

- Song 77 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- **"Healing on the Sabbath":** (10 min.)
Mr 3:1, 2—The Jewish religious leaders were seeking a pretext to condemn Jesus (*jy* 78 ¶1-2)
Mr 3:3, 4—Jesus knew that they had adopted an extreme, unscriptural view of the Sabbath law (*jy* 78 ¶3)
Mr 3:5—Jesus was "thoroughly grieved at the insensibility of their hearts" (*nwtsty* study note)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
Mr 3:29—What does it mean to blaspheme against the holy spirit, and what are the consequences? (*nwtsty* study notes)

Mr 4:26-29—What can we learn from Jesus' illustration of the sower who sleeps? (*w14* 12/15 12-13 ¶6-8)

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) Mr 3:1-19a

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Second Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Use the sample conversation.
- **Third Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Choose your own scripture, and offer a study publication.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *bhs* 36 ¶21-22—Show how to reach the heart.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS


- Song 103
- **"Let the One Who Has Ears to Listen, Listen":** (15 min.) Explain the meaning of Mark 4:9 (*nwtsty* study note). Play the video *Become Wise by Listening to Counsel* (video category THE BIBLE). Then have a discussion based on "Keep Yourselves in God's Love," pages 46-47.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *jy* chap. 18
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 123 and Prayer

MARK 3-4 | Healing on the Sabbath



3:1-5

Why was Jesus thoroughly grieved by the attitude of the Jewish religious leaders? Because they made the Sabbath burdensome by adding countless lesser restrictions. For example, killing a flea was forbidden. Healing was lawful only if life was in danger. This meant that broken bones or sprains could not be treated on the Sabbath. Clearly, the religious leaders had no real concern for the man with the withered hand.

 **ASK YOURSELF:**

'Do others view me as being rule oriented or as being compassionate?'

'When I see someone in the congregation who needs help, how can I imitate Jesus' compassion to a greater degree?'



Light in a Darkened World

(2 Corinthians 4:6)

1. In these days, dark and lawless days,
Shines a light we can see.
Like the dawn of another day
That will soon come to be.

(CHORUS)

*Shining through the darkness,
Ours is a message so bright.
It offers hope and light—
Sparkling like the daylight,
Bringing tomorrow in sight—
So ends the night.*

2. Those who sleep need awakening
As the time ebbs away.
We give hope and encouragement.
For their future we'll pray.

(Chorus)

he said to them: "Have you never read what David did when he was in need and he and the men with him were hungry?"^a

26 How, in the account about A·bi'a·thar^b the chief priest, he entered into the house of God and ate the loaves of presentation,* which it is not lawful for anybody to eat except the priests,^c and he also gave some to the men who were with him?"

27 Then he said to them: "The Sabbath came into existence for the sake of man,^d and not man for the sake of the Sabbath.

28 So the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath."^e

3 Once again he entered into a synagogue, and a man with a withered* hand was there.^f

2 So they were watching him closely to see whether he would cure the man on the Sabbath, in order to accuse him. **3** He said to the man with the withered* hand:

"Get up and come to the center." **4** Next he said to them:

"Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save a life* or to kill?"^g But they kept silent. **5** After looking around at them with indignation, being thoroughly grieved at the insensibility of their hearts,^h

he said to the man: "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

6 At that the Pharisees went out and immediately began holding council with the party followers of Herodⁱ against him, in order to kill him.

7 But Jesus departed for the sea along with his disciples, and a great multitude from Gal'i-lee and from Ju·de'a followed him.^j

8 Even from Jerusalem and from Id·u·me'a and from across the Jordan and from around Tyre and Si'don, a great multi-

2:26 *Or "the showbread." 3:1, 3 *Or "paralyzed." 3:4 *Or "soul."

tude came to him when they heard about the many things he was doing. **9** And he told his disciples to have a small boat ready for him so that the crowd would not press in on him. **10** Because he cured many, all those who had serious diseases were crowding around him to touch him.^a **11** Even the unclean spirits,^b whenever they saw him, would fall down before him and cry out and say: "You are the Son of God."^c **12** But many times he sternly ordered them not to make him known.^d

13 He ascended a mountain and summoned those whom he wanted,^e and they came to him.^f

14 And he formed* a group of 12, whom he also named apostles, those who were to accompany him and whom he would send out to preach **15** and to have authority to expel demons.^g

16 And the group of 12^h that he formed* were Simon, to whom he also gave the name Peter,ⁱ **17** James the son of Zeb'e-dee and John the brother of James (he also gave these the name Bo·a·ner'ges, which means "Sons of Thunder"),^j **18** Andrew, Philip, Bar·thol'o·mew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Al·phae'us, Thad·dae'us, Simon the Ca·na·nae'an,* **19** and Judas Is·car'i·ot, who later betrayed him.

Then he went into a house, **20** and again the crowd gathered, so that they were not able even to eat a meal. **21** But when his relatives heard about it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying: "He has gone out of his mind."^k **22** Also, the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying: "He has Be·el'ze·bub,* and

3:14, 16 *Or "appointed." **3:18** *Or "the zealous one." **3:22** *A designation applied to Satan.

MARK 3:9-4:2

he expels the demons by means of the ruler of the demons.”^a

23 So after calling them to him, he spoke to them with illustrations: “**How can Satan expel Satan?** **24** If a kingdom becomes divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand;^b **25** and if a house becomes divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. **26** Also, if Satan has risen up against himself and has become divided, he cannot stand but is coming to an end. **27** In fact, no one who enters the house of a strong man is able to steal his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man. Only then can he plunder his house. **28** Truly I say to you that all things will be forgiven the sons of men, no matter what sins they commit and what blasphemies they speak. **29** But whoever blasphemes against the holy spirit has no forgiveness forever^c but is guilty of everlasting sin.”^d **30** He said this because they were saying: “He has an unclean spirit.”^e

31 Now his mother and his brothers^f came, and standing outside, they sent someone in to call him.^g **32** As there was a crowd sitting around him, they said to him: “Look! Your mother and your brothers are outside asking for you.”^h **33** But he replied to them: “**Who are my mother and my brothers?**” **34** Then he looked at those sitting around him in a circle and said: “**See, my mother and my brothers!**”ⁱ **35** **Whoever does the will of God, this one is my brother and sister and mother.”^j**

4 Again he began teaching beside the sea, and a very large crowd gathered near him. So he went aboard a boat and sat in it away from the shore, but the whole crowd was next to the sea, along the shore.^k **2** And he began to teach them many things

MARK 4:3-28

with illustrations,^a and while he was teaching, he said to them:^b

3 "Listen. Look! The sower went out to sow.^c

4 As he was sowing, some seeds fell alongside the road, and the birds came and ate them up.

5 Others fell on rocky ground where there was not much soil, and they immediately sprang up because the soil was not deep.^d

6 But when the sun rose, they were scorched, and they withered because they had no root.

7 Other seeds fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them, and they yielded no fruit.^e

8 But others fell on the fine soil, and growing up and increasing, they began to yield fruit, and they were bearing 30, 60, and 100 times more."^f

9 Then he added: "Let the one who has ears to listen, listen."^g

10 Now when he was alone, those around him with the Twelve began questioning him about the illustrations.^h

11 He said to them: "To you the sacred secretⁱ of the Kingdom of God has been given, but to those outside all things are in illustrations,^j

12 so that, though looking, they may look and still not see, and though hearing, they may hear and still not get the sense of it; nor will they ever turn back and receive forgiveness."^k

13 Further, he said to them: "You do not know this illustration, so how will you understand all the other illustrations?"

14 "The sower sows the word.^l

15 These, then, are the ones alongside the road where the word is sown; but as soon as they have heard it, Satan comes^m and takes away the word that was sown in them.ⁿ

16 Likewise, these are the ones sown on rocky ground; as soon as they have heard the word,

they accept it with joy.^a **17** Yet they have no root in themselves, but they continue for a time; then as soon as tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, they are stumbled. **18** There are still others that are sown among the thorns. These are the ones who have heard the word,^b **19** but the anxieties^c of this system of things* and the deceptive power of riches^d and the desires^e for everything else make inroads and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. **20** Finally, the ones that were sown on the fine soil are those who listen to the word and favorably receive it and bear fruit—30, 60, and 100 times more.”^f

21 He also said to them: “A lamp is not brought out to be put under a basket* or under a bed, is it? Is it not brought out to be put on a lampstand?^g **22** For there is nothing hidden that will not be exposed; nothing is carefully concealed that will not come out in the open.^h **23** Whoever has ears to listen, let him listen.”ⁱ

24 He further said to them: “Pay attention to what you are hearing.^j With the measure that you are measuring out, you will have it measured out to you, yes, you will have more added to you. **25** For whoever has will have more given to him,^k but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.”^l

26 So he went on to say: “In this way the Kingdom of God is just as when a man casts seeds on the ground. **27** He sleeps at night and rises up by day, and the seeds sprout and grow tall—just how, he does not know. **28** On its own the ground bears fruit gradually, first the stalk,

4:19 *Or “this age.” See Glossary.

4:21 *Or “measuring basket.”

then the head, finally the full grain in the head. **29** But as soon as the crop permits it, he thrusts in the sickle, because the harvesttime has come.”

30 And he went on to say: “With what can we compare the Kingdom of God, or with what illustration can we explain it? **31** It is like a mustard grain, which at the time it was sown in the ground was the tiniest of all the seeds on the earth.^a **32** But when it has been sown, it grows and becomes greater than all other vegetable plants and produces great branches, so that the birds of heaven are able to find lodging under its shadow.”

33 With many illustrations^b of that sort he spoke the word to them, to the extent that they were able to listen. **34** Indeed, without an illustration he would not speak to them, but he would explain all things privately to his disciples.^c

35 And on that day, when evening had fallen, he said to them: “Let us cross to the other shore.”^d **36** So after they had dismissed the crowd, they took him in the boat, just as he was, and there were other boats with him.^e **37** Now a great violent windstorm broke out, and the waves kept crashing into the boat, so that the boat was close to being swamped.^f **38** But he was in the stern, sleeping on the pillow.* So they woke him up and said to him: “Teacher, do you not care that we are about to perish?” **39** With that he got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea: “Hush! Be quiet!”^g And the wind abated, and a great calm set in. **40** So he said to them: “Why are you so afraid?* Do you not yet have any faith?” **41** But they felt an unusual fear, and they said to one another: “Who really is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him.”^a

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Mr 3:1, 2—The Jewish religious leaders were seeking a pretext to condemn Jesus (*fy 78 ¶1-2*)
Mr 3:3, 4—Jesus knew that they had adopted an extreme, unscriptural view of the Sabbath law (*fy 78 ¶3*)
Mr 3:5—Jesus was "thoroughly grieved at the insensibility of their hearts" (*nwtsty study note*)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
Mr 3:29—What does it mean to blaspheme against the holy spirit, and what are the consequences? (*nwtsty study notes*)

Mr 4:26-29—What can we learn from Jesus' illustration of the sower who sleeps? (*w14 12/15 12-13 ¶6-8*)

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MARK 3-4 | Healing on the Sabbath



3:1-5

Why was Jesus thoroughly grieved by the attitude of the Jewish religious leaders? Because they made the Sabbath burdensome by adding countless lesser restrictions. For example, killing a flea was forbidden. Healing was lawful only if life was in danger. This meant that broken bones or sprains could not be treated on the Sabbath. Clearly, the religious leaders had no real concern for the man with the withered hand.

 **ASK YOURSELF:**

'Do others view me as being rule oriented or as being compassionate?'

'When I see someone in the congregation who needs help, how can I imitate Jesus' compassion to a greater degree?'



April 23-29

Treasures From God's Word

Mark 3:1, 2—The Jewish religious leaders were seeking a pretext to condemn Jesus (*jy 78 paragraphs 1-2*)

On another Sabbath, Jesus visits a synagogue, likely in Galilee. There he finds a man whose right hand is withered. (Luke 6:6) The scribes and the Pharisees are watching Jesus closely. Why? They reveal what their real intent is when they ask: “Is it lawful to cure on the Sabbath?”—Matthew 12:10.

The Jewish religious leaders believe that healing is lawful on the Sabbath *only* if life is in danger. Thus, for example, on the Sabbath it is unlawful to set a bone or bandage a sprain, conditions that are not life threatening. Clearly the scribes and the Pharisees are not questioning Jesus because they feel genuine concern for this poor man's suffering. They are trying to find a pretext for condemning Jesus.

Mark 3:3, 4—Jesus knew that they had adopted an extreme, unscriptural view of the Sabbath law (*jy 78 paragraph 3*)

Jesus, however, knows their twisted reasoning. He realizes that they have adopted an extreme, unscriptural view of what constitutes a violation of the prohibition against doing work on the Sabbath. (Exodus 20:8-10) He has already faced such misplaced criticism of his good works. Now Jesus sets the stage for a dramatic confrontation by telling the man with the withered hand: “Get up and come to the center.”—Mark 3:3.

Mark 3:5—Jesus was “thoroughly grieved at the insensibility of their hearts” (*nwtsty* study note)

with indignation, being thoroughly grieved: Only Mark records Jesus’ reaction when Jesus observed the **insensibility** of the hearts of the religious leaders on this occasion. (Matthew 12:13; Luke 6:10) Peter, himself a man of deep emotion, may have been the source of this vivid description of Jesus’ feelings.—See “Introduction to Mark.”

Digging for Spiritual Gems

Mark 3:29—What does it mean to blaspheme against the holy spirit, and what are the consequences? (*nwtsty* study notes)

blasphemes against the holy spirit: Blasphemy refers to defamatory, injurious, or abusive speech against God or against sacred things. Since **holy spirit** emanates from God himself, willfully opposing or denying its operation amounted to blasphemy against God. As shown at Matthew 12:24, 28 and Mark 3:22, the Jewish religious leaders saw God’s spirit at work in Jesus as he performed miracles; yet, they attributed this power to Satan the Devil.

guilty of everlasting sin: Seems to refer to willful sin that has eternal consequences; there is no sacrifice to cover such sin.—See study note on **blasphemes against the holy spirit** in this verse and study note on Matthew 12:31, the parallel account.

Mark 4:26-29—What can we learn from Jesus’ illustration of the sower who sleeps? (*w14* 12/15 12-13 paragraphs 6-8)

6 What can we learn from this illustration? First of all, we have to

admit that we have no control over the spiritual growth of a Bible student. Modesty on our part will help us to avoid the temptation to pressure or force a student to get baptized. We do all we can to assist and support the person, but we humbly admit that ultimately the decision to make a dedication belongs to that person. Dedication is something that must spring from a willing heart motivated by love for God. Anything less would not be acceptable to Jehovah.—Psalms 51:12; 54:6; 110:3.

7 Second, understanding the lesson behind this illustration will help us not to be discouraged if we do not at first see results from our work. We need to be patient. (James 5:7, 8) Even though the seed does not bear fruit, if we have done our best to help the student, we realize that this outcome is not a sign of unfaithfulness on our part. Jehovah allows the seed of truth to flourish only in a humble heart that is willing to make changes. (Matthew 13:23) So we should not judge the effectiveness of our ministry merely by the results. In Jehovah's eyes the success of our ministry is not determined by the response of those whom we teach. Rather, he treasures our faithful efforts regardless of the results.—Read Luke 10:17-20; 1 Corinthians 3:8.

8 Third, we do not always discern the changes that are taking place within a person. For example, a couple with whom a missionary had been studying approached him, asking to become unbaptized publishers. He reminded the couple that in order to qualify, they would have to stop smoking. Much to his surprise, they told him that they had quit several months before. Why did they quit? They had come to realize that Jehovah could see them smoking and that he hates hypocrisy. So their hearts motivated them to make a decision—either smoke in front of the missionary or stop altogether. Their newly developed love for Jehovah helped them to make the right decision. They had grown spiritually, even though the missionary had no idea of the change that had taken place.

MARK

Study Notes—Chapter 3

3:4

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

to save a life or to kill: Or “to save or to kill a soul.”—See Glossary, “Soul.”

3:5

with indignation, being thoroughly grieved: Only Mark records Jesus’ reaction when Jesus observed the **insensibility** of the hearts of the religious leaders on this occasion. (Mt 12:13; Lu 6:10) Peter, himself a man of deep emotion, may have been the source of this vivid description of Jesus’ feelings.—See “Introduction to Mark.”

3:6

began holding council: This is the first of two occasions when the Bible specifically mentions that two opposing parties, **the Pharisees** and **the party followers of Herod**, consult together to do away with Jesus. The second occasion was nearly two years later, just three days before Jesus was put to death, indicating that these groups plotted together against Jesus over an extended period of time.—Mt 22:15-22.

party followers of Herod: Also known as Herodians. They were a party of nationalists who supported the political aims of the Herods in their rule under the Romans. Some of the Sadducees probably belonged to this party. The Herodians joined with the Pharisees to oppose Jesus.—Mr 3:6.

3:7

the sea: A freshwater inland lake in northern Israel. (The Greek word translated “sea” may also mean “lake.”) It has been called the Sea of Chinnereth (Nu 34:11), the lake of Gennesaret (Lu

5:1), and the Sea of Tiberias (Joh 6:1). It lies an average of 210 m (700 ft) below sea level. It is 21 km (13 mi) long from N to S and 12 km (8 mi) wide, and its greatest depth is about 48 m (157 ft).—See App. A7, Map 3B, “Activity at the Sea of Galilee.”

3:8

Idumea: During the time of Jesus’ ministry, Idumea was the southernmost region of the Roman province of Judea. (See App. B10.) In Greek, the name means “[Land] of the Edomites.” The Edomites originally occupied territory S of the Dead Sea. (See App. B3 and B4.) They were conquered by Babylonian King Nabonidus in the sixth century B.C.E. By the fourth century B.C.E., the Nabataean Arabs occupied their land, so the Edomites moved north into the Negeb, as far as the region around Hebron, and that territory was called Idumea. They were conquered by the Hasmoneans (Maccabees) and forced to be circumcised and live by Jewish law or be expelled. The forefathers of the Herods were among those who submitted to Jewish law and customs.

from across the Jordan: Evidently referring to the region E of the Jordan, also known as Perea (from the Greek word *pe’ran*, meaning “the other side; beyond”).

3:12

not to make him known: That is, not to reveal his identity. Although the unclean spirits knew that Jesus was “the Son of God” and addressed him as such (vs. 11), Jesus would not allow demons to witness about him. They are outcasts, rebels, haters of what is holy, and enemies of God. (See study note on Mr 1:25.) Similarly, when “a demon of divination” impelled a girl to identify Paul and Silas as “slaves of the Most High God” and proclaimers of “the way of salvation,” Paul cast the spirit out of her.—Ac 16:16-18.

3:14

apostles: Or “sent ones.” The Greek word *a·po'sto·los* is derived from the verb *a·po·stel'lo*, which is used toward the end of the verse and is rendered “send out.”—See study note on Mt 10:2.

3:16

to whom he also gave the name Peter: The name that Jesus gave to Simon means “A Piece of Rock.” (Joh 1:42) Jesus, who was able to discern that Nathanael was a man “in whom there [was] no deceit” (Joh 1:47), could also discern Peter’s makeup. Peter displayed rocklike qualities, especially after Jesus’ death and resurrection.—See study note on Mt 10:2.

3:17

Boanerges: A Semitic expression that is found only in Mark’s account. Jesus gave James and John this name that likely reflected their fiery enthusiasm.—Lu 9:54.

which means: Mark explains or translates terms that Jewish readers would have been familiar with, indicating that he wrote his account with non-Jews in mind.

3:18

Bartholomew: Meaning “Son of Tolmai.” He is thought to be the Nathanael mentioned by John. (Joh 1:45, 46) A comparison of the Gospels shows that Matthew and Luke link Bartholomew and Philip in the same way that John associates the name Nathanael with Philip.—Mt 10:3; Lu 6:14.

James the son of Alphaeus: Evidently the same disciple as the one called “James the Less” at Mr 15:40. It is generally thought that Alphaeus was the same person as Clopas (Joh 19:25), which would also make him the husband of “the other Mary” (Mt 27:56; 28:1; Mr 15:40; 16:1; Lu 24:10). The Alphaeus mentioned

here is evidently not the same person as the Alphaeus mentioned at Mr 2:14, the father of Levi.

Thaddaeus: In the listings of the apostles at Lu 6:16 and Ac 1:13, the name Thaddaeus is not included; instead we find “Judas the son of James,” leading to the conclusion that Thaddaeus is another name for the apostle whom John calls “Judas, not Iscariot.” (Joh 14:22) The possibility of confusing this Judas with Judas Iscariot, the traitor, might be a reason why the name Thaddaeus is sometimes used.

the Cananaean: A designation distinguishing the apostle Simon from the apostle Simon Peter. (Mt 10:4) This term is thought to be of Hebrew or Aramaic origin, meaning “Zealot; Enthusiast.” Luke referred to this Simon as “the zealous one,” using the Greek word *ze·lo·tes'*, also meaning “zealot; enthusiast.” (Lu 6:15; Ac 1:13) While it is possible that Simon once belonged to the Zealots, a Jewish party opposed to the Romans, he may have been given this designation because of his zeal and enthusiasm.

3:19

Iscariot: Possibly meaning “Man From Kerioth.” Judas’ father, Simon, is also called “Iscariot.” (Joh 6:71) This term has commonly been understood to indicate that Simon and Judas were from the Judean town of Kerioth-hezron. (Jos 15:25) If this is so, Judas was the only Judean among the 12 apostles, the rest being Galileans.

3:21

his relatives: These may have included Jesus’ half brothers James and Judas (Jude), who each wrote a Bible book. The names of Jesus’ four half brothers are mentioned at Mt 13:55 and Mr 6:3.—See study note on Mt 13:55.

3:22

Beelzebub: A designation applied to Satan. Possibly an alteration of Baal-zebub, meaning “Owner (Lord) of the Flies,” the Baal worshipped by the Philistines at Ekron. (2Ki 1:3) Some Greek manuscripts use the alternate forms Beelzeboul or Beezeboul, possibly meaning “Owner (Lord) of the Lofty Abode (Habitation)” or if a play on the non-Biblical Hebrew word *ze’vel* (dung), “Owner (Lord) of the Dung.” As shown at Mt 12:24, this is a designation applied to Satan—the prince, or ruler, of the demons.

3:23

illustrations: Or “parables.” The Greek word *pa·ra·bo·le’*, which literally means “a placing beside (together),” may be in the form of a parable, a proverb, or an illustration. Jesus often explains a thing by ‘placing it beside,’ or comparing it with, another similar thing. (Mr 4:30) His illustrations were short and usually fictitious narratives from which a moral or spiritual truth could be drawn.

3:25

house: That is, a household. The original-language term for “house” could refer to an individual family or an extended household, including one associated with the palaces of kings. (Ac 7:10; Php 4:22) The term was used of ruling dynasties, such as those of the Herods and the Caesars, where internal dissension was common and destructive.

be able to stand: Or “continue (stay together).”—See study note on **house** in this verse.

3:29

blasphemes against the holy spirit: Blasphemy refers to defamatory, injurious, or abusive speech against God or against sacred things. Since **holy spirit** emanates from God himself, willfully opposing or denying its operation amounted to

blasphemy against God. As shown at Mt 12:24, 28 and Mr 3:22, the Jewish religious leaders saw God's spirit at work in Jesus as he performed miracles; yet, they attributed this power to Satan the Devil.

guilty of everlasting sin: Seems to refer to willful sin that has eternal consequences; there is no sacrifice to cover such sin.—See study note on **blasphemes against the holy spirit** in this verse and study note on Mt 12:31, the parallel account.

3:31

his brothers: That is, Jesus' half brothers. Their names are listed at Mt 13:55 and Mr 6:3.—See study note on Mt 13:55 regarding the meaning of the term “brother.”

3:34

See, my mother and my brothers!: Jesus here makes a distinction between his natural brothers, some of whom evidently lacked faith in him (Joh 7:5), and his spiritual brothers, his disciples. He shows that regardless of how precious the ties are that bind him to his relatives, his relationship with those who do “the will of God” is even more precious.—Mr 3:35.

MARK

Study Notes—Chapter 4

4:1

away from the shore: Along the shore of the Sea of Galilee near Capernaum, there is a spot that forms a natural amphitheater. The good acoustic properties of this location would have allowed a large crowd to hear Jesus speak to them from a boat.

4:2

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4:3

Look!: The Greek word *i·dou'*, here rendered “look!,” is often used to focus attention on what follows, encouraging the reader to visualize the scene or to take note of a detail in a narrative. It is also used to add emphasis or to introduce something new or surprising. In the Christian Greek Scriptures, the term occurs most frequently in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke and in the book of Revelation. A corresponding expression is often used in the Hebrew Scriptures.

4:5

on rocky ground: Not referring to spots where rocks were scattered in the soil but to bedrock or a shelf of rock where there was little soil. The parallel account at Lu 8:6 says that some seed fell “on the rock.” Such terrain would prevent seeds from sinking their roots deep enough to find needed moisture.

4:7

among the thorns: Jesus is evidently referring, not to full-grown thornbushes, but to weeds that had not been cleaned out of the plowed soil. These would grow and choke out the newly planted seeds.

4:9

Let the one who has ears to listen, listen: Before telling the illustration of the sower, Jesus said: “Listen.” (Mr 4:3) He

concludes the illustration with this exhortation, emphasizing how important it is for his followers to heed his counsel carefully. Similar exhortations can be found at Mt 11:15; 13:9, 43; Mr 4:23; Lu 8:8; 14:35; Re 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22; 13:9.

4:19

system of things: The Greek word *ai-on'*, having the basic meaning “age,” can refer to a state of affairs or to features that distinguish a certain period of time, epoch, or age. Here the term is connected with the anxieties and problems that characterize life in the present system of things.—See Glossary.

4:21

a basket: Used for measuring dry commodities, such as grain. The type of “basket” (Greek, *mo'di-os*) mentioned here had a capacity of about 9 L (or 8 dry qt).

4:24

With the measure that you are measuring out: The context of verses 23 to 25 indicates that if the disciples measure out little interest and attention, they cannot expect to get much from Jesus' teaching. But if they give him their fullest measure of attention, he will respond by giving them information and enlightenment beyond their expectations. Thus they will be enriched and better able to impart understanding to others. In his generosity, Jesus will favor them with **more** than they expected.

4:26

In this way the Kingdom of God is just as when a man casts seeds: Mark is the only Gospel writer to record the illustration found in verses 26 to 29.

4:31

mustard grain: Several kinds of mustard plants are found growing wild in Israel. Black mustard (*Brassica nigra*) is the

variety commonly cultivated. The relatively small seed, 1-1.6 mm (0.039 to 0.063 in.) in diameter and weighing 1 mg (0.000035 oz) produces a treelike plant. Some varieties of the mustard plant attain a height of up to 4.5 m (15 ft).

the tiniest of all the seeds: The mustard seed was used in ancient Jewish writings as a figure of speech for the very smallest measure of size. Although there are smaller seeds known today, it was evidently the tiniest of seeds gathered and sown by Galilean farmers in Jesus' day.

4:37

a great violent windstorm: This expression renders three Greek words that could literally be translated "a great hurricane of wind." (See study note on Mt 8:24.) Mark was not present, so his vivid description of the windstorm and the other details mentioned in this account may indicate that he obtained the information from Peter.—Regarding Peter's influence on Mark's Gospel, see "Introduction to Mark."

4:38

the pillow: Or "the cushion." This is the only place where this word appears in the Christian Greek Scriptures. The use of the definite article in Greek may suggest that the pillow was part of the boat's equipment. It may have been a sack of sand kept as ballast beneath the stern deck, a leather-covered seat for the helmsman, or a fleece or cushion on which an oarsman could sit.

- Song 77 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Healing on the Sabbath”:** (10 min.)
Mr 3:1, 2—The Jewish religious leaders were seeking a pretext to condemn Jesus (*fy 78 ¶1-2*)
Mr 3:3, 4—Jesus knew that they had adopted an extreme, unscriptural view of the Sabbath law (*fy 78 ¶3*)
Mr 3:5—Jesus was “thoroughly grieved at the insensibility of their hearts” (*nwtsty study note*)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
Mr 3:29—What does it mean to blaspheme against the holy spirit, and what are the consequences? (*nwtsty study notes*)

Mr 4:26-29—What can we learn from Jesus’ illustration of the sower who sleeps? (*w14 12/15 12-13 ¶6-8*)

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) Mr 3:1-19a

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Second Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Use the sample conversation.
- **Third Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Choose your own scripture, and offer a study publication.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *bhs 36 ¶21-22*—Show how to reach the heart.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS


- Song 103
- **“Let the One Who Has Ears to Listen, Listen”:** (15 min.) Explain the meaning of Mark 4:9 (*nwtsty study note*). Play the video *Become Wise by Listening to Counsel* (video category THE BIBLE). Then have a discussion based on “Keep Yourselves in God’s Love,” pages 46-47.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *fy chap. 18*
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 123 and Prayer

MARK 3-4 | Healing on the Sabbath



3:1-5

Why was Jesus thoroughly grieved by the attitude of the Jewish religious leaders? Because they made the Sabbath burdensome by adding countless lesser restrictions. For example, killing a flea was forbidden. Healing was lawful only if life was in danger. This meant that broken bones or sprains could not be treated on the Sabbath. Clearly, the religious leaders had no real concern for the man with the withered hand.

 **ASK YOURSELF:**

‘Do others view me as being rule oriented or as being compassionate?’

‘When I see someone in the congregation who needs help, how can I imitate Jesus’ compassion to a greater degree?’





Our Christian Life and Ministry

MEETING WORKBOOK

Sample Conversations

●○○ INITIAL CALL

Question: Where can we find solid advice on how to live a happy life?

Scripture: Ps 1:1, 2

Link: What effect can the love of money and possessions have on our happiness?



●●○ FIRST RETURN VISIT

Question: What effect can the love of money and possessions have on our happiness?

Scripture: 1Ti 6:9, 10

Link: What are the benefits of maintaining a positive attitude?



○○● SECOND RETURN VISIT

Question: What are the benefits of maintaining a positive attitude?

Scripture: Pr 17:22

Link: How can a family prosper despite difficulties?

Apply Yourself to the Field ministry

bhs 36 pars. 21-22

²¹ **There will be peace between humans and animals.** Animals will not harm humans anymore. Little children will feel safe, even around animals that are dangerous to us today.—**Read Isaiah 11:6-9; 65:25.**

²² **No one will be sick.** When Jesus was on earth, he healed many people. (Matthew 9:35; Mark 1:40-42; John 5:5-9) But as King of God's Kingdom, Jesus will heal everyone. No one will ever say: "I am sick."—Isaiah 33:24; 35:5, 6.

103 *Shepherds—Gifts in Men*

(Ephesians 4:8)

1. Help in our lives, Jehovah provides,
 Shepherds to tend his flock.
 By their example they serve as guides,
 Showing us how to walk.

(CHORUS)

*God gives us men who have earned our trust,
Men who are loyal and true.
They show concern for his precious sheep;
Love them for all that they do.*

2. Shepherds who love us care how we feel;
 Gently they guide the way.
 When we are hurt, they help us to heal,
 Kind in the words they say.

(Chorus)

3. Godly advice and counsel they give,
 That we may never stray.
 Thus they assist us, God's way to live,
 Serving him ev'ry day.

(Chorus)

- Song 77 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- **“Healing on the Sabbath”:** (10 min.)
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APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Second Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Use the sample conversation.
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- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *bhs 36 ¶21-22*—Show how to reach the heart.

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 **ASK YOURSELF:**

‘Do others view me as being rule oriented or as being compassionate?’

‘When I see someone in the congregation who needs help, how can I imitate Jesus’ compassion to a greater degree?’



Become Wise by Listening to Counsel

[Byong Soo Narrating]

Today started out well.

But after the meeting tonight, my feelings were hurt.

Earlier in the week, we invited some friends over to watch a movie.

And apparently, this new young elder heard about it, so he counselled me about it after the meeting, saying that I should give my movie choices some thought.

I just didn't like the way he gave the counsel.

He's only 27. That's too young.

[In the Ministry- On the Carts]

The next day, we had plans to go out in the ministry with Brother Kang and his wife.

But the motivation just wasn't there.

I asked to speak with Brother Kang alone.

I told him what happened and how we didn't feel the counsel applied to us.

Bro. Kang: I can understand how you might feel. But, Byong Soo, be absolutely honest with me. Do you feel there is no valid reason for that counsel?

Byong Soo: Mm. Well, maybe there were some scenes that could have been less violent. But the way he gave the counsel —he didn't even ask how we felt.

Bro Kang: Byong Soo, what is the only way for us to receive perfect counsel?

Byong Soo: From a perfect man.

Bro. Kang: That's right. And is Jesus here on the earth today?

Become Wise by Listening to Counsel

[Byong Soo Narrating]

He was right.

Counsel can only be perfect if it's given from a perfect person.

Still, this counsel about our movie choices would have been so much easier if it came from someone older and more experienced, like Brother Kang.

Well, he must have sensed what I was thinking because he helped me to remember something from the Bible. [Job 32:4-6; Job 33:8-13]

Bro Kang: When Job underwent severe trials, it was the younger Elihu who helped Job adjust his thinking correctly. It required humility on Job's part to listen to someone younger and less experienced.

He then read Proverbs 19:20: "Listen to counsel and accept discipline, in order to become wise in your future."

The point was clear: Keep our focus on the counsel, not the counsellor.

[At Home]

I later shared Brother Kang's comments with my wife.

We both realized that we should welcome all counsel from Jehovah. It's for our good. [Throw worldly videos into the rubbish bin]

[At the Kingdom Hall]

I'm sure it took courage for that young elder to approach me about the matter.

But I'm so glad he did because, in the end, his counsel was just another example of God's love.

“LISTEN TO COUNSEL AND ACCEPT DISCIPLINE”

Satan’s spirit—his rebellious, contentious attitude—fills today’s world. The Bible thus refers to Satan as “the ruler of the authority of the air” and mentions the resulting “spirit that now operates in the sons of disobedience.” (Ephesians 2:2) Many today want to be completely independent of the authority of others. Sadly, that spirit of independence has even infected some in the Christian congregation. For example, an elder may offer some kindly counsel on the dangers of immoral or violent entertainment, but some may resist or even resent the counsel. Each of us needs to apply the words of Proverbs 19:20: “Listen to counsel and accept discipline, in order that you may become wise in your future.”

What can help us in this regard? Consider three common reasons why people resist counsel or discipline, and then note the Scriptural viewpoint.

- “I don’t think the counsel was appropriate.” We may feel that the counsel does not really fit our circumstances or that the one giving it did not grasp the whole picture. Our immediate reaction might even be to belittle the counsel. (Hebrews 12:5) Since we are all imperfect, is it not possible that our own view of the matter is what needs adjusting? (Proverbs

19:3) Was there not *some* valid reason for the counsel to be given? Then that is what we need to focus on. God's Word advises us: "Take hold on discipline; do not let go. Safeguard it, for it itself is your life." —Proverbs 4:13.

- "I don't like the way the counsel was given." Granted, God's Word sets a high standard for the way counsel should be given. (Galatians 6:1) However, the Bible also says: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23) The only way that we can ever receive perfect counsel delivered in just the right way is to receive it from a perfect person. (James 3:2) Jehovah uses imperfect humans to counsel us, so it is wise to avoid focusing on the way the counsel is given. Look, rather, to the content of the counsel, and prayerfully consider how to apply it.
- "He is in no position to counsel me!" If we think that personal faults in the counselor invalidate his counsel, we need to remember the points noted above. Likewise, if we think that our age, experience, or responsibilities in the congregation somehow put us above counsel, we need to readjust our thinking. In ancient Israel, the king had great responsibilities, yet he had to accept counsel from prophets, priests, and others who were among his subjects. (2 Samuel 12:1-13; 2 Chronicles 26:16-20) Today, Jehovah's organization appoints imperfect men to offer counsel, and mature Christians gladly accept it and apply it. If we

have greater responsibilities or experience than others do, we should be even more conscious of the need to set an example in reasonableness and humility by accepting counsel and applying it.—1 Timothy 3:2, 3; Titus 3:2.

Clearly, none of us is above counsel. So let us be resolved to accept counsel readily, apply it obediently, and thank Jehovah heartily for this lifesaving gift. Counsel really is an expression of Jehovah's love for us, and we want to remain in God's love.—Hebrews 12:6-11.

“BE OBEDIENT TO THOSE WHO ARE TAKING THE LEAD”

In ancient Israel, there was an urgent need for organization. Moses alone could not oversee millions of people traveling together in a dangerous wilderness. What did he do? “Moses proceeded to choose capable men out of all Israel and to give them positions as heads over the people, as chiefs of thousands, chiefs of hundreds, chiefs of fifties and chiefs of tens.”—Exodus 18:25.

In the Christian congregation today, there is a similar need for organization. That is why a field service group has an overseer, a congregation has elders, a group of congregations has a circuit overseer, a

18

JESUS INCREASES AS JOHN DECREASES

MATTHEW 4:12 MARK 6:17-20 LUKE 3:19, 20
JOHN 3:22-4:3

- JESUS' DISCIPLES BAPTIZE
 - JOHN THE BAPTIST IS IMPRISONED
-

After celebrating the Passover in the spring of 30 C.E., Jesus and his disciples leave Jerusalem. However, they do not directly return to their homes in Galilee. They go into the country of Judea, where they baptize many. John the Baptist has been doing a similar work for about a year, and some of his disciples are still with him, perhaps in the Jordan River valley.

Jesus himself does not baptize anyone—his disciples do so under his direction. At this point in Jesus' ministry, both Jesus and John are teaching Jews who are repentant over their sins against God's Law covenant.—Acts 19:4.

But John's disciples are jealous, complaining to him about Jesus: "The man [Jesus] who was with



you . . . is baptizing, and all are going to him.” (John 3:26) Yet, John is not jealous. He rejoices in Jesus’ success and wants his disciples to rejoice too. John reminds them: “You yourselves bear me witness that I said, ‘I am not the Christ, but I have been sent ahead of that one.’” He illustrates this point in a way that all can understand: “Whoever has the bride is the bridegroom. But the friend of the bridegroom, when he stands and hears him, has a great deal of joy on account of the voice of the bridegroom. So my joy has been made complete.”—John 3:28, 29.

John, like the friend of the bridegroom, rejoiced months earlier upon introducing his disciples to Jesus. Some of them followed Jesus and would in time be anointed with holy spirit. John also wants his present disciples to follow Jesus. In fact, John’s purpose is to prepare the way for Christ’s ministry. John explains: “That one must keep on increasing, but I must keep on decreasing.”—John 3:30.

A different John, who had earlier begun to follow Jesus, later writes concerning Jesus’ origin and key role in human salvation: “The one who comes from

above is over all others. . . . The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand. The one who exercises faith in the Son has everlasting life; the one who disobeys the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God remains upon him.” (John 3:31, 35, 36) What an important truth for people to know!

Not long after John the Baptist discusses that his role and work must decrease, he is arrested by King Herod. Herod has taken Herodias, the wife of his half brother Philip, and married her. When John publicly exposes his adulterous deed, Herod has him put in prison. Upon hearing about John’s being arrested, Jesus leaves Judea with his disciples and ‘withdraws into Galilee.’—Matthew 4:12; Mark 1:14.

- ◇ What is the meaning of the baptism done by John? the baptism done under Jesus’ direction prior to his resurrection?
- ◇ How does John show that his disciples should not be jealous of Jesus’ activity?
- ◇ Why is John put in prison?

*Loyally Submitting
to Theocratic Order*
(1 Corinthians 14:33)

1. As Jehovah's people sound throughout the earth
Truths about the Kingdom and its priceless worth,
Theocratic order they must all obey
And remain united, loyalty display.

(CHORUS)

*Loyal submission in recognition,
This to our God we owe.
He gives protection, tender affection,
Loyalty to him we show.*

2. God provides his steward and his active force.
These will ever guide us in our Christian course.
So may we be steadfast, seeking God to please,
Loyally proclaiming all his wise decrees!

(Chorus)

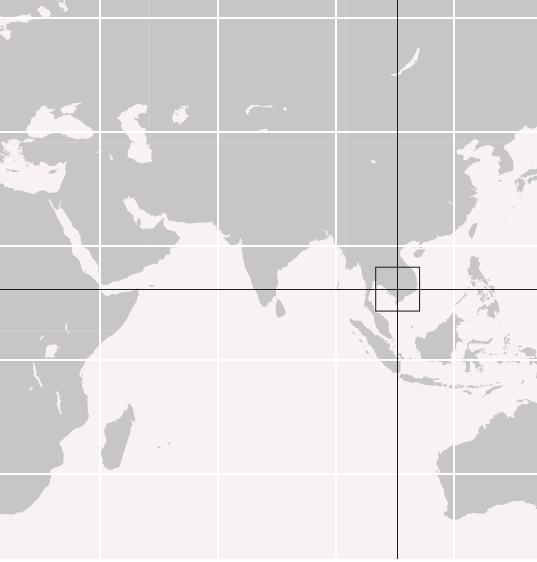
FEBRUARY 2018

THE  **WATCHTOWER**
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
APRIL 2-29, 2018

LARGE
PRINT
EDITION



COVER IMAGE:

CAMBODIA

A Witness couple share the Bible's message of good news with a mother who picked up her son from school. She wears a traditional head scarf

TABLE OF CONTENTS

4 WEEK OF APRIL 2-8

Imitate the Faith and Obedience of Noah, Daniel, and Job

16 WEEK OF APRIL 9-15

Do You Know Jehovah as Did Noah, Daniel, and Job?

Noah, Daniel, and Job experienced many of the same kinds of problems we face today. What enabled them to remain faithful and obedient? How did they come to know Jehovah so well that nothing could break their integrity? These two articles will consider those questions.

PUBLISHERS

1,021

BIBLE STUDIES

2,524

MEMORIAL

ATTENDANCE (2016)

2,790

The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) Issue 3 February 2018 is published by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; L. Weaver, Jr., President; G. F. Simonis, Secretary-Treasurer; 1000 Red Mills Road, Wallkill, NY 12589-3299, and by Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Canada, PO Box 4100, Georgetown, ON L7G 4Y4. © 2017 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. Printed in Canada.

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

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

28 WEEK OF APRIL 16-22

What Does It Mean to Be a Spiritual Person?

40 WEEK OF APRIL 23-29

Move Forward as a Spiritual Person!

In the first of these two articles, we will see what spirituality is and what we can learn from exemplary spiritual people. Then in the second article, we will consider how we can cultivate spirituality and put it to work in our daily lives.

52 Joy—A Quality We Acquire From God

60 FROM OUR ARCHIVES

The Kingdom Is in Place —Let It Come!

(Revelation 11:15; 12:10)

1. Jehovah, you always have been,
And always you will be.
You've given the throne to your Son;
He rules by your decree.
The Kingdom has been brought to birth;
His rulership will fill the earth.

(CHORUS)

*For now have come to pass
Salvation and kingdom and might.
The Kingdom is in place.
We pray: "Let it come, Let it come!"*

2. The time for the Devil is short;
We know what this will mean.
Though living in times of distress,
We see the things unseen.
The Kingdom has been brought to birth;
His rulership will fill the earth.

(Chorus)

3. The angels in heaven rejoice
And sing with joyful cries.
The heavens above are relieved
From Satan and his lies.
The Kingdom has been brought to birth;
His rulership will fill the earth.

(Chorus)



SONGS:
22, 75

CAN YOU EXPLAIN?

What might we consider when analyzing our spirituality?

What do we need to do to move forward as a spiritual person?

How will having the mind of Christ affect your daily life?

Move Forward as a Spiritual Person!

“Keep walking by spirit.”—GAL. 5:16.

ROBERT got baptized as a teenager, but he did not really take the truth seriously. He says: “I never did anything wrong, but I was just going through the motions. I looked spiritually strong, being at all the meetings and serving as an auxiliary pioneer a few times a year. But something was missing.”

1, 2. What did one brother find lacking with regard to his spiritual condition, and what did he do about it?

² Robert himself did not perceive what was wrong until later when he got married. He and his wife began passing time by quizzing each other on Bible subjects. His wife, a spiritually strong person, had no problem answering the questions, but Robert found himself constantly embarrassed, not knowing what to say. He says: “It was as if I knew nothing. I thought to myself, ‘If I am going to be my wife’s spiritual head, I have to do something.’” And Robert did. He says: “I studied the Bible and studied and studied some more, and the pieces started to fit together. I got understanding and, most important, developed a close relationship with Jehovah.”

³ We can learn important lessons from Robert’s experience. We may have some Bible knowledge and may regularly associate with the Christian congregation, but these things in themselves do not necessarily make us into a spiritual person. Or we may have already made progress, but when we examine ourselves further, we find that we can still improve our spirituality. (Phil. 3:16) To help us to *continue* progressing, we will answer three key questions in this article: (1) What will help us to analyze the true state of our spirituality? (2) How can we cultivate

3. (a) What can we learn from Robert’s experience? (b) What key points will we now discuss?

spirituality and keep growing as a spiritual person?
(3) How can strong spirituality help us in our daily life?

ANALYZING OURSELVES

⁴ When we became servants of God, we made a transformation. This change affected every area of our life. And it was not over when we got baptized. We are told to “*continue* to be made new in [our] dominant mental attitude.” (Eph. 4:23, 24) Since we are not perfect, we all need to continue making changes. Even longtime servants of Jehovah need to maintain their spirituality.—Phil. 3:12, 13.

⁵ To improve and maintain our spirituality, we need to analyze ourselves honestly. Whether we are young or old, we can ask ourselves these questions: ‘Do I notice changes in myself that indicate that I am moving toward becoming a spiritually-minded person? Is my personality becoming Christlike? What do my disposition and conduct at Christian meetings reveal about the depth of my spirituality? What do my conversations show about my desires? What do my study habits, dress and grooming, or reaction to counsel reveal about me? How do I react when faced

4. To whom does the counsel found at Ephesians 4:23, 24 apply?

5. What questions can help us analyze ourselves?

with temptations? Have I progressed beyond basics to maturity, becoming full-grown as a Christian?' (Eph. 4:13) Thinking about our answers to these questions can help us measure our spiritual progress.

⁶ To analyze the state of our spirituality, we may at times need help from others. The apostle Paul pointed out that the fleshly person cannot see the wrongness of his position before God. On the other hand, the spiritual person understands God's viewpoint as well as the erroneous course of the physical man. (1 Cor. 2:14-16; 3:1-3) Elders who have the mind of Christ often see early warning signs of fleshly thinking. If they bring these to our attention, do we accept and apply their counsel? By doing so, we give evidence of our desire to develop our spirituality.—Eccl. 7:5, 9.

CULTIVATING SPIRITUALITY

⁷ Keep in mind that having knowledge of the Bible is not enough to become a spiritually-minded person. Ancient King Solomon had a lot of knowledge

6. To analyze the state of our spirituality, what else may be needed?

7. Why is having Bible knowledge not enough to become a spiritually-minded person?

about Jehovah's ways. His sayings later became part of the Bible. But in the end, he failed to stay faithful to Jehovah as a spiritual man. (1 Ki. 4:29, 30; 11:4-6) So in addition to Bible knowledge, what is needed? We need to continue to make spiritual progress. (Col. 2:6, 7) But how do we do so?

⁸ Paul urged first-century Christians to “press on to maturity.” (Heb. 6:1) In order to apply Paul's counsel today, what steps can we take? One important step is to study the publication “*Keep Yourselves in God's Love*.” Completing your study of that book will help you to see how to apply Bible principles in your life. If you have already finished studying that book, can you move on to other study materials that can help you to stabilize your faith? (Col. 1:23) Do you prayerfully meditate on how you can apply in your life what you are studying?

⁹ Keep in mind that as we study and meditate, we should do so with the goal of developing a heartfelt desire to please Jehovah and obey his laws. (Ps. 40:8; 119:97) At the same time, we work to reject things that will hinder our spiritual growth.—Titus 2:11, 12.

8, 9. (a) What will help us to develop spiritual stability? (b) What is our goal when we study and meditate? (See opening picture.)

¹⁰ If you are a youth, do you have clear spiritual goals? When attending circuit assemblies, a brother who serves at Bethel has made it his custom to speak with baptism candidates before the program. Many candidates are youths. The brother asks them what spiritual goals they have. Many give answers that reveal that they have a clear vision of what they want to do to serve Jehovah—perhaps by entering some form of full-time service or by serving where there is a greater need for Kingdom proclaimers. Occasionally, however, there are youths who do not seem to have an answer. Might that indicate that they have not yet resolved in their heart that they should have clear spiritual goals? As a youth, ask yourself: ‘Am I participating in spiritual activities just because my parents expect me to? Am I drawing closer to God by nurturing a personal relationship with him?’ Of course, the counsel to have spiritual goals applies not just to youths. Having such goals will help all of us as Jehovah’s servants to deepen our spirituality.—Eccl. 12:1, 13.

¹¹ Once we have identified areas for improvement, we need to take positive steps that will help us move

10. What can young people do to cultivate spirituality?

11. (a) To make real spiritual progress, what do we need to do?
(b) What Bible example can we imitate?

forward. Becoming a spiritual person is very important. In fact, it is a life-and-death matter. (Rom. 8: 6-8) However, for us to be spiritually mature does not mean to be perfect. Jehovah's spirit can help us to make the needed progress. Still, we do need to put forth effort. In commenting on Luke 13:24, John Barr, who served as a member of the Governing Body, pointed out some years ago, "Many fail because they are not diligent enough to grow mighty." We need to be like Jacob, who did not give up wrestling with an angel until he got a blessing. (Gen. 32: 26-28) Although Bible study can be enjoyable, we should not expect the Bible to read like a novel that is written just to entertain. We need to work at finding spiritual gems that will help us.

¹² As we work at cultivating spirituality, holy spirit will give us the power to transform our mind. With the spirit's help, we can gradually begin to think more and more as Christ did. (Rom. 15:5) Additionally, it will help us root out fleshly desires and cultivate qualities pleasing to God. (Gal. 5:16, 22, 23) If we find that our mind pushes us toward materialistic thinking or fleshly desires, we should not give up.

12, 13. (a) What will help us to apply Romans 15:5? (b) How can the apostle Peter's example and counsel help us? (c) What can you do to cultivate spirituality? (See the box "Steps You Can Take to Progress Spiritually.")

Steps You Can Take to Progress Spiritually

- Study God’s Word diligently, and meditate on what you read
- Zealously apply the things you learn
- Keep your mind and heart open to the influence of the holy spirit
- Gratefully accept help from others

Keep asking for the spirit, and Jehovah will help you to redirect your mental attitude to focus on proper things. (Luke 11:13) Remember the apostle Peter. Several times in his life, he did not respond as a spiritual man should. (Matt. 16:22, 23; Luke 22:34, 54-62; Gal. 2:11-14) But he did not give up. Gradually, with Jehovah’s help, Peter developed Christlike thinking. We can do the same.

¹³ Peter, in fact, later spelled out specific things we can work on. (Read 2 Peter 1:5-8.) As we “put forth all earnest effort” to develop such qualities as self-control, endurance, and brotherly affection, we will be helped to continue to move ahead as spiritually-minded individuals. Each day, why not ask yourself, ‘What can I work on today to progress spiritually?’

APPLYING BIBLE PRINCIPLES IN DAILY LIFE

¹⁴ Our Christlike thinking will influence our speech, our conduct at work or in school, and the decisions we make each day. Those decisions will reveal that we strive to be followers of Christ. As spiritual people, we want nothing to jeopardize our relationship with our heavenly Father. When we are confronted with temptations, our Christlike attitude will move us to push them away. When making decisions, we will stop and ponder over these questions: ‘What Bible principles will help me decide? What would Christ do in this situation? What decision will please Jehovah?’ To train ourselves to think this way, let us take a look at a few sample situations. In each example, we will identify a Scriptural principle that can help us make a wise decision.

¹⁵ *Selecting a marriage mate.* The Scriptural principle is found at **2 Corinthians 6:14, 15. (Read.)** Paul’s words clearly state that a spiritual person cannot enjoy complete harmony with a physical person. How can this be applied to choosing a marriage mate?

14. How will being spiritually-minded affect our life?

15, 16. Give examples of how Christlike thinking helps us when making decisions about (a) selecting a marriage mate. (b) choosing our associations.

¹⁶ *Associations.* Note the Scriptural principle found at **1 Corinthians 15:33.** (Read.) A godly person will not mix with those who could endanger his spirituality. What questions could help you to make practical application? For example, how does this apply to social networking? Or what should you do if invited to play online games with strangers?

¹⁷ *Activities that hinder spiritual growth.* Paul's words to fellow Christians contain a warning. (Read **Hebrews 6:1.**) What are the "dead works" that we should avoid? Any pursuits that are spiritually dead, vain, or fruitless. This principle can help us with many questions that could arise in our life, such as: 'Does this activity fall in the category of fleshly works? Should I get involved in this money-making proposal? Why should I not join worldly reform movements?'

¹⁸ *Spiritual goals.* Jesus' words spoken in the Sermon on the Mount give us clear guidance about setting goals. (Matt. 6:33) A spiritual person pursues spiritually oriented goals. Keeping this principle in mind helps us answer such questions as: 'Should I pursue plans for an advanced education? Should I accept a certain job offer?'

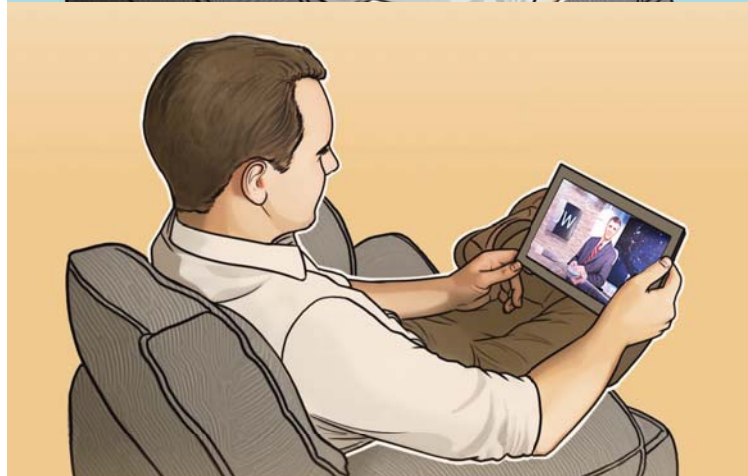
17-19. How will having a spiritual viewpoint help you (a) to avoid vain pursuits? (b) to set goals in life? (c) to deal with disputes?

¹⁹ *Disputes.* How does Paul’s counsel to the congregation in Rome help us in dealing with disputes? (Rom. 12:18) As followers of Christ, we work to “be peaceable with all men.” When disputes arise, how do we react? Do we find it difficult to yield, or are we known as those who are “making peace”?—Jas. 3:18.

²⁰ These are just a few examples to show how reflecting on godly principles can help us make deci-

20. Why do you want to move forward spiritually?

Will my decisions help me to grow spiritually, set spiritual goals, and “be peaceable”?
(See paragraphs 17-19)



sions that harmonize with what is expected of a spiritual person. Being spiritually-minded can help us to make our daily life happier and more satisfying. Robert, whose experience was considered at the beginning of this article, says: “After I developed a real relationship with Jehovah, I was a better husband and a better father. I was content and happy.” We can enjoy similar blessings if we make spiritual progress our priority. As spiritual people, we will enjoy a more satisfying life now and “the real life” to come.—1 Tim. 6:19.



1. Today men heap reproach and shame
Upon Jehovah’s holy name.
Some show God weak; some paint him cruel.
“There is no God,” so shouts the fool.
Who’ll go Jehovah’s name to clear?
Who’ll sing his praise for all to hear?

(CHORUS 1)

*‘Lord, here I am! Send me, send me!
I’ll sing your praises faithfully.
No greater honor could there be, Lord.
Here I am! Send me, send me!’*

2. Some make the claim that God is slow;
The fear of God they do not know.
Some worship idols made of stone;
Some would put Caesar on God’s throne.
Who’ll tell the wicked what’s in store?
Who’ll warn of God’s great final war?

(CHORUS 2)

*'Lord, here I am! Send me, send me!
I'll sound the warning fearlessly.
No greater honor could there be, Lord.
Here I am! Send me, send me!'*

3. Today the meek ones mourn and sigh
Because the evils multiply.
With honest hearts they seek to find
The truth that gives real peace of mind.
Who'll go with comfort to the meek?
Who'll help them righteousness to seek?

(CHORUS 3)

*'Lord, here I am! Send me, send me!
I'll teach the meek ones patiently.
No greater honor could there be, Lord.
Here I am! Send me, send me!'*

