an initial call or a return visit. In addition, the workbook will contain ideas for two follow-up conversations. This approach will help us focus on our goal of teaching “all those who [are] rightly disposed for everlasting life.”—Ac 13:48.

Student Assignments: Unless the instructions indicate otherwise, students should demonstrate the sample conversations.

"Give Us More Faith"

(Luke 17:5)

E♭m7/D♭ D♭ma7 E♭m7/D♭ D♭ma7 E♭m7/D♭ D♭ma7 E♭m7/D♭ D♭ma7

Be - cause we are im - per - fect, O Je - ho - vah, The in - cli -
A - part from faith, no one can ful - ly please you. We must be -

E♭m7/D♭ D♭ma7 E♭m7/D♭ D♭ma7

na - tion of our heart is flawed. There is a
lieve our faith will be re - paid. And as a

E♭m/C F7+5 B♭m B♭m7

sin shield, that eas - i - ly en - snares us— A lack of
our faith pro - vides a ref - uge. We face the

Chorus
D♭/E♭ E♭9 E♭m7 G♭/A♭

faith in you, the liv - ing God. Give us more
fu - ture firm and un - a - fraid.

"Give Us More Faith"

D^bma7
E^bm/C
F7+5
B^bm9
B^bm
D^b/A^b
Fm/A^b

faith, we beg of you, Je - ho - vah. Please help us

G^bma7
G^b6
A^bm/F
B^b7^b9^b13
E^bm
G^b/D^b

out ac - cord - ing to our need. Give us more

Cm11^b5
F7
B^bm9
B^bm9/A^b
A^b/G^b
G^b
G^bma7
G^o

faith, ac - cord - ing to your mer - cy, That we may

D^b/A^b
G^b/A^b
A^b7
D^b

hon - or you in word and deed.

(See also Gen. 8:21; Heb. 11:6; 12:1.)

- Song 21 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

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- God’s blessing on specific theocratic construction projects or preaching campaigns
- God’s wisdom and strength to guide those taking the lead
- Other

Stop Worrying

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said: “Stop being anxious about your lives.” (Mt 6:25) While it is only natural for imperfect humans living in Satan’s world to be anxious on occasion, Jesus was teaching his followers to avoid extreme anxiety. (Ps 13:2) Why? Because undue anxiety, even about daily needs, can distract us, making it more difficult for us to seek first the Kingdom. (Mt 6:33) Jesus’ further comments will help us to stop needless worrying.

- Mt 6:26—What can we learn from observing the birds?
(w16.07 9-10 ¶11-13)

- Mt 6:27—Why is undue worry a waste of time and energy?
(w05 11/1 22 ¶15)

- Mt 6:28-30—What lesson can we learn from the lilies of the field?
(w16.07 10-11 ¶15-16)

- Mt 6:31, 32—In what ways are Christians different from the nations?
(w16.07 11 ¶17)



I want to stop worrying about _____

MARY—PREGNANT BUT NOT MARRIED

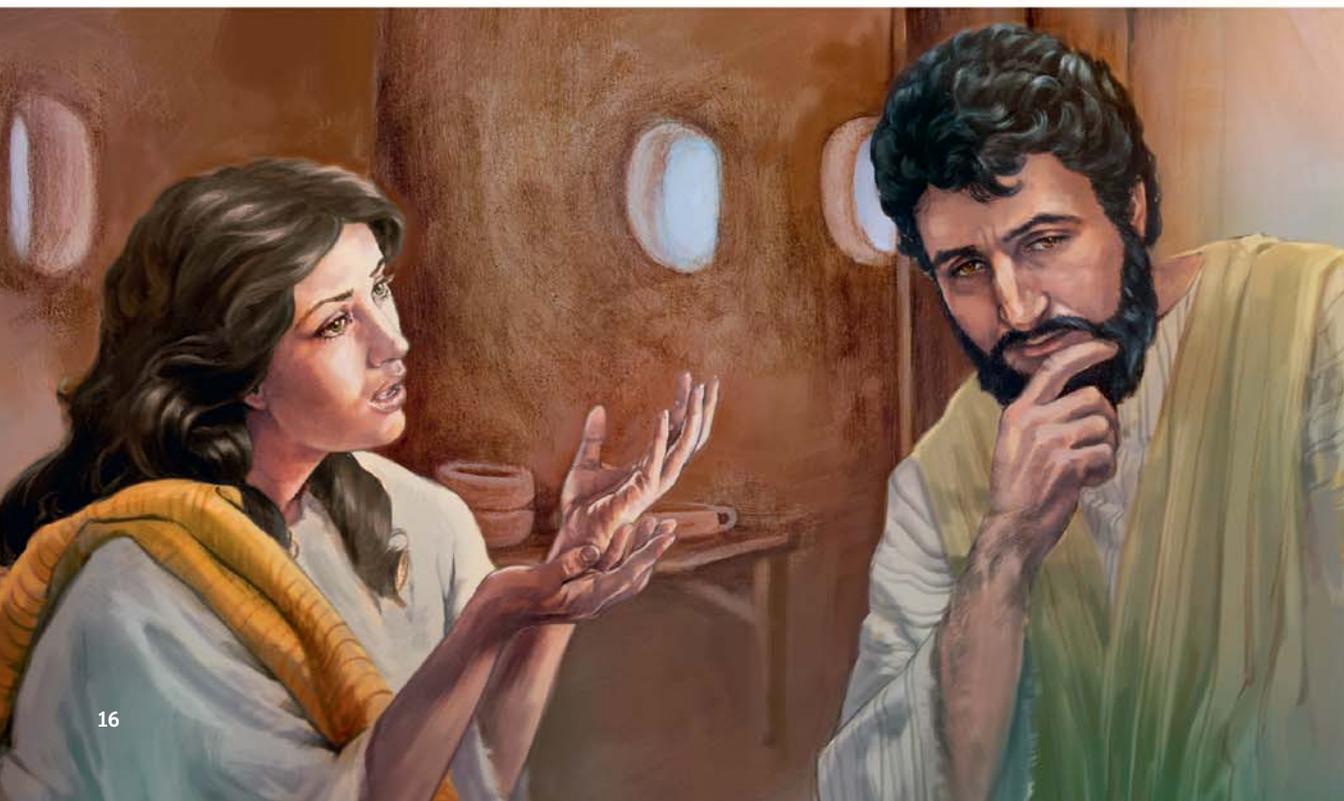
MATTHEW 1:18-25 LUKE 1:56

Mary is in the fourth month of her pregnancy. Recall that she spent the early part of her pregnancy visiting her relative Elizabeth in the Judean hills to the south. But now Mary has returned home to Nazareth. Here, her pregnancy will soon become public knowledge. Imagine how distressing the situation is for her!

What makes matters worse is that Mary is engaged to marry a local carpenter named Joseph. And she knows that according to God's Law to Israel, a woman who is engaged to one man but who willingly has sexual relations with another man is to be stoned to death. (Deuteronomy 22:23, 24) Hence, even though Mary has not been immoral, she probably wonders both how she can explain her pregnancy to Joseph and what will happen.

Mary has been away for three months, so we can be sure that Joseph is eager to see her. When they meet, Mary likely tells him of her condition, doing her best to explain that her pregnancy is by means of God's holy spirit. Yet, as you can imagine, this is a very difficult thing for Joseph to understand and to believe.

Joseph knows that Mary is a good woman and that she has a fine reputation. And he loves her dearly. Still, despite what she claims, it seems to Joseph that she could only be pregnant by some other man. Joseph does not want her to be stoned to death or to be disgraced publicly; hence, he makes up his mind to divorce her secretly. In those days, engaged people were viewed as married, and a divorce was required to end an engagement.



Later, while Joseph is still weighing these matters, he goes to sleep. Jehovah's angel appears to him in a dream and says: "Do not be afraid to take your wife Mary home, for what has been conceived in her is by holy spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." —Matthew 1:20, 21.

When Joseph wakes up, how grateful he is that the issue is now clearer! He does not delay in doing what the angel directed. He takes Mary

to his home. This is a public action that serves, in effect, as a marriage ceremony, giving notice that Joseph and Mary are now a married couple. Nevertheless, Joseph does not have sexual relations with Mary while she is pregnant with Jesus.

Months later, Joseph and Mary, who is heavy with child, must get ready for a trip away from their home in Nazareth. Where do they need to go at a time when Mary is about to give birth?

-
- ◇ When Joseph learns that Mary is pregnant, what must he think, and why?
 - ◇ How could Joseph divorce Mary when they are not yet married?
 - ◇ What public action establishes that Joseph and Mary are a married couple?



Now We Are One

(Genesis 2:23, 24)

Db Absus4/D \flat Ab7/D \flat B \flat m9 B \flat m

This is at last bone of my bone, Flesh of my flesh; now

G \flat E \flat m Fm E \flat m/G \flat B \flat m D \flat ma7/A \flat

I'm not a-lone. God has pro - vid - ed a part - ner,

G \flat G \flat /A \flat Ab7 D \flat

Some - one to call my own. Now we are one;

Ab7sus4/D \flat Ab7/D \flat B \flat m9 B \flat m G \flat

now there can be Bless-ings to share for you and for me.

Now We Are One

Ebm Fm Ebm/Gb Bbm Dbma7/Ab Gb

As man and wom - an to - geth - er, We are a

Detailed description: This system contains the first two staves of music. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of three flats (Bb, Eb, Ab) and a common time signature. It features a series of chords: Ebm, Fm, Ebm/Gb, Bbm, Dbma7/Ab, and Gb. The bottom staff is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature, providing a bass line for the chords. The lyrics 'As man and wom - an to - geth - er, We are a' are positioned between the two staves.

Gb/Ab Ebm6/Gb Fsus4 F Bbm/F

fam - i - ly. Ev - 'ry day we'll serve our

Detailed description: This system contains the third and fourth staves of music. The top staff continues with chords: Gb/Ab, Ebm6/Gb, Fsus4, F, and Bbm/F. The bottom staff continues the bass line. The lyrics 'fam - i - ly. Ev - 'ry day we'll serve our' are positioned between the two staves.

Fsus4 F Fsus4 F F/C Bb/C C7 Fsus4 F

God a - bove. As he shows the way,

Detailed description: This system contains the fifth and sixth staves of music. The top staff continues with chords: Fsus4, F, Fsus4, F, F/C, Bb/C, C7, Fsus4, and F. The bottom staff continues the bass line. The lyrics 'God a - bove. As he shows the way,' are positioned between the two staves.

Bbm/F C/E E° Ebm7 Gb/Ab

Un - fail - ing love we'll dis - play.

Detailed description: This system contains the seventh and eighth staves of music. The top staff continues with chords: Bbm/F, C/E, E°, Ebm7, and Gb/Ab. The bottom staff continues the bass line. The lyrics 'Un - fail - ing love we'll dis - play.' are positioned between the two staves.

Now We Are One

Db Ab7sus4/Db Ab7/Db Bbm9 Bbm

As we have vowed, so may it be. Sea - sons of joy, may

Detailed description: This system contains the first two lines of music. The treble staff features a vocal line with a melody of eighth and quarter notes. The bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving bass lines. The lyrics are placed between the two staves.

Gb Ebm Fm Ebm/Gb Bbm Dbma7/Ab

we come to see. Oh, may we hon - or Je - ho - vah,

Detailed description: This system contains the next two lines of music. The treble staff continues the vocal melody. The bass staff features a more active accompaniment with eighth notes. The lyrics are placed between the two staves.

Gb Ebm7 Gb/Ab Fm/Ab Ab7

And may you al - ways be my

Detailed description: This system contains the third line of music. The treble staff has a vocal line with a long note on 'ways' and a final note on 'my'. The bass staff has a rhythmic accompaniment. The lyrics are placed between the two staves.

Db

love.

Detailed description: This system contains the final line of music. The treble staff has a vocal line with a long note on 'love'. The bass staff has a long, sustained chord. The lyrics are placed between the two staves.

(See also Gen. 29:18; Eccl. 4:9, 10; 1 Cor. 13:8.)

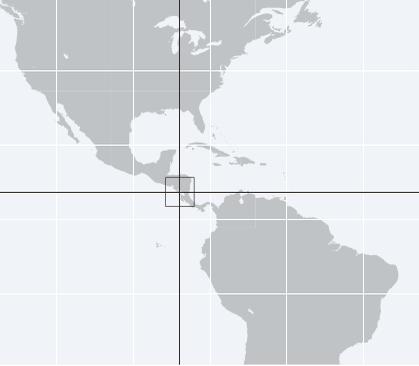
NOVEMBER 2017

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
DECEMBER 25, 2017–JANUARY 28, 2018



COVER IMAGE:
NICARAGUA

Two Christian sisters share the Bible's message with a merchant in the town of Tipitapa

PUBLISHERS
28,642

BIBLE STUDIES
42,298

MEMORIAL ATTENDANCE
(2016)
88,308

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For Jehovah's people, singing has always been an integral part of worship. However, some may feel uncomfortable singing in public. How can we overcome the fear of using our voice to sing praises to Jehovah? This article gives us good reasons to sing out joyfully and offers some suggestions for improving our singing voice.

8 WEEK OF **JANUARY 1-7** **Are You Taking Refuge in Jehovah?**

13 WEEK OF **JANUARY 8-14** **Imitate Jehovah's Justice and Mercy**

We can learn valuable lessons from the arrangement of the cities of refuge in ancient Israel. In the first article, look for ways that sinners can take refuge in Jehovah today. In the second article, see how Jehovah's example helps us to forgive others, respect life, and act justly.

18 "The Generous Person Will Be Blessed"

20 WEEK OF **JANUARY 15-21** **Reject Worldly Thinking**

25 WEEK OF **JANUARY 22-28** **Let Nothing Deprive You of the Prize**

These two articles are based on Paul's inspired counsel to the Christians in Colossae. The first article explains what to do when we hear worldly ideas that may sound appealing or convincing. The second article reminds us of how to avoid attitudes that could deprive us of the blessings that Jehovah has promised.

30 **How Can You Adjust to Your New Congregation?**

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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November 2017
Vol. 138, No. 17 ENGLISH

He Will Make You Strong

(1 Peter 5:10)

D Bm G A D

There was a rea - son why God brought the truth to you And
God gave his own be - lov - ed Son in your be - half; On

G A Bm Em7 Asus4 A

called you from the dark - ness to the light. With - in your
this ac - count, He wants you to suc - ceed. If He did

D Bm G Em/G F#sus4 F#

heart, he saw the long - ing that you had To
not with - hold the gift of His dear Son, Then

Bm9 Bm Bm9/A Bm/A G

search for him and prac - tice what is right. You
nev - er doubt He'll give the strength you need. He

He Will Make You Strong

G D/F# Em Em/D

prom - ised him in prayer to do his will; He
won't for - get the faith and love you've shown; He

Detailed description: This system contains the first two lines of music. The treble staff has a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a common time signature. The melody starts on G4, moving to A4, B4, C5, then down to B4, A4, G4. The bass staff provides accompaniment with chords G, D/F#, Em, and Em/D. The lyrics are aligned with the notes.

Em/C# F#7+5 Bm D/A G Dma7/F# Em11 A7sus4 *Chorus*

helped you then, and he will help you still. With
will not fail to care for all His own.

Detailed description: This system contains the third and fourth lines of music. The treble staff continues the melody with chords Em/C#, F#7+5, Bm, D/A, G, Dma7/F#, Em11, and A7sus4. The bass staff has chords corresponding to the treble staff, with 'R.H.' written above the final two chords. The lyrics are: 'helped you then, and he will help you still. With will not fail to care for all His own.'

D Em11 D/F# G D/F#

Je - sus' blood He bought you, to God you now be - long. So

Detailed description: This system contains the fifth and sixth lines of music. The treble staff has chords D, Em11, D/F#, G, and D/F#. The bass staff has corresponding chords. The lyrics are: 'Je - sus' blood He bought you, to God you now be - long. So'.

Em/C# F#7 Bm D/E E7 G/A A7

he will make you firm, and he will make you strong. He'll

Detailed description: This system contains the seventh and eighth lines of music. The treble staff has chords Em/C#, F#7, Bm, D/E, E7, G/A, and A7. The bass staff has corresponding chords. The lyrics are: 'he will make you firm, and he will make you strong. He'll'.



Reject Worldly Thinking

“Look out that no one takes you captive by means of the philosophy and empty deception . . . of the world.”

—COL. 2:8.

SONGS: 38, 31

HOW DO YOU ANSWER?

What loving counsel did the apostle Paul give about worldly thinking?

What is an example of worldly thinking, and how can we reject it?

How has the information in this article helped you?

THE apostle Paul wrote his letter to Christians in Colossae evidently at the end of his first confinement in Rome, or about 60-61 C.E. He mentioned to them the importance of acquiring “spiritual comprehension.” (Col. 1:9) Paul further stated: “I am saying this so that no one may delude you with persuasive arguments. Look out that no one takes you captive by means of the philosophy and empty deception according to human tradition, according to the elementary things of the world and not according to Christ.” (Col. 2:4, 8) Paul went on to explain why some popular ideas were wrong and why worldly thinking may be appealing to imperfect people. For example, it may make a person feel wise and superior to others. The letter was aimed at helping the brothers to reject worldly thinking and wrong practices.—Col. 2:16, 17, 23.

² Worldly thinking ignores or belittles Jehovah’s guidelines, and its influence could gradually weaken our faith. Today, we all are exposed to worldly thinking. It is promoted on televi-

1. What counsel did the apostle Paul write to fellow Christians? (See opening picture.)
2. Why will we consider examples of worldly thinking?

sion, on the Internet, at work, or at school. In this article, we will examine what we can do to prevent such thinking from corrupting our mind. We will consider five examples of worldly thinking and discuss how we can reject these ideas.

DO WE NEED TO BELIEVE IN GOD?

³ *“I can be a good person without believing in God.”* In many countries, it is not unusual to hear people say that they do not believe in God; they consider themselves to be nonreligious. They may not have examined the question of God’s existence carefully, but they are drawn to the idea of being free to do as they please. **(Read Psalm 10:4.)** Others may feel worldly-wise when they say, “I can have high principles without believing in God.”

⁴ Is the claim of unbelievers that there is no Creator based on logical reasoning? When looking to science to determine whether life was created, a person can easily get lost in a fog of information. But in reality, the answer is simple. If a building needs someone to construct it, how much more so do living things! Actually, the most basic living cells on earth are far more complex than any house because they can do what no house can do—reproduce. So these cells have a way to store and copy the information needed to replicate themselves. Where did the design for living cells come from? The Bible answers: “Every house is constructed by someone, but the one who constructed all things is God.”—Heb. 3:4.

3. What idea is appealing to many people, and why?

4. How could we reason with someone who claims that there is no Creator?

⁵ How can we reason about the notion that a person can determine what is good without believing in God? God’s Word acknowledges that unbelievers may have certain commendable principles. (Rom. 2:14, 15) For example, they may respect and love their parents. But how well-founded are the moral standards of someone who refuses to acknowledge our loving Creator as the One who sets the standards of right and wrong? (Isa. 33:22) Many thinking people today will admit that the deplorable conditions on earth confirm that man needs God’s help. **(Read Jeremiah 10:23.)** So we should not be tempted to think that someone could fully determine what is good without believing in God and adhering to his standards.—Ps. 146:3.

DO WE NEED RELIGION?

⁶ *“You can be happy without religion.”* This example of worldly thinking appeals to many people because they view religion as dull and irrelevant. Also, many religions turn people away from God by teaching hellfire, collecting tithes, or preaching politics. No wonder an increasing number of people feel that they can be happy without religion! Such individuals may say, “I am interested in spiritual matters, but I do not get involved in organized religion.”

⁷ Is it really true that one can be happy without religion? Certainly an individual can be happy without *false* religion, but a person cannot be truly happy unless he has a relationship with

5. What can we say about the notion that an individual can determine what is good without believing in God?

6. What view of religion do many people have?

7. How does true religion promote happiness?

Jehovah, who is described as “the happy God.” (1 Tim. 1:11) Everything God does benefits others. His servants are happy because they focus on helping others. (Acts 20:35) For example, consider how true worship promotes family happiness. True worship teaches us to honor and respect our spouse, to treat marriage vows as sacred, to avoid adultery, to raise respectful children, and to practice true love. As a result, such worship unites people in happy congregations and a happy worldwide brotherhood.—**Read Isaiah 65:13, 14.**

⁸ How can we analyze the worldly idea that one can be happy without serving God? Consider this question, What makes people happy? Some find satisfaction in a career, a sport, or a hobby. Others find satisfaction in caring for family or friends. All those things can bring pleasure, but our life has a higher purpose that brings lasting happiness. In contrast with animals, we can come to know our Creator and serve him faithfully. We have been created in such a way that we find happiness in doing so. (**Read Matthew 5:3.**) For example, true worshippers find delight and derive much encouragement from meeting together to worship Jehovah. (Ps. 133:1) They also enjoy a united brotherhood, a wholesome lifestyle, and a happy hope.

DO WE NEED MORAL STANDARDS?

⁹ “*Why condemn sex outside marriage?*” People may say to us: “Life is to be enjoyed. Why condemn having sex outside marriage?” The suggestion that a Chris-

8. How can we use Matthew 5:3 to reason on the question, What makes people happy?

9. (a) What idea about sex is common in this world? (b) Why does God’s Word forbid sex outside marriage?

tian should tolerate sexual immorality is wrong. Why? Because God’s Word forbids sexual immorality.* (**Read 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8.**) Jehovah has the right to make laws for us because he created us. The law of God that permits sexual relations only between a man and a woman who are married to each other is part of what defines the marriage arrangement. God gives us laws because he loves us. They benefit us. Families who obey them enjoy love, respect, and security. God does not tolerate willful disobedience to his law.—Heb. 13:4.

¹⁰ God’s Word teaches us how to keep far away from sexual immorality. An important way to do so is by controlling what we look at. Jesus stated: “Everyone who keeps on looking at a woman so as to have a passion for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If, now, your right eye is making you stumble, tear it out and throw it away from you.” (Matt. 5:28, 29) Therefore, a Christian will avoid looking at pornography or listening to music with immoral lyrics. The apostle Paul wrote to fellow Christians: “Deaden . . . your body members that are on the earth as respects sexual immorality.” (Col. 3:5) Further, we need to control what we think about and talk about.—Eph. 5:3-5.

* Many people do not realize that the passage found in some Bibles at John 7:53–8:11 is an addition that was not part of the original inspired writings. On the basis of this passage, some have claimed that only a person without sin could find someone guilty of adultery. But the law that God gave to the nation of Israel said: “If a man is found lying down with a woman who is the wife of another man, both of them must die together.”—Deut. 22:22.

10. How can a Christian keep far away from sexual immorality?



Lasting joy comes from helping people to benefit from God's wisdom
(See paragraphs 12, 13)

SHOULD WE PURSUE A SECULAR CAREER?

¹¹ *“Pursuing a career is the key to happiness.”* Many people urge us to pursue a secular career as our goal in life. Such a career may promise status, authority, and wealth. Because many make pursuing a career their main goal in life, a Christian might adopt the same way of thinking.

¹² Is it true that succeeding in a secular career that offers power and prestige leads to lasting happiness? No. Remember that the craving to control others and the longing to be admired are the desires that enticed Satan, but he is angry, not happy. (Matt. 4:8, 9; Rev. 12:12) Compared to the lasting joy that comes from helping people to benefit from God's wisdom so that they can gain everlasting life, a secular career can provide only limited satisfaction. Moreover, the spirit of this world is intensely competitive. It pushes

11. Why can pursuing a secular career sound appealing?

12. Is succeeding in a career the key to happiness?

people to outdo one another, breeds jealousy, and in the end, proves to be “a chasing after the wind.”—Eccl. 4:4.

¹³ True, we have to earn a living, and there is nothing wrong with choosing work we enjoy. But our secular employment should not be the main thing in our life. Jesus said: “No one can slave for two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will stick to the one and despise the other. You cannot slave for God and for Riches.” (Matt. 6:24) When we focus first on serving Jehovah and teaching others his Word, we experience incomparable joy. The apostle Paul, for one, had that experience. Earlier in life, he had pursued a promising career in Judaism, but he found true happiness when he became a disciple-maker and witnessed how people responded to God's message and how it changed their life. (**Read 1 Thessalonians 2:13, 19, 20.**) No other career offers satisfaction like that.

13. (a) How should we view secular pursuits? (b) According to Paul's letter to the Thessalonians, what gave him deep joy?

CAN WE SOLVE MANKIND'S PROBLEMS?

¹⁴ “Humans can solve their own problems.” This worldly idea may sound appealing to many people. Why? If it were true, it would mean that man does not need God’s guidance and that man can do as he pleases. Also, the idea that man can solve his own problems may sound convincing because—according to some studies—war, crime, disease, and poverty are all decreasing. One report states: “The reason humanity is getting better is because humans have decided to make the world a better place.” Does a comment like that indicate that man is coming to grips with the problems that have plagued him for so long? To answer, let us consider those problems more closely.

¹⁵ *Wars:* The two world wars took an estimated 60 million or more lives. Since the end of World War II, mankind has certainly not learned to avoid war. By 2015, the number of people displaced from their homes by war or persecution had grown to some 65 million. An estimated 12.4 million people were displaced during 2015 alone. *Crime:* Although certain types of crime have decreased in some places, other types, such as cyber-crime, domestic violence, and terrorism are increasing at an alarming rate. In addition, many people believe that global corruption has worsened. Mankind is not able to eliminate crime. *Disease:* Some diseases have been controlled. But a report published in 2013 noted that each year a staggering nine million people under the age of 60 die from heart disease, stroke, cancer, respiratory disease,

14. Why may the idea that man can solve his own problems sound appealing?

15. What facts underline the gravity of mankind’s problems?

and diabetes. *Poverty:* According to the World Bank, the number of those suffering extreme poverty in Africa alone has grown from 280 million in 1990 to 330 million in 2012.

¹⁶ The present economic and political systems are powered by selfish forces. Clearly, such forces cannot eliminate war, crime, disease, and poverty—only God’s Kingdom can. Consider what Jehovah will do for mankind. *War:* God’s Kingdom will eliminate such deep-seated causes of war as selfishness, corruption, patriotism, false religion, and Satan himself. (Ps. 46:8, 9) *Crime:* God’s Kingdom is already teaching millions to love and trust one another as no other government can. (Isa. 11:9) *Disease:* Jehovah will bless his people with perfect health. (Isa. 35:5, 6) *Poverty:* Jehovah will eliminate it and will provide his people with spiritual and physical prosperity, a quality of life far more valuable than riches.—Ps. 72:12, 13.

“KNOW HOW YOU SHOULD ANSWER”

¹⁷ If you hear a worldly idea that seems to challenge your faith, research what God’s Word says on the subject and discuss the matter with an experienced fellow believer. Consider why the idea may sound appealing, why such thinking is faulty, and how you can refute it. Indeed, all of us can protect ourselves against worldly thinking by following the admonition that Paul gave to the congregation in Colossae: “Go on walking in wisdom toward those on the outside . . . Know how you should answer each person.”—Col. 4:5, 6.

16. (a) Why can only God’s Kingdom solve mankind’s problems? (b) What Kingdom blessings are foretold by Isaiah and a psalmist?

17. How can you reject worldly thinking?

Oh, Walk With God!

(Micah 6:8)

C C° C C6 C#° G7/D Dm7 G7

Oh, walk with God in mod - es - ty;
 Oh, walk with God in ho - li - ness;
 Oh, walk with God in hap - pi - ness;

Dm7 G7 C/G G7 C

Show loy - al love, and be true.
 Con - sid - er things that are pure.
 Re - joice that he is your Friend.

F C/E G7/D C

Stay close to Je - ho - vah, lean - ing on him,
 No mat - ter how great temp - ta - tions may be,
 Be thank - ful for all the gifts that he gives

D7/A Bm/D D7 C/G G7

And let his strength sus - tain you.
 He'll help you to en - dure them.
 And bless - ings that are end - less.

Oh, Walk With God!

G7+5 C G7/D C#° G7/D C/E Eb°

Keep hold - ing tight to his faith - ful Word;
 What - ev - er praise - wor - thy things there are,
 Oh, walk with God, let your heart be glad;

C/E D7 Bm/D D7 G G7/F

You'll nev - er drift a - way,
 What - ev - er things are true,
 Ex - press your joy in song.

C/E C G7/B C Fma7/A Dm/F F#° //

So let God lead you by the hand
 Con - tin - ue to show, you con - sider them,
 Your joy will show, and all will know, //

C/G G7 C

As you lis - ten and o - bey.
 And our God will be with you.
 To Je - ho - vah you be - long.

