

- Song 45 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Whose Thoughts Are You Thinking?”:** (10 min.)
Mt 16:21, 22—Peter allowed sentimentality to influence his thinking (w07 2/15 16 ¶17)
Mt 16:23—Peter was not thinking God’s thoughts (w15 5/15 13 ¶16-17)
Mt 16:24—Christians must allow God’s thoughts to direct their life (w06 4/1 23 ¶9)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
Mt 16:18—Who was the rock on which Jesus built the Christian congregation? (nwtsty study note)

Mt 16:19—What were “the keys of the Kingdom of the heavens” that Jesus gave to Peter? (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 16:1-20

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) Use the sample conversation.
- **Second Return Visit Video:** (5 min.) Play and discuss the video.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS


- Song 78
- **“Improving Our Skills in the Ministry—Using Questions Effectively”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Do the Work That Jesus Did—Teach* (video category OUR MEETINGS AND MINISTRY).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) jy chap. 9
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 134 and Prayer

MATTHEW 16-17 | Whose Thoughts Are You Thinking?

16:21-23

- Although Peter no doubt spoke with good motive, Jesus quickly corrected Peter’s wrong thinking
- Jesus knew that this was no time to “be kind” to himself. Relaxing his guard at such a critical time was precisely what Satan wanted him to do

16:24

 **Jesus identified three things we must do to allow God’s will to guide us. What does each involve?**

- Disown yourself:

- Pick up your torture stake:

- Keep following Jesus:



45 *The Meditation of My Heart*

(Psalm 19:14)

1. The meditation of my heart,
 The thoughts I ponder through the day—
 May they be pleasing to you, Lord,
 And keep me steadfast in your way.
When worries weigh upon my mind
 And make me restless in the night,
Then may I meditate on you
 And things I know to be upright.
2. Whatever things are chaste and true,
 Whatever virtue there may be,
Whatever things well-spoken-of—
 May thoughts of these bring peace to me.
How precious are your thoughts, O God!
 Beyond all counting is their sum.
So may I ponder your own words,
 Absorbed in them may I become.

29 Departing from there, Jesus next came near the Sea of Gal'i-lee,^a 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.^b **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.^c

32 But Jesus called his disciples to him and said: "I feel pity for the crowd,^d 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."^e

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?"^f **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.^g **37** And all ate and were satisfied, and they took up seven large baskets* full of leftover fragments.^h **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.ⁱ

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

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

MATTHEW 15:29-16:15

a sign from heaven.^a **2** In reply he said to them: “When evening falls, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is fire-red,’ **3** and in the morning, ‘It will be wintry, rainy weather today, for the sky is fire-red but gloomy.’ You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but the signs of the times you cannot interpret. **4** A wicked and adulterous* generation keeps seeking a sign, but no sign will be given it^b except the sign of Jo’nah.”^c With that he went away, leaving them behind.

5 Now the disciples crossed to the other side and forgot to take bread along.^d **6** Jesus said to them: “Keep your eyes open and watch out for the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”^e **7** So they began to reason among themselves, saying: “We did not take any loaves along.” **8** Knowing this, Jesus said: “Why are you discussing among yourselves that you have no loaves, you with little faith? **9** Do you not yet see the point, or do you not remember the five loaves in the case of the 5,000 and how many baskets you took up?^f **10** Or the seven loaves in the case of the 4,000 and how many large baskets* you took up?^g **11** How is it you do not discern that I did not speak to you about bread? But watch out for the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”^h **12** Then they grasped that he said to watch out, not for the leaven of bread, but for the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

13 When he had come into the region of Caes·a·re’a Phi·lip’pi, Jesus asked his disciples: “Who are men saying the Son of man is?”ⁱ **14** They said: “Some say John the Baptist,^j others E·li’jah,^k and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” **15** He said to

16:4 *Or “unfaithful.”

MATTHEW 16:16–17:12

them: “You, though, who do you say I am?” **16** Simon Peter answered: “You are the Christ,^a the Son of the living God.”^b **17** In response Jesus said to him: “Happy you are, Simon son of Jo’nah, because flesh and blood* did not reveal it to you, but my Father in the heavens did.”^c **18** Also, I say to you: You are Peter,^d and on this rock^e I will build my congregation, and the gates of the Grave* will not overpower it. **19** I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you may bind on earth will already be bound in the heavens, and whatever you may loosen on earth will already be loosened in the heavens.” **20** Then he sternly instructed the disciples not to tell anybody that he was the Christ.^f

21 From that time forward, Jesus began explaining to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed, and on the third day be raised up.^g **22** At this Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying: “Be kind to yourself, Lord; you will not have this happen to you at all.”^h **23** But turning his back, he said to Peter: “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me, because you think, not God’s thoughts, but those of men.”ⁱ

24 Then Jesus said to his disciples: “If anyone wants to come after me, let him disown himself and pick up his torture stake* and keep following me.^j **25** For whoever wants to save his life* will lose it, but whoever loses his life* for my sake will find it.^k **26** Really, what good will it do a man if he gains the whole world

16:17 *Or “because a human.” 16:18 *Or “Hades,” that is, the common grave of mankind. See Glossary. 16:24 *See Glossary. 16:25, 26 *Or “soul.”

but loses his life?^{*a} Or what will a man give in exchange for his life?^{*b} **27** For the Son of man is to come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he will repay each one according to his behavior.^c **28** Truly I say to you that there are some of those standing here who will not taste death at all until first they see the Son of man coming in his Kingdom.”^d

17 Six days later Jesus took Peter and James and his brother John along and led them up into a lofty mountain by themselves.^e **2** And he was transfigured before them; his face shone as the sun, and his outer garments became brilliant* as the light.^f **3** And look! there appeared to them Moses and E-li’jah conversing with him. **4** Then Peter said to Jesus: “Lord, it is fine for us to be here. If you wish, I will erect three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for E-li’jah.” **5** While he was still speaking, look! a bright cloud overshadowed them, and look! a voice out of the cloud said: “This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved.^g Listen to him.”^h **6** At hearing this, the disciples fell facedown and became very much afraid. **7** Then Jesus came near, and touching them, he said: “**Get up. Have no fear.**” **8** When they looked up, they saw no one but Jesus himself. **9** As they were descending from the mountain, Jesus commanded them: “**Tell the vision to no one until the Son of man is raised up from the dead.**”ⁱ

10 However, the disciples put the question to him: “Why, then, do the scribes say that E-li’jah must come first?”^j **11** In reply he said: “E-li’jah is indeed coming and will restore all things.^k **12** However, I say to you that

17:2 *Or “white.”

E·li'jah has already come, and they did not recognize him but did whatever they wanted with him.^a In this way also, the Son of man is going to suffer at their hands.”^b **13** Then the disciples perceived that he spoke to them about John the Baptist.

14 When they came toward the crowd,^c a man approached him, knelt down to him, and said: **15** “Lord, have mercy on my son, because he is an epileptic and is ill. He falls often into the fire and often into the water.^d **16** I brought him to your disciples, but they could not cure him.” **17** In reply Jesus said: “O faithless and twisted generation,^e how long must I continue with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring him here to me.” **18** Then Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and the boy was cured from that hour.^f **19** Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said: “Why could we not expel it?” **20** He said to them: “Because of your little faith. For truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard grain, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.”^g **21** *—

22 It was while they were gathered together in Gal'i·lee that Jesus said to them: “The Son of man is going to be betrayed into men's hands,^h **23** and they will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised up.”ⁱ And they were very much grieved.

24 After they arrived in Ca-per'na·um, the men collecting the two drachmas* tax approached Peter and said: “Does your teacher not pay the two drachmas tax?”^j **25** He said:

17:21 *See App. A3. 17:24 *Lit., “the double drachmas.” See App. B14.

MATTHEW 17:13-18:8

“Yes.” However, when he entered the house, Jesus spoke to him first and said: “What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth receive duties or head tax? From their sons or from the strangers?” **26** When he said: “From the strangers,” Jesus said to him: “Really, then, the sons are tax-free. **27** But that we do not cause them to stumble,^a go to the sea, cast a fishhook, and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth, you will find a silver coin.* Take that and give it to them for me and you.”

18 In that hour the disciples came near to Jesus and said: “Who really is greatest in the Kingdom of the heavens?”^b **2** So calling a young child to him, he stood him in their midst **3** and said: “Truly I say to you, unless you turn around* and become as young children,^c you will by no means enter into the Kingdom of the heavens.^d **4** Therefore, whoever will humble himself like this young child is the one who is the greatest in the Kingdom of the heavens;^e **5** and whoever receives one such young child on the basis of my name receives me also. **6** But whoever stumbles one of these little ones who have faith in me, it would be better for him to have hung around his neck a millstone that is turned by a donkey and to be sunk in the open sea.^f

7 “Woe to the world because of the stumbling blocks! Of course, it is inevitable that stumbling blocks will come, but woe to the man through whom the stumbling block comes! **8** If, then, your hand or your foot makes you stumble, cut it off

17:27 *Lit., “stater coin,” considered to be the tetradrachma. See App. B14.

18:3 *Or “change.”

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MATTHEW 16-17 | Whose Thoughts Are You Thinking?

16:21-23

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- Jesus knew that this was no time to “be kind” to himself. Relaxing his guard at such a critical time was precisely what Satan wanted him to do

16:24

 **Jesus identified three things we must do to allow God’s will to guide us. What does each involve?**

- Disown yourself:

- Pick up your torture stake:

- Keep following Jesus:



February 19-25

Treasures From God's Word

Matthew 16:21, 22—Peter allowed sentimentality to influence his thinking (w07 2/15 16 **paragraph 17**)

On another occasion, Jesus explained to his apostles that he must go to Jerusalem, where he would be persecuted by “the older men and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised up.” At this Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him, saying: “Be kind to yourself, Lord; you will not have this destiny at all.” Clearly, Peter’s view had been blurred by sentimentality. Correction was in order. So Jesus said to him: “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me, because you think, not God’s thoughts, but those of men.” — Matthew 16:21-23.

Matthew 16:23—Peter was not thinking God’s thoughts (w15 5/15 13 **paragraphs 16-17**)

16 Satan can fool even zealous servants of Jehovah. For example, consider what happened when Jesus told his disciples that he was about to be killed. No doubt with good motive, the apostle Peter took him aside and said: “Be kind to yourself, Lord; you will not have this happen to you at all.” Jesus’ reply to Peter was firm: “Get behind me, Satan!” (**Matthew 16:22, 23**) Why did Jesus call Peter “Satan”? Because Jesus understood what was about to happen. The hour approached when he would die as a ransom sacrifice and prove the Devil a liar. At that critical juncture in human history, it was not a time for Jesus to “be kind” to himself. Relaxing his guard would have been precisely what Satan wanted him to do.

17 As we near the end of this system of things, we too are living in critical times. Satan wants us to relax our guard, to “be kind” to ourselves by carving out a niche in this world, thus losing our sense of urgency. Do not let that happen to you! Instead, “keep on the watch.” (Matthew 24:42) Never believe Satan’s deceptive propaganda that the end is far off—or that it is not coming at all.

Matthew 16:24—Christians must allow God’s thoughts to direct their life (w06 4/1 23 paragraph 9)

What does following Jesus’ example in doing God’s will involve? Jesus said to his disciples: “If anyone wants to come after me, let him disown himself and pick up his torture stake and continually follow me.” (Matthew 16:24) Here he outlined three things that we must do. First, we “disown” ourselves. In other words, we say no to our selfish, imperfect inclinations and yes to God’s counsel and direction. Second, we ‘pick up our torture stake.’ In Jesus’ day a torture stake was a symbol of shame and suffering. As Christians, we accept our part in suffering for the sake of the good news. (2 Timothy 1:8) Although the world may ridicule or reproach us, like Christ we ‘despise shame,’ happy in the knowledge that we are pleasing God. (Hebrews 12:2) Finally, we follow Jesus “continually.”—Psalm 73:26; 119:44; 145:2.

MATTHEW

Study Notes—Chapter 16

16:2

said to them: A few important ancient manuscripts omit the rest of verse 2 as well as all of verse 3. Although there is some uncertainty regarding the authenticity of these words, many authorities favor including them based on the great number of other early and later manuscripts that include them.

16:4

adulterous: Refers to spiritual adultery, or unfaithfulness to God.—See study note on Mr 8:38.

sign of Jonah: See study note on Mt 12:39.

16:5

to the other side: That is, to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, evidently toward Bethsaida on the northeastern shore of the lake.

16:6

leaven: Often used figuratively in the Bible to denote corruption and sin, here referring to corrupt teachings.—Mt 16:12; 1Co 5:6-8; compare study note on Mt 13:33.

16:9

baskets: Reporting on the two occasions when Jesus miraculously fed the crowds (see study notes on Mt 14:20; 15:37; 16:10 and parallel accounts at Mr 6:43; 8:8, 19, 20), the accounts consistently distinguish between the types of baskets used for collecting leftovers. When he fed about 5,000, the Greek term *ko'phi-nos* (rendered “basket”) is used; when he fed the 4,000, the Greek word *sphy-ris'* (rendered “large basket”) is used. This

indicates that the writers were present or had received the facts from reliable eyewitnesses.

16:10

large baskets: Or “provision baskets.”—See study notes on Mt 15:37; 16:9.

16:13

Caesarea Philippi: A town situated at the headwaters of the Jordan River at an elevation of 350 m (1,150 ft) above sea level. The town is some 40 km (25 mi) N of the Sea of Galilee and near the SW foot of Mount Hermon. It was named Caesarea by Philip the tetrarch, son of Herod the Great, in honor of the Roman emperor. In order to distinguish it from the seaport city of the same name, it was called Caesarea Philippi, which means “Caesarea of Philip.”—See App. B10.

Son of man: See study note on Mt 8:20.

16:14

John the Baptist: See study note on Mt 3:1.

16:16

Simon Peter: See study note on Mt 10:2.

the Christ: Peter identifies Jesus as “the Christ” (Greek, *ho Khri-stos*), a title equivalent to “the Messiah” (from Hebrew *Ma-shi’ach*), both meaning “Anointed One.” Here “Christ” is preceded by the definite article in Greek, evidently as a way of emphasizing Jesus’ office as the Messiah.—See study notes on Mt 1:1; 2:4.

the living God: An expression used to highlight that Jehovah is alive and active in contrast with the lifeless gods of the nations (Ac 14:15), such as the gods worshipped in the region of

Caesarea Philippi (Mt 16:13). This term also occurs in the Hebrew Scriptures.—De 5:26; Jer 10:10.

16:17

son of Jonah: Or “Bar-jonah.” Many Hebrew names included the Hebrew word *ben* or the Aramaic word *bar*, both meaning “son,” followed by the name of the father as a surname. The use of the Aramaic loanword *bar* in several proper names, such as Bartholomew, Bartimaeus, Barnabas, and Bar-Jesus, is evidence of the influence of Aramaic on the Hebrew spoken in Jesus’ day.

flesh and blood: Or “a human,” a common Jewish expression. In this context, it evidently refers to fleshly or human thinking.—Ga 1:16, ftn.

16:18

You are Peter, and on this rock: The Greek word *pe'tros* in the masculine gender means “a piece of rock; a stone.” Here it is used as a proper name (Peter), the Greek form of the name Jesus gave Simon. (Joh 1:42) The feminine form *pe'tra* is rendered “rock,” and it may denote bedrock, a cliff, or a mass of rock. This Greek word also occurs at Mt 7:24, 25; 27:60; Lu 6:48; 8:6; Ro 9:33; 1Co 10:4; 1Pe 2:8. Peter evidently did not view himself as the rock on which Jesus would build his congregation, since he wrote at 1Pe 2:4-8 that Jesus was the long-foretold “foundation cornerstone,” chosen by God himself. Similarly, the apostle Paul referred to Jesus as the “foundation” and “the spiritual rock.” (1Co 3:11; 10:4) So Jesus was evidently using a play on words, saying in effect: ‘You, the one I called Peter, a Piece of Rock, have discerned the true identity of the Christ, “this rock,” the one who will serve as the foundation of the Christian congregation.’

congregation: This is the first occurrence of the Greek term *ek·kle·si'a*. It comes from two Greek words, *ek*, meaning “out,” and *ka·le'o*, meaning “to call.” It refers to a group of people summoned or called together for a particular purpose or activity. (See Glossary.) In this context, Jesus foretells the formation of the Christian congregation, made up of anointed Christians, who as “living stones” are being “built up into a spiritual house.” (1Pe 2:4, 5) This Greek term is frequently used in the *Septuagint* as an equivalent of the Hebrew term rendered “congregation,” which often refers to the entire nation of God’s people. (De 23:3; 31:30) At Ac 7:38, the Israelites who were called out of Egypt are referred to as a “congregation.” Similarly, Christians who are “called . . . out of darkness” and “chosen . . . out of the world” make up “the congregation of God.”—1Pe 2:9; Joh 15:19; 1Co 1:2.

the Grave: Or “Hades,” that is, the common grave of mankind. (See Glossary, “Grave.”) The Bible speaks of the dead as being within “the gates of death” (Ps 107:18) and “the gates of the Grave” (Isa 38:10), that is, subject to the power of death. Jesus promises victory over the Grave, meaning that “the gates” of the Grave will open to release the dead by means of a resurrection. His own resurrection confirmed the truthfulness of his promise. (Mt 16:21) Because the congregation is built on Jesus, the one who can release its members from death, it cannot be overpowered by or permanently restrained by the Grave.—Ac 2:31; Re 1:18; 20:13, 14.

16:19

keys of the Kingdom of the heavens: In the Bible, those who were given certain keys, whether literal or figurative, were entrusted with a degree of authority. (1Ch 9:26, 27; Isa 22:20-22) So the term “key” came to symbolize authority and responsibility. Peter used these “keys” entrusted to him to open up for Jews (Ac

2:22-41), Samaritans (Ac 8:14-17), and Gentiles (Ac 10:34-38) the opportunity to receive God's spirit with a view to their entering the heavenly Kingdom.

bind . . . loosen: Or "lock . . . unlock." Evidently referring to decisions forbidding or allowing certain actions or developments.—Compare study note on Mt 18:18.

will already be bound . . . will already be loosened: The unusual construction of Greek verbs here (future form of "to be" combined with perfect passive participle of "bind" and "loosen") indicates that whatever decision Peter made ("whatever you may bind"; "whatever you may loosen") would be made after the corresponding decision was made in heaven; it would not precede it.—Compare study note on Mt 18:18.

16:20

the Christ: See study note on Mt 16:16.

16:21

Jesus: A few ancient manuscripts read "Jesus Christ."

elders: Lit., "older men." In the Bible, the Greek term *pre-sby'te-ros* refers primarily to those who hold a position of authority and responsibility in a community or a nation. Although the term sometimes refers to physical age (as at Lu 15:25; Ac 2:17), it is not limited to those who are elderly. Here it refers to the leaders of the Jewish nation who are often mentioned together with chief priests and scribes. The Sanhedrin was made up of men from these three groups.—Mt 21:23; 26:3, 47, 57; 27:1, 41; 28:12; see Glossary, "Elder; Older man."

chief priests: See study note on Mt 2:4 and Glossary, "Chief priest."

scribes: See study note on Mt 2:4 and Glossary, "Scribe."

16:23

Satan: Jesus was not identifying Peter with Satan the Devil but was referring to him as a resister, or opposer, which is the meaning of the Hebrew expression *sa-tan'*. Jesus may have implied that Peter, by his action on this occasion, had allowed himself to be influenced by Satan.

stumbling block: See study note on Mt 18:7.

16:24

let him disown himself: Or “let him give up all right to himself.” This indicates a person’s willingness to deny himself utterly or to relinquish ownership of himself to God. The Greek phrase can be rendered “he must say no to himself,” which is fitting because it may involve saying no to personal desires, ambitions, or convenience. (2Co 5:14, 15) The same Greek verb is used by Matthew when describing Peter’s denial that he knew Jesus.—Mt 26:34, 35, 75.

torture stake: Or “execution stake.” In classical Greek, the word *stau-ros'* primarily referred to an upright stake or pole. Used figuratively, this term sometimes stands for the suffering, shame, torture, and even death that a person experienced because of being a follower of Jesus.—See Glossary.

16:25

life: Or “soul.”—See Glossary, “Soul.”

16:26

life: See study note on Mt 16:25 and Glossary, “Soul.”

16:28

Truly: See study note on Mt 5:18.

Study Notes—Chapter 17

17:1

a lofty mountain: Possibly Mount Hermon, which is near Caesarea Philippi. (See study note on Mt 16:13.) It reaches a height of 2,814 m (9,232 ft) above sea level. The transfiguration may have taken place on one of the spurs of Mount Hermon.— See App. B10.

17:2

he was transfigured: Or “he was transformed; his appearance was changed.” The same Greek verb (*me·ta·mor·pho'o*) occurs at Ro 12:2.

17:3

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

17:5

a voice: The second of three instances in the Gospel accounts where Jehovah is reported as speaking audibly to humans.—See study notes on Mt 3:17; Joh 12:28.

whom I have approved: Or “with whom I am well-pleased.”— See study notes on Mt 3:17; 12:18.

17:9

Son of man: See study note on Mt 8:20.

17:14

knelt down: In the ancient Near East, kneeling was a posture that expressed respect, especially when petitioning superiors.

17:15

an epileptic: See study note on Mt 4:24.

17:20

your little faith: The Greek expression is related to the term rendered “you with little faith” at Mt 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8; Lu 12:28. Jesus does not imply that his disciples were entirely without faith but, rather, that their faith needed to be stronger.— See study notes on Mt 6:30; 8:26.

truly: See study note on Mt 5:18.

the size of a mustard grain: Or “as small as a mustard seed.”— See study notes on Mt 13:31, 32.

17:21

Some ancient manuscripts here read: “However, this kind does not come out except by prayer and fasting.” (See study note on Mr 9:29.) But these words do not appear in the earliest and most reliable manuscripts and are evidently not part of the inspired Scriptures.—See App. A3.

17:24

Capernaum: See study note on Mt 4:13.

the two drachmas tax: Lit., “the double drachmas.” (See App. B14.) Various temple services were maintained through taxation. (Ex 30:12-16) Apparently, by Jesus’ day it had become customary for each adult male Jew to contribute a fixed amount as an annual temple tax.

17:26

the sons are tax-free: In Jesus’ day, the family members of monarchs were known to be tax-exempt.

17:27

fishhook: The only occurrence in the Christian Greek Scriptures of the Greek word rendered “fishhook,” likely a baited hook cast

into the water on the end of a line. Every other mention of fishing equipment in the Christian Greek Scriptures refers to nets.

silver coin: Lit., “stater.” This coin was considered to be the tetradrachma. (See App. B14.) It was worth four drachmas, the equivalent of a shekel, which was exactly the amount required to pay the temple tax for two.—Ex 30:13.

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- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
Mt 16:18—Who was the rock on which Jesus built the Christian congregation? (nwtsty study note)

Mt 16:19—What were “the keys of the Kingdom of the heavens” that Jesus gave to Peter? (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 16:1-20

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) Use the sample conversation.
- **Second Return Visit Video:** (5 min.) Play and discuss the video.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS


- Song 78
- **“Improving Our Skills in the Ministry—Using Questions Effectively”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Do the Work That Jesus Did—Teach* (video category OUR MEETINGS AND MINISTRY).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) jy chap. 9
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 134 and Prayer

MATTHEW 16-17 | Whose Thoughts Are You Thinking?

16:21-23

- Although Peter no doubt spoke with good motive, Jesus quickly corrected Peter’s wrong thinking
- Jesus knew that this was no time to “be kind” to himself. Relaxing his guard at such a critical time was precisely what Satan wanted him to do

16:24

 **Jesus identified three things we must do to allow God’s will to guide us. What does each involve?**

- Disown yourself:

- Pick up your torture stake:

- Keep following Jesus:





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?

78 *“Teaching the Word of God”*

(Acts 18:11)

1. For those who teach the Word of God,
 There is a joyful share.
The benefits that we receive
 Are far beyond compare.
We imitate the Son of God
 And how he taught with love.
And as we teach, the ones we’re helping
 Draw close to God above.
2. As teachers of Jehovah’s Word,
 We strive to do what’s right,
So all may see sincerity
 As we reflect God’s light.
With diligence we search God’s Word,
 For it has news to tell.
So we can share our heart’s good treasure
 And teach ourselves as well.
3. Jehovah gives us all we need
 To teach his precious Word.
So if we pray to ask for help,
 We know that we’ll be heard.
We love what’s in the Word of God;
 What’s more, we know it’s true.
And as we love the ones we’re teaching,
 They’ll soon be teachers too!

- Song 45 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Whose Thoughts Are You Thinking?”:** (10 min.)
Mt 16:21, 22—Peter allowed sentimentality to influence his thinking (w07 2/15 16 ¶17)
Mt 16:23—Peter was not thinking God’s thoughts (w15 5/15 13 ¶16-17)
Mt 16:24—Christians must allow God’s thoughts to direct their life (w06 4/1 23 ¶9)
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- Disown yourself:

- Pick up your torture stake:

- Keep following Jesus:



IMPROVING OUR SKILLS IN THE MINISTRY

Using Questions Effectively



WHY IMPORTANT: If “the thoughts of a man’s heart are like deep waters,” then questions are like a bucket to draw them out. (Pr 20:5) Questions help us to involve our listeners. Answers to well-chosen questions often provide valuable feedback. Jesus used questions effectively. How can we imitate him?

HOW TO DO IT:

- **Ask viewpoint questions.** Jesus asked a series of questions to determine his disciples’ point of view. (Mt 16:13-16; be 238 ¶3-5) What viewpoint questions might you ask?

- **Ask leading questions.** To correct Peter’s thinking, Jesus asked questions and provided possible answers that led Peter to the right conclusion. (Mt 17:24-26) What leading questions might you ask to help someone reach the right conclusion?

- **Commend your listener.** After a scribe “answered intelligently,” Jesus commended him. (Mr 12:34) How might you commend someone who gives an answer to a question?

Be respectful. We do not have the authority that Jesus had. So we must show respect especially to older ones, people we do not know, and those in positions of authority.—1Pe 2:17.

WATCH THE FIRST PART OF THE VIDEO DO THE WORK THAT JESUS DID—TEACH, AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- Why is this an example of poor teaching, even though the information is accurate?

- Why must we do more than just explain the information?

WATCH THE SECOND PART OF THE VIDEO, AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- How did the brother use questions effectively?

- What other aspects of his teaching can we imitate?



What effect does our teaching have on others? (Lu 24:32)



9

GROWING UP IN NAZARETH

MATTHEW 13:55, 56 MARK 6:3

- JOSEPH AND MARY'S FAMILY GROWS
 - JESUS LEARNS A TRADE
-

Jesus is growing up in Nazareth, a rather small, unimportant city. It is located up north, in the hill country of an area called Galilee, to the west of the large lake known as the Sea of Galilee.

When he is perhaps two years of age, Jesus is brought here from Egypt by Joseph and Mary. It seems that at this time, he is their only child. Later, however, his half brothers are born—James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas. Joseph and Mary also become parents to girls, Jesus' half sisters. Yes, Jesus has at least six younger brothers and sisters.

Of course, Jesus has other relatives. We already know about Elizabeth and her son, John. He lives many miles to the south, in Judea. Living close by in Galilee is Salome, who is apparently Mary's sister and thus Jesus' aunt. Salome's husband is

Zebedee. Their two sons, James and John, would seem to be Jesus' first cousins. We do not know whether Jesus spends much time with these boys while they are growing up, but eventually they become his close companions, serving as two of Jesus' apostles.

Joseph has to work very hard to support his growing family. He is a carpenter. Joseph raises Jesus as his own son, so Jesus is called "the carpenter's son." (Matthew 13:55) Joseph teaches Jesus to be a carpenter too, and he learns well. In fact, people later say about Jesus: "This is the carpenter." —Mark 6:3.

The life of Joseph's family is centered on the worship of Jehovah. In keeping with God's Law, Joseph and Mary give their children spiritual instruction 'when they sit in their house and when they walk on the road and when they lie down and when they get up.' (Deuteronomy 6:6-9) There is a synagogue in Nazareth. We can be sure that Joseph regularly takes his family along to worship there. It is later said that "according to his custom on the Sabbath

day,” Jesus went to the synagogue. (Luke 4:16) The family also finds great enjoyment in regular trips to Jehovah’s temple in Jerusalem.

- ◇ Jesus has at least how many younger brothers and sisters?
- ◇ What secular work does Jesus learn to do, and why?
- ◇ Joseph provides what vital instruction for his family?



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)

DECEMBER 2017

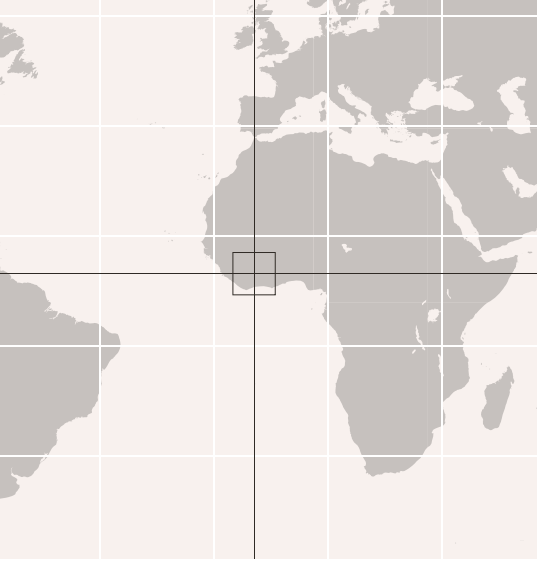
THE WATCHTOWER

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

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*.

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?

54 LIFE STORY

Leaving Things Behind to Follow the Master

133 *Worship Jehovah During Youth* (Ecclesiastes 12:1)

1. Precious to God, we are daughters and sons,
 Giving our strength as his faithful young ones.
Loving attention to us he will give,
 Blessing our days for as long as we live.
2. Honoring parents who care for our lives
 Helps us express what we're feeling inside.
Then we find favor with God and with men,
 Drawing us close to Jehovah, our Friend.
3. May we remember our God in our youth,
 Growing each day in our love of the truth.
Giving our best to our God, we will bring
 Joy to the heart of Jehovah, our King.



YOUNG ONES

“Keep Working Out Your Own Salvation”

“Just as you have always obeyed, . . . keep working out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”

—PHIL. 2:12.

EACH year thousands of Bible students get baptized. Many are young people—teenagers and preteens. They may have been raised in the truth. Are you

1. Why is baptism such an important step? (See opening picture.)

SONGS:
133, 135

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

Although baptism is a serious step, why should it not be feared or avoided?

How can you work out your own salvation?

Why do you treasure your dedication to Jehovah?

one of them? If so, you are to be commended. Baptism is a requirement for Christians, and it is an essential step to gaining salvation.—Matt. 28: 19, 20; 1 Pet. 3:21.

² Although baptism opens the door to many blessings, it also involves responsibility. In what way? On the day of your baptism, you answered yes to the question, “On the basis of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, have you repented of your sins and dedicated yourself to Jehovah to do his will?” Your baptism symbolizes your dedication. It is a solemn promise that you made to Jehovah to love him and to put his will above everything else. That is a serious commitment. Should you regret making it? No, you definitely should not. Putting yourself in Jehovah’s hands is *never* a wrong move. Consider the alternative! A person who lives apart from Jehovah is under Satan’s rule. The Devil has no interest in your salvation. In fact, he would be happy if you lost out on everlasting life by siding with him in rejecting Jehovah’s sovereignty.

2. Why is the step of dedication not to be feared or avoided?

³ In contrast to supporting Satan, consider the blessings you have as a dedicated and baptized Christian. Now that you have given your life to Jehovah, you can say with greater confidence than ever before: “Jehovah is on my side; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?” (Ps. 118:6) You could have no greater privilege in life than being on God’s side and having him approve of you.

A PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

⁴ As a baptized Christian, your relationship with Jehovah is not a ‘family plan,’ such as some people have for cellular telephone service. On the contrary, you are now responsible for your own salvation, even if you still live under your parents’ roof. Why is it important to remember that? Because you cannot always predict what challenges you will face in the future. For example, if you were baptized as a preteen, you likely will face new feelings and pressures as you enter and pass through adolescence. One teenage girl put it this way: “A child usually won’t resent being one

3. What blessings come from dedicating yourself to Jehovah?

4, 5. (a) In what way is dedication a personal responsibility?
(b) What challenges are not unique to young people?

of Jehovah’s Witnesses just because of not having a piece of birthday cake at school. But in a few years when the urge to have sex becomes stronger, he or she needs to be thoroughly convinced that obeying Jehovah’s laws is always the best choice.”

⁵ Of course, being confronted with new challenges is not unique to young people. Even those who got baptized as adults face many unanticipated tests of faith. Such tests may have to do with marriage, health issues, or employment. Really, everyone, regardless of his or her age, will encounter situations that require faithfulness to Jehovah.—Jas. 1:12-14.

⁶ To help you stay faithful in any circumstance, never forget that your promise to Jehovah is unconditional. That means that you have told the Sovereign of the universe that you will continue to serve him even if your friends or parents stop doing so. (Ps. 27:10) In all situations, you can summon the strength—with Jehovah’s help—to live up to your dedication.—**Read Philippians 4:11-13.**

-
6. (a) In what way is your dedication to Jehovah unconditional?
(b) What can you learn from Philippians 4:11-13?

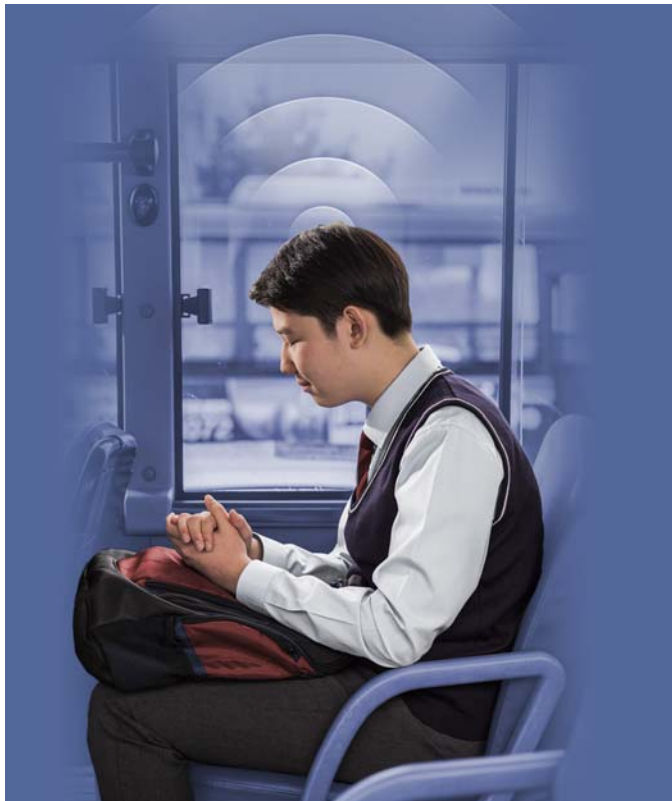
⁷ Jehovah wants you to be his friend. But maintaining that friendship and working out your own salvation will require effort. In fact, Philippians 2:12 says: “Keep working out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” Those words indicate that you need to consider how you will maintain your friendship with Jehovah and remain faithful to him despite any challenges. You cannot become overconfident. Even some of God’s long-time servants have gone astray. Hence, what steps can you take to work out your own salvation?

BIBLE STUDY IS IMPORTANT

⁸ Friendship with Jehovah involves two-way communication—listening and talking. Personal study of the Bible is the prime way we *listen* to Jehovah. That includes taking in knowledge by reading and meditating on God’s Word and Bible-based publications. As you do that, remember that study of the Bible is not a mere academic exercise. It should not be as if you were memorizing facts just to pass a school exam. Fruitful study is more like an expedition on which you can

7. What does it mean to work out your own salvation “with fear and trembling”?

8. What does personal study include, and why is it important?



How well are you communicating with Jehovah?
(See paragraphs 8-11)

explore and discover new aspects of Jehovah's personality. This will help you to draw close to God, and then he will draw close to you.—Jas. 4:8.

⁹ Jehovah's organization has provided a number of tools to help you put together an effective

9. What tools have helped you in your personal study?

study program. For example, “Bible Study Activities” found on the “Teenagers” section of jw.org can help you to learn practical lessons from Bible events. Also on jw.org, the study guides “What Does the Bible Really Teach?” can help you to build your conviction about your beliefs. Those study guides can help you to learn how to explain your beliefs to others. Other ideas for study can be found in the article “Young People Ask . . . How Can I Make Bible Reading Enjoyable?” in the April 2009 issue of *Awake!* Study and meditation play an important role in working out your own salvation.—Read Psalm 119:105.

PRAYER IS VITAL

¹⁰ While personal study is one way we listen to Jehovah, prayer is a way in which we speak to him. A Christian should not view prayer as a meaningless ritual; nor is it a ‘good luck charm’ to increase the chances of success at some endeavor. Rather, prayer is real communication with our Creator. Jehovah *wants* to hear from you. (Read **Philippians 4:6.**) When you experience any kind

10. Why is prayer vital for a baptized Christian?

of anxiety, the Bible's wise advice is to "throw your burden on Jehovah." (Ps. 55:22) Do you really believe that? There are millions of brothers and sisters who can assure you that it has helped them. It can help you too!

¹¹ Prayer offers you the opportunity to do more than simply ask Jehovah for help. The Bible says: "Show yourselves thankful." (Col. 3:15) Sometimes we can become so consumed by our problems that we overlook the many blessings we have. Why not determine that each day you will think of at least three things for which you can be thankful? Then thank Jehovah in prayer for those blessings. A teenager named Abigail, who got baptized at age 12, says: "I feel that Jehovah deserves our thanks more than anyone else in the universe. We should thank him at every opportunity for the gifts he has given us. I once heard an excellent reminder: If we woke up tomorrow with only the things we thanked Jehovah for today, what would we end up with?"*

* For more suggestions, see "Young People Ask—Why Should I Pray?" and its accompanying worksheet on jw.org.

11. Why should you always give thanks to Jehovah?

THE VALUE OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

¹² Ancient King David, who had been delivered from many grievous trials, expressed these words in song: “Taste and see that Jehovah is good; happy is the man who takes refuge in him.” (Ps. 34:8) That verse highlights the value of personal experience. When you read the Bible and our publications and when you attend Christian meetings, you hear encouraging experiences of how God has helped others to stay faithful. But as you grow spiritually, you need to see Jehovah’s hand in your own life. How have you personally tasted Jehovah’s goodness?

¹³ There is one way that all Christians have tasted Jehovah’s goodness. It is by being invited to draw close to God and his Son. Jesus said: “No man can come to me unless the Father, who sent me, draws him.” (John 6:44) Do you feel that those words apply to you? A youth might reason, ‘Jehovah drew *my parents*, and I merely followed.’ But when you dedicated yourself to Jehovah and

12, 13. Why is it important to think of how you personally have tasted Jehovah’s goodness?

got baptized, you showed that you had come into a privileged relationship with him. Now you are truly known by him. The Bible assures us: “If anyone loves God, this one is known by him.” (1 Cor. 8:3) Try always to treasure, to appreciate, your place in Jehovah’s organization.

¹⁴ Another way you can taste Jehovah’s goodness is by experiencing his support as you share your faith with others. You can do that in the ministry as well as at school. Some find it difficult to preach to their peers at school. You likely can understand why. You have no idea how they will react. It can be especially challenging when speaking to a large group rather than to a classmate one-on-one. What can help you?

¹⁵ First, think about why you are convinced of your beliefs. Are the study guides found on jw.org available in your language? If you are not sure, take the time to look for them. They are designed to help you reflect on what you believe, why you believe it, and how you can explain your beliefs to others. When your conviction is strong and you are well-prepared, you will feel impelled

14, 15. How can the ministry help you to strengthen your faith?

to give a witness for Jehovah's name.—Jer. 20: 8, 9.

¹⁶ Even with preparation, however, you may be hesitant to speak up about your beliefs. An 18-year-old sister, baptized when she was 13, admits, “I know what I believe, but sometimes I have trouble putting my thoughts into words.” How does she deal with this obstacle? “I just try to be casual,” she says. “My classmates talk freely about the things that they do. I should feel free to do the same. So I'll mention something in passing, such as, ‘I was teaching the Bible the other day, and . . .’ Then I continue with the point of my story. Although the immediate point is not in itself about the Bible, often others are curious about what I do when teaching the Bible. Sometimes they ask questions about it. The more I use this approach, the easier it gets. And afterward, I always feel great!”

¹⁷ As you show respect for others and take a personal interest in them, it is more likely that

16. What might help you overcome hesitancy to speak up about your beliefs?

17. How can your view of your faith help you to speak to others?

they will respond in kind. “I had always been afraid that if I worked the Bible into a conversation, people would view me as a fanatic.” That is a comment made by Olivia, who is 17 and who got baptized as a preteen. Then she started to think differently. Rather than give too much thought to her fears, Olivia reasoned: “A lot of young people don’t know anything about Jehovah’s Witnesses. We are the only Witnesses they are exposed to. So the way we act can determine how they will respond. What if we are shy or timid or have a hard time speaking up about our faith, or what if we cringe when we do speak up? Then they may look at us as if we aren’t proud of who we are. They may even respond unkindly because of our lack of confidence. However, if we talk with ease and assurance about what we believe, making it a normal part of conversation, it’s more likely that they will respect us.”

KEEP WORKING OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION

¹⁸ As we have seen, working out your own salvation is a serious responsibility. Some of the things

18. What is involved in your working out your own salvation?

involved are reading God’s Word and meditating on it, praying to Jehovah, and thinking of ways that Jehovah has blessed you as an individual. Applying yourself in those aspects will boost your confidence in your privilege of having a friendship with Jehovah. That, in turn, will move you to speak up about your beliefs.—Read Psalm 73:28.

¹⁹ Jesus said: “If anyone wants to come after me, let him disown himself and pick up his torture stake and keep following me.” (Matt. 16:24) Clearly, discipleship—including dedication and baptism—is an obligation for you as a Christian. Yet, it opens the door to countless blessings now and to everlasting life in God’s new world. You have every reason, then, to keep working out your own salvation!

19. Why is the effort you put into your salvation worthwhile?

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)

