

- Song 143 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Keep on the Watch”:** (10 min.)
Mt 25:1-6—Five discreet and five foolish virgins went out to meet the bridegroom
Mt 25:7-10—The foolish virgins were absent when the bridegroom arrived
Mt 25:11, 12—Only the discreet virgins were admitted to the marriage feast

- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
Mt 25:31-33—Explain the illustration of the sheep and the goats. (w15 3/15 27 ¶7)

Mt 25:40—How can we express our friendship toward Christ’s brothers? (w09 10/15 16 ¶16-18)

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 25:1-23

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Second Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Invite the person to the Memorial.
- **Third Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Choose your own scripture, and offer a study publication.
- **Talk:** (6 min. or less) w15 3/15 27 ¶7-10—Theme: How Does the Illustration of the Sheep and the Goats Emphasize the Preaching Work?

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

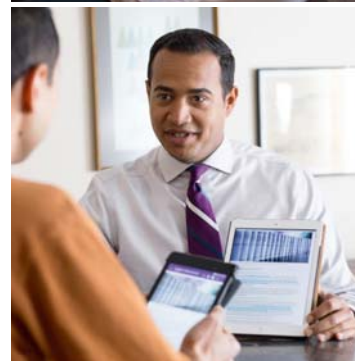
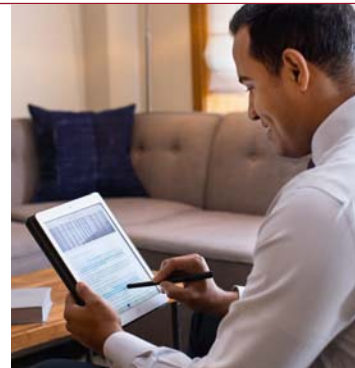
- Song 85
- **“Improving Our Skills in the Ministry—Teaching Our Students to Prepare”:** (10 min.) Discussion. Afterward, play and discuss the video that shows a publisher teaching her Bible student how to prepare for the study. Invite those in the audience to relate other ways in which they have successfully helped their students to prepare for their Bible study.
- **Welcome Our Guests:** (5 min.) Talk based on the article in the March 2016 *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook*. Relate some good experiences enjoyed during the 2017 Memorial season. Provide necessary reminders regarding parking, entering and exiting the building, and so forth for the upcoming Memorial on March 31.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) jy chap. 14
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
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IMPROVING OUR SKILLS IN THE MINISTRY
Teaching Our Students to Prepare

WHY IMPORTANT: When they prepare, Bible students can more readily understand and remember what we are teaching them. The more they understand and remember, the faster they will make progress. Even after baptism, they will need to prepare for the meetings and the ministry in order to “keep on the watch.” (Mt 25:13) Therefore, knowing how to study and having a good study routine will benefit them throughout their life. Right from the start, we should help our students develop the habit of preparing for their Bible study.

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- Show him how to prepare. Early on, some teachers will use the entire study session to demonstrate to their student how to prepare for a lesson



143 *Keep Working, Watching, and Waiting*

(Romans 8:20-25)

1. The God of times and of seasons,
Whose name alone is Jehovah—
The time for his vindication
Is near by signs we can see.

(CHORUS)

*Keep on working and watching and waiting,
Joyfully anticipating,
Life as God meant it to be.*

2. The time has long been appointed;
His Son is ready to conquer,
Defeating all who oppose him.
His sword will bring victory.

(Chorus)

3. Though all creation is groaning,
In faith we're eagerly waiting.
Jehovah's day is approaching,
The time for setting us free.

(Chorus)

ing and the gnashing of his teeth will be.^a

25 “Then the Kingdom of the heavens may be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps^b and went out to meet the bridegroom.^c **2** Five of them were foolish, and five were discreet.^{*d} **3** For the foolish took their lamps but took no oil with them, **4** whereas the discreet took oil in their flasks along with their lamps. **5** While the bridegroom was delaying, they all became drowsy and fell asleep. **6** Right in the middle of the night there was a shout: ‘Here is the bridegroom! Go out to meet him.’ **7** Then all those virgins got up and put their lamps in order.^e **8** The foolish said to the discreet, ‘Give us some of your oil, because our lamps are about to go out.’ **9** The discreet answered, saying: ‘Perhaps there may not be enough for both us and you. Go instead to those who sell it, and buy some for yourselves.’ **10** While they were going off to buy it, the bridegroom came. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast,^f and the door was shut. **11** Afterward, the rest of the virgins also came, saying, ‘Sir, Sir, open to us!’^g **12** In answer he said, ‘I tell you the truth, I do not know you.’

13 “Keep on the watch,^h therefore, because you know neither the day nor the hour.ⁱ

14 “For it is just like a man about to travel abroad who summoned his slaves and entrusted his belongings to them.^j **15** He gave five talents* to one, two to another, and one to still another, to each according to his own ability, and he went abroad. **16** Immediately the one who re-

25:15 *A Greek talent equaled 20.4 kg (654 oz t). See App. B14.

ceived the five talents went and did business with them and gained five more. **17** Likewise, the one who received the two gained two more. **18** But the slave who received just one went off and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.*

19 "After a long time, the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them.^a

20 So the one who had received the five talents came forward and brought five additional talents, saying, 'Master, you entrusted five talents to me; see, I gained five talents more.'^b **21** His master said to him: 'Well done, good and faithful slave! You were faithful over a few things. I will appoint you over many things.'^c Enter into the joy of your master.'^d

22 Next the one who had received the two talents came forward and said, 'Master, you entrusted two talents to me; see, I gained two talents more.'^e

23 His master said to him: 'Well done, good and faithful slave! You were faithful over a few things. I will appoint you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master.'

24 "Finally the slave who had received the one talent came forward and said: 'Master, I knew you to be a demanding man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you did not winnow.'^f **25** So I grew afraid and went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.' **26** In reply his master said to him: 'Wicked and sluggish slave, you knew, did you, that I reaped where I did not sow and gathered where I did not winnow? **27** Well, then, you should have deposited my money* with the bankers, and on my coming I would have received it back with interest.

25:18, 27 *Lit., "silver."

MATTHEW 25:17-40

28 “Therefore, take the talent away from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents.^a

29 For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance. But the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.^b **30** And throw the good-for-nothing slave out into the darkness outside. There is where his weeping and the gnashing of his teeth will be.’

31 “When the Son of man^c comes in his glory, and all the angels with him,^d then he will sit down on his glorious throne.

32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. **33** And he will put the sheep^e on his right hand, but the goats on his left.^f

34 “Then the King will say to those on his right: ‘Come, you who have been blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the founding of the world. **35** For I became hungry and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you received me hospitably;^g

36 naked* and you clothed me.^h I fell sick and you looked after me. I was in prison and you visited me.’ⁱ **37** Then the righteous ones will answer him with the words: ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?’^j

38 When did we see you a stranger and receive you hospitably, or naked and clothe you? **39** When did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’

40 In reply the King will say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of

25:36 *Or “not sufficiently dressed.”

MATTHEW 25:41-26:22

the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’^a

41 “Then he will say to those on his left: ‘Go away from me,^b you who have been cursed, into the everlasting fire^c prepared for the Devil and his angels.’^d **42** For I became hungry, but you gave me nothing to eat; and I was thirsty, but you gave me nothing to drink. **43** I was a stranger, but you did not receive me hospitably; naked, but you did not clothe me; sick and in prison, but you did not look after me.’ **44** Then they too will answer with the words: ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not minister to you?’ **45** Then he will answer them, saying: ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of these least ones, you did not do it to me.’^e **46** These will depart into everlasting cutting-off,^{*f} but the righteous ones into everlasting life.”^g

26 Now when Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples: **2** “You know that two days from now the Passover takes place,^h and the Son of man will be handed over to be executed on the stake.”ⁱ

3 Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the courtyard of the high priest, who was named Ca’ia·phas,^j **4** and they conspired together^k to seize* Jesus by cunning[#] and to kill him. **5** However, they were saying: “Not at the festival, so that there may not be an uproar among the people.”

6 While Jesus was in Beth’a·ny in the house of Simon the leper,^l **7** a woman with an ala-

25:46 *That is, from life. Lit., “lopping off; pruning.” **26:4** *Or “arrest.” #Or “crafty device.”

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Mt 25:40—How can we express our friendship toward Christ’s brothers? (w09 10/15 16 ¶16-18)

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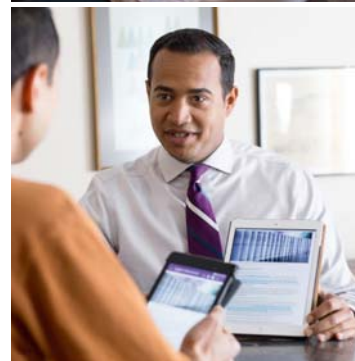
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MATTHEW 25 | “Keep on the Watch”

25:1-12

Although Jesus directed the parable of the ten virgins to his anointed followers, its basic message applies to all Christians. (w15 3/15 12-16) “Keep on the watch, therefore, because you know neither the day nor the hour.” (Mt 25:13) Can you explain Jesus’ parable?

- **Bridegroom (vs. 1)**—Jesus
- **Discreet, prepared virgins (vs. 2)**—Anointed Christians who are prepared to carry out their assignment faithfully and who shine as illuminators until the end (Php 2:15)
- **The shout: “Here is the bridegroom!” (vs. 6)**—Evidence of Jesus’ presence
- **Foolish virgins (vs. 8)**—Anointed Christians who go out to meet the Bridegroom but who do not remain watchful and do not maintain their integrity
- **The discreet virgins refuse to share their oil (vs. 9)**—After the final sealing, it is too late for faithful anointed ones to help any who have turned unfaithful
- **“The bridegroom came” (vs. 10)**—Jesus comes to render judgment near the end of the great tribulation
- **The discreet virgins enter the marriage feast with the bridegroom, and the door is shut (vs. 10)**—Jesus gathers his faithful anointed ones to heaven, but the unfaithful ones lose their heavenly reward

The parable does not teach that a large number of the anointed would prove unfaithful and need to be replaced. Rather, it serves as a warning that each anointed Christian has the full capacity to choose either a course of preparedness and vigilance or a course of folly and unfaithfulness. Jesus exhorted: “Prove yourselves ready.” (Mt 24:44) Regardless of our hope, Jesus requires all of us to prepare our heart for faithful service and to meet the same standard of watchfulness.

 How am I demonstrating my watchfulness? _____



March 26–April 1

Digging for Spiritual Gems: (8 minutes)

Matthew 25:31-33—Explain the illustration of the sheep and the goats. (w15 3/15 27 paragraph 7)

Today, we have a clear understanding of the illustration of the sheep and the goats. Regarding the identity of those mentioned, Jesus is “the Son of man,” the King. Those referred to as “my brothers” are spirit-anointed men and women, who will rule with Christ from heaven. (Romans 8:16, 17) “The sheep” and “the goats” represent individuals from all nations. These ones are not anointed by holy spirit. What about the timing of the judgment? This judgment will occur toward the end of the great tribulation just ahead. And what of the reason why people will be judged as either sheep or goats? The outcome hinges on how they have treated the remaining ones of Christ’s spirit-anointed brothers on earth. With the end of this system so close at hand, how grateful we are that Jehovah has progressively shed light on this illustration and on the related illustrations recorded in Matthew chapters 24 and 25!

Matthew 25:40—How can we express our friendship toward Christ’s brothers? (w09 10/15 16 paragraphs 16-18)

16 If you hope to live on earth under God’s Kingdom, how can you express your friendship toward Christ’s brothers? Let us consider just three ways. First, by wholeheartedly sharing in the preaching work. Christ commanded his brothers to preach the good news worldwide. (Matthew 24:14) However, the remaining ones of Christ’s brothers on earth today would be hard-pressed to shoulder that responsibility without the assistance of their other sheep companions. Really, each time members

of the other sheep class engage in the preaching work, they help Christ's brothers to fulfill their sacred commission. The faithful and discreet slave class deeply appreciates this act of friendship, as does Christ.

17 A second way that those of the other sheep class can help Christ's brothers is by financially supporting the preaching work. Jesus encouraged his followers to make friends for themselves by means of "the unrighteous riches." (Luke 16:9) Not that we can buy friendship with Jesus or Jehovah. Rather, by using our material assets to further Kingdom interests, we prove our friendship and love, not just in word, but "in deed and truth." (1 John 3:16-18) We provide such financial support when we engage in the preaching work, when we donate money toward the construction and maintenance of our meeting facilities, and when we contribute funds toward the worldwide preaching work. Whether the amount we contribute is small or great, both Jehovah and Jesus certainly appreciate our cheerful giving.—2 Corinthians 9:7.

18 A third way that all of us prove that we are friends of Christ is by cooperating with the direction provided by congregation elders. These men are appointed by holy spirit under Christ's direction. (Ephesians 5:23) "Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive," wrote the apostle Paul. (Hebrews 13:17) At times, we may find it a challenge to obey the Bible-based direction given to us by the local elders. We are likely aware of their imperfections, and this may distort our view of their counsel. Still, Christ, the Head of the congregation, is pleased to use these imperfect men. Therefore, the way we react to their authority directly influences our friendship with Christ. When we overlook the faults of the elders and joyfully follow their direction, we prove our love for Christ.

MATTHEW

Study Notes—Chapter 25

25:2

discreet: Or “wise.”—See study note on Mt 24:45.

25:7

put their lamps in order: Evidently referring to what needed to be done, including trimming the wicks and adding oil so that the lamps would burn brightly.

25:13

Keep on the watch: Lit., “Stay awake.” This exhortation to stay awake spiritually is the basic message of the parable of the ten virgins.—See study notes on Mt 24:42; 26:38.

25:15

talents: A Greek talent was, not a coin, but a unit of weight and money. One Greek silver talent equaled 20.4 kg (654 oz t) and was worth approximately 6,000 drachmas or Roman denarii. It was the equivalent of about 20 years’ wages for a common laborer.—See App. B14.

25:18

money: Lit., “silver,” that is, silver used as money.

25:25

hid your talent in the ground: Evidence of this practice is seen in the large quantities of valuables and coins unearthed by both archaeologists and farmers in Bible lands.

25:27

bankers . . . interest: During the first century C.E., moneylenders, or bankers, were prominent in Israel and surrounding nations. The Law forbade the Israelites from

charging interest on loans to needy fellow Jews (Ex 22:25), but interest was specifically allowed on loans to foreigners, likely for business ventures (De 23:20). In Jesus' day, it was evidently common to receive interest on funds deposited with moneylenders.

25:30

gnashing of his teeth: See study note on Mt 8:12.

25:31

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

25:33

on his right hand . . . on his left: In some contexts, both positions indicate honor and authority (Mt 20:21, 23), but the place of greatest honor is always on the right (Ps 110:1; Ac 7:55, 56; Ro 8:34). However, here and at Mt 25:34, 41, there is a clear contrast between the place of favor at the King's right hand and that of disfavor at his left.—Compare Ec 10:2, ftns.

25:34

inherit: The basic meaning of the Greek verb is for an heir to receive something as a right, often because of relationship, such as a son receiving an inheritance from his father. (Ga 4:30) But here, as in most occurrences in the Christian Greek Scriptures, the term is used in the broader sense of receiving something as a reward from God.—Mt 19:29; 1Co 6:9.

the Kingdom: In the Bible, the term “kingdom” is used in several different ways, including “the region or country governed by a king,” “kingly power,” “a realm,” and “being ruled by a king.” Here it is evidently used in the sense of receiving the benefits or blessings of being ruled by God's Kingdom and enjoying life within its realm.

founding of the world: The Greek word for “founding” is rendered “to conceive” at Heb 11:11, where it is used with “offspring.” Here used in the expression “founding of the world,” it apparently refers to the conception and birth of children born to Adam and Eve. Jesus associates “the founding of the world” with Abel, evidently the first redeemable human of the world of mankind whose name was written in the scroll of life from “the founding of the world.”—Lu 11:50, 51; Re 17:8.

25:36

naked: Or “not sufficiently dressed.” The Greek word *gy·mnos'* can have the meaning “lightly clad; in the undergarment only.”—Jas 2:15, ftn.

25:40

Truly: See study note on Mt 5:18.

brothers: The plural form of the Greek word for “brother” can refer to both men and women.

25:46

cutting-off: That is, from life. The Greek word *ko'la·sis* is used of “pruning” or “lopping off” needless branches from trees. This “cutting-off” would be “everlasting,” since the person would be cut off from life with no hope of a resurrection.

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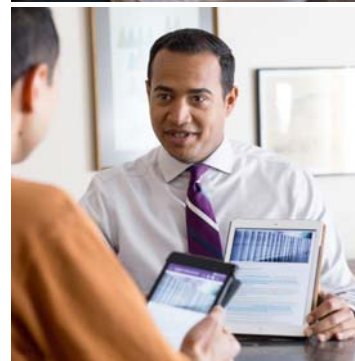
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Our Christian Life and Ministry

MEETING WORKBOOK

Sample Conversations

Inviting people to the Memorial in Slovenia

●○○ INITIAL CALL

Memorial Invitation Campaign (March 3-31): We want to invite you to a very important event. Here is your personal invitation. On Saturday, March 31, millions around the world will gather to commemorate the death of Jesus Christ. This invitation shows the time and location of the meeting being held in our area. We also invite you to a talk the week before entitled “Who Is Jesus Christ?”

Link When Interest Is Shown: Why did Jesus die?



○●○ FIRST RETURN VISIT

Question: Why did Jesus die?

Scripture: Mt 20:28

Link: What does the ransom accomplish?



○○● SECOND RETURN VISIT

Question: What does the ransom accomplish?

Scripture: Ro 6:23

Link: How can we show our appreciation for the ransom?

Apply Yourself to the Field Ministry

Talk: (6 minutes or less) w15 3/15 27 paragraphs 7-10—
Theme: How Does the Illustration of the Sheep and the Goats Emphasize the Preaching Work?

w15 3/15 27 paragraphs 7-10

7 Today, we have a clear understanding of the illustration of the sheep and the goats. Regarding the *identity* of those mentioned, Jesus is “the Son of man,” the King. Those referred to as “my brothers” are spirit-anointed men and women, who will rule with Christ from heaven. (Romans 8:16, 17) “The sheep” and “the goats” represent individuals from all nations. These ones are not anointed by holy spirit. What about the *timing* of the judgment? This judgment will occur toward the end of the great tribulation just ahead. And what of the reason why people will be judged as either sheep or goats? The outcome hinges on how they have treated the remaining ones of Christ’s spirit-anointed brothers on earth. With the end of this system so close at hand, how grateful we are that Jehovah has progressively shed light on this illustration and on the related illustrations recorded in Matthew chapters 24 and 25!

How Does the Illustration Emphasize the Preaching Work?

8 In the illustration of the sheep and the goats, Jesus does not directly mention the preaching work. Why, then, can it be said that it emphasizes the importance of preaching?

9 First, note that Jesus is teaching by means of an illustration. Obviously, he is not talking about separating literal sheep from

literal goats. Likewise, he is not saying that each individual judged to be a sheep must literally feed, clothe, nurse, or visit one of his brothers in prison. Rather, he is illustrating the attitude that the figurative sheep display toward his brothers. He describes the sheep as “righteous” because they recognize that Christ has a group of anointed brothers still on earth, and the sheep loyally support the anointed during these critical last days.—Matthew 10:40-42; 25:40, 46; 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

10 Second, consider the context of Jesus’ words. He is discussing the sign of his presence and the conclusion of the system of things. (Matthew 24:3) Early in his discourse, Jesus indicated that the sign would include a remarkable feature—the good news of the Kingdom would “be preached in all the inhabited earth.” (Matthew 24:14) And just prior to talking about the sheep and the goats, he related the illustration of the talents. As discussed in the preceding article, Jesus gave that illustration to stress to his spirit-anointed disciples, his “brothers,” that they must zealously engage in the preaching work. However, the small number of anointed ones left on earth during Jesus’ presence face an enormous challenge—that of preaching to “all the nations” before the end comes. The illustration of the sheep and the goats shows that the anointed would have help. Therefore, one of the primary ways that those judged to be sheep show kindness to Christ’s brothers is by supporting them in the preaching work. What, though, is involved in providing that support? Does it consist only of material backing and emotional comfort, or is more required?

Welcome One Another

(Romans 15:7)

1. Welcome to all who gather here this day
To hear God's Word and to learn his way.
Life-giving truth he offers to us all;
With thankfulness of heart, we respond to his call.
2. Thanks to our God for brothers such as these,
Who welcome us and who seek to please.
May we keep holding men of that sort dear,
And now we welcome others who meet with us here.
3. God's invitation reaches all mankind,
That all sincere ones the truth may find.
God by his Son has drawn us to His side.
So welcome one another with hearts opened wide.

- Song 143 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Keep on the Watch”:** (10 min.)
Mt 25:1-6—Five discreet and five foolish virgins went out to meet the bridegroom
Mt 25:7-10—The foolish virgins were absent when the bridegroom arrived
Mt 25:11, 12—Only the discreet virgins were admitted to the marriage feast
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
Mt 25:31-33—Explain the illustration of the sheep and the goats. (w15 3/15 27 ¶7)

Mt 25:40—How can we express our friendship toward Christ’s brothers? (w09 10/15 16 ¶16-18)

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 25:1-23

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Second Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Invite the person to the Memorial.
- **Third Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Choose your own scripture, and offer a study publication.
- **Talk:** (6 min. or less) w15 3/15 27 ¶7-10—Theme: How Does the Illustration of the Sheep and the Goats Emphasize the Preaching Work?

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

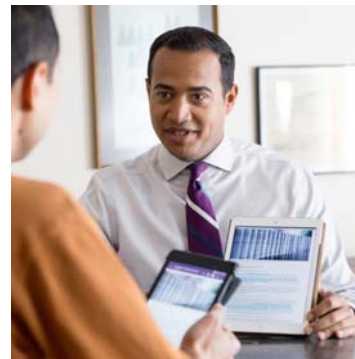
- Song 85
- **“Improving Our Skills in the Ministry—Teaching Our Students to Prepare”:** (10 min.) Discussion. Afterward, play and discuss the video that shows a publisher teaching her Bible student how to prepare for the study. Invite those in the audience to relate other ways in which they have successfully helped their students to prepare for their Bible study.
- **Welcome Our Guests:** (5 min.) Talk based on the article in the March 2016 *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook*. Relate some good experiences enjoyed during the 2017 Memorial season. Provide necessary reminders regarding parking, entering and exiting the building, and so forth for the upcoming Memorial on March 31.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) jy chap. 14
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 79 and Prayer

IMPROVING OUR SKILLS IN THE MINISTRY
Teaching Our Students to Prepare

WHY IMPORTANT: When they prepare, Bible students can more readily understand and remember what we are teaching them. The more they understand and remember, the faster they will make progress. Even after baptism, they will need to prepare for the meetings and the ministry in order to “keep on the watch.” (Mt 25:13) Therefore, knowing how to study and having a good study routine will benefit them throughout their life. Right from the start, we should help our students develop the habit of preparing for their Bible study.

HOW TO DO IT:

- Be a good example. (Ro 2:21) Prepare for each study with the student in mind. (km 11/15 3) Let him see your underlined publication
- Encourage him to prepare. Once the study is established, let him know that preparation is part of the Bible study arrangement, and explain the benefits. Give practical suggestions on how he can buy out time from his schedule to prepare. Some teachers allow the student to use the teacher’s underlined publication during a study session to help the student see the benefits. Commend him when he prepares
- Show him how to prepare. Early on, some teachers will use the entire study session to demonstrate to their student how to prepare for a lesson



- Song 131 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Esther Acted Unselfishly for Jehovah and for His People”:** (10 min.)
 Es 8:3, 4—Although Esther was safe, she risked her life for others (*ia* 143 ¶24-25)
 Es 8:5—Esther was tactful with Ahasuerus (*w06* 3/1 11 ¶8)
 Es 8:17—Many people became Jewish proselytes (*w06* 3/1 11 ¶3)
 - **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Es 8:1, 2—How was Jacob’s deathbed prophecy fulfilled regarding Benjamin’s ‘dividing spoil in the evening’? (*ia* 142, box)
- Es 9:10, 15, 16—Even though the decree authorized plundering of the spoil, why did the Jews refrain from doing so? (*w06* 3/1 11 ¶4)

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

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

- **Bible Reading:** Es 8:1-9 (4 min. or less)

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Prepare This Month’s Presentations:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play each sample presentation video, and then discuss the highlights. Afterward, discuss the article “Improving Our Skills in the Ministry—Building Your Own Magazine Presentation.”

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 118
- **“Welcome Our Guests”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Invite publishers to relate good experiences that resulted from taking the initiative to welcome visitors attending a past Memorial. Have a reenactment of an outstanding experience.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** *ia* chap. 10 ¶12-21, review on p. 91 (30 min.)
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 147 and Prayer

Welcome Our Guests

On March 23, some 12 million or more visitors are expected to attend the Memorial as our guests. What an outstanding witness they will receive as the speaker discusses Jehovah’s gift of the ransom and some of the future blessings that will result to mankind! (Isa 11:6-9; 35:5, 6; 65:21-23; Joh 3:16) However, the speaker is not the only one who will give a witness on this special occasion. All of us can have a share by warmly welcoming our guests. (Ro 15:7) Here are some suggestions.



- Instead of going to your seat and waiting for the program to begin, welcome visitors and inactive ones with a warm smile and a friendly greeting
- While giving special attention to acquaintances that you personally invited, be alert for others who may be there as a result of the invitation campaign. Invite new ones to sit with you. Share your Bible and songbook with them
- After the talk, make yourself available to answer questions. If time is limited because your congregation must leave to make room for another congregation, make arrangements to visit the person within a few days. If you do not have his or her contact information, you might say: “I’d like to hear what you thought of the program. Is there a way that I can contact you?”

14

JESUS BEGINS TO MAKE DISCIPLES

JOHN 1:29-51

- JESUS' FIRST DISCIPLES JOIN HIM

After 40 days in the wilderness and before heading back to Galilee, Jesus returns to John, who had baptized him. As Jesus approaches, John points him out and exclaims to those present: “See, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is the one about whom I said: ‘Behind me there comes a man who has advanced in front of me, for he existed before me.’” (John 1:29, 30) Though John is a bit older than Jesus, he is aware that Jesus existed before him as a spirit person in heaven.

A few weeks earlier, when Jesus came to be baptized, John did not seem certain that Jesus was to be the Messiah. “Even I did not know him,” John acknowledges, “but the reason why I came baptizing in water was so that he might be made manifest to Israel.”—John 1:31.

John goes on to relate to his listeners what happened when he baptized Jesus: “I viewed the spirit coming down as a dove out of heaven, and it remained upon him. Even I did not know him, but the very One who sent me to baptize in water said to me: ‘Whoever it is upon whom you see the spirit coming down and remaining, this is the one who baptizes in holy spirit.’ And I have seen it, and I have given witness that this one is the Son of God.” —John 1:32-34.

John is with two of his disciples the next day when Jesus again approaches. John says: “See, the Lamb of God!” (John 1:36) At this, these two disciples of John the Baptist follow Jesus. One of the two is named Andrew. Likely the other is the very person who recorded this event, who is also named John. It seems that this John is a cousin of Jesus, being a son of Salome. She is probably Mary’s sister, and her husband is Zebedee.

Turning and seeing Andrew and John following him, Jesus asks: “What are you looking for?”

“Rabbi,” they ask him, “where are you staying?”

“Come, and you will see,” answers Jesus.—John 1:37-39.

It is about four o'clock in the afternoon, and Andrew and John stay with Jesus the rest of the day. Andrew is so excited that at one point he finds his brother Simon, also called Peter, and tells him: “We have found the Messiah.” (John 1:41) Andrew takes Peter to Jesus. Later events suggest that John similarly finds his brother James and brings him to Jesus; yet, John does not include this personal detail in his record of events.

The next day, Jesus finds Philip, who is from Bethsaida. It is near the north shore of the Sea of Galilee and is the home city of Andrew and Peter. Jesus invites Philip: “Be my follower.”—John 1:43.

Philip then finds Nathanael, also called Bartholomew, and says: “We have found the one of whom Moses, in the Law, and the Prophets wrote: Jesus, the son of Joseph, from Nazareth.” Nathanael is doubtful and says to Philip: “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”

“Come and see,” Philip urges him. Jesus notices

Nathanael approaching and says: “See, truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.”

“How do you know me?” Nathanael asks.

Jesus answers: “Before Philip called you, while you were under the fig tree, I saw you.”

Nathanael replies in amazement: “Rabbi, you are the Son of God, you are King of Israel.”

“Do you believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree?” Jesus asks. “You will see things greater than these.” Then Jesus promises: “Most truly I say to you men, you will see heaven opened up and the angels of God ascending and descending to the Son of man.”—John 1:45-51.

Very soon after this, Jesus, along with his newly acquired disciples, leaves the Jordan Valley and travels to Galilee.

- ◇ Who are the first of Jesus’ disciples?
- ◇ How is Peter, as well as perhaps James, introduced to Jesus?
- ◇ What helps to convince Nathanael that Jesus is the Son of God?



79 *Teach Them to Stand Firm*

(Matthew 28:19, 20)

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

(CHORUS)

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

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

(Chorus)

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

(Chorus)

JANUARY 2018

THE  **WATCHTOWER**
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
FEBRUARY 26–APRIL 1, 2018

**LARGE
PRINT
EDITION**



COVER IMAGE:

BOLIVIA

At Riberalta, Beni, two pioneer couples load literature onto an airplane. They are going to a remote area of the country to preach

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4 WEEK OF FEBRUARY 26–MARCH 4

“He Gives Power to the Tired One”

When we feel overwhelmed by the pressures of life, what can we do? This article discusses our yeartext for 2018 and shows why we need to give Jehovah the opportunity to strengthen us and how he will do so.

16 WEEK OF MARCH 5-11

Pleasant Unity and the Memorial

The annual observance of the Memorial of Christ’s death will be held on Saturday, March 31, 2018. How can we prepare now for this occasion, how will we benefit from attending it, and how does that annual event contribute to the unity of God’s people everywhere? Find the answers in this article.

PUBLISHERS

26,081

BIBLE STUDIES

42,568

MEMORIAL

ATTENDANCE (2016)

75,027

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

28 WEEK OF MARCH 12-18

Why Give to the One Who Has Everything?

All that we have comes from Jehovah. He still expects us, however, to use our finances to support the work of his organization today. This article will consider why and how we benefit from honoring Jehovah with our valuable things.

40 WEEK OF MARCH 19-25

What Kind of Love Brings True Happiness?

52 WEEK OF MARCH 26–APRIL 1

See the Difference in People

The first of these articles discusses how true happiness comes from loving God and not from the counterfeit types of love so evident in “the last days.” (2 Tim. 3:1) The second article describes how traits that characterize people of the last days stand in sharp contrast with the qualities found among God’s people.

127 *The Sort of Person I Should Be*

(2 Peter 3:11)

1. How can I repay you, what gift can I give

To thank you, Jehovah, for the life that I live?
I look in my heart with your Word as my mirror;
The person I see, may you help me see clearer.

(BRIDGE)

My life I have promised in service to you,
But not from mere duty will I do what I do.
Whole-souled and wholehearted I serve you by choice;
May I be one more who makes you rejoice.

Help me to examine, and help me to see
Just what sort of person you desire me to be.
Those loyal to you, you will loyally treasure;
May I be among those who bring your heart pleasure.



SONGS:
127, 101

See the Difference in People

**HOW MAY WE
IMPROVE IN . . .**

the way we view
ourselves?

the way we relate
to others?

the way we strive
to improve our
personality?

*“You will . . . see the distinction
between a righteous person and
a wicked person.”—MAL. 3:18.*

MANY health-care professionals work among those infected with contagious diseases. They care for their patients because they want to help them. In doing so, however, they need to protect themselves so that they do not

1, 2. What challenge faces God’s people today? (See opening pictures.)

become infected with the disease they are seeking to treat. Likewise, many of us live and work with those who are infected with attitudes and characteristics that run counter to godly qualities. This presents a challenge for us.

² These last days are a time of moral chaos. The apostle Paul's second letter to Timothy describes the characteristics of people who are alienated from God, characteristics that will become more pronounced in the days ahead. (Read **2 Timothy 3:1-5, 13.**) Though we may be shocked by the prevalence of such qualities, we could be influenced by the behavior and attitudes of those who display them. (Prov. 13:20) In this article, we will consider how the qualities that characterize people of the last days stand in contrast with the qualities of God's people. We will also see how we can protect ourselves from being infected with negative traits while at the same time helping others spiritually.

³ "The last days," wrote the apostle Paul, would bring "critical times hard to deal with." He then listed 19 negative traits, or qualities, that would characterize people in this time period. The list

3. To whom does the list of qualities found at 2 Timothy 3:2-5 apply?

is similar to the one found at Romans 1:29-31, though the list in Paul’s letter to Timothy includes terms that are not mentioned elsewhere in the Christian Greek Scriptures. Paul introduces his list of ungodly qualities with the words “for men will be . . .” The term “men” should be understood to mean “people,” since both men and women display such qualities. However, these are not qualities exhibited by *all* people. Christians have far different traits.—Read Malachi 3:18.

HOW WE VIEW OURSELVES

⁴ After stating that many would be lovers of themselves and of money, Paul wrote that people would also be *boastful, haughty, and puffed up with pride*, traits that often reflect a feeling of superiority because of one’s abilities, appearance, wealth, or rank. People with such traits crave to be admired and adored. One scholar wrote the following about the person who has an all-consuming pride: “In his heart there is a little altar where he bows down before himself.” Some have said that inordinate pride is so distasteful that even the proud dislike it in others.

4. How would you describe those who are puffed up with pride?

⁵ Jehovah certainly detests pride. He hates “haughty eyes.” (Prov. 6:16, 17) Pride hinders approach to God. (Ps. 10:4) It is a characteristic of the Devil. (1 Tim. 3:6) Sadly, though, even some loyal servants of Jehovah have become infected with pride. Uzziah, a king of Judah, proved faithful for years. “However,” the Bible states, “as soon as he was strong, his heart became haughty to his own ruin, and he acted unfaithfully against Jehovah his God by entering the temple of Jehovah to burn incense on the altar of incense.” Later, King Hezekiah too fell prey to haughtiness, though only temporarily.—2 Chron. 26:16; 32:25, 26.

⁶ Some people become proud because of their good looks, popularity, musical ability, physical prowess, or exalted position. David had not just one of these assets but all of them; yet, he remained humble throughout his life. After he killed Goliath and was offered the daughter of King Saul to be his wife, David said: “Who am I and who are my relatives, my father’s family in Israel, for me to become son-in-law to the king?” (1 Sam. 18:18) What helped David remain humble? The qualities,

5. How have even faithful ones been overtaken by pride?

6. What could have caused David to become proud, but why did he not?

abilities, and privileges David had were because God ‘stooped down,’ or humbled himself, to pay attention to him. (Ps. 113:5-8) David knew that he did not possess anything good that he had not received from Jehovah.—Compare 1 Corinthians 4:7.

⁷ Like David, Jehovah’s people today strive to show humility. We are awed by the knowledge that Jehovah, the greatest Person in the universe, manifests the appealing quality of humility. (Ps. 18:35) We take to heart the inspired counsel: “Clothe yourselves with the tender affections of compassion, kindness, humility, mildness, and patience.” (Col. 3:12) We also know that love “does not brag, does not get puffed up.” (1 Cor. 13:4) When we show humility, people may be drawn to Jehovah. Just as husbands can be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, others can be drawn to God by the humility shown by his people.—1 Pet. 3:1.

HOW WE RELATE TO OTHERS

⁸ Paul described how people living in the last days would relate to one another. He wrote that in

7. What will help us to show humility?

8. (a) How is disobedience to parents viewed by some today?
(b) What do the Scriptures admonish children to do?

the last days, children would be *disobedient to parents*. While such behavior is sometimes accepted and even encouraged in books, movies, and television programs today, disobedience undermines the stability of the most important social unit in society—the family. This principle has long been understood. Interestingly, in ancient Greece, if a man struck his parents, he would lose all his civil rights; in Roman law, to strike a father was as serious as murder. Both the Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian Greek Scriptures admonish children to honor their parents.—Ex. 20:12; Eph. 6:1-3.

⁹ Children can protect themselves from being infected with the spirit of disobedience by reflecting on what their parents have done for them. An appreciative attitude is bolstered by the understanding that obedience is required by God, the Father of us all. By speaking positively about their parents, young ones can help other youths view their own parents in a positive light. Of course, if parents *have no natural affection* for their children, it might be difficult for those children to obey from the heart. On the other hand, when a youngster senses his parents' genuine love, he is moved

9. What will help young ones to be obedient to their parents?

to please them even when he is tempted to disobey. “Though I often felt inclined to try to get away with things,” admits Austin, “my parents set reasonable guidelines, explained the reasons for rules, and kept the lines of communication wide open. This helped me to be obedient. I could see that they cared for me, and that made me want to please them.”

¹⁰ Paul lists other negative qualities that show that people lack love for one another. Fittingly, *unthankful* follows “disobedient to parents” because it describes the attitude of those who lack appreciation for the kindnesses shown to them by others. People would also be *disloyal*. They would *not be open to any agreement*, displaying an unwillingness to become reconciled to other people. They would be *blasphemers* and *betrayers*, directing abusive, injurious speech against humans and even against God. And there would be *slanderers*, people who voice damaging reports meant to destroy the good reputation of others.*

* The Greek word for “slanderer” or “accuser” is *di-a’bo-los*, a term used in the Bible as a title for Satan, the wicked slanderer of God.

10, 11. (a) What negative qualities show that people lack love for one another? (b) To what extent do true Christians love their fellow man?

¹¹ In contrast with the people who show the widespread lack of love today, those who worship Jehovah have genuine love for their fellow man. This has always been true. Jesus said that love of neighbor, a form of *a-ga'pe*, was the second most important commandment in the Mosaic Law, second only to love of God. (Matt. 22:38, 39) Jesus also said that love for one another would be the quality that would identify true Christians. (Read John 13:34, 35.) Such Christian love would even be extended to one's enemies.—Matt. 5:43, 44.

¹² Jesus showed great love for others. He went from city to city, telling people the good news about the Kingdom of God. He cured the blind, the lame, the lepers, and the deaf. He raised the dead. (Luke 7:22) Jesus even gave his own life in behalf of mankind, though many hated him. Jesus' love perfectly reflected the love his Father shows. Throughout the earth, Jehovah's Witnesses express godly love toward others.

¹³ The love we show for others draws people to our heavenly Father. A man in Thailand, for

12. How did Jesus show love for others?

13. How may the love we show for others help them to draw close to Jehovah?

example, was touched by the love he saw among the brothers at a regional convention. Upon returning home, he asked to have a Bible study twice a week. He preached to all his relatives, and just six months after the convention, he gave his first Bible reading at the Kingdom Hall. To analyze how well we are doing in showing love for others, we might ask ourselves: ‘Am I reaching out to help others in my family, in my congregation, and in my ministry? Do I strive to see others as Jehovah sees them?’

WOLVES AND LAMBS

¹⁴ Other qualities displayed by people in the last days provide additional reasons for Christians to keep their distance from such people. Godless ones would be *without love of goodness*, or as some translations render the expression, “haters of good” or “hostile to all goodness.” They would be *without self-control, fierce*. Some would be *headstrong*, or impulsive and reckless.

¹⁵ Many who formerly displayed such animalistic qualities have changed for the better. This

14, 15. What animalistic qualities do many display, but how have some changed for the better?

transformation was beautifully foretold in a Bible prophecy. (Read Isaiah 11:6, 7.) There we read about wild animals, such as wolves and lions, that live in peace with domestic animals, such as lambs and calves. Notice that this tranquil state of affairs will prevail “because the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah.” (Isa. 11:9) Since animals cannot learn about Jehovah, the spiritual fulfillment of this prophecy applies to people.

¹⁶ There are many who were once as fierce as wolves but who now live in peace with others. You can read some of their experiences in the series “The Bible Changes Lives,” found on jw.org. Those who have come to know and serve Jehovah are not like those who *have an appearance of godliness but prove false to its power*, who behave as if they worship God but belie that claim by their conduct. Rather, formerly fierce people have “put on the new personality that was created according to God’s will in true righteousness and loyalty.” (Eph. 4:23, 24) As people learn about God, they see the need to conform to his standards. They are then

16. How has the Bible helped people to transform their personalities?

moved to make changes in their beliefs, attitudes, and conduct. Such changes are not easy but can be made because God’s spirit will help those who sincerely desire to do God’s will.

“FROM THESE TURN AWAY”

¹⁷ The distinction between those serving God and those not serving him is becoming increasing-

17. How may we avoid being influenced by those who display ungodly qualities?



ly evident. We who serve God must be careful that we do not become influenced by the unrighteous attitudes of others. Wisely, we heed the inspired counsel to *turn away from* those described at 2 Timothy 3:2-5. Of course, we cannot completely avoid people with ungodly traits. We might have to work with them, go to school with them, or live with them. But we can avoid being drawn into their thinking and imitating their characteristics. We do this by strengthening our spirituality



Applying Bible principles
transforms lives!
(See paragraph 16)

through Bible study and close association with those who are determined to serve Jehovah.

¹⁸ We should also strive to help others spiritually. Look for opportunities to witness, asking Jehovah to help you say the right thing at the right time. We should let others know that we are Jehovah’s Witnesses. That way, our fine conduct will bring glory to God and not to us. We have been trained “to reject ungodliness and worldly desires and to live with soundness of mind and righteousness and godly devotion amid this present system of things.” (Titus 2:11-14) If we conduct ourselves in a godly way, others will observe us, and some may even say: “We want to go with you, for we have heard that God is with you people.”—Zech. 8:23.

18. How may our speech and conduct benefit others spiritually?



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101 *Working Together in Unity*

(Ephesians 4:3)

1. From a world divided and cold,
 God has brought us into his fold.
 Unity and peace we possess,
 Bringing us happiness.
 Unity we cherish;
 Harmony is sweet.
 In God's work there's much to be done.
 He directs us now through his Son.
 May we serve obediently,
 Working in harmony.
2. As we pray to be of one mind,
 Always tender, loving, and kind,
 Love will grow and praise will increase,
 Giving us joy and peace.
 Peace is so refreshing,
 Bringing such delight.
 As we show true brotherly love,
 God will grant us peace from above.
 With his help, united we'll be,
 Serving him endlessly.

