

- Song 16 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“A Symbolic Drama’ With Meaning for Us”:** (10 min.)
 Ga 4:24, 25—Hagar represented literal Israel under the Law covenant (*it-1 1018 ¶2*)
 Ga 4:26, 27—Sarah represented “the Jerusalem above,” the heavenly part of Jehovah’s organization (*w14 10/15 10 ¶11*)
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- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Ga 4:6—What is the meaning of the Hebrew or the Aramaic word *abba*? (*w09 4/1 13*)

Ga 6:17—In what possible ways did the apostle Paul bear “the brand marks of a slave of Jesus”? (*w10 11/1 15*)

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) Ga 4:1-20 (10)

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Apply Yourself to Reading and Teaching:** (10 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Scripture Application Made Clear*, and then discuss study 6 of the *Teaching* brochure.
- **Talk:** (5 min. or less) *w12 3/15 30-31*—Theme: Why Should Christians Vigorously Shun Pornography? (13)

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 110
- **Local Needs:** (8 min.)
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- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *jy chap. 69*
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GALATIANS 4-6 | “A Symbolic Drama” With Meaning for Us



4:24-31

The apostle Paul used this “symbolic drama” to illustrate the superiority of the new covenant over the Law covenant. Under the loving supervision of Christ and his fellow heirs, all humankind has the prospect of freedom from sin, imperfection, sorrow, and death.—Isa 25:8, 9.

HAGAR—THE SLAVE GIRL

Literal Israel under the Law covenant, with Jerusalem as its capital

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The Jewish people (bound to Jehovah by the Law covenant) persecuted and rejected Jesus

ENSLAVEMENT TO THE LAW COVENANT

The Law reminded natural Israelites that they were slaves to sin

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Jerusalem above, the heavenly part of God’s organization

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Christ and the 144,000 spirit-anointed Christians

THE NEW COVENANT OFFERS FREEDOM

Faith in the value of Christ’s sacrifice led to freedom from the Law’s condemnation

16 Praise Jah for His Son, the Anointed

(Revelation 21:2)

1. Jehovah anointed his Son
To rule over ev'ryone.
His throne is established on justice,
That God's will on earth may be done.

(CHORUS)

*Praise Jah for his Son, the Anointed.
Praise Jesus, O you faithful sheep,
Who loyally follow day after day
and all his commandments keep.
Praise Jah for his Son, the Anointed,
the Ruler of heavenly fame,
Anointed with exultation and might
to honor God's holy name.*

2. Christ's brothers are chosen and called.
God gives them their own new birth.
This bride class will share in the Kingdom
And bring Paradise to this earth.

(Chorus)

Galatians 4-6

⁴ Now I say that as long as the heir is a young child, he is no different from a slave, although he is the lord of all things, ² but he is under supervisors and stewards until the day set ahead of time by his father. ³ Likewise, we too, when we were children, were enslaved by the elementary things of the world. ⁴ But when the full limit of the time arrived, God sent his Son, who was born of a woman and who was under law, ⁵ that he might release by purchase those under law, so that we might receive the adoption as sons.

⁶ Now because you are sons, God has sent the spirit of his Son into our hearts, and it cries out: “*Abba, Father!*” ⁷ So you are no longer a slave but a son; and if a son, then you are also an heir through God.

⁸ Nevertheless, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those who are not really gods. ⁹ But now that you have come to know God or, rather, have come to be known by God, how is it that you are turning back again to the weak and beggarly elementary things and want to slave for them over again? ¹⁰ You are scrupulously observing days and months and seasons and years. ¹¹ I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you.

¹² Brothers, I beg you, become as I am, because I also used to be as you are. You did me no wrong. ¹³ But you know that it was because of a physical illness that I had my first opportunity to declare the good news to you. ¹⁴ And though my physical condition was a trial for you, you did not treat me with contempt or disgust; but you received me like an angel of God, like Christ Jesus.

¹⁵ Where is that happiness you had? For I bear you witness that, if it had been possible, you would have gouged out your eyes and given them to me. ¹⁶ So, then, have I become your enemy because

I tell you the truth? ¹⁷ They are zealous to win you over, but not for a good purpose; they want to alienate you from me, so that you may be eager to follow them. ¹⁸ However, it is always fine for someone to seek zealously after you for a good purpose and not just when I am present with you, ¹⁹ my little children, for whom I am again experiencing birth pains until Christ is formed in you. ²⁰ I wish I could be present with you just now and speak in a different way, because I am perplexed over you.

²¹ Tell me, you who want to be under law, Do you not hear the Law? ²² For example, it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the servant girl and one by the free woman; ²³ but the one by the servant girl was actually born through natural descent and the other by the free woman through a promise. ²⁴ These things may be taken as a symbolic drama; for these women mean two covenants, the one from Mount Si'nai, which bears children for slavery and which is Ha'gar. ²⁵ Now Ha'gar means Si'nai, a mountain in Arabia, and she corresponds with the Jerusalem today, for she is in slavery with her children. ²⁶ But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother.

²⁷ For it is written: "Be glad, you barren woman who does not give birth; break into joyful shouting, you woman who does not have birth pains; for the children of the desolate woman are more numerous than those of her who has the husband." ²⁸ Now you, brothers, are children of the promise the same as Isaac was. ²⁹ But just as then the one born through natural descent began persecuting the one born through spirit, so also now.

³⁰ Nevertheless, what does the scripture say? "Drive out the servant girl and her son, for the son of the servant girl will by no means be an heir with the son of the free woman." ³¹ So, brothers, we are children, not of a servant girl, but of the free woman.

5 For such freedom Christ set us free. Therefore, stand firm, and do not let yourselves be confined again in a yoke of slavery.

² See! I, Paul, am telling you that if you become circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you. ³ Again I bear witness to every man who gets circumcised that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. ⁴ You are separated from Christ, you who are trying to be declared righteous by means of law; you have fallen away from his undeserved kindness. ⁵ For our part, we are by spirit eagerly waiting for the hoped-for righteousness resulting from faith. ⁶ For in union with Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is of any value, but faith operating through love is.

⁷ You were running well. Who hindered you from continuing to obey the truth? ⁸ This sort of persuasion does not come from the One calling you. ⁹ A little leaven ferments the whole batch of dough. ¹⁰ I am confident that you who are in union with the Lord will not come to think otherwise; but the one who is causing you trouble, whoever he may be, will receive the judgment he deserves. ¹¹ As for me, brothers, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the stumbling block of the torture stake has been eliminated. ¹² I wish the men who are trying to unsettle you would emasculate themselves.

¹³ You were called to freedom, brothers; only do not use this freedom as an opportunity to pursue fleshly desires, but through love slave for one another. ¹⁴ For the entire Law has been fulfilled in one commandment, namely: "You must love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁵ If, though, you keep on biting and devouring one another, look out that you do not get annihilated by one another.

¹⁶ But I say, Keep walking by spirit and you will carry out no fleshly desire at all. ¹⁷ For the flesh is against the spirit in its desire, and the spirit against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so

that you do not do the very things you want to do. ¹⁸ Furthermore, if you are being led by spirit, you are not under law.

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are plainly seen, and they are sexual immorality, uncleanness, brazen conduct, ²⁰ idolatry, spiritism, hostility, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, dissensions, divisions, sects, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and things like these. I am forewarning you about these things, the same way I already warned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit God's Kingdom.

²² On the other hand, the fruitage of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, ²³ mildness, self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴ Moreover, those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed to the stake the flesh together with its passions and desires.

²⁵ If we are living by spirit, let us also go on walking orderly by spirit. ²⁶ Let us not become egotistical, stirring up competition with one another, envying one another.

6 Brothers, even if a man takes a false step before he is aware of it, you who have spiritual qualifications try to readjust such a man in a spirit of mildness. But keep an eye on yourself, for fear you too may be tempted. ² Go on carrying the burdens of one another, and in this way you will fulfill the law of the Christ. ³ For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he is deceiving himself. ⁴ But let each one examine his own actions, and then he will have cause for rejoicing in regard to himself alone, and not in comparison with the other person. ⁵ For each one will carry his own load.

⁶ Moreover, let anyone who is being taught the word share in all good things with the one who gives such teaching.

⁷ Do not be misled: God is not one to be mocked. For whatever a person is sowing, this he will also reap; ⁸ because the one sowing

with a view to his flesh will reap corruption from his flesh, but the one sowing with a view to the spirit will reap everlasting life from the spirit. ⁹ So let us not give up in doing what is fine, for in due time we will reap if we do not tire out. ¹⁰ So, then, as long as we have the opportunity, let us work what is good toward all, but especially toward those related to us in the faith.

¹¹ See with what large letters I have written you with my own hand.

¹² All those who want to make a good impression in the flesh are the ones who try to compel you to get circumcised, doing so only to avoid being persecuted for the torture stake of the Christ. ¹³ For even those who are getting circumcised do not keep the Law themselves, but they want you to be circumcised so that they may have cause for boasting about your flesh. ¹⁴ But may I never boast, except in the torture stake of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been put to death with regard to me and I with regard to the world. ¹⁵ For neither is circumcision anything nor is uncircumcision, but a new creation is. ¹⁶ As for all those who walk orderly by this rule of conduct, peace and mercy be upon them, yes, upon the Israel of God.

¹⁷ From now on let no one make trouble for me, for I am bearing on my body the brand marks of a slave of Jesus.

¹⁸ The undeserved kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ be with the spirit you show, brothers. Amen.

- Song 16 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“A Symbolic Drama’ With Meaning for Us”:** (10 min.)
 Ga 4:24, 25—Hagar represented literal Israel under the Law covenant (*it-1 1018 ¶2*)
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- **Apply Yourself to Reading and Teaching:** (10 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Scripture Application Made Clear*, and then discuss study 6 of the *Teaching* brochure.
- **Talk:** (5 min. or less) *w12 3/15 30-31*—Theme: Why Should Christians Vigorously Shun Pornography? (13)

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 110
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- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 40 and Prayer

GALATIANS 4-6 | “A Symbolic Drama” With Meaning for Us



4:24-31

The apostle Paul used this “symbolic drama” to illustrate the superiority of the new covenant over the Law covenant. Under the loving supervision of Christ and his fellow heirs, all humankind has the prospect of freedom from sin, imperfection, sorrow, and death.—Isa 25:8, 9.

HAGAR—THE SLAVE GIRL

Literal Israel under the Law covenant, with Jerusalem as its capital

HAGAR’S “CHILDREN”

The Jewish people (bound to Jehovah by the Law covenant) persecuted and rejected Jesus

ENSLAVEMENT TO THE LAW COVENANT

The Law reminded natural Israelites that they were slaves to sin

SARAH—THE FREE WOMAN

Jerusalem above, the heavenly part of God’s organization

SARAH’S “CHILDREN”

Christ and the 144,000 spirit-anointed Christians

THE NEW COVENANT OFFERS FREEDOM

Faith in the value of Christ’s sacrifice led to freedom from the Law’s condemnation

June 3-9 / Galatians 4-6

- Song 16 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 minutes or less)

Treasures From God's Word

- **“A Symbolic Drama' With Meaning for Us”**: (10 minutes)

“A Symbolic Drama” With Meaning for Us

Galatians 4:24-31

The apostle Paul used this “symbolic drama” to illustrate the superiority of the new covenant over the Law covenant. Under the loving supervision of Christ and his fellow heirs, all humankind has the prospect of freedom from sin, imperfection, sorrow, and death.—Isaiah 25:8, 9.

Hagar—The Slave Girl

Literal Israel under the Law covenant, with Jerusalem as its capital

Hagar's “Children”

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Enslavement to the Law Covenant

The Law reminded natural Israelites that they were slaves to sin

Sarah—The Free Woman

Jerusalem above, the heavenly part of God's organization

Sarah's "Children"

Christ and the 144,000 spirit-anointed Christians

The New Covenant Offers Freedom

Faith in the value of Christ's sacrifice led to freedom from the Law's condemnation

Galatians 4:24, 25—Hagar represented literal Israel under the Law covenant

Galatians 4:24, 25: These things may be taken as a symbolic drama; for these women mean two covenants, the one from Mount Sinai, which bears children for slavery and which is Hagar. Now Hagar means Sinai, a mountain in Arabia, and she corresponds with the Jerusalem today, for she is in slavery with her children.

it-1 1018 paragraph 2

According to the apostle Paul, Hagar figured in a symbolic drama in which she represented the nation of fleshly Israel, bound to Jehovah by the Law covenant inaugurated at Mount Sinai, which covenant brought forth "children for slavery." Because of the sinful condition of the people, the nation was unable to keep the terms of that covenant. Under it the Israelites did not become a free people but were condemned as sinners worthy of death; hence, they were slaves. (John 8:34; Romans 8:1-3) Jerusalem of Paul's day corresponded to Hagar, for Jerusalem the capital, representing the organization of natural Israel, found herself in slavery with her children. Spirit-begotten Christians, though, are children of the "Jerusalem above," God's symbolic woman. This Jerusalem, like Sarah the freewoman, has never been in slavery. But just as Isaac was persecuted by Ishmael, so also the children of the "Jerusalem above," who have been set free by the Son, experienced persecution at the hands of the children of enslaved Jerusalem. However, Hagar and her son were driven out, representing Jehovah's casting off natural Israel as a nation.—Galatians 4:21-31; see also John 8:31-40.

Galatians 4:26, 27—Sarah represented “the Jerusalem above,” the heavenly part of Jehovah’s organization

Galatians 4:26, 27: But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. For it is written: “Be glad, you barren woman who does not give birth; break into joyful shouting, you woman who does not have birth pains; for the children of the desolate woman are more numerous than those of her who has the husband.”

w14 10/15 10 paragraph 11

While the Abrahamic covenant had a literal fulfillment for the descendants of Abraham when they inherited the Promised Land, the Scriptures show that the terms of that covenant also have a spiritual fulfillment. (Galatians 4:22-25) In this greater fulfillment, as the apostle Paul explained under inspiration, the primary part of the offspring of Abraham is Christ and the secondary part refers to the 144,000 spirit-anointed Christians. (Galatians 3:16, 29; Revelation 5:9, 10; 14:1, 4) The woman producing the offspring is none other than “the Jerusalem above”—the heavenly part of God’s organization, made up of loyal spirit creatures. (Galatians 4:26, 31) As the Abrahamic covenant promised, the offspring of the woman would bring blessings to mankind.

Galatians 4:28-31—Blessings to obedient mankind come through the “children” of the Jerusalem above

Galatians 4:28-31: Now you, brothers, are children of the promise the same as Isaac was. But just as then the one born through natural descent began persecuting the one born through spirit, so also now. Nevertheless, what does the scripture say? “Drive out the servant girl and her son, for the son of the servant girl will by no means be an heir with the son of the free woman.” So, brothers, we are children, not of a servant girl, but of the free woman.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

Galatians 4:6—What is the meaning of the Hebrew or the Aramaic word *abba*?

Galatians 4:6: Now because you are sons, God has sent the spirit of his Son into our hearts, and it cries out: “*Abba*, Father!”

w09 4/1 13

Why did Jesus in prayer address Jehovah as “*Abba*, Father”?

The Aramaic word ‘*abba*’ can mean either “the father” or “O Father.” On each of the three occasions that the expression appears in the Scriptures, it is part of a prayer and is used with

reference to the heavenly Father, Jehovah. What significance does the word carry?

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia states: "In the colloquial speech of Jesus' time, 'abbā' was primarily used as a term of informal intimacy and respect by children of their fathers." It was an endearing form of address and among the first words that a child learned. Jesus used the expression in a particularly fervent appeal to his Father. In the garden of Gethsemane, just hours before his death, Jesus in prayer addressed Jehovah with the words "Abba, Father."—Mark 14:36.

"'Abbā' as a form of address to God is extremely uncommon in Jewish literature of the Greco-Roman period, doubtless because it would have appeared irreverent to address God with this familiar term," continues the above-mentioned reference work. However, "Jesus' . . . use of this term in prayer is an indirect attestation of His extraordinary claim to intimacy with God." The other two Scriptural occurrences of "Abba"—both in the writings of the apostle Paul—indicate that first-century Christians also used it in their prayers.—Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6.

Galatians 6:17—In what possible ways did the apostle Paul bear “the brand marks of a slave of Jesus”?

Galatians 6:17: From now on let no one make trouble for me, for I am bearing on my body the brand marks of a slave of Jesus.

w10 11/1 15

To what was the apostle Paul referring when he said that he bore on his body “the brand marks of a slave of Jesus”?—Galatians 6:17.

Paul’s words could have suggested a number of possible meanings in the minds of his first-century audience. For instance, a red-hot iron was used in ancient times to identify prisoners of war, robbers of temples, and fugitive slaves. When used on humans in this way, the brand mark was considered dishonorable.

However, brand marks were not always viewed negatively. Many ancient peoples used them to denote membership of a specific tribe or of a particular religion. According to the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, for example, “the Syrians consecrated themselves to the gods Hadad and Atargatis by signs branded on the wrist or neck . . . An ivy leaf was branded on the devotee of Dionysus.”

Many modern-day commentators assume that Paul was referring to scars received in different episodes of physical abuse during his

Christian missionary activity. (2 Corinthians 11:23-27) Perhaps, though, Paul meant that his way of life—not any literal marks—identified him as a Christian.

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Scripture Application Made Clear

6

SUMMARY: Do not simply read a scripture and then move on to the next point. Make sure that your listeners see clearly the connection between the scripture you read and the point you are making.



John 10:33-36

HOW TO DO IT:

- **Isolate key words.** After reading a scripture, highlight the words that relate directly to your main point. You may do this by repeating those words or by asking a question that invites your listeners to identify the key words.



If you use different words to restate the idea of the scripture, be sure that your listeners can still plainly see how the words in the Bible itself connect to your main point.

- **Emphasize the point.** If you introduced the scripture with a clear reason for reading it, explain how the key words of the scripture relate to that reason.



As you discuss the scripture, keep your Bible open. This helps your listeners to connect your words to the verse you just read.

- **Make your application simple.** Avoid commenting on irrelevant details that do not contribute to the main point. Based on what your listeners already know about the topic, decide how many facts are necessary to make the point of application clear and understandable.

Apply Yourself to the Field Ministry

- **Apply Yourself to Reading and Teaching:** (10 minutes)

Discussion. Play the video *Scripture Application Made Clear*, and then discuss study 6 of the *Teaching* brochure.

- **Talk:** (5 minutes or less) w12 3/15 30-31—Theme: Why Should Christians Vigorously Shun Pornography? (*th* study 13)

Questions From Readers

Could a Christian's practice of viewing pornography become so bad that it results in his being expelled from the Christian congregation?

Yes, it could. That underscores why it is vital to shun vigorously all pornography—both written material and images—in magazines, in films, in videos, and on the Internet.

Pornography is found everywhere around the globe. The Internet makes pornographic material more available than ever and has increased the number affected by this terrible plague. Some, young and old, have accidentally come across pornographic Web sites. Others have deliberately gone to them, feeling less inhibited because they can read or view pornography in secret—at home or at the office. Why should this seriously concern Christians?

We find a fundamental reason in Jesus' warning: "Everyone that keeps on looking at a woman so as to have a passion for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matthew 5:28) Of course, normal sexual relations are proper and a source of pleasure between marriage mates. (Proverbs 5:15-19; 1 Corinthians 7:2-5) But that is not the focus of pornography. Rather, it features illicit sex that stimulates the sort of immoral thoughts that Jesus warned against. Plainly, reading or viewing pornography goes directly contrary to the divine direction: "Deaden, therefore, your body members that are upon the earth as respects fornication, uncleanness, sexual appetite, hurtful desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry."—Colossians 3:5.

What if a Christian did view pornography on an occasion or two? His case might, in a sense, be likened to the dangerous situation in which the psalmist Asaph once found himself: "As for me, my feet had almost turned aside, my steps had nearly been made to slip." How could the Christian have a clean conscience and be at peace with God if he was gazing at pornographic images of naked men or women or of a couple engaging in fornication? Nor was Asaph at peace: "I came to be plagued all day long, and my correction is every morning."—Psalm 73:2, 14.

A Christian caught up in that badness should wake up and face his need for spiritual help. That help is available in the congregation: "Even though a man takes some false step before he is aware of it, you who have spiritual qualifications try to readjust such a man in a spirit of mildness, as you each keep an eye on yourself." (Galatians 6:1) A Christian elder or two could give him the help he needs, including 'prayers of faith that can make the indisposed one well, and his sin can be forgiven.' (James 5:13-15) Those who have sought help to remove the stain of pornography have seen that drawing near to God has been good for them, as it was for Asaph.—Psalm 73:28.

However, the apostle Paul said that some who sinned did not repent "over their *uncleanness* and fornication and loose conduct." * (2 Corinthians 12:21) Regarding the Greek term there rendered "uncleanness," Professor Marvin R. Vincent wrote that it has "the sense of impurity on the side of *sordidness*." It is a sad fact that some pornography is much worse than scenes of nakedness or of a man and woman engaging in fornication. There is sordid, abhorrent pornography involving homosexuality (sex between those of the same gender), group sex, bestiality, child pornography, gang rape, the brutalizing of women, bondage, or sadistic torture. Some in Paul's day who were "in darkness mentally" came to be "past all

moral sense [and] gave themselves over to loose conduct to work *uncleanness of every sort with greediness.*”—Ephesians 4:18, 19.

[Footnote.] * As to distinctions between “uncleanness and fornication and loose conduct,” see *The Watchtower* of July 15, 2006, pages 29-31. [End of Footnote.]

Paul also mentioned “uncleanness” at Galatians 5:19. A British scholar noted that it “may here [signify] more especially all unnatural lusts.” What Christian would deny that the above-mentioned abhorrent, sexually degrading forms of pornography are “unnatural lusts” and are sordid? Paul concluded at Galatians 5:19-21 that “those who practice” such uncleanness “will not inherit God’s kingdom.” Consequently, if someone developed an entrenched practice of viewing abhorrent, sexually degrading pornography, perhaps over a considerable period of time, and would not repent and turn around, he could not remain in the Christian congregation. He would have to be disfellowshipped in order to preserve the cleanness and spirit of the congregation.—1 Corinthians 5:5, 11.

It is good to know that some who fell into viewing abhorrent forms of pornography went to the elders and received the spiritual help needed to make drastic changes. Jesus appealed to Christians in ancient Sardis: “Strengthen the things remaining that were ready to

die, . . . continue mindful of how you have received and how you heard, and go on keeping it, and repent. Certainly unless you wake up, . . . you will not know at all at what hour I shall come upon you.” (Revelation 3:2, 3) It is possible to repent and be snatched out of the fire, as it were.—Jude 22, 23.

How much better, though, it is for each of us to be firmly resolved not to come anywhere near that dangerous position. Yes, we should be absolutely determined to avoid all forms of pornography!

“The Joy of Jehovah”

(Nehemiah 8:10)

1. Signs of the times are pointing to the Kingdom.
Good news we tell for all to hear.
Lift up your heads, and look to your salvation;
Time for deliverance is near!

(CHORUS)

The joy of Jehovah is our stronghold.

Sing loud, and raise a joyful cry.

Rejoice in the hope, and show a grateful heart,

All give praise and laud our God on high.

The joy of Jehovah is our stronghold.

His greatness all must come to know.

With constant devotion to our God and King,

Godly joy in service we will show.

2. Look to our God, you lovers of Jehovah.
No need to fear, for he is strong.
Stand up and shout with voices loud as thunder;
Sing to our God a joyful song!

(Chorus)

- Song 16 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“A Symbolic Drama’ With Meaning for Us”:** (10 min.)
 Ga 4:24, 25—Hagar represented literal Israel under the Law covenant (*it-1 1018 ¶2*)
 Ga 4:26, 27—Sarah represented “the Jerusalem above,” the heavenly part of Jehovah’s organization (*w14 10/15 10 ¶11*)
 Ga 4:28-31—Blessings to obedient mankind come through the “children” of the Jerusalem above
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Ga 4:6—What is the meaning of the Hebrew or the Aramaic word *abba*? (*w09 4/1 13*)

 Ga 6:17—In what possible ways did the apostle Paul bear “the brand marks of a slave of Jesus”? (*w10 11/1 15*)

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) Ga 4:1-20 (10)

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Apply Yourself to Reading and Teaching:** (10 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Scripture Application Made Clear*, and then discuss study 6 of the *Teaching* brochure.
- **Talk:** (5 min. or less) *w12 3/15 30-31*—Theme: Why Should Christians Vigorously Shun Pornography? (13)

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 110
- **Local Needs:** (8 min.)
- **Organizational Accomplishments:** (7 min.) Play the *Organizational Accomplishments* video for June.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *jy chap. 69*
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 40 and Prayer

GALATIANS 4-6 | “A Symbolic Drama” With Meaning for Us



4:24-31

The apostle Paul used this “symbolic drama” to illustrate the superiority of the new covenant over the Law covenant. Under the loving supervision of Christ and his fellow heirs, all humankind has the prospect of freedom from sin, imperfection, sorrow, and death.—Isa 25:8, 9.

HAGAR—THE SLAVE GIRL

Literal Israel under the Law covenant, with Jerusalem as its capital

HAGAR’S “CHILDREN”

The Jewish people (bound to Jehovah by the Law covenant) persecuted and rejected Jesus

ENSLAVEMENT TO THE LAW COVENANT

The Law reminded natural Israelites that they were slaves to sin

SARAH—THE FREE WOMAN

Jerusalem above, the heavenly part of God’s organization

SARAH’S “CHILDREN”

Christ and the 144,000 spirit-anointed Christians

THE NEW COVENANT OFFERS FREEDOM

Faith in the value of Christ’s sacrifice led to freedom from the Law’s condemnation

69

THEIR FATHER—ABRAHAM OR THE DEVIL?

JOHN 8:37-59

- THE JEWS CLAIM ABRAHAM AS FATHER
 - BEFORE ABRAHAM, JESUS HAS BEEN
-

Still in Jerusalem for the Festival of Tabernacles (or, Booths), Jesus goes on teaching vital truths. Some Jews present had just said to him: “We are Abraham’s offspring and never have been slaves.” Jesus responds: “I know that you are Abraham’s offspring. But you are seeking to kill me, because my word makes no progress among you. I speak the things I have seen while with my Father, but you do the things you have heard from your father.”—John 8:33, 37, 38.

Jesus’ point is simple: His Father is different from theirs. Unaware of what Jesus means, the Jews repeat their claim: “Our father is Abraham.” (John 8:39; Isaiah 41:8) They are literally his descendants. So they feel that they are of the same faith as God’s friend Abraham.



However, Jesus gives a shocking reply: “If you were Abraham’s children, you would be doing the works of Abraham.” Indeed, a real son imitates his father. “But now you are seeking to kill me,” Jesus continues, “a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do this.” Then Jesus makes the puzzling statement: “You are doing the works of your father.”—John 8:39-41.

The Jews still do not grasp to whom Jesus is referring. They claim that they are legitimate sons, saying: “We were not born from immorality; we have one Father, God.” Is God really their Father, though? “If God were your Father,” Jesus says, “you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I have not come of my own initiative, but that One sent me.” Jesus asks a question and answers it himself: “Why do you not understand what I am saying? Because you cannot listen to my word.”—John 8:41-43.

Jesus has tried to show what the consequences of rejecting him are. But now he pointedly says: “You are from your father the Devil, and you wish to do

the desires of your father.” What is their father like? Jesus identifies him clearly: “That one was a murderer when he began, and he did not stand fast in the truth.” Jesus adds: “The one who is from God listens to the sayings of God. This is why you do not listen, because you are not from God.”—John 8:44, 47.

That condemnation angers the Jews, who answer: “Are we not right in saying, ‘You are a Samaritan and have a demon?’” By calling Jesus “a Samaritan,” they are expressing contempt for him. But Jesus ignores their slur, responding: “I do not have a demon, but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me.” That this is a serious matter can be seen by Jesus’ startling promise: “If anyone observes my word, he will never see death at all.” He does not mean that the apostles and others who follow him will literally never die. Rather, they will never see eternal destruction, “the second death,” with no hope of a resurrection.—John 8:48-51; Revelation 21:8.

But the Jews take Jesus’ words literally, saying: “Now we do know that you have a demon. Abraham

died, also the prophets, but you say, ‘If anyone observes my word, he will never taste death at all.’ You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died, are you? . . . Who do you claim to be?”—John 8:52, 53.

It is obvious that Jesus is making the point that he is the Messiah. But rather than directly answer their question about his identity, he says: “If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, the one who you say is your God. Yet you have not known him, but I know him. And if I said I do not know him, I would be like you, a liar.”—John 8:54, 55.

Jesus now refers back to the example of their faithful forefather: “Abraham your father rejoiced greatly at the prospect of seeing my day, and he saw it and rejoiced.” Yes, believing God’s promise, Abraham looked forward to the arrival of the Messiah. “You are not yet 50 years old, and still you have seen Abraham?” the Jews respond in disbelief. Jesus answers: “Most truly I say to you, before Abraham came into existence, I have been.” He is refer-

ring to his prehuman existence as a mighty spirit in heaven.—John 8:56-58.

The Jews, enraged by Jesus' claim to have lived before Abraham, get ready to stone him. But Jesus leaves unharmed.

- ◇ How does Jesus show that his Father is different from the father of his enemies?
- ◇ Why is it unfitting for the Jews to insist that Abraham is their father?
- ◇ In what way will Jesus' followers “never see death at all”?

40 *To Whom Do We Belong?*

(Romans 14:8)

1. To whom do you belong?

Which god do you now obey?

Your master's the one to whom you bow.

He is your god; you serve him now.

You cannot serve two gods;

Devotion cannot be shared.

And so in the end your choice will depend

On how your heart is prepared.

2. To whom do you belong?

Which god will you now obey?

For one god is false and one is true,

So make your choice; it's up to you.

Will Caesar of this world

Possess your allegiance still?

Or will you obey the true God today

By always doing his will?

3. To whom do I belong?

Jehovah I will obey.

My Father in heaven I will serve;

I'll pay my vows without reserve.

He bought me at great cost;

Devoted to him I'll stay.

To him I will give each moment I live.

His name I'll honor each day.

APRIL 2019

THE  **WATCHTOWER**
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

LARGE PRINT EDITION



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COVER PICTURE:

After his resurrection, Jesus met with his disciples and instructed them to "go, . . . and make disciples" (See study article 14, paragraph 1)

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57 *Preaching to All Sorts of People*

(1 Timothy 2:4)

1. We really want to imitate our God,
To be impartial, as we know he is.
To save all sorts of people is his will;
He welcomes all to come and to be his.

(CHORUS)

*It's the person, not the place;
It's the heart and not the face.
God's message to all people we extend.
So because we really care,
We keep preaching ev'rywhere:
"All sorts of people can become God's friend."*

2. It doesn't matter where they may be found
Or what at first they might appear to be.
What really counts is what they are at heart—
The inner self, the one Jehovah sees.

(Chorus)

3. Jehovah welcomes all who make the choice
To leave the world and all its ways behind.
This we have learned, and this we want to share,
And so we preach to people of all kinds.

(Chorus)

Are You Fully Accomplishing Your Ministry?

“Keep preaching the good news, fully accomplish your ministry.”—2 TIM. 4:5, ftn.

SONG 57

Preaching to All Sorts of People

PREVIEW

We have been commissioned to preach the good news of the Kingdom and to make disciples. This article will consider how we can fully accomplish our ministry, even if we have challenging personal circumstances. We will also learn how we can make our preaching work more effective and rewarding.

CHRIST JESUS commanded his followers to “go, . . . and make disciples of people of all the nations.” (Matt. 28:19) All of God’s faithful servants want to learn how they can “fully accomplish” this ministry that they have been given to do. (2 Tim. 4:5) After all, this work is more important, more worthwhile, and more urgent than any other occupation in life. However, it can be a challenge to spend as much time in the ministry as we would like.

² There are other important activities that demand our time and energy. We may have to work secularly many hours a day to provide the necessities of life for ourselves and our family. We may struggle with other family responsibilities, sickness, depression, or the aches and pains of advancing age. How can we fully accomplish our ministry while coping with such challenging circumstances?

³ If our circumstances limit the amount of time we can spend in Jehovah’s service, we should not feel discouraged. Jesus knew that not every one of us would be able to produce the same amount of

-
1. What do all of God’s servants want to do, and why? (See cover picture.)
 2. What challenges do we face in accomplishing our ministry?
 3. What can we conclude from Jesus’ words found at Matthew 13:23?

Kingdom fruitage. (Read Matthew 13:23.) Jehovah highly values everything we do in his service as long as we are doing our best. (Heb. 6:10-12) On the other hand, we may feel that our circumstances would allow us to do more. In this article, we will examine how we can make the ministry our priority in life, keep our life simple, and improve in our preaching and teaching skills. First, though, what does it mean to accomplish our ministry fully?

⁴ Simply put, to accomplish our ministry fully, we must have as full a share as possible in the preaching and teaching work. But more is involved than the amount of time. Our motive is important to Jehovah. Because we love Jehovah and our neighbor, we work whole-souled in our Christian ministry.* (Mark 12:30, 31; Col. 3:23) Serving God whole-souled means giving of ourselves, using our strength and energies to the best of our ability in his service. When we appreciate the privilege of doing the preaching work, we try to share the good news with as many people as we can.

* **EXPRESSION EXPLAINED:** Our **Christian ministry** includes various aspects of preaching and teaching, construction and maintenance of theocratic facilities, and disaster relief work.—2 Cor. 5:18, 19; 8:4.

4. What does it mean to accomplish our ministry fully?

⁵ Imagine a young man who enjoys playing the guitar. He is happy to play music whenever he can. Eventually, he obtains work playing the guitar in a local café on weekends. However, his income does not cover his expenses. So he works as a cashier in a grocery store Monday through Friday. Although he spends most of his time in the grocery store, his heart is in his music. He yearns to improve his skill and to be a full-time musician. Even so, he enjoys every available opportunity to play music, brief though it may be.

⁶ In a similar way, you may be limited in the amount of time you can devote to the preaching work. Yet, that is what you love to do. You strive to improve your ability to reach people's hearts with the good news. With many demands on your time, you may wonder how you can make the preaching work your priority.

HOW TO MAKE THE MINISTRY YOUR PRIORITY

⁷ Jesus set an outstanding example in his attitude toward the ministry. He made talking about God's Kingdom the main focus of his life. (John 4:34, 35)

5-6. Illustrate how a person with limited time can give priority to the ministry.

7-8. How can we imitate Jesus' attitude toward the ministry?

He walked hundreds of miles to preach to as many as possible. He seized every opportunity to speak to people in public places and in their homes. Jesus' whole life revolved around the ministry.

⁸ We can imitate Christ by creating opportunities to talk about the good news whenever and wherever possible. We are willing to sacrifice personal comfort to engage in the evangelizing work. (Mark 6: 31-34; 1 Pet. 2:21) Some in the congregation are able to serve as special, regular, or auxiliary pioneers. Others have learned to speak another language or have moved to an area where there is a need for more preachers. However, much of the evangelizing work is done by regular Kingdom publishers, who do the best they can. Whatever the case, Jehovah does not ask more of us than we can give. He wants all of us to enjoy our sacred service as we declare “the glorious good news of the happy God.”—1 Tim. 1:11; Deut. 30:11.

⁹ The apostle Paul set a good example in making the ministry the most important activity in his life. When he was in Corinth during his second missionary journey, he was low on funds and had to spend

9. (a) How did Paul give priority to the preaching work even when he had to do secular work? (b) What does Acts 28:16, 30, 31 show about Paul's attitude toward his ministry?

some time making tents. However, Paul did not view tentmaking as his primary occupation. He worked at this trade to support himself in the ministry so that he could declare the good news to the Corinthians “without cost” to them. (2 Cor. 11:7) Although Paul had to do some secular work, he continued to give priority to the ministry, and he preached on every Sabbath. After his circumstances improved, Paul was able to give more attention to preaching. He “began to be intensely occupied with the word, witnessing to the Jews to prove that Jesus is the Christ.” (Acts 18:3-5; 2 Cor. 11:9) Later, when he was under house arrest in Rome for two years, Paul witnessed to visitors and wrote letters. (Read Acts 28:16, 30, 31.) Paul was determined not to allow anything to interfere with his ministry. He wrote: “Since we have this ministry . . . , we do not give up.” (2 Cor. 4:1) Like Paul, even if we have to spend time in secular work, we can still make the Kingdom work the most important activity in life.

¹⁰ If our door-to-door preaching activity is limited by advancing age or debilitating health problems, we can enjoy other forms of the ministry. First-century evangelizers reached out to people

10-11. How can we fully accomplish our ministry if our health is limiting what we can do?



There are many ways that we can fully accomplish our ministry
(See paragraphs 10-11)

wherever they were. They took advantage of every opportunity to talk about the truth—from house to house, publicly, and informally—wherever people “happened to be on hand.” (Acts 17:17; 20:20) If we are unable to do much walking, we might be able to sit in a public area where we can preach to passers-by. Or we might be able to witness informally, write letters, or do telephone witnessing. Many publishers with severe limitations experience much joy and satisfaction in these other avenues of the preaching work.

¹¹ Despite health limitations, you can accomplish your ministry fully. Consider again the example of the apostle Paul. He said: “For all things I have the strength through the one who gives me power.” (Phil. 4:13) Paul needed that power when he got sick on one of his missionary trips. He explained to the Galatians: “It was because of a physical illness that I had my first opportunity to declare the good news to you.” (Gal. 4:13) Similarly, your health limitations may give you opportunities to declare the good news to others, such as to doctors, nurses, and health-care providers. Many of these people are at work when publishers may be calling at their homes.

HOW TO KEEP YOUR LIFE SIMPLE

¹² Jesus said: “The lamp of the body is the eye. If, then, your eye is focused [or “simple,” ftn.], your whole body will be bright.” (Matt. 6:22) What did he mean? He meant that we need to keep our life simple or focused on a single goal, or purpose, not being distracted or sidetracked from it. Jesus himself set the example by focusing his life on the ministry, and he taught his disciples to keep focused on serving Jehovah and on His Kingdom. We imitate

12. What does it mean to keep your eye “focused”?

Jesus by living a life that centers on the Christian ministry, “seeking first the Kingdom and [God’s] righteousness.”—Matt. 6:33.

¹³ One way to focus on our ministry is by simplifying our life so that we can spend more time helping others come to know and love Jehovah.* For example, could we adjust our secular working hours so that we can spend more time in the ministry during the week? Could we reduce some recreational activities that may be very time-consuming?

¹⁴ This is what one elder, Elias, and his wife did. He explains: “We could not pioneer at that time, but we had to start somewhere. So we took relatively small steps toward increasing our time in the ministry. For example, we reduced our expenses, cut back on what we now view as excessive recreational activities, and asked our employers for a more flexible schedule. As a result, we were able to participate in evening witnessing, conduct more Bible studies, and even share in the midweek field service twice a month. What a joy!”

* See the seven steps listed in the box “How to Simplify Your Life” in *The Watchtower* of July 2016, p. 10.

13. What can help us to focus on our Christian ministry?

14. What adjustments did one couple make in order to give more time and attention to the ministry?

Goals to Help Me Fully Accomplish My Ministry

- ▶ Practice a sample conversation from the current *Our Christian Life and Ministry—Meeting Workbook*
- ▶ Improve my ability to start conversations and witness informally
- ▶ Improve my skill in reading and explaining scriptures, making return visits, or demonstrating a Bible study
- ▶ Look for opportunities to introduce jw.org[®] and to show videos
- ▶ Increase my preaching activity during the circuit overseer’s visit or during the Memorial season
- ▶ Make my ministry, return visits, and Bible studies a matter of prayer

MY PERSONAL GOALS:

1.

2.

3.

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR PREACHING AND TEACHING SKILLS

¹⁵ Another way to accomplish our ministry more fully is by improving our skills in the preaching work. People in some professions are required to receive ongoing training and education in order to improve their knowledge and skills. This is also true of Kingdom preachers. We need to continue learning how to be more skillful in our ministry.—Prov. 1:5; read 1 Timothy 4:13, 15.

¹⁶ How, though, can we continue to make progress in our ministry? By paying close attention to the instruction we receive at the weekly Life and Ministry Meeting. This meeting provides invaluable training to help us progressively improve our skills in the field service. For instance, when the chairman gives counsel to those who have presented student assignments, we can identify suggestions that can help us improve in our ministry. We can put those suggestions into practice the next time we share the good news with someone. We could ask our field service group overseer for help or work in

15-16. In line with 1 Timothy 4:13, 15, how can we keep improving our skills as evangelizers? (See also the box “Goals to Help Me Fully Accomplish My Ministry.”)



Applying what we learn at the midweek meeting will help us to make continual progress in our ministry
(See paragraphs 15-16)

the ministry with him or with another experienced publisher, a pioneer, or the circuit overseer. As we become more skilled at using each tool in the Teaching Toolbox, we will enjoy our preaching and teaching more.

¹⁷ How privileged we are that Jehovah allows us to be his “fellow workers”! (1 Cor. 3:9) When you “make sure of the more important things” and focus on the Christian ministry, you will “serve

17. What will you experience when you fully accomplish your ministry?

Jehovah with rejoicing.” (Phil. 1:10; Ps. 100:2) As one of God’s ministers, you can be confident that he will give you the power you need to accomplish your ministry no matter what challenges or limitations you may face. (2 Cor. 4:1, 7; 6:4) Whether your circumstances allow you to have a small or a great share in witnessing, you can “have cause for rejoicing” when you are whole-souled in your ministry. (Gal. 6:4) When you fully accomplish your ministry, you show your love for Jehovah and for your fellow man. “By doing this you will save both yourself and those who listen to you.”—1 Tim. 4:16.

PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS Page 13: A sister demonstrates a return visit during the midweek meeting. Afterward, as the meeting chairman gives counsel, she makes notes in her *Teaching* brochure. Later, on the weekend, she uses in the field ministry what she learned at the meeting.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- Why should we want to accomplish our ministry fully?
- How can we keep our life simple and make the ministry our priority?
- How can we improve our skills in the ministry?

58 *Searching for Friends of Peace*

(Luke 10:6)

1. Jesus commanded: 'Let the truth be heard.'

In summer heat, on dusty roads,

He let all hear Jehovah's word.

He loved God's sheep and called to ev'ryone.

He searched the land from the sunrise

'til the day was done.

From door to door and in the street,

We share with ev'ryone we meet

The news that soon man's troubles all will be gone.

(CHORUS)

Searching the world

For friends of peace in ev'ry nation,

Searching to find

A heart inclined toward salvation,

Wanting to leave

No stone unturned.

2. Time waits for no one, so the search goes on.

A million hearts, a million lives,

We give our all to save just one.

Love is the force that makes us call again.

A wounded heart can be healed,

and broken lives can mend.

We search the towns and city squares,

And when we find someone who cares,

The joy we feel inspires us to go on.

(Chorus)

