

- Song 93 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

**TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD**

- **“Feeding Many Through the Hands of a Few”:** (10 min.)  
 Mt 14:16, 17—The disciples had only five loaves and two fish (w13 7/15 15 ¶2)  
 Mt 14:18, 19—Jesus fed the large crowds through the hands of his disciples (w13 7/15 15 ¶3)  
 Mt 14:20, 21—Thousands benefited from Jesus’ miracle (nwtsty study note on Mt 14:21; w13 7/15 15 ¶1)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)  
 Mt 15:7-9—Why must we avoid hypocrisy? (nwtsty study note)

Mt 15:26—What might Jesus have meant when he used the term “little dogs”? (nwtsty study note)

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 15:1-20

**APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY**

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Use the sample conversation.
- **First Return Visit Video:** (5 min.) Play and discuss the video.
- **Talk:** (6 min. or less) w15 9/15 16-17 ¶14-17—Theme: Focus on Jesus to Strengthen Your Faith.

**LIVING AS CHRISTIANS**

- Song 135
- **Become Jehovah’s Friend—Making Friends:** (7 min.) Play the video (video category CHILDREN). Afterward, invite selected young children to the stage, and ask them the following questions: Why should you make friends with those who love Jehovah? What can you learn from them?
- **“Honor Your Father and Your Mother”:** (8 min.) Discussion. Play the whiteboard animation *How Can I Talk to My Parents?* (video category TEENAGERS).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) jy chap. 8
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 148 and Prayer

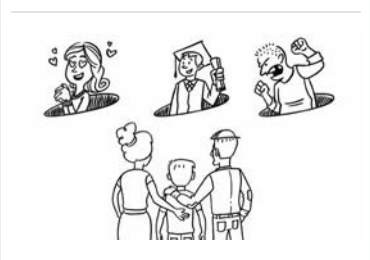
**“Honor Your Father and Your Mother”**

When Jesus walked the earth, he emphasized the command: “Honor your father and your mother.” (Ex 20:12; Mt 15:4) Jesus certainly had freeness of speech because he “remained obedient” to his parents as a youth. (Lu 2:51, ftn.) As an adult, he made sure that his mother would be cared for after his death. —Joh 19:26, 27.

In our day, too, Christian youths who obey their parents and speak to them respectfully show them honor. In fact, the command to honor our parents has no time limit. Even after our parents have grown old, we should continue to honor them by benefiting from their wisdom. (Pr 23:22) We also honor our aged parents by caring for them emotionally and financially as needed. (1Ti 5:8) Whether we are young or old, maintaining good communication with our parents is a key to honoring them.

**WATCH THE WHITEBOARD ANIMATION *HOW CAN I TALK TO MY PARENTS?* AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:**

- Why might you find it difficult to talk to your parents?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- How can you honor your parents when talking to them?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- Why is it worth the effort to talk to your parents? (Pr 15:22)  
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Talking to your parents can help you to succeed in life

# 93      *Bless Our Meeting Together* (Hebrews 10:24, 25)

1. Bless us as we meet together,  
    O Jehovah, we now pray.  
    We are thankful for our meetings;  
    May your spirit with us stay.
2. Help us, Lord, refine our worship;  
    With your Word, oh, do us fill.  
    Train our minds and tongues to witness;  
    Love within our hearts instill.
3. Loving Father, bless our meetings;  
    Grant us peace and unity.  
    May our words and may our actions  
    Magnify your Sov'reignty.

**53** When Jesus had finished these illustrations, he departed from there. **54** After coming into his home territory,<sup>a</sup> he began to teach them in their synagogue, so that they were astounded and said: "Where did this man get this wisdom and these powerful works?<sup>b</sup> **55** Is this not the carpenter's son?<sup>c</sup> Is not his mother called Mary, and his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?<sup>d</sup> **56** And his sisters, are they not all with us? Where, then, did he get all of this?"<sup>e</sup> **57** So they began to stumble because of him.<sup>f</sup> But Jesus said to them: "A prophet is not without honor except in his home territory and in his own house."<sup>g</sup> **58** And he did not perform many powerful works there on account of their lack of faith.

**14** At that time Herod, the district ruler,<sup>\*</sup> heard the report about Jesus<sup>h</sup> **2** and said to his servants: "This is John the Baptist. He was raised up from the dead, and this is why these powerful works are operating in him."<sup>i</sup> **3** Herod<sup>\*</sup> had arrested John and had bound him and imprisoned him because of He-ro'di-as, the wife of Philip his brother.<sup>j</sup> **4** For John had been saying to him: "It is not lawful for you to have her."<sup>k</sup> **5** However, although he wanted to kill him, he feared the crowd, because they took him for a prophet.<sup>l</sup> **6** But when Herod's birthday<sup>m</sup> was being celebrated, the daughter of He-ro'di-as danced for the occasion and pleased Herod so much<sup>n</sup> **7** that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked. **8** Then she, at her mother's prompting, said: "Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist."<sup>o</sup> **9** Grieved though he was, the king, out of

**14:1** \*Lit., "the tetrarch." **14:3** \*That is, Herod Antipas. See Glossary.

regard for his oaths and for those dining\* with him, commanded it to be given. **10** So he sent and had John beheaded in the prison. **11** His head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother. **12** Later his disciples came and removed his corpse and buried him; then they came and reported to Jesus. **13** At hearing this, Jesus departed from there by boat into an isolated place to be alone. But the crowds, getting to hear of it, followed him on foot from the cities.<sup>a</sup>

**14** When he came ashore, he saw a large crowd, and he felt pity for them,<sup>b</sup> and he cured their sick ones.<sup>c</sup> **15** But when evening fell, his disciples came to him and said: "The place is isolated and the hour is already late; send the crowds away, so that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food."<sup>d</sup> **16** However, Jesus said to them: "They do not have to leave; you give them something to eat." **17** They said to him: "We have nothing here except five loaves and two fish." **18** He said: "Bring them here to me." **19** And he instructed the crowds to recline on the grass. Then he took the five loaves and two fish, and looking up to heaven, he said a blessing,<sup>e</sup> and after breaking the loaves, he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. **20** So they all ate and were satisfied, and they took up the leftover fragments, 12 baskets full.<sup>f</sup> **21** Now those eating were about 5,000 men, as well as women and young children.<sup>g</sup> **22** Then, without delay, he made his disciples board the boat and go ahead of him to the opposite shore, while he sent the crowds away.<sup>h</sup>

**23** After sending the crowds away, he went up on the moun-

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14:9 \*Or "reclining at the table."

## MATTHEW 14:10-36

tain by himself to pray.<sup>a</sup> When evening came, he was there alone. **24** By now the boat was many hundreds of yards\* away from land, struggling against the waves because the wind was against them. **25** But in the fourth watch of the night\* he came to them, walking on the sea. **26** When they caught sight of him walking on the sea, the disciples were troubled, saying: "It is an apparition!" And they cried out in their fear. **27** But at once Jesus spoke to them, saying: "**Take courage! It is I; do not be afraid.**"<sup>b</sup> **28** Peter answered him: "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you over the waters." **29** He said: "**Come!**" So Peter got out of the boat and walked over the waters and went toward Jesus. **30** But looking at the windstorm, he became afraid. And when he started to sink, he cried out: "Lord, save me!" **31** Immediately stretching out his hand, Jesus caught hold of him and said to him: "**You with little faith, why did you give way to doubt?**"<sup>c</sup> **32** After they got up into the boat, the windstorm abated. **33** Then those in the boat did obeisance\* to him, saying: "You really are God's Son." **34** And they crossed over and came to land in Gen-nes'a-ret.<sup>d</sup>

**35** On recognizing him, the men of that place sent word into all that surrounding country, and people brought him all those who were ill. **36** And they pleaded with him that they might just touch the fringe of his outer garment,<sup>e</sup> and all those who touched it were made completely well.

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**14:24** \*Lit., "many stadia." A stadium equaled 185 m (606.95 ft). **14:25**

\*That is, about 3:00 a.m. until sunrise at about 6:00 a.m. **14:33** \*Or "bowed down."

## MATTHEW 15:1-28

**15** Then there came to Jesus from Jerusalem Pharisees and scribes,<sup>a</sup> saying: **2** “Why do your disciples overstep the tradition of the men of former times? For example, they do not wash\* their hands when about to eat a meal.”<sup>b</sup>

**3** In reply he said to them: “Why do you overstep the commandment of God because of your tradition?<sup>c</sup> **4** For example, God said, ‘Honor your father and your mother,’<sup>d</sup> and, ‘Let the one who speaks abusively of\* his father or mother be put to death.’<sup>e</sup> **5** But you say, ‘Whoever says to his father or mother: “Whatever I have that could benefit you is a gift dedicated to God,”<sup>f</sup> **6** he need not honor his father at all.’ So you have made the word of God invalid because of your tradition.<sup>g</sup> **7** You hypocrites, Isaiah aptly prophesied about you when he said:<sup>h</sup> **8** ‘This people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far removed from me. **9** It is in vain that they keep worshipping me, for they teach commands of men as doctrines.’”<sup>i</sup> **10** With that he called the crowd near and said to them: “Listen and get the sense of it:<sup>j</sup> **11** It is not what enters into a man’s mouth that defiles him, but it is what comes out of his mouth that defiles him.”<sup>k</sup>

**12** Then the disciples came and said to him: “Do you know that the Pharisees were stumbled at hearing what you said?”<sup>l</sup> **13** In reply he said: “Every plant that my heavenly Father did not plant will be uprooted. **14** Let them be. Blind guides is what they are. If, then, a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit.”<sup>m</sup> **15** Peter

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15:2 \*That is, ceremonially cleanse.

15:4 \*Or “reviles.”

responded: "Make the illustration plain to us." **16** At this he said: "Are you also still without understanding?<sup>a</sup> **17** Are you not aware that whatever enters into the mouth passes through the stomach and is discharged into the sewer? **18** However, whatever comes out of the mouth comes from the heart, and those things defile a man.<sup>b</sup> **19** For example, out of the heart come wicked reasonings,<sup>c</sup> murders, adulteries, sexual immorality,\* thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies. **20** These are the things that defile a man; but to take a meal with unwashed\* hands does not defile a man."

**21** Leaving there, Jesus now went into the region of Tyre and Si'don.<sup>d</sup> **22** And look! a Phoenician woman from that region came and cried out: "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David. My daughter is cruelly demon possessed."<sup>e</sup> **23** But he did not say a word in answer to her. So his disciples came and began to urge him: "Send her away, because she keeps crying out after us." **24** He answered: "I was not sent to anyone except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."<sup>f</sup> **25** But the woman came and did obeisance\* to him, saying: "Lord, help me!" **26** In answer he said: "It is not right to take the bread of the children and throw it to the little dogs." **27** She said: "Yes, Lord, but really the little dogs do eat of the crumbs falling from the table of their masters."<sup>g</sup> **28** Then Jesus replied to her: "O woman, great is your faith; let it happen to you as you wish." And her daughter was healed from that hour on.

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**15:19** \*Plural of the Greek *por-nei'a*. See Glossary. **15:20** \*That is, not ceremonially cleansed. **15:25** \*Or "bowed down."

**29** Departing from there, Jesus next came near the Sea of Gal'i-lee,<sup>a</sup> and after going up on the mountain, he was sitting there. **30** Then large crowds approached him, bringing along people who were lame, maimed, blind, speechless, and many others, and they laid them at his feet, and he cured them.<sup>b</sup> **31** So the crowd felt amazement as they saw the speechless speaking and the maimed being made sound and the lame walking and the blind seeing, and they glorified the God of Israel.<sup>c</sup>

**32** But Jesus called his disciples to him and said: "I feel pity for the crowd,<sup>d</sup> because they have already stayed with me for three days and they have had nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry,\* for they may give out on the road."<sup>e</sup>

**33** However, the disciples said to him: "Where in this isolated place are we going to get enough bread to satisfy a crowd of this size?"<sup>f</sup> **34** At this Jesus said to them: "How many loaves do you have?" They said: "Seven, and a few small fish." **35** So after instructing the crowd to recline on the ground, **36** he took the seven loaves and the fish, and after offering thanks, he broke them and began giving them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.<sup>g</sup> **37** And all ate and were satisfied, and they took up seven large baskets\* full of leftover fragments.<sup>h</sup> **38** Now those eating were 4,000 men, as well as women and young children. **39** Finally, after sending the crowds away, he got into the boat and came into the region of Mag'a-dan.<sup>i</sup>

**16** Here the Pharisees and Sadducees approached him, and to test him, they asked him to display to them

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15:32 \*Or "fasting." 15:37; 16:10 \*Or "provision baskets."



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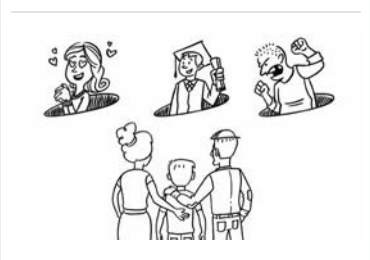
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Talking to your parents can help you to succeed in life

## MATTHEW 14-15 | Feeding Many Through the Hands of a Few



**Just before the Passover of 32 C.E., Jesus performed a miracle, the only one that was recorded by all four Gospel writers.**

**By means of this miracle, Jesus set a pattern that he continues to follow in our day.**




### 14:16-21

- Jesus instructed his disciples to feed the crowds, even though they had only five loaves and two fish
- Jesus took the loaves and fish and, after praying, began to distribute them to the disciples who, in turn, distributed them to the crowds
- Miraculously, there was more than enough for everyone to eat. Jesus fed thousands through the hands of just a few—his disciples



- Jesus foretold that during the last days, he would appoint a channel to provide spiritual “food at the proper time.”—Mt 24:45
- In 1919, Jesus appointed “the faithful and discreet slave,” a small group of anointed brothers, over “his domestics,” those who are fed
- By means of this small group of anointed brothers, Jesus is following the pattern he set in the first century

 How can I show that I recognize and respect the channel that Jesus is using to feed people spiritually?

## 14:1

**Herod:** That is, Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great.—See [Glossary](#).

**district ruler:** Lit., “tetrarch” (meaning “ruler over one fourth” of a province), a term applied to a minor district ruler or territorial prince ruling only with the approval of the Roman authorities. The tetrarchy of Herod Antipas consisted of Galilee and Perea.—Compare study note on Mr 6:14.

## 14:2

**John the Baptist:** See [study note on Mt 3:1](#).

## 14:3

**Herod:** That is, Herod Antipas.—See [Glossary](#).

**arrested John . . . and imprisoned him:** The Bible does not mention where this took place. Josephus says that John was imprisoned and killed at Machaerus fortress, which was located on the eastern side of the Dead Sea. (*Jewish Antiquities*, Book 18, chap. 5, par. 2 [Loeb 18.119]) It is possible that John spent some time in that prison. ([Mt 4:12](#)) However, it is likely that at the time of his death, John was held in Tiberias, a city located on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. The reasons for this conclusion are as follows: (1) John seems to have been imprisoned near where Jesus was carrying out his ministry in Galilee. John heard of Jesus’ works, and from jail he sent his disciples to speak with Jesus. ([Mt 11:1-3](#)) (2) Mark states that “the most prominent men of Galilee” were in attendance at Herod’s birthday party, indicating that it was held at Herod’s residence in Tiberias. John was evidently in captivity close to where the party took place.—[Mr 6:21-29](#); [Mt 14:6-11](#).

**Herodias, the wife of Philip his brother:** Herod Antipas became infatuated with Herodias, the wife of his half brother Herod Philip. Herodias divorced Philip, Antipas divorced his wife, and Herodias and Antipas were married. John the Baptist was arrested for criticizing this immoral union, one that was contrary to Jewish law.

## 14:6

**birthday . . . celebrated:** This event likely occurred at Herod Antipas’ residence in Tiberias. (See [study notes on Mt 14:3](#); [Mr 6:21](#).) The Bible mentions just two birthday celebrations—the one referred to here, at which John was beheaded; the other, that of a Pharaoh, at which the Egyptian monarch’s chief baker was executed. ([Ge 40:18-22](#)) These two accounts are similar in that both occasions were marked with great feasting and the granting of favors and both are remembered for executions.

## 14:9

**the king:** Herod Antipas’ official Roman title was “tetrarch,” as seen from [study note on Mt 14:1](#). However, he was popularly referred to as “king.”

**his oaths:** The use of the plural “oaths” (in contrast with the singular at [Mt 14:7](#)) may indicate that Herod emphasized or confirmed his promise with repeated oaths.

## 14:14

**felt pity:** Or “felt compassion.”—See [study note on Mt 9:36](#).

## 14:16

**you give them something to eat:** This is the only miracle Jesus performed that is recorded in all four Gospels.—[Mr 6:35-44](#); [Lu 9:10-17](#); [Joh 6:1-13](#).

## 14:17

**fish:** In Bible times, fish were commonly prepared by broiling or by salting and drying and were often eaten along with bread. The fish Jesus used were likely salted and dried.

## 14:19

**after breaking the loaves:** Bread was often made in flat loaves that were baked hard. Therefore, breaking the loaves was the customary way of eating them.—[Mt 15:36](#); [26:26](#); [Mr 6:41](#); [8:6](#); [Lu 9:16](#).

## 14:20

**baskets:** These may have been small wicker baskets with a cord handle that a traveler could use for carrying them. It is thought that they had a volume of approximately 7.5 L (2 gal).—See [study notes on Mt 16:9, 10](#).

## 14:21

**as well as women and young children:** Only Matthew mentions the women and the young children when reporting this miracle. It is possible that the total number of those miraculously fed was well over 15,000.

## 14:24

**many hundreds of yards:** Lit., “many stadia.” A stadium (Greek, *sta'di-on*) equaled 185 m (606.95 ft), that is, one eighth of a Roman mile.

## 14:25

**fourth watch:** That is, about 3:00 a.m. until sunrise at about 6:00 a.m. This division is according to the Greek and Roman system of four night watches. The Hebrews formerly divided the night into three watches of about four hours each ([Ex 14:24](#); [Jg 7:19](#)), but by this time, they had adopted the Roman system.

## 14:33

**did obeisance to him:** Or “bowed down to him; paid him homage.” These people recognized Jesus as God’s representative. They rendered obeisance to him, not as to a god or a deity, but as to “God’s Son.”—See [study notes on Mt 2:2](#); [8:2](#); [18:26](#).

## 14:34

**Gennesaret:** A small plain (measuring about 5 by 2.5 km (3 by 1.5 mi) bordering the NW shore of the Sea of Galilee. At [Lu 5:1](#), the Sea of Galilee is called “the lake of Gennesaret.”

## 15:2

**wash their hands:** That is, a ceremonial cleansing to adhere to tradition rather than out of concern for hygiene. Later, the Babylonian Talmud (*Sotah 4b*) puts eating with unwashed hands on par with having relations with a harlot, and it states that those who lightly esteem hand washing will be “uprooted from the world.”

## 15:5

**a gift dedicated to God:** The scribes and Pharisees taught that money, property, or anything that a person dedicated as a gift to God belonged to the temple. According to this tradition, a son could keep the dedicated gift and use it for his own interests, claiming that it was reserved for the temple. Some evidently evaded the responsibility of caring for their parents by dedicating their assets in this way.—[Mt 15:6](#).

## 15:7

**hypocrites:** See [study note on Mt 6:2](#).

## 15:15

**illustration:** Or “parable.”—See [study note on Mt 13:3](#).

## 15:19

**sexual immorality:** The plural form of the Greek word *por·nei'a* is used here and could be rendered “acts (cases) of sexual immorality.”—See [study note on Mt 5:32](#) and [Glossary](#).

## 15:22

**look!:** See [study note on Mt 1:20](#).

**Phoenician:** Or “Canaanite.” Greek, *Kha·na·nai'a*. The early inhabitants of Phoenicia descended from Canaan, and in time, “Canaan” came to refer primarily to Phoenicia.—See study note on Mr 7:26, where the woman is called a “Syrophoenician.”

**Son of David:** See [study notes on Mt 1:1; 15:25](#).

## 15:25

**did obeisance to him:** Or “bowed down to him; paid him homage.” By calling Jesus “Son of David” ([Mt 15:22](#)), this non-Jewish woman evidently recognizes him as the promised Messiah. She renders obeisance to him, not as to a god or a deity, but as to a representative of God.—See [study notes on Mt 2:2; 8:2; 14:33; 18:26](#).

## 15:26

**children . . . little dogs:** Since dogs were unclean according to the Mosaic Law, the Scriptures often use the term in a derogatory sense. ([Le 11:27; Mt 7:6; Php 3:2; Re 22:15](#)) However, in Matthew’s account of Jesus’ conversation, the diminutive form of the term is used, meaning “little dog” or “house dog,” softening the comparison. Perhaps this indicates that Jesus was suggesting an affectionate term for household pets in non-Jewish homes. By likening Israelites to “children” and non-Jews to “little dogs,” Jesus evidently wanted to indicate an order of priority. In a household that had both children and dogs, the children would be fed first.

## 15:31

**the maimed being made sound:** These words are omitted in a few manuscripts, but the majority of early manuscripts and many later manuscripts include them.

## 15:32

**feel pity:** Or “feel compassion.”—See [study note on Mt 9:36](#).



## 15:37

**large baskets:** Or “provision baskets.” The Greek word *sphy-ris*’ used here seems to denote a type of basket that is larger than the ones used on an earlier occasion when Jesus fed about 5,000. (See [study note on Mt 14:20](#).) The same Greek word is used for the “basket” in which Paul was lowered to the ground through an opening in the wall of Damascus.—[Ac 9:25](#).

## 15:39

**Magadan:** While no place called Magadan is known today in the region around the Sea of Galilee, some scholars believe that Magadan is the same locality as Magdala, which is considered to be Khirbet Majdal (Migdal), about 6 km (3.5 mi) NNW of Tiberias. In the parallel account ([Mr 8:10](#)), the area is called Dalmanutha.—See [App. B10](#).

## February 12-18

### Treasures From God's Word

**Matthew 14:16, 17**—The disciples had only five loaves and two fish (w13 7/15 15 paragraph 2)

Upon seeing the crowd, Jesus is moved with pity for the people, so he heals the sick among them and teaches them many things about God's Kingdom. When it gets late, the disciples urge Jesus to dismiss the people so that they might go to nearby villages and buy some food for themselves. But Jesus tells his disciples: "You give them something to eat." His words must seem puzzling to them, for the provisions at hand are meager at best—five loaves and two small fish.

**Matthew 14:18, 19**—Jesus fed the large crowds through the hands of his disciples (w13 7/15 15 paragraph 3)

Moved by compassion, Jesus performs a miracle—the only miracle that is recorded by all four Gospel writers. (Mark 6:35-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-13) Jesus has his disciples tell the crowd to recline on the green grass in groups of 50 and of 100. After saying a blessing, he begins breaking the bread and dividing up the fish. Then, rather than giving the food to the people directly, Jesus distributes it "to the disciples, the disciples in turn to the crowds." Miraculously, there is more than enough for everyone to eat! Just think: Jesus has fed thousands through the hands of a few—his disciples

**Matthew 14:20, 21**—Thousands benefited from Jesus' miracle (nwtsty study note on **Matthew 14:21**; w13 7/15 15 paragraph 1)

Imagine the scene. (Read Matthew 14:14-21.) It is just before the Passover of 32 C.E. A crowd of some 5,000 men, besides women and young children, are with Jesus and his disciples at a deserted place in the vicinity of Bethsaida, a village on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee.

- Song 93 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

**TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD**

- **“Feeding Many Through the Hands of a Few”:** (10 min.)  
 Mt 14:16, 17—The disciples had only five loaves and two fish (w13 7/15 15 ¶2)  
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- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)  
 Mt 15:7-9—Why must we avoid hypocrisy? (nwtsty study note)

Mt 15:26—What might Jesus have meant when he used the term “little dogs”? (nwtsty study note)

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 15:1-20

**APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY**

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Use the sample conversation.
- **First Return Visit Video:** (5 min.) Play and discuss the video.
- **Talk:** (6 min. or less) w15 9/15 16-17 ¶14-17—Theme: Focus on Jesus to Strengthen Your Faith.

**LIVING AS CHRISTIANS**

- Song 135
- **Become Jehovah’s Friend—Making Friends:** (7 min.) Play the video (video category CHILDREN). Afterward, invite selected young children to the stage, and ask them the following questions: Why should you make friends with those who love Jehovah? What can you learn from them?
- **“Honor Your Father and Your Mother”:** (8 min.) Discussion. Play the whiteboard animation *How Can I Talk to My Parents?* (video category TEENAGERS).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) jy chap. 8
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 148 and Prayer

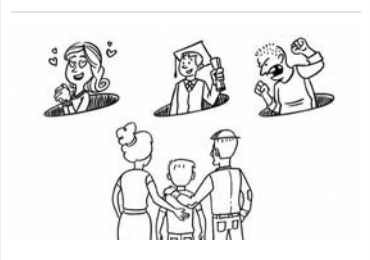
**“Honor Your Father and Your Mother”**

When Jesus walked the earth, he emphasized the command: “Honor your father and your mother.” (Ex 20:12; Mt 15:4) Jesus certainly had freeness of speech because he “remained obedient” to his parents as a youth. (Lu 2:51, ftn.) As an adult, he made sure that his mother would be cared for after his death. —Joh 19:26, 27.

In our day, too, Christian youths who obey their parents and speak to them respectfully show them honor. In fact, the command to honor our parents has no time limit. Even after our parents have grown old, we should continue to honor them by benefiting from their wisdom. (Pr 23:22) We also honor our aged parents by caring for them emotionally and financially as needed. (1Ti 5:8) Whether we are young or old, maintaining good communication with our parents is a key to honoring them.

**WATCH THE WHITEBOARD ANIMATION *HOW CAN I TALK TO MY PARENTS?* AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:**

- Why might you find it difficult to talk to your parents?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- How can you honor your parents when talking to them?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- Why is it worth the effort to talk to your parents? (Pr 15:22)  
 \_\_\_\_\_



Talking to your parents can help you to succeed in life





# Our Christian Life and Ministry

## MEETING WORKBOOK

### Sample Conversations

#### ●○○ INITIAL CALL

**Question:** Is the Bible still relevant today?

**Scripture:** 2Ti 3:16

**Link:** Is the Bible compatible with science?



#### ○○● FIRST RETURN VISIT

**Question:** Is the Bible compatible with science?

**Scripture:** Job 26:7

**Link:** Is the Bible's advice practical?



#### ○○● SECOND RETURN VISIT

**Question:** Is the Bible's advice practical?

**Scripture:** Pr 14:30

**Link:** Has the Bible accurately foretold the future?

## Apply Yourself to the Field Ministry

w15 9/15 16-17 paragraphs 14-17

### Focus On Jesus to Strengthen Your Faith

14 When Peter looked at the storm and started to sink, he could have tried to make it back to the boat on his own. He was an able swimmer, so this might even have been his natural response. (John 21:7) Yet, instead of relying on himself, he refocused on Jesus and accepted Jesus' help. If we sense that our faith is weakening, we should imitate Peter's example. But how can we do that?

15 Just as Peter refocused on Jesus, we too must "look intently at the Chief Agent and Perfecter of our faith, Jesus." (Read **Hebrews 12:2, 3.**) Of course, we cannot literally see Jesus as Peter did. Instead, we "look intently" at Jesus by examining his teachings and actions and then following these closely. Consider some steps we can take based on the model Jesus set. If we put these into practice, we will receive the help we need to make our faith firm.

16 *Strengthen your confidence in the Bible.* Jesus was convinced that the Bible is God's Word, which provides the best guidance in life. (John 17:17) Following Jesus' example, we must read the Bible daily, study it, and meditate on what we learn. Along with general Bible study, dig into topics about which you may have questions. To illustrate, you might increase your conviction that the end of this system of things really is near by studying in detail the Scriptural proof that we live in the last days. Strengthen your trust in the Bible's promises for the future by investigating its many prophecies that have already come true. Develop your confidence in the practical value of the Bible by considering examples of how the Bible improves people's lives.—**1 Thessalonians 2:13.**

17 *Focus on the blessings Jehovah has promised.* By fixing his sights on “the joy that was set before him,” Jesus was able to remain faithful despite extreme tests. (**Hebrews**12:2) He was never distracted by what the world could offer. (**Matthew** 4:8-10) You can imitate Jesus by meditating on the wonderful promises Jehovah has made to you. Put yourself in the picture by writing down or making a drawing of what you hope to do once God has removed this wicked system. Make a list of people whom you look forward to meeting when they are resurrected and what you would like to discuss with them. See these as God’s promises not just to mankind in general but to you personally

*Jehovah's Warm Appeal:*  
*"Be Wise, My Son"*  
(Proverbs 27:11)

1. Young man and young woman,  
do give your heart to me.  
My foe who now taunts me  
will then be made to see.  
Your youth and devotion  
to me you freely give;  
You show all the world  
that for me you really live.

*(CHORUS)*

*Beloved son and precious daughter,  
Be wise and make my heart rejoice,  
That out of your own heart you serve me,  
And offer praise by your own choice.*

2. Rejoice and take pleasure  
in giving me your all,  
And though you may stumble,  
I'll raise you if you fall.  
No matter who fails you  
or proves to be untrue,  
Take comfort in knowing  
I'll always cherish you.

*(Chorus)*

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- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

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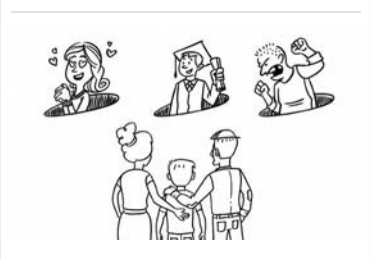
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 \_\_\_\_\_



Talking to your parents can help you to succeed in life

# 8

## THEY ESCAPE FROM A WICKED RULER

MATTHEW 2:13-23

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- JESUS' FAMILY FLEES TO EGYPT
  - JOSEPH MOVES HIS FAMILY TO NAZARETH
- 

Joseph wakes Mary up to give her urgent news. Jehovah's angel has just appeared to him in a dream, telling him: "Get up, take the young child and his mother and flee to Egypt, and stay there until I give you word, for Herod is about to search for the young child to kill him."—Matthew 2:13.

Right away, Joseph, Mary, and their son make their escape by night. They do so just in time, because Herod learns that the astrologers have tricked him. He had told them to report back to him. Instead, they left the country without doing so. Herod is filled with rage. Still wanting to kill Jesus, he gives orders to put to death all the boys in Bethlehem and its surroundings who are two years of age and under. He bases this age calculation on what





he learned earlier from the astrologers who had come from the East.

The slaughter of all the boys is a horrible thing! We cannot know how many young boys were killed, but the bitter weeping and wailing of the bereaved mothers fulfills a Bible prophecy given by Jeremiah, God's prophet.—Jeremiah 31:15.

In the meantime, Joseph and his family have fled to Egypt, and they continue living there. Then one night Jehovah's angel again appears to Joseph in a dream. "Get up, take the young child and his mother," the angel says, "and go into the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the life of the young child are dead." (Matthew 2:20) So Joseph now concludes that the family can return to their homeland. In this way another Bible prophecy is fulfilled—God's Son is called out of Egypt.—Hosea 11:1.

Apparently, Joseph intends that his family settle in Judea, perhaps near the town of Bethlehem, where they were living before they fled to Egypt. But he learns that Herod's wicked son Archelaus is now the king of Judea. In another dream, God



warns Joseph of the danger. So Joseph and his family travel farther north and settle in the city of Nazareth in the territory of Galilee, away from the center of Jewish religious life. Jesus grows up in this community, which fulfills another prophecy: “He will be called a Nazarene.”—Matthew 2:23.



- ◇ When the astrologers do not return, what does King Herod do, and how is young Jesus protected?
- ◇ On returning from Egypt, why do Joseph and his family not go back to Bethlehem?
- ◇ What Bible prophecies are fulfilled during this period of time?

1. The living God, Jehovah, you have proved to be;  
Your mighty works abound  
in earth and sky and sea.  
No rival god can equal what you have done  
—there is none.  
Our foes will be consumed.

*(CHORUS)*

*Jehovah provides escape for the loyal.  
His servants will see what a mighty Crag is he.  
So with courage and faith in our God,  
we spread the fame  
Of Jehovah, our Source of escape,  
and praise his name.*

2. Though ropes of death encircle me, I call to you,  
“Jehovah, give me strength,  
and give me courage too.”  
From your own temple dwelling, you hear my plea,  
“Shelter me;  
Rescue me, O my God.”

*(Chorus)*

3. From heaven you will thunder  
and give forth your voice.  
Your enemies will quake;  
your servants will rejoice.  
You prove to be whatever you need to be;  
all will see  
How you provide escape.

*(Chorus)*

DECEMBER 2017

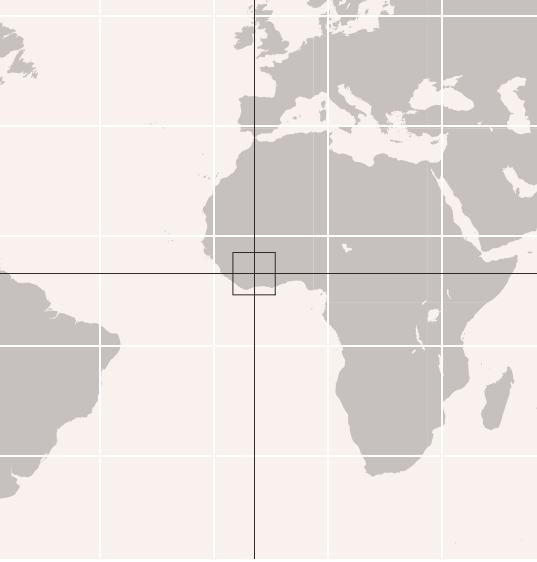
# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:  
JANUARY 29–FEBRUARY 25, 2018

LARGE  
PRINT  
EDITION



COVER IMAGE:

## CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Côte d'Ivoire (formerly Ivory Coast) is a major producer of cocoa beans, which are used to make chocolate. The beans are spread to dry under the sun. A pioneer shares with a worker the important contents of the *Good News* brochure

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

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#### **4 WEEK OF JANUARY 29–FEBRUARY 4**

“I Know He Will Rise”

#### **17 WEEK OF FEBRUARY 5-11**

“I Have Hope Toward God”

What past events gave Christians a basis for confidence that there will be a resurrection? How should those events and the convictions held by other faithful ones of the past affect your hope? These articles should strengthen your belief in the resurrection.

PUBLISHERS

11,133

BIBLE STUDIES

28,274

MEMORIAL  
ATTENDANCE (2016)

76,526

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

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## 29 WEEK OF FEBRUARY 12-18

Parents—Help Your Children  
Become “Wise for Salvation”

## 41 WEEK OF FEBRUARY 19-25

Young Ones—“Keep Working  
Out Your Own Salvation”

Among the thousands who get baptized each year are young ones—teenagers and preteens. Baptism opens the door to many blessings; it also involves responsibility. Parents, how can you help your children reach out for the goal of baptism? Baptized young ones and those who are contemplating baptism, how can you strengthen your relationship with Jehovah?

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## 54 LIFE STORY

Leaving Things Behind to Follow the Master



# The Miracle of Life

(Psalm 36:9)

1. Ev'ry newborn child, Ev'ry drop of rain,  
Ev'ry golden ray of sun, Each head of grain—  
All are gifts from God; They reveal his way.  
Miracles performed by him sustain us each day.

*(CHORUS)*

*So, what are we to do with a gift so rare  
But to love the One who gave it and show him we care.  
No matter what we do, We never can earn it.  
This gift is still a gift—The miracle of life.*

2. Others may give up, Lose their will to try,  
Echoing the wife of Job: “Curse God and die.”  
We are not that way; Praise to God we give,  
Thanking him for ev'ry precious moment we live.

*(CHORUS)*

*So, what are we to do with a gift so rare  
But to love the ones around us and show them we care.  
No matter what we do, We never can earn it.  
This gift is still a gift—The miracle of life.*



# PARENTS

## Help Your Children Become “Wise for Salvation”

*“From infancy you have known  
the holy writings, which are able  
to make you wise for salvation.”*

—2 TIM. 3:15.

**THOUSANDS** of Bible students  
make their dedication to Jehovah  
and get baptized. Many are young

---

**1, 2.** Why might some parents have concerns when their children want to take the steps of dedication and baptism?

**SONGS:**  
141, 134

**WHAT DOES IT  
MEAN TO . . .**

---

know the holy  
writings?

---

be persuaded  
to believe?

---

become wise for  
salvation?

people who have been raised in the truth and who have chosen the best way of life. (Ps. 1:1-3) If you are a Christian parent, you no doubt look forward to the day when your son or daughter will get baptized.—Compare 3 John 4.

<sup>2</sup> Still, you might have concerns. Perhaps you have seen some youths get baptized but later question the wisdom of living by God’s standards. A number have even left the way of the truth. Hence, you might worry that your child will start out on the Christian course but then change and lose that original love of the truth. He or she might become like those in the first-century congregation in Ephesus of whom Jesus said: “You have left the love you had at first.” (Rev. 2:4) How can you try to avoid such an outcome and help your child to “grow to salvation”? (1 Pet. 2:2) In answer, let us consider the example of Timothy.

### **“YOU HAVE KNOWN THE HOLY WRITINGS”**

<sup>3</sup> It was likely in 47 C.E., during the apostle Paul’s first visit to Lystra, that Timothy was introduced to Christianity. Though at the time Timothy

---

3. (a) Under what circumstances did Timothy become a Christian, and how did he respond to Christian teachings? (b) Paul admonished Timothy about what three aspects of learning?



was likely a teenager, he must have applied himself well. Two years later he became Paul's traveling companion. Some 16 years after that, Paul wrote to Timothy: "Continue in the things that you learned and were persuaded to believe, knowing from whom you learned them and that from infancy you have known the holy writings [the Hebrew Scriptures], which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. 3:14, 15) Note that Paul mentions (1) *knowing* the holy writings, (2) *being persuaded to believe* the things learned, and (3) *becoming wise for salvation* through faith in Christ Jesus.

<sup>4</sup> As a Christian parent, you want your child to know the holy writings, which today include the Hebrew Scriptures as well as the Christian Greek Scriptures. Depending on their ability, even very young children can gain a basic education about the people and events of the Bible. Jehovah's organization has provided a number of tools that parents can use to help their children. Can you think of some that are available in your language? Remember, knowledge of the Scriptures is the foundation on which a strong relationship with Jehovah is built.

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4. What tools have you found to be effective when you teach your young children? (See opening picture.)

## “PERSUADED TO BELIEVE”

<sup>5</sup> Knowledge of the holy writings is important. However, more is involved in imparting spiritual education to children than simply teaching them about the people and events of the Bible. Timothy was also “persuaded to believe.” In the original language, that phrase means “to be assured of” or “to be convinced and certain of the truth of something.” Timothy knew the Hebrew Scriptures from infancy. But at some point he was convinced by compelling evidence that Jesus was the Messiah. Put another way, his knowledge was reinforced with conviction. In fact, Timothy’s conviction about the good news was so strong that he became a baptized disciple and joined Paul in the missionary work.

<sup>6</sup> How can you help build conviction in your children so that they are persuaded to believe, as Timothy was? First, be patient. Conviction does not come about overnight; nor does it pass from you to your offspring simply because *you* have been persuaded to believe. Each child needs to use his or her own

---

5. (a) What does “persuaded to believe” mean? (b) How do we know that Timothy was persuaded to believe the good news about Jesus?

6. How can you help your children to be persuaded to believe what they learn from God’s Word?

“power of reason” to develop conviction about Bible truth. (Read Romans 12:1.) You as a parent play an important role in that process, especially when your child asks questions. Consider an example.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas, the father of an 11-year-old girl, relates: “My daughter might ask, ‘Could Jehovah have used evolution to develop life on earth?’ or, ‘Why don’t we get involved in the community—with elections, for example—to try to improve things?’ Sometimes I have to bite my tongue so as not to give a dogmatic answer. After all, conviction isn’t the result of one large chunk of truth. It comes from many small pieces of evidence.”

<sup>8</sup> As Thomas knows, teaching takes patience. Actually, patience is important for all Christians. (Col. 3:12) Thomas realizes that there may be a need for many discussions over a period of time. He needs to reason on the Scriptures so that his daughter develops conviction about what she learns. “Especially on important points,” says Thomas, “my wife and I want to know if our daughter really believes what she is learning and if it makes sense to her. If she has questions, that’s good. Frankly, I would

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7, 8. (a) How does one Christian father show patience in teaching his daughter? (b) How have you found the need for similar patience?

worry if she accepted something without asking questions.”

<sup>9</sup> With patient teaching from their parents, children will be able gradually to begin to grasp “the breadth and length and height and depth” of faith. (Eph. 3:18) We can look for what is appropriate to their age and ability. As they become convinced of what they learn, they will increasingly be able to defend their beliefs before others, including schoolmates. (1 Pet. 3:15) For example, can your children explain from the Bible what happens at death? Does the Bible’s explanation make sense to them?\* Yes, inculcating God’s Word in your child will require patience, but it is worth the effort.—Deut. 6:6, 7.

<sup>10</sup> Of course, your example is also important when it comes to building conviction. Stephanie, the mother of three daughters, says: “Ever since my children were very young, I have had to ask myself, ‘Do I talk to my children about why *I* am convinced of Jehovah’s existence, his love, and the rightness of

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\* The “What Does the Bible Really Teach?” study guides are excellent tools to help both young ones and adults to understand and explain Bible truths. They can be found on [jw.org](http://jw.org) in many languages. Look under BIBLE TEACHINGS > BIBLE STUDY TOOLS.

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9. How can you inculcate God’s Word in your children?

10. What should be an important part of your teaching?

his ways? Can my children clearly see that *I* really love Jehovah?’ I can’t expect my children to be persuaded unless *I* am.”

## “WISE FOR SALVATION”

<sup>11</sup> As we have seen, Timothy had (1) knowledge of the Scriptures and (2) conviction about his beliefs. But what did Paul mean by saying that the holy writings could make Timothy “wise for salvation”?

<sup>12</sup> *Insight on the Scriptures, Volume 2*, explains that, in the Bible, wisdom includes “the ability to use knowledge and understanding successfully to solve problems, avoid or avert dangers, attain certain goals, or counsel others in doing so. It is the opposite of foolishness.” The Bible says that “foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child.” (Prov. 22:15, ftn.) Logically, then, wisdom—the opposite of foolishness—would be one evidence of maturity. Spiritual maturity is not determined primarily by age but by a person’s healthy fear of Jehovah and readiness to obey his commands.—Read Psalm 111:10.

<sup>13</sup> Young ones who are reasonably mature

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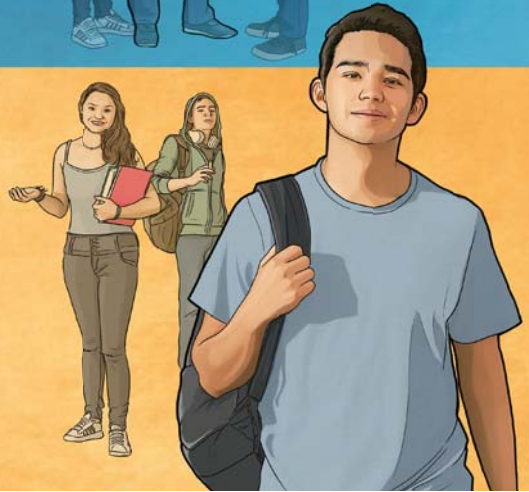
**11, 12.** What is wisdom, and why can we conclude that it is not measured solely by a person’s age?

**13.** How can a young person demonstrate that he or she is wise for salvation?

Why is a parent's  
continued effort  
important?  
(See paragraphs 14-18)



spiritually are not “tossed about as by waves and carried here and there” by their desires or by pressure from their peers. (Eph. 4:14) Rather, they are making progress in having “their powers of discernment trained to distinguish both right and wrong.” (Heb. 5:14) They demonstrate that they are progressing toward maturity by making wise decisions—even when their parents or other adults are not watching. (Phil. 2:12) That kind of wisdom is necessary for salvation. (Read Proverbs 24:14.) How can you help your children to acquire it? First of all,



make sure that you clearly state your Bible-based values to your children. By your words and by your example, let them know that the values found in God’s Word are also your values.—Rom. 2:21-23.

<sup>14</sup> However, more is involved than simply *telling* your children what is right and what is wrong. You would also do well to help them reason on such questions as: ‘Why does the Bible forbid things that

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**14, 15.** (a) A young person contemplating baptism should consider what weighty issues? (b) How can you help your children ponder blessings that come from obeying God’s laws?

can be appealing to the flesh? What convinces me that Bible standards are always for my own good?’—Isa. 48:17, 18.

<sup>15</sup> A child who expresses interest in getting baptized should be helped to reason on yet another matter—how he or she feels about the responsibilities that come with being a Christian. What are the benefits? What are the costs? How do the benefits greatly outweigh the costs? (Mark 10:29, 30) Those are issues that one is likely to face after baptism. Therefore, it is crucial to think these matters through before taking that serious step. When children are helped to consider deeply the blessings of obedience and the consequences of disobedience, they are more likely to develop a personal conviction. Which one? That Bible standards are *always* in their best interests.—Deut. 30:19, 20.

## WHEN A BAPTIZED YOUTH STRUGGLES

<sup>16</sup> What, though, if your son or daughter begins to express doubts at some point after baptism? For example, a baptized adolescent may seem attracted to the things of the world or may begin to question the wisdom of living by Bible principles. (Ps. 73:1-3, 12,

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16. What should parents consider if a child who is already baptized begins to waver in faith?



13) As a parent, realize that how you handle such questioning on the part of your son or daughter may influence whether your child will choose to draw closer to your faith or he will draw away from it. Be determined not to declare war with your child over this issue, whether he is still quite young or he is now an adolescent. Your goal should be to provide loving support and help in a winning way.

<sup>17</sup> Of course, a youth who is baptized has made a solemn dedication to Jehovah. That dedication is a promise to love God and to put his will above everything else. (Read Mark 12:30.) Jehovah does not take that promise lightly, and it should not be taken lightly by anyone who has made it. (Eccl. 5:4, 5) At an appropriate time and in a kind manner, remind your child of those facts. Before doing that, however, make good use of material that Jehovah's organization has provided for parents. Your doing so may lay the groundwork for stressing both the seriousness and the blessings of being dedicated to Jehovah and of being a baptized Christian.

<sup>18</sup> For example, helpful advice can be found in the appendix entitled "Questions Parents Ask," at the back of the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers*

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17, 18. If a young person has doubts, how can parents provide assistance?

*That Work*, Volume 1. It says: “Don’t hastily conclude that your teen has *rejected your faith*. In many cases, there is an underlying issue.” It could be peer pressure. Other possible causes may be loneliness or the feeling that other Christian youths are doing better spiritually. “Significantly,” the appendix continues, “issues such as these have little to do with the *tenets* of your faith. They have more to do with circumstances that make practicing faith a challenge—at least for now.” The appendix then provides several suggestions about how a Christian parent might help a youth whose conviction is wavering.

<sup>19</sup> As a parent, you have the weighty responsibility—and privilege—to bring up your children “in the discipline and admonition of Jehovah.” (Eph. 6:4) As we have seen, that requires not only teaching them what the Bible says but also helping them to develop conviction about what they learn. Yes, they need a conviction that is so strong that it moves them to dedicate themselves to Jehovah and to serve him wholeheartedly. May Jehovah’s Word, his spirit, and your efforts as a parent help your children to become “wise for salvation.”

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19. How can parents help their children to become “wise for salvation”?

# 134 *Children Are a Trust From God*

(Psalm 127:3-5)

## 1. When a man becomes a father

And a woman has a child of her own,  
They share a trust, they must remember,  
That is not theirs, not theirs alone.  
The gift they share is from Jehovah;  
Of life and love he is the one true Source.  
To parents he gives sure direction  
That they may follow the wisest course.

*(CHORUS)*

*A sacred trust you have been given;  
A precious life is in your hands.  
You can bestow the greatest favor;  
Instruct your child in God's commands.*

## 2. All the words God has commanded—

They must always prove to be on your heart.  
These words you'll speak to sons and daughters;  
This is your trust, this is your part.  
To them you'll speak along your roadway,  
When you rise up and when you are at rest.  
In years to come, may they remember,  
May they be faithful, may they be blessed.

*(Chorus)*

In the new earth society,  
there will be joyful work  
and fellowship for all

