

- Song 90 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Keep Encouraging One Another and Building One Another Up”:** (10 min.)
[Play the video *Introduction to 1 Thessalonians.*]
1Th 5:11-13—Give “extraordinary consideration” to those who are presiding over you (w11 6/15 26 ¶12; 28 ¶19)
1Th 5:14—Speak consolingly to those who are depressed, and support the weak (w17.10 10 ¶13; w15 2/15 9 ¶16)

- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
1Th 4:3-6—How does one who commits sexual immorality “take advantage of his brother”? (it-1 863-864)

1Th 4:15-17—Who will be “caught away in clouds to meet the Lord in the air,” and how does this happen? (w15 7/15 18-19 ¶14-15)

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) 1Th 3:1-13 (5)

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call Video:** (4 min.) Play and discuss the video.
- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Use the sample conversation. (1)
- **Initial Call:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Overcome a common objection. (3)
- **Initial Call:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Overcome a common objection. (4)

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 81
- **Pioneers Who Encourage:** (9 min.) Play the video *Pioneers’ Power to Help* (video category THE BIBLE). Then answer the following questions: How can pioneers encourage others in the congregation? How have you been encouraged by the pioneers in your congregation?
- **Good Examples That Encourage Us:** (6 min.) Play the video *We Must “Run With Endurance”—Imitate Good Examples* (video category THE BIBLE). Then answer the following questions: What challenge did the sister have? What did she do to receive encouragement?
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) jy chap. 74
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 100 and Prayer

1 THESSALONIANS 1-5 | “Keep Encouraging One Another and Building One Another Up”



5:11-14

Every Christian has the ability to encourage others. For instance, we encourage fellow Christians when we faithfully attend meetings and share in the ministry, perhaps “amid much struggling” because of poor health or other difficulties. (1Th 2:2, fn.) Additionally, with advance thought and maybe some research, we can speak consolingly to fellow worshippers who need encouragement.

Where can you find helpful information on how to encourage someone dealing with a specific challenge?

Whom in the congregation do you want to encourage?

Encourage One Another

(Hebrews 10:24, 25)

1. As we encourage one another
To serve Jehovah faithfully,
We find the bonds of love are strengthened;
Fine works bring peace and unity.
The love we find among God's people
Gives each the courage to endure.
Our congregation is a refuge,
A place where we can feel secure.
2. A word when spoken at the right time
Is, oh, how comforting to hear!
We hear these words of consolation
From friends so faithful and so dear.
How good it is to work together
With those whose hopes and goals we share!
We seek to strengthen one another
And help each one his burden bear.
3. As we with eyes of faith are seeing
The nearness of Jehovah's day,
We need our gathering together
To keep us walking in the way.
United with Jehovah's people,
We hope to serve eternally.
So we encourage one another
To hold to our integrity.

1 Thessalonians

1 Paul, Sil·va'nus, and Timothy, to the congregation of the Thes·sa·lo'ni·ans in union with God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

May you have undeserved kindness and peace.

2 We always thank God when we mention all of you in our prayers, **3** for we continually remember your faithful work, your loving labor, and your endurance because of your hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father. **4** For we know, brothers loved by God, his choosing of you, **5** because the good news we preach did not come to you with speech alone but also with power and with holy spirit and with strong conviction, just as you know what sort of men we became among you for your sakes. **6** And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, seeing that you accepted the word under much tribulation with joy of holy spirit, **7** so that you became an example to all the believers in Mac·e·do'ni·a and in A·cha'ia.

8 The fact is, not only has the word of Jehovah sounded out from you in Mac·e·do'ni·a and A·cha'ia but your faith in God has spread abroad in every place, so that we do not need to say anything. **9** For they themselves keep reporting about our first contact with you and how you turned to God from your idols to slave for a living and true God, **10** and to wait for his Son from the heavens, whom he raised up from the dead, namely, Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming.

2 You yourselves surely know, brothers, that our visit to you has not been without results. **2** For although we had first suffered and been insolently treated in Phi·lip'pi, as you know, we mustered up boldness by means of our God to tell you the good news of God in the face of much opposition. **3** For the exhortation we give does not spring from error or from uncleanness or with deceit, **4** but just as

we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the good news, so we speak to please, not men, but God, who examines our hearts.

⁵ In fact, you know that we never used flattering speech or put on any false front with greedy motives; God is witness! ⁶ Nor have we been seeking glory from men, either from you or from others, though we could be an expensive burden as apostles of Christ. ⁷ On the contrary, we became gentle in your midst, as when a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. ⁸ So having tender affection for you, we were determined to impart to you, not only the good news of God but also our very selves, because you became so beloved to us.

⁹ Surely you remember, brothers, our labor and toil. We were working night and day, so that we would not put an expensive burden on any one of you, when we preached the good news of God to you. ¹⁰ You are witnesses, God is also, of how loyal and righteous and blameless we behaved toward you believers. ¹¹ You well know that we kept exhorting and consoling you and bearing witness to each one of you, just as a father does his children, ¹² so that you would go on walking worthily of God, who is calling you to his Kingdom and glory.

¹³ Indeed, that is why we also thank God unceasingly, because when you received God's word, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but, just as it truthfully is, as the word of God, which is also at work in you believers. ¹⁴ For you, brothers, became imitators of the congregations of God in union with Christ Jesus that are in Ju-de'a, because you suffered at the hands of your own countrymen the same things that they also are suffering at the hands of the Jews, ¹⁵ who even killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and persecuted us. Furthermore, they are not pleasing God, but are against the interests of all men, ¹⁶ as they try to prevent us from speaking to people of the nations so that

these might be saved. In this way they always fill up the measure of their sins. But his wrath has at last come upon them.

¹⁷ But when we were separated from you, brothers, for just a short time (in person, not in our hearts), because of our strong desire, we made every effort to see you in person. ¹⁸ For this reason we wanted to come to you, yes I, Paul, tried not just once but twice; yet Satan cut across our path. ¹⁹ For what is our hope or joy or crown of exultation before our Lord Jesus at his presence? Is it not in fact you? ²⁰ You certainly are our glory and joy.

3 So when we could bear it no longer, we thought it best to stay on alone in Athens; ² and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's minister in the good news about the Christ, to make you firm and comfort you regarding your faith, ³ so that no one might be shaken by these tribulations. For you yourselves know that we cannot avoid suffering such things. ⁴ For when we were with you, we used to tell you in advance that we would suffer tribulation, and that is what has happened, just as you know. ⁵ That is why, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to learn of your faithfulness, in case somehow the Tempter might have tempted you, and our labor might have turned out to be in vain.

⁶ But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has given us the good news about your faithfulness and love, that you always continue to remember us fondly and that you long to see us in the same way as we also do you. ⁷ That is why, brothers, in all our distress and tribulation, we have been comforted because of you and the faithfulness you demonstrate. ⁸ Because we are revitalized if you are standing firm in the Lord. ⁹ For how can we show our thanks to God concerning you in return for the great joy we feel before our God on your account? ¹⁰ Night and day we make supplications as earnestly as we can to see you in person and to supply what is lacking in your faith.

¹¹ Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus make a way for us to come to you. ¹² Moreover, may the Lord cause you to increase, yes, to abound in love for one another and for all, just as we do for you, ¹³ so that he may make your hearts firm, blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the presence of our Lord Jesus with all his holy ones.

4 Finally, brothers, just as you received instruction from us on how you should walk in order to please God, just as you are in fact walking, we request you and appeal to you by the Lord Jesus to keep doing it more fully. ² For you know the instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

³ For this is the will of God, that you should be holy and abstain from sexual immorality. ⁴ Each one of you should know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, ⁵ not with greedy, uncontrolled sexual passion like the nations have that do not know God. ⁶ No one should go beyond proper limits and take advantage of his brother in this matter, because Jehovah exacts punishment for all these things, just as we told you previously and also strongly warned you. ⁷ For God has called us, not for uncleanness, but for holiness. ⁸ So, then, the man who disregards this is disregarding, not man, but God, who gives you his holy spirit.

⁹ However, concerning brotherly love, you do not need us to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another. ¹⁰ In fact, you are doing so toward all the brothers in all of Mac-e-do'ni-a. But we urge you, brothers, to go on doing so in fuller measure. ¹¹ Make it your aim to live quietly and to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we instructed you, ¹² so that you may walk decently in the eyes of people outside and not need anything.

¹³ Moreover, brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who are sleeping in death, so that you may not sorrow as the rest do who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we have faith that Jesus died

and rose again, so too God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep in death through Jesus. ¹⁵ For this is what we tell you by Jehovah's word, that we the living who survive to the presence of the Lord will in no way precede those who have fallen asleep in death; ¹⁶ because the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a commanding call, with an archangel's voice and with God's trumpet, and those who are dead in union with Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Afterward we the living who are surviving will, together with them, be caught away in clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and thus we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ So keep comforting one another with these words.

5 Now as for the times and the seasons, brothers, you need nothing to be written to you. ² For you yourselves know very well that Jehovah's day is coming exactly as a thief in the night. ³ Whenever it is that they are saying, "Peace and security!" then sudden destruction is to be instantly on them, just like birth pains on a pregnant woman, and they will by no means escape. ⁴ But you, brothers, you are not in darkness, so that the day should overtake you as it would thieves, ⁵ for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We belong neither to night nor to darkness.

⁶ So, then, let us not sleep on as the rest do, but let us stay awake and keep our senses. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. ⁸ But as for us who belong to the day, let us keep our senses and put on the breastplate of faith and love and the hope of salvation as a helmet ⁹ because God assigned us, not to wrath, but to the acquiring of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁰ He died for us, so that whether we stay awake or are asleep, we should live together with him. ¹¹ Therefore, keep encouraging one another and building one another up, just as you are in fact doing.

¹² Now we request you, brothers, to show respect for those who are working hard among you and presiding over you in the Lord

and admonishing you; ¹³ and to give them extraordinary consideration in love because of their work. Be peaceable with one another. ¹⁴ On the other hand, we urge you, brothers, to warn the disorderly, speak consolingly to those who are depressed, support the weak, be patient toward all. ¹⁵ See that no one repays injury for injury to anyone, but always pursue what is good toward one another and to all others.

¹⁶ Always be rejoicing. ¹⁷ Pray constantly. ¹⁸ Give thanks for everything. This is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. ¹⁹ Do not put out the fire of the spirit. ²⁰ Do not treat prophecies with contempt. ²¹ Make sure of all things; hold fast to what is fine. ²² Abstain from every form of wickedness.

²³ May the God of peace himself sanctify you completely. And may the spirit and soul and body of you brothers, sound in every respect, be preserved blameless at the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ The one who is calling you is faithful, and he will surely do so.

²⁵ Brothers, keep praying for us.

²⁶ Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss.

²⁷ I am putting you under the solemn obligation by the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers.

²⁸ The undeserved kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

- Song 90 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Keep Encouraging One Another and Building One Another Up”:** (10 min.)
[Play the video *Introduction to 1 Thessalonians.*]
1Th 5:11-13—Give “extraordinary consideration” to those who are presiding over you (w11 6/15 26 ¶12; 28 ¶19)
1Th 5:14—Speak consolingly to those who are depressed, and support the weak (w17.10 10 ¶13; w15 2/15 9 ¶16)

- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
1Th 4:3-6—How does one who commits sexual immorality “take advantage of his brother”? (it-1 863-864)

1Th 4:15-17—Who will be “caught away in clouds to meet the Lord in the air,” and how does this happen? (w15 7/15 18-19 ¶14-15)

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) 1Th 3:1-13 (5)

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call Video:** (4 min.) Play and discuss the video.
- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Use the sample conversation. (1)
- **Initial Call:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Overcome a common objection. (3)
- **Initial Call:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Overcome a common objection. (4)

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 81
- **Pioneers Who Encourage:** (9 min.) Play the video *Pioneers’ Power to Help* (video category THE BIBLE). Then answer the following questions: How can pioneers encourage others in the congregation? How have you been encouraged by the pioneers in your congregation?
- **Good Examples That Encourage Us:** (6 min.) Play the video *We Must “Run With Endurance”—Imitate Good Examples* (video category THE BIBLE). Then answer the following questions: What challenge did the sister have? What did she do to receive encouragement?
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) jy chap. 74
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 100 and Prayer

1 THESSALONIANS 1-5 | “Keep Encouraging One Another and Building One Another Up”



5:11-14

Every Christian has the ability to encourage others. For instance, we encourage fellow Christians when we faithfully attend meetings and share in the ministry, perhaps “amid much struggling” because of poor health or other difficulties. (1Th 2:2, fn.) Additionally, with advance thought and maybe some research, we can speak consolingly to fellow worshippers who need encouragement.

Where can you find helpful information on how to encourage someone dealing with a specific challenge?

Whom in the congregation do you want to encourage?

July 8-14 / 1 Thessalonians 1-5

- Song 90 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 minutes or less)

Treasures From God's Word

- **“Keep Encouraging One Another and Building One Another Up”**: (10 minutes)

[Play the video *Introduction to 1 Thessalonians*.]

“Keep Encouraging One Another and Building One Another Up”

1 Thessalonians 5:11-14

Every Christian has the ability to encourage others. For instance, we encourage fellow Christians when we faithfully attend meetings and share in the ministry, perhaps “amid much struggling” because of poor health or other difficulties. (1 Thessalonians 2:2, footnote.) Additionally, with advance thought and maybe some research, we can speak consolingly to fellow worshippers who need encouragement.

Where can you find helpful information on how to encourage someone dealing with a specific challenge?

Whom in the congregation do you want to encourage?

1 Thessalonians 5:11-13—Give “extraordinary consideration” to those who are presiding over you

1 Thessalonians 5:11-13: Therefore, keep encouraging one another and building one another up, just as you are in fact doing. Now we request you, brothers, to show respect for those who are working hard among you and presiding over you in the Lord and admonishing you; and to give them extraordinary consideration in love because of their work. Be peaceable with one another.

w11 6/15 26 paragraph 12

“Presiding over” the congregation involves more than just teaching. The same expression is used at 1 Timothy 3:4. Paul said that an overseer should be “a man presiding over his own household in a fine manner, having children in subjection with all seriousness.” Here the expression “presiding over” obviously includes not only teaching his children but also taking the lead in the family and “having children in subjection.” Yes, elders take the lead in the congregation, helping all to be in subjection to Jehovah.—1 Timothy 3:5.

w11 6/15 28 paragraph 19

What would you do if you received a gift especially made for you? Would you show your appreciation by using it? The “gifts in men” are what Jehovah through Jesus Christ has provided for you. One way you can show your gratitude for these gifts is by listening intently to talks given by the elders and by trying to apply the

points they bring out. You can also show your appreciation by making meaningful comments at meetings. Support the work in which the elders are taking the lead, such as the field ministry. If you have benefited from counsel you received from a certain elder, why not tell him so? In addition, why not show your appreciation for the elders' families? Remember, for an elder to work hard in the congregation, his family is sacrificing time spent with him.

1 Thessalonians 5:14—Speak consolingly to those who are depressed, and support the weak

1 Thessalonians 5:14: On the other hand, we urge you, brothers, to warn the disorderly, speak consolingly to those who are depressed, support the weak, be patient toward all.

w17.10 10 paragraph 13

Support those who are weak. The genuineness of our love can be tested by the Bible's command to "support the weak, be patient toward all." (1 Thessalonians 5:14) Although many who are weak later become strong in the faith, others need our patient, ongoing support. This can include sharing upbuilding Scriptural thoughts, inviting them to join us in the ministry, or just taking time to listen to them. In addition, instead of simply thinking that a brother or a sister is either "strong" or "weak," we should recognize that we all have strengths and weaknesses. Even the apostle Paul acknowledged his own weaknesses. (2 Corinthians 12:9, 10) Thus, we can all benefit from the support of fellow Christians.

w15 2/15 9 paragraph 16

Our tender words. Our tender affection for others moves us to “speak consolingly to those who are depressed.” (1 Thessalonians 5:14) What can we say to encourage such ones? We can lift their spirits by expressing our genuine care and concern for them. We can offer sincere commendation to help them see their positive qualities and abilities. We can remind them that Jehovah drew them to his Son, so they must be precious in his eyes. (John 6:44) We can reassure them that Jehovah deeply cares for his servants who are “brokenhearted” or “crushed in spirit.” (Psalms 34:18) Our tender words can have a healing effect on those who need comfort.— Proverbs 16:24.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

1 Thessalonians 4:3-6—How does one who commits sexual immorality “take advantage of his brother”?

1 Thessalonians 4:3-6: For this is the will of God, that you should be holy and abstain from sexual immorality. Each one of you should know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not with greedy, uncontrolled sexual passion like the nations have that do not know God. No one should go beyond proper limits and take advantage of his brother in this matter, because Jehovah exacts punishment for all these things, just as we told you previously and also strongly warned you.

it-1 863-864

Fornication is an offense for which an individual may be expelled (disfellowshipped) from the Christian congregation. (1 Corinthians 5:9-13; Hebrews 12:15, 16) The apostle explains that a Christian committing fornication sins against his own body, using reproductive members for a perverted purpose. He is greatly affected spiritually in an adverse way, brings defilement into God's congregation, and lays himself open to the danger of deadly sexually transmitted diseases. (1 Corinthians 6:18, 19) He encroaches on the rights of his Christian brothers (1 Thessalonians 4:3-7) by (1) bringing uncleanness and disgraceful folly, with reproach, into the congregation (Hebrews 12:15, 16), (2) depriving the one with whom he commits fornication of a clean moral standing and, if that one is single, of being clean when entering into marriage, (3) depriving his own family of a clean moral record, as well as (4) wronging the parents, husband, or fiancé of the one with whom he commits fornication. He disregards, not man, whose laws may or may not condone fornication, but God, who will exact punishment for his sin.—1 Thessalonians 4:8.

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17—Who will be “caught away in clouds to meet the Lord in the air,” and how does this happen?

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17: For this is what we tell you by Jehovah's word, that we the living who survive to the presence of the Lord will in no way precede those who have fallen asleep in death; because the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a commanding call,

with an archangel's voice and with God's trumpet, and those who are dead in union with Christ will rise first. Afterward we the living who are surviving will, together with them, be caught away in clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and thus we will always be with the Lord.

w15 7/15 18-19 paragraphs 14-15

14 What will happen after Gog of Magog starts the attack on God's people? Both Matthew and Mark record the same event: "[The Son of man] will send out the angels and will gather his chosen ones together from the four winds, from earth's extremity to heaven's extremity." (Mark 13:27; Matthew 24:31) This gathering work does not refer to the initial ingathering of anointed ones; nor does it refer to the final sealing of the remaining anointed ones. (Matthew 13:37, 38) That sealing happens before the outbreak of the great tribulation. (Revelation 7:1-4) So, what is this gathering work that Jesus mentions? It is the time when the remaining ones of the 144,000 will receive their heavenly reward. (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; Revelation 14:1) This event will take place at some point after the beginning of the attack by Gog of Magog. (Ezekiel 38:11) Then these words of Jesus will be fulfilled: "At that time the righteous ones will shine as brightly as the sun *in the Kingdom of their Father.*"—Matthew 13:43.

15 Does this mean that there will be a "rapture" of the anointed ones? Many in Christendom believe, according to this teaching, that Christians will be bodily caught up from the earth. Then, they expect that Jesus will visibly return to rule the earth. However, the Bible clearly shows that "the sign of the Son of man" will appear in

heaven and that Jesus will come "on the clouds of heaven."
(Matthew 24:30) Both of these expressions imply invisibility.
Additionally, "flesh and blood cannot inherit God's Kingdom." So
those who will be taken to heaven will first need to be "changed, in
a moment, in the blink of an eye, during the last trumpet." (Read
1 Corinthians 15:50-53.) Therefore, while we do not use the term
"rapture" here because of its wrong connotation, the remaining
faithful anointed will be gathered together in an instant of time.

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 minutes or less) 1 Thessalonians 3:1-13 (*th*
study 5)

- Song 90 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Keep Encouraging One Another and Building One Another Up”:** (10 min.)
[Play the video *Introduction to 1 Thessalonians.*]
1Th 5:11-13—Give “extraordinary consideration” to those who are presiding over you (w11 6/15 26 ¶12; 28 ¶19)
1Th 5:14—Speak consolingly to those who are depressed, and support the weak (w17.10 10 ¶13; w15 2/15 9 ¶16)

- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
1Th 4:3-6—How does one who commits sexual immorality “take advantage of his brother”? (it-1 863-864)

1Th 4:15-17—Who will be “caught away in clouds to meet the Lord in the air,” and how does this happen? (w15 7/15 18-19 ¶14-15)

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) 1Th 3:1-13 (5)

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call Video:** (4 min.) Play and discuss the video.
- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Use the sample conversation. (1)
- **Initial Call:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Overcome a common objection. (3)
- **Initial Call:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Overcome a common objection. (4)

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 81
- **Pioneers Who Encourage:** (9 min.) Play the video *Pioneers’ Power to Help* (video category THE BIBLE). Then answer the following questions: How can pioneers encourage others in the congregation? How have you been encouraged by the pioneers in your congregation?
- **Good Examples That Encourage Us:** (6 min.) Play the video *We Must “Run With Endurance”—Imitate Good Examples* (video category THE BIBLE). Then answer the following questions: What challenge did the sister have? What did she do to receive encouragement?
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) jy chap. 74
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 100 and Prayer

1 THESSALONIANS 1-5 | “Keep Encouraging One Another and Building One Another Up”



5:11-14 

Every Christian has the ability to encourage others. For instance, we encourage fellow Christians when we faithfully attend meetings and share in the ministry, perhaps “amid much struggling” because of poor health or other difficulties. (1Th 2:2, fn.) Additionally, with advance thought and maybe some research, we can speak consolingly to fellow worshippers who need encouragement.

Where can you find helpful information on how to encourage someone dealing with a specific challenge?

Whom in the congregation do you want to encourage?



Our Christian Life and Ministry

MEETING WORKBOOK


Sample Conversations

●○○
INITIAL CALL →

Question: Is God to blame for our suffering?

Scripture: Job 34:10

Link: What is the root cause of our suffering?




○○●
FIRST RETURN VISIT →

Question: What is the root cause of our suffering?

Scripture: 1Jo 5:19

Link: How will God undo the damage caused by the Devil?




○○●
SECOND RETURN VISIT

Question: How will God undo the damage caused by the Devil?

Scripture: Mt 6:9, 10

Link: What is the Kingdom of God?



81

The Life of a Pioneer

(Ecclesiastes 11:6)

1. At the start of the day, with the sun yet to rise,
We are making our way
with the sleep in our eyes, and we pray.
We are there with a smile for the people we meet.
Some may stop for a while,
some pass by on the street, but we stay.

(CHORUS)

It's the life that we choose;

For Jehovah we live.

And whatever he asks, we will do.

In the work we endure,

Whether sunshine or rain.

It's a way we can say ev'ry day: "I love you."

2. At the end of the day, with the sun sinking low,
Feeling happy and tired,
in our heart there's a glow, and we pray.
It's a life that we love, always giving our best.
And Jehovah we thank,
for by him we are blessed ev'ry day.

(Chorus)

- Song 90 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Keep Encouraging One Another and Building One Another Up”:** (10 min.)
[Play the video *Introduction to 1 Thessalonians.*]
1Th 5:11-13—Give “extraordinary consideration” to those who are presiding over you (w11 6/15 26 ¶12; 28 ¶19)
1Th 5:14—Speak consolingly to those who are depressed, and support the weak (w17.10 10 ¶13; w15 2/15 9 ¶16)

- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
1Th 4:3-6—How does one who commits sexual immorality “take advantage of his brother”? (it-1 863-864)

1Th 4:15-17—Who will be “caught away in clouds to meet the Lord in the air,” and how does this happen? (w15 7/15 18-19 ¶14-15)

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) 1Th 3:1-13 (5)

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call Video:** (4 min.) Play and discuss the video.
- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Use the sample conversation. (1)
- **Initial Call:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Overcome a common objection. (3)
- **Initial Call:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Overcome a common objection. (4)

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 81
- **Pioneers Who Encourage:** (9 min.) Play the video *Pioneers’ Power to Help* (video category THE BIBLE). Then answer the following questions: How can pioneers encourage others in the congregation? How have you been encouraged by the pioneers in your congregation?
- **Good Examples That Encourage Us:** (6 min.) Play the video *We Must “Run With Endurance”—Imitate Good Examples* (video category THE BIBLE). Then answer the following questions: What challenge did the sister have? What did she do to receive encouragement?
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) jy chap. 74
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 100 and Prayer

1 THESSALONIANS 1-5 | “Keep Encouraging One Another and Building One Another Up”



5:11-14 

Every Christian has the ability to encourage others. For instance, we encourage fellow Christians when we faithfully attend meetings and share in the ministry, perhaps “amid much struggling” because of poor health or other difficulties. (1Th 2:2, fn.) Additionally, with advance thought and maybe some research, we can speak consolingly to fellow worshippers who need encouragement.

Where can you find helpful information on how to encourage someone dealing with a specific challenge?

Whom in the congregation do you want to encourage?

Pioneers' Power to Help

(At the Hall, before the meeting starts)

(Maria invites Joanna to work with her in field service.)

Joanna speaking to herself: It was really nice of Maria to invite me in service. But I already have plans with Sarah.

(Out in field service)

Joanna speaking to herself: We have similar service schedules, and we really enjoy working together. I try to get most of my time during the week, . . .

(At meeting for field service)

Brother speaking to group: Anyone made plans to work together?

Joanna continues: . . . though I do meet with the group sometimes on Saturday.

Brother speaking to group: Sister Martin, can you work with Rachel today?

(Another meeting for field service)

Brother speaking to group: Thanks, everyone. Anyone made plans to work together? OK. Joanna, you can work with Sarah.

(Another meeting for field service)

Brother speaking to group: Anyone made plans to work together?

Joanna: Sarah, do you want to go with me to a Bible study?

Brother in audience speaks: Could I work with Alisha?

Brother conducting answers: Uh-huh.

Sara: OK, let's work together.

Brother speaking to group: Joanna, could you two (Maria) work together, please?

Joanna: Um, I'd love to. But I've just arranged to work with Sarah. I'm so sorry.

Brother speaking to group: Uh-huh. No problem. Maria, could you work with this sister?

(Joanna is at home)

Joanna speaks to herself: While doing my Bible reading that night, I was really affected by the words found at 2 Corinthians 6:12, 13: "You are restricted in your own tender affections . . . Open your hearts wide."

Joanna continues: It struck me that some in the congregation missed out on a beautiful blessing by drawing away from the apostle Paul. I realized I was limiting my joy as well by not working with more in the ministry. I was going through the motions of pioneering, but I was stuck in the same routine.

(At the Hall, before the meeting starts)

Joanna speaks to Maria at the next meeting: How are you, Maria?

Maria: Good. And you?

Joanna: Let me ask you something. Could you join me on a Bible study Saturday?

Maria: Oh, I'd love that! Uh-huh.

Joanna: That's great. So later we'll make the arrangements. OK?

Announcement from stage: The meeting is starting. We'd like to invite everyone to take your seats because our meeting is about to begin.

(At Joanna's study)

Joanna speaks to herself: My student liked Maria and Isabelle (Maria's young daughter) so much. I really learned a lot from them. I started going out regularly on the weekends . . .

(Another meeting for field service)

Brother speaking to group: Anyone made plans to work together?
(Joanna is paired with Sister Martin)

Joanna continues: . . . and working with different ones in the ministry. And I learned more about Sister Martin after one day in the ministry than I had in years of seeing her at meetings. Sarah and I still enjoy working together. But I've found that by working with a variety of friends, my own joy has increased. I'm so glad I 'opened my heart wide.'

- Song 90 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Keep Encouraging One Another and Building One Another Up”:** (10 min.)
[Play the video *Introduction to 1 Thessalonians.*]
1Th 5:11-13—Give “extraordinary consideration” to those who are presiding over you (w11 6/15 26 ¶12; 28 ¶19)
1Th 5:14—Speak consolingly to those who are depressed, and support the weak (w17.10 10 ¶13; w15 2/15 9 ¶16)

- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
1Th 4:3-6—How does one who commits sexual immorality “take advantage of his brother”? (it-1 863-864)

1Th 4:15-17—Who will be “caught away in clouds to meet the Lord in the air,” and how does this happen? (w15 7/15 18-19 ¶14-15)

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) 1Th 3:1-13 (5)

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call Video:** (4 min.) Play and discuss the video.
- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Use the sample conversation. (1)
- **Initial Call:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Overcome a common objection. (3)
- **Initial Call:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Overcome a common objection. (4)

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 81
- **Pioneers Who Encourage:** (9 min.) Play the video *Pioneers’ Power to Help* (video category THE BIBLE). Then answer the following questions: How can pioneers encourage others in the congregation? How have you been encouraged by the pioneers in your congregation?
- **Good Examples That Encourage Us:** (6 min.) Play the video *We Must “Run With Endurance”—Imitate Good Examples* (video category THE BIBLE). Then answer the following questions: What challenge did the sister have? What did she do to receive encouragement?
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) jy chap. 74
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 100 and Prayer

1 THESSALONIANS 1-5 | “Keep Encouraging One Another and Building One Another Up”



5:11-14

Every Christian has the ability to encourage others. For instance, we encourage fellow Christians when we faithfully attend meetings and share in the ministry, perhaps “amid much struggling” because of poor health or other difficulties. (1Th 2:2, fn.) Additionally, with advance thought and maybe some research, we can speak consolingly to fellow worshippers who need encouragement.

Where can you find helpful information on how to encourage someone dealing with a specific challenge?

Whom in the congregation do you want to encourage?

We Must "Run With Endurance"—Imitate Good Examples

(A young sister in a high school class considers sharing the "*Can the dead really live again*" tract with another student who is noticeably sad, but she is intimidated by a different aggressive student and does not share it.)

(The young sister is now at the Hall and is sitting by herself tapping on her phone. She takes note of others conversing but she doesn't join in.)

(The young sister is now at a get-together. She sits alone tapping on her phone. She looks at the others associating but she doesn't join in.)

(The young sister is now at a Watchtower study. She goes to raise her hand but decides to let another sister answer instead.)

(The young sister is now at a publication stand in field service. She stands back and lets the other sister respond to questions from passersby.)

The young sister: (soliloquy)

I don't know why I get so nervous around people.

I want to be more outgoing, but I'm just not that type of person. Maybe I'm just too shy to be useful to Jehovah.

What was that scripture Allison commented on last night?
Philippians 3:17:

"Unitedly become imitators of me, brothers, and keep your eye on those who are walking in a way that is in harmony with the example we set for you."

Then she mentioned how scared she was to give talks or even go door to door. But then she found a good friend in the congregation. By imitating her friend's zeal, she eventually worked up the courage to start pioneering. Maybe if I reach out to Allison, she could be that friend for me.

(Allison and the young sister speak together in a private home.)

(Allison makes a point of speaking to the young sister at the Hall, and brings along other sisters to speak with her as well.)

(Allison sits by the young sister and gives encouragement to the young sister to answer at the Watchtower Study.)

(Allison joins the young sister on the stage for a part.)

(Back at school, the young sister gives that tract to her fellow student.)

(The young sister speaks up in field service at the publication stand.)

(The young sister, at a get-together, sees another shy sister sitting alone tapping on her phone and invites her to join the rest of the friends and enjoy the association, which she does.)

LESSONS ABOUT HOSPITALITY AND PRAYER

LUKE 10:38–11:13

- JESUS VISITS MARTHA AND MARY
 - PERSISTENCE IN PRAYER IS VITAL
-

On the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, about two miles from Jerusalem, lies the village of Bethany. (John 11:18) Jesus goes there and enters the house of two sisters, Martha and Mary. They and their brother, Lazarus, are Jesus' friends, and they warmly welcome him.

It is an honor to have the Messiah as a visitor. Martha is eager to provide well for Jesus, so she sets to work preparing an elaborate meal. While Martha works, her sister, Mary, sits at Jesus' feet and listens to him. In time, Martha says to Jesus: "Lord, does it not matter to you that my sister has left me alone to attend to things? Tell her to come and help me."—Luke 10:40.

Rather than criticizing Mary, Jesus counsels Martha for being overly concerned with material



provisions: “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and disturbed about many things. A few things, though, are needed, or just one. For her part, Mary chose the good portion, and it will not be taken away from her.” (Luke 10:41, 42) Yes, Jesus points out that it is not necessary to spend a lot of time preparing many dishes. Just a simple meal will suffice.

Martha’s intentions are good. She wants to be hospitable. But her anxious attention to the meal means that she is missing out on valuable instruction from God’s own Son! Jesus emphasizes that Mary made a wise choice, one that will be of lasting benefit to her as well as a lesson for all of us to remember.

On another occasion, Jesus provides a different but equally important lesson. A disciple asks him: “Lord, teach us how to pray, just as John also taught his disciples.” (Luke 11:1) Jesus had already done so about a year and a half earlier in his Sermon on the Mount. (Matthew 6:9-13) However, this disciple may not have been present then, so Jesus repeats the key points. Then he gives an illustration to emphasize the need to be persistent in prayer.

“Suppose one of you has a friend and you go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves, because one of my friends has just come to me on a journey and I have nothing to offer him.’ But that one replies from inside: ‘Stop bothering me. The door is already locked, and my young children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything.’ I tell you, even if he will not get up and give him anything because of being his friend, certainly because of his bold persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.”—Luke 11:5-8.

Jesus is not implying that Jehovah is unwilling to respond to petitions, as was the friend. Rather, he is showing that if an unwilling friend will respond to persistent requests, certainly our loving heavenly Father will respond to the sincere petitions of his faithful servants! Jesus continues: “I say to you, keep on asking, and it will be given you; keep on seeking, and you will find; keep on knocking, and it will be opened to you. For everyone asking receives, and everyone seeking finds, and to everyone knocking, it will be opened.”—Luke 11:9, 10.

Jesus then underscores his point by making a comparison to human fathers: “Which father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will hand him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he also asks for an egg, will hand him a scorpion? Therefore, if you, although being wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more so will the Father in heaven give holy spirit to those asking him!” (Luke 11:11-13) What a fine assurance that our Father is willing to hear us and respond to our needs!

- ◇ How do Martha and Mary differ in their focus, and what lesson can we learn from this?
- ◇ Why does Jesus repeat his instructions on prayer?
- ◇ How does Jesus illustrate the need to persist in prayer?

100 *Receive Them With Hospitality*

(Acts 17:7)

1. Jehovah shows sincere hospitality.

He cares for all without partiality.

He gives both rain and sun,

withholding these from none;

He fills our hearts with food and good cheer.

Whenever we show favor to lowly ones,

We imitate our God as beloved sons.

Our Father will repay

the goodness we display,

Our kindness that is truly sincere.

2. We never know the good that may come about

When we see those in need and we help them out.

Though strangers they may be,

in hospitality,

We lend a hand to care for their needs.

Like Lydia of old, we say: 'Be my guest.'

When they come to our home, they find peace and rest.

Our Father is aware

of all those ev'rywhere,

Who imitate his merciful deeds.

MAY 2019

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

LARGE PRINT EDITION



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
JULY 1–AUGUST 4, 2019

Study Article 18: July 1-7	2
Love and Justice in the Christian Congregation	

Study Article 19: July 8-14	14
Love and Justice in the Face of Wickedness	

Study Article 20: July 15-21	27
Providing Comfort for Victims of Abuse	

Study Article 21: July 22-28	41
Do Not Be Fooled by “the Wisdom of This World”	

Study Article 22: July 29–August 4	51
Improve Your Study Habits!	

COVER PICTURE:

Parents protect their children from sexual abuse by sharing with them appropriate information about sex. To do so, parents use the information that God’s organization has provided. (See study article 19, paragraphs 19-22)

This publication is not for sale. It is provided as part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations. To make a donation, please visit donate.jw.org.

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

The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) May 2019 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. © 2019 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. Printed in Canada.

Visit the [jw.org](https://www.jw.org)® website,
or scan code



142 *Holding Fast to Our Hope*

(Hebrews 6:18, 19)

1. Mankind has stumbled for centuries in darkness.
Vain is their quest as they try to catch the wind.
Man's tragic flaw is revealed in its starkness;
None can they save, for they all have sinned.

(CHORUS)

*Sing with good cheer, for God's Kingdom is here!
His Son's mighty reign brings us freedom from fear.
Through him, at last, evil soon will be past;
This hope, like an anchor, is holding us fast.*

2. "God's day is near!" rings the Kingdom proclamation;
Men will no longer cry out to God: "How long?"
Soon he will free all his groaning creation.
Praise God Almighty, and join our song.

(Chorus)

PART 3 OF 4

Love and Justice in the Face of Wickedness

*“You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness;
no one bad may remain with you.”—PS. 5:4.*

SONG 142

Holding Fast to Our Hope

PREVIEW

This article will consider how children can be kept safe from sexual abuse. We will learn how elders act in behalf of the congregation and how parents can protect their children.

JEHOVAH GOD hates all forms of wickedness. (Read Psalm 5:4-6.) How he must hate child sexual abuse—an especially repugnant wicked deed! In imitation of Jehovah, we as his Witnesses abhor child abuse and do not tolerate it in the Christian congregation.—Rom. 12:9; Heb. 12:15, 16.

² Any act of child abuse is absolutely opposed to “the law of the Christ”! (Gal. 6:2) Why can we say that? As we learned in the preceding article, the law of the Christ—that is, all that Jesus taught both by word and by example—is built on love and promotes justice. Governed by this law, true Christians treat children in a way that makes them feel safe and genuinely loved. But child abuse is a selfish, unjust act that makes a child feel unsafe and unloved.

³ Sadly, child sexual abuse is a worldwide plague, and true Christians have been affected by this plague. Why? “Wicked men and impostors” abound, and some may try to enter the congregation. (2 Tim. 3:13) In addition, some professing to be a part of the congregation have succumbed to perverted fleshly desires and have sexually abused children. Let us discuss why child abuse is such a grave sin. Then we will consider how elders handle instances of serious wrongdoing,

1-3. (a) According to Psalm 5:4-6, how does Jehovah feel about wickedness? **(b)** Why can we say that child abuse is opposed to “the law of the Christ”?

including child abuse, and how parents can protect their children.*

A GRAVE SIN

⁴ Child abuse has far-reaching consequences. It affects the victims as well as those who care about the victims—their family members and their Christian brothers and sisters. Child abuse is a grave sin.

⁵ *A sin against the victim.*[#] It is a sin to inflict unjust pain and suffering on others. As we will see in the next article, the child abuser does just that—he hurts the child in devastating ways. He betrays the child’s trust, robbing the child of his or her security. Children must be protected from such a wicked deed, and those who have been victimized by it need comfort and help. —1 Thess. 5:14.

* **EXPRESSIONS EXPLAINED:** **Child sexual abuse** occurs when an adult uses a child to satisfy his or her own sexual desires. It could include sexual intercourse; oral or anal sex; fondling of genitalia, breasts, or buttocks; or other perverted acts. While most **victims** are girls, many boys are abused as well. Although most **abusers** are men, some women also abuse children.

EXPRESSION EXPLAINED: In this article and in the one that follows, the word “**victim**” refers to someone who was sexually abused as a child. We use this term to make clear that the child has been hurt and taken advantage of and that he or she is innocent.

4-5. How is child abuse a sin against the victim?

⁶ *A sin against the congregation.* When someone who is a part of the congregation becomes guilty of child abuse, he brings reproach on the congregation. (Matt. 5:16; 1 Pet. 2:12) How unfair that is to the millions of faithful Christians who are putting up “a hard fight for the faith”! (Jude 3) We do not tolerate in our midst individuals who unrepentantly commit wicked deeds and who bring reproach on the good name of the congregation.

⁷ *A sin against the secular authorities.* Christians are to “be in subjection to the superior authorities.” (Rom. 13:1) We prove our subjection by showing due respect for the laws of the land. If someone in the congregation becomes guilty of violating a criminal law, such as by committing child abuse, he is sinning against the secular authorities. (Compare Acts 25:8.) While the elders are not authorized to enforce the law of the land, they do not shield any perpetrator of child abuse from the legal consequences of his sin. (Rom. 13:4) The sinner reaps what he has sown.—Gal. 6:7.

⁸ *Above all, a sin against God.* (Ps. 51:4) When a

6-7. How is child abuse a sin against the congregation and against the secular authorities?

8. How does Jehovah view sins committed against humans?

human sins against another human, he also sins against Jehovah. Consider an example from the Law that God gave Israel. The Law said that a man who robbed or defrauded his neighbor was behaving “unfaithfully toward Jehovah.” (Lev. 6:2-4) Certainly, then, when an individual who is a part of the congregation abuses a child—robbing that child of his or her security—he is behaving unfaithfully toward God. The abuser brings great reproach on Jehovah’s name. For that reason, abuse must be condemned for what it is—a gross sin against God.

⁹ Over the years, Jehovah’s organization has provided an abundance of Scriptural information on the subject of child abuse. For example, articles in *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* have discussed how those who have been sexually abused can deal with emotional scars, how others can help and encourage them, and how parents can protect their children. Elders have received detailed Scriptural training on how to handle the sin of child abuse. The organization continues to review the way congregations handle the sin of child abuse. Why? To make sure that our way of handling the matter is in harmony with the law of the Christ.

9. What Scriptural information has Jehovah’s organization provided over the years, and why?

HANDLING INSTANCES OF SERIOUS WRONGDOING

¹⁰ When elders handle any matter involving serious wrongdoing, they keep in mind that the law of the Christ requires that they treat the flock with love and do what is right and just in God's eyes. As a result, they have a number of concerns when they receive a report of serious wrongdoing. The elders are primarily concerned with maintaining the sanctity of God's name. (Lev. 22:31, 32; Matt. 6:9) They are also deeply concerned with the spiritual welfare of their brothers and sisters in the congregation and want to help any who have been victims of wrongdoing.

¹¹ In addition, if the wrongdoer is a part of the congregation, elders are concerned with trying to restore him if that is possible. (Read James 5:14, 15.) A Christian who gives in to wrong desire and commits a serious sin is spiritually sick. This means that he no longer has a healthy relationship with Jehovah.* In

* Spiritual sickness is no excuse for gross sin. The sinner is fully responsible for his wrong choices and actions and is accountable to Jehovah. —Rom. 14:12.

10-12. (a) When they handle any matter involving serious wrongdoing, what do elders keep in mind, and what concerns do they have? (b) According to James 5:14, 15, what do the elders endeavor to do?

a sense, the elders are spiritual physicians. They endeavor to make “the sick one [in this instance, the wrongdoer] well.” Their Scriptural counsel can help him to restore his relationship with God, but this is only possible if he is genuinely repentant.—Acts 3:19; 2 Cor. 2:5-10.

¹² Clearly, elders have a weighty responsibility. They care deeply about the flock that God has entrusted to them. (1 Pet. 5:1-3) They want their brothers and sisters to feel secure in the congregation. For that reason, they act promptly when they receive a report of serious wrongdoing, including child abuse. Consider the questions that appear at the beginning of paragraphs 13, 15, and 17.

¹³ *Do elders comply with secular laws about reporting an allegation of child abuse to the secular authorities?* Yes. In places where such laws exist, elders endeavor to comply with secular laws about reporting allegations of abuse. (Rom. 13:1) Such laws do not conflict with God’s law. (Acts 5:28, 29) So when they learn of an allegation, elders immediately seek direction on how they can comply with laws about reporting it.

¹⁴ Elders assure victims and their parents and others with knowledge of the matter that they are free to

13-14. Do elders comply with secular laws about reporting an allegation of child abuse? Explain.

report an allegation of abuse to the secular authorities. But what if the report is about someone who is a part of the congregation and the matter then becomes known in the community? Should the Christian who reported it feel that he has brought reproach on God's name? No. The abuser is the one who brings reproach on God's name.

¹⁵ *In the congregation, before the elders take judicial action, why are at least two witnesses required?* This requirement is part of the Bible's high standard of justice. When there is no confession of wrongdoing, two witnesses are required to establish the accusation and authorize the elders to take judicial action. (Deut. 19:15; Matt. 18:16; read 1 Timothy 5:19.) Does this mean that before an allegation of abuse can be reported to the authorities, two witnesses are required? No. This requirement does not apply to whether elders or others report allegations of a *crime*.

¹⁶ When they learn that someone in the congregation is accused of child abuse, elders endeavor to comply with any secular laws about reporting the matter, and then they conduct a Scriptural investigation. If the individual denies the accusation, the elders

15-16. (a) According to 1 Timothy 5:19, why are at least two witnesses required before the elders take judicial action? (b) What do elders do when they learn that someone in the congregation is accused of child abuse?

consider the testimony of witnesses. If at least two people—the one making the accusation and someone else who can verify this act or other acts of child abuse by the accused—establish the charge, a judicial committee is formed.* The absence of a second witness does not mean that the one making the accusation is untruthful. Even if a charge of wrongdoing cannot be established by two witnesses, the elders recognize that a serious sin may have been committed, one that deeply hurt others. The elders provide ongoing support to any individuals who may have been hurt. In addition, the elders remain alert regarding the alleged abuser to protect the congregation from potential danger.—Acts 20:28.

¹⁷ *What is the role of the judicial committee?* The term “judicial” does not mean that the elders judge, or rule on, whether the abuser should be punished by the authorities for breaking the law. The elders do not interfere with law enforcement; they leave criminal matters to the secular authorities. (Rom. 13:2-4; Titus 3:1) Instead, the elders judge, or determine, whether an individual can remain in the congregation.

* A child is never required to confront an alleged abuser. A parent or another trusted confidant may advise the elders of the allegation without exposing the child to further emotional harm.

17-18. Explain the role of the judicial committee.

18 When elders serve on a judicial committee, their role is spiritual, or religious. Guided by the Scriptures, they judge whether the abuser is repentant or not. If he is unrepentant, he is expelled, and an announcement is made to the congregation. (1 Cor. 5: 11-13) If he is repentant, he may remain in the congregation. However, the elders will inform him that he may never qualify to receive any congregation privileges or to serve in any position of responsibility in the congregation. Out of concern for the welfare of children, the elders may privately warn the parents of minors in the congregation of the need to monitor their children's interactions with the individual. When taking such measures, the elders are careful to maintain the privacy of those hurt by the sin.

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR CHILDREN

19 Who have the responsibility to protect children from harm? Parents do.* Your children are a sacred trust, “an inheritance from Jehovah.” (Ps. 127:3) It is your responsibility to safeguard that trust. What can you do to protect your children from abuse?

* What is said about parents also applies to legal guardians or others who have parental responsibility for a minor.

19-22. What can parents do to protect their children? (See cover picture.)

Educate Yourself and Your Children

For Parents to Use With Their Children

- ▶ “Your Child Is in Danger!,” “How Can We Protect Our Children?,” and “Prevention in the Home” *Awake!* October 8, 1993
- ▶ “A Danger That Concerns Every Parent,” “How to Protect Your Children,” and “Make Your Family a Safe Haven” *Awake!* October 2007
- ▶ “How to Be a Good Father” *The Watchtower*, October 1, 2008
- ▶ “Talk to Your Children About Sex” *The Watchtower*, November 1, 2010
- ▶ *We Protect Our Children*, video available on JW Broadcasting®
- ▶ “Jehovah’s Witnesses Educate Parents and Children to Protect Against Sexual Predators,” available on jw.org® (Look under ABOUT US > ACTIVITIES.)
- ▶ “How Can Parents Teach Their Children About Sex?” available on jw.org (Look under BIBLE TEACHINGS > BIBLE QUESTIONS ANSWERED.)
- ▶ *Learn From the Great Teacher*, chapters 10 and 32
- ▶ *Become Jehovah’s Friend—Protect Your Children*, video available on jw.org (Look under BIBLE TEACHINGS > CHILDREN.)

²⁰ First, *educate yourself about abuse*. Learn about the kind of individuals who abuse children and the tactics they use to deceive them. Be alert to potential dangers. (Prov. 22:3; 24:3) Remember that in most cases, the abuser is someone the child already knows and trusts.

For Teenagers

- ▶ *What Your Peers Say—Sexual Harassment*, video available on jw.org (Look under BIBLE TEACHINGS > TEENAGERS.)
- ▶ “How Can I Protect Myself From Sexual Predators?” *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*, Volume 1, chapter 32
- ▶ “Young People Ask—What Should I Know About Sexual Assault?—Part 1: Precautions,” available on jw.org (Look under BIBLE TEACHINGS > TEENAGERS.)
- ▶ “What Should I Know About Sexual Assault?” *Answers to 10 Questions Young People Ask*, Question 8

Comfort for Victims

- ▶ “Help for the Victims of Incest” *The Watchtower*, October 1, 1983
- ▶ “The Innocent Victims of Child Abuse” and “The Secret Wounds of Child Abuse” *Awake!* October 8, 1991
- ▶ “Young People Ask—What Should I Know About Sexual Assault?—Part 2: Recovery,” available on jw.org (Look under BIBLE TEACHINGS > TEENAGERS.)
- ▶ “Providing Comfort for Victims of Abuse” *The Watchtower*, May 2019, Study Article 20

²¹ Second, *maintain good communication with your children.* (Deut. 6:6, 7) That includes being a good listener. (Jas. 1:19) Remember that children are often reluctant to report abuse. They may fear that they will not be believed, or they may have been threatened by the abuser to keep the abuse secret. If you sense that

something is wrong, kindly draw them out with questions and then patiently listen to their answers.

²² Third, *educate your children*. Share with them age-appropriate information about sex. Teach them what to say and do if someone tries to touch them in an inappropriate way. Use the information that God’s organization has provided on how to protect your children.—See the box “Educate Yourself and Your Children.”

²³ As Jehovah’s Witnesses, we view child sexual abuse as a gross sin and a wicked deed. Governed by the law of the Christ, our congregations do not shield perpetrators of abuse from the consequences of their sins. Meanwhile, what can we do to help those who have suffered abuse? The next article will answer that question.

23. How do we view child sexual abuse, and what question will the next article answer?

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- Why is child abuse a grave sin?
- When they handle instances of serious wrongdoing, what concerns do elders have?
- How can parents protect their children from abuse?

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)

