

- Song 99 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Make Appointments of Elders”:** (10 min.)
[Play the video *Introduction to Titus.*]
Tit 1:5-9—Circuit overseers appoint as elders those who meet the Scriptural qualifications (w14 11/15 28-29)
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LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 84
- **“Young Ones—Be ‘Zealous for Fine Works’”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Youths Honoring Jehovah* (video category TEENAGERS).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) jy chap. 79
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
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TITUS 1-PHILEMON | “Make Appointments of Elders”

1:5-9

Titus was commissioned to “make appointments of elders in city after city.” This Biblical precedent is followed today when circuit overseers make appointments in the congregation.



GOVERNING BODY

Following the first-century pattern, the Governing Body entrusts circuit overseers with the serious responsibility to appoint elders and ministerial servants.

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APPOINTED ELDERS

Even after elders are appointed, they must continue to meet the Scriptural qualifications.

Myriads of Brothers

(Revelation 7:9, 10)

1. Myriads on myriads of brothers,
Millions for all to see,
Each one a faithful witness,
Firm in integrity.
Myriads we are on myriads,
Growing, a mighty crowd,
From ev'ry nation and tribe and tongue,
We praise our God aloud.
2. Myriads on myriads of brothers,
We preach both far and near
"Good news of something better,"
Which millions long to hear.
And as we keep on preaching,
Though we at times are stressed,
Jesus refreshes the weary souls;
He gives us peace and rest.
3. Myriads on myriads of brothers,
God keeps us in his sight,
Safe in his earthly courtyards,
Serving him day and night.
Myriads we are on myriads,
With Kingdom news we go,
God's fellow workers we have become,
Serving him here below.

Titus

1 Paul, a slave of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ according to the faith of God's chosen ones and the accurate knowledge of the truth that is according to godly devotion ² and is based on a hope of the everlasting life that God, who cannot lie, promised long ago; ³ but in his own due time, he made his word known through the preaching entrusted to me according to the command of our Savior, God; ⁴ to Titus, a genuine child according to the faith we share:

May you have undeserved kindness and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

⁵ I left you in Crete so that you would correct the things that were defective and make appointments of elders in city after city, as I instructed you: ⁶ if there is any man free from accusation, a husband of one wife, having believing children who are not accused of debauchery or rebelliousness. ⁷ For as God's steward, an overseer must be free from accusation, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not a drunkard, not violent, not greedy of dishonest gain, ⁸ but hospitable, a lover of goodness, sound in mind, righteous, loyal, self-controlled, ⁹ holding firmly to the faithful word as respects his art of teaching, so that he may be able both to encourage by the teaching that is wholesome and to reprove those who contradict.

¹⁰ For there are many rebellious men, profitless talkers, and deceivers, especially those who adhere to the circumcision. ¹¹ It is necessary to shut their mouths, because these very men keep on subverting entire households by teaching things they should not for the sake of dishonest gain. ¹² A certain one of them, their own prophet, said: "Cre'tans are always liars, injurious wild beasts, idle gluttons."

¹³ This witness is true. For this very reason, keep on reproving them with severity so that they may be healthy in the faith, ¹⁴ paying

no attention to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn away from the truth. ¹⁵ All things are clean to clean people; but to those who are defiled and faithless, nothing is clean, for both their minds and their consciences are defiled. ¹⁶ They publicly declare that they know God, but they disown him by their works, because they are detestable and disobedient and not approved for good work of any sort.

2 You, however, keep on speaking what is consistent with wholesome teaching. ² Let the older men be moderate in habits, serious, sound in mind, healthy in faith, in love, in endurance. ³ Likewise, let the older women be reverent in behavior, not slanderous, not enslaved to a lot of wine, teachers of what is good, ⁴ so that they may advise the younger women to love their husbands, to love their children, ⁵ to be sound in mind, chaste, working at home, good, subjecting themselves to their own husbands, so that the word of God may not be spoken of abusively.

⁶ Likewise, keep on urging the younger men to be sound in mind, ⁷ showing yourself to be an example of fine works in every way. Teach what is pure with all seriousness, ⁸ using wholesome speech that cannot be criticized, so that those who oppose may be put to shame, having nothing negative to say about us. ⁹ Let slaves be in subjection to their owners in all things, trying to please them, not talking back, ¹⁰ not stealing from them, but showing complete trustworthiness, so that in every way they may adorn the teaching of our Savior, God.

¹¹ For the undeserved kindness of God has been manifested, bringing salvation to all sorts of people. ¹² It trains us to reject ungodliness and worldly desires and to live with soundness of mind and righteousness and godly devotion amid this present system of things, ¹³ while we wait for the happy hope and glorious manifestation of the great God and of our Savior, Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave himself for us to set us free from every sort of

lawlessness and to cleanse for himself a people who are his own special possession, zealous for fine works.

¹⁵ Keep on speaking these things and exhorting and reproofing with full authority. Do not let anyone look down on you.

3 Continue reminding them to be in subjection and to be obedient to governments and authorities, to be ready for every good work, ² to speak injuriously of no one, not to be quarrelsome, but to be reasonable, displaying all mildness toward all men. ³ For we too were once senseless, disobedient, led astray, being slaves to various desires and pleasures, carrying on in badness and envy, detestable, hating one another.

⁴ However, when the kindness of our Savior, God, and his love for mankind were manifested ⁵ (not because of any righteous works we had done, but because of his own mercy), he saved us by means of the bath that brought us to life and by making us new by holy spirit. ⁶ He poured this spirit out richly on us through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that after being declared righteous through the undeserved kindness of that one, we might become heirs according to a hope of everlasting life.

⁸ These words are trustworthy, and I want you to keep stressing these matters, so that those who have believed God may keep their minds focused on maintaining fine works. These things are fine and beneficial to men.

⁹ But have nothing to do with foolish arguments and genealogies and disputes and fights over the Law, for they are unprofitable and futile. ¹⁰ As for a man who promotes a sect, reject him after a first and a second admonition, ¹¹ knowing that such a man has deviated from the way and is sinning and is self-condemned.

¹² When I send Ar'te-mas or Tych'i-cus to you, do your utmost to come to me at Ni-cop'o-lis, for that is where I have decided to spend the winter. ¹³ Carefully supply Ze'nas, who is versed in the

Law, and A-pol'los so that they may lack nothing for their trip. ¹⁴ But let our people also learn to maintain fine works so as to help in cases of urgent need, so that they may not be unproductive.

¹⁵ All those with me send you their greetings. Give my greetings to those who have affection for us in the faith.

May the undeserved kindness be with all of you.

PHILEMON

¹ Paul, a prisoner for the sake of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, to Phi-le'mon our beloved fellow worker, ² and to Ap'phi-a our sister, and to Ar-chip'pus our fellow soldier, and to the congregation that is in your house:

³ May you have undeserved kindness and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴ I always thank my God when I mention you in my prayers, ⁵ as I keep hearing of your faith and the love that you have for the Lord Jesus and for all the holy ones. ⁶ I pray that your sharing in the faith may move you to acknowledge every good thing that we have through Christ. ⁷ For I received much joy and comfort on hearing of your love, because the hearts of the holy ones have been refreshed through you, brother.

⁸ For this very reason, though I have great freeness of speech in connection with Christ to order you to do what is proper, ⁹ I would rather appeal to you on the basis of love, seeing that I am Paul an older man, yes, now also a prisoner for the sake of Christ Jesus.

¹⁰ I am appealing to you for my child, whose father I became while in prison, O-nes'i-mus. ¹¹ He was formerly useless to you, but now he is useful to you and to me. ¹² I am sending him back to you, yes him, my very own heart.

¹³ I would like to keep him here for myself so that he might take your place in ministering to me during my imprisonment for the sake of the good news. ¹⁴ But I do not want to do anything without your consent, so that your good deed may be done, not under compulsion, but of your own free will. ¹⁵ Perhaps this is really why he broke away for a short while, so that you may have him back forever, ¹⁶ no longer as a slave, but as more than a slave, as a brother who is beloved, especially so to me, but how much more so to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. ¹⁷ So if you consider me a friend, receive him kindly the same way you would me. ¹⁸ Moreover, if he did you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to my account. ¹⁹ I, Paul, am writing with my own hand: I will pay it back—not to mention that you owe me even your own self. ²⁰ Yes, brother, may I receive this assistance from you in connection with the Lord; refresh my heart in connection with Christ.

²¹ I am confident that you will comply, so I am writing you, knowing that you will do even more than what I say. ²² But along with that, also prepare a place for me to stay, for I am hoping that through your prayers I will be given back to you.

²³ Sending you greetings is Ep'a-phras, my fellow captive in union with Christ Jesus, ²⁴ also Mark, Ar-is-tar'chus, De'mas, and Luke, my fellow workers.

²⁵ The undeserved kindness of the Lord Jesus Christ be with the spirit you show.

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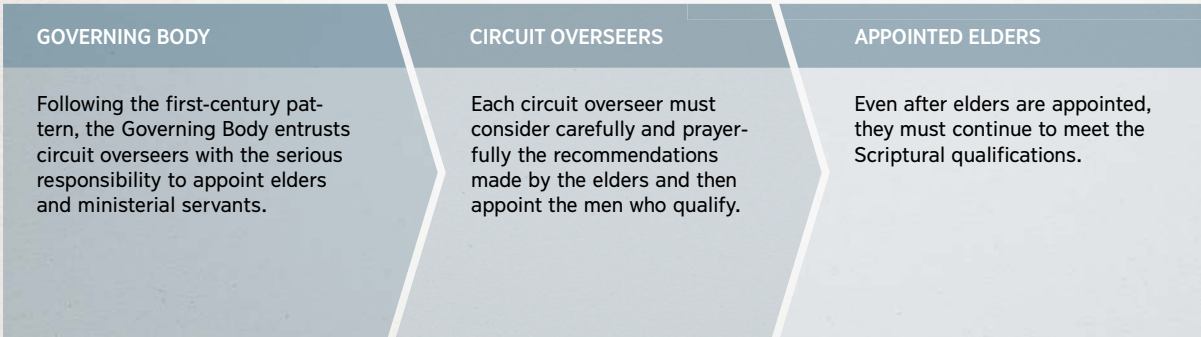
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August 12-18 / Titus 1–Philemon

- Song 99 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 minutes or less)

Treasures From God’s Word

- **“Make Appointments of Elders”**: (10 minutes)

[Play the video *Introduction to Titus*.]

“Make Appointments of Elders”

Titus 1:5-9

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[Box.] Governing Body

Following the first-century pattern, the Governing Body entrusts circuit overseers with the serious responsibility to appoint elders and ministerial servants.

Circuit Overseers

Each circuit overseer must consider carefully and prayerfully the recommendations made by the elders and then appoint the men who qualify.

Appointed Elders

Even after elders are appointed, they must continue to meet the Scriptural qualifications. [End of Box.]

Titus 1:5-9—Circuit overseers appoint as elders those who meet the Scriptural qualifications

Titus 1:5-9: I left you in Crete so that you would correct the things that were defective and make appointments of elders in city after city, as I instructed you: if there is any man free from accusation, a husband of one wife, having believing children who are not accused of debauchery or rebelliousness. For as God's steward, an overseer must be free from accusation, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not a drunkard, not violent, not greedy of dishonest gain, but hospitable, a lover of goodness, sound in mind, righteous, loyal, self-controlled, holding firmly to the faithful word as respects his art of teaching, so that he may be able both to encourage by the teaching that is wholesome and to reprove those who contradict.

w14 11/15 28-29

Although the Scriptures do not explain in detail how every appointment was made back then, we do see some indication of how this was done. We are told that when Paul and Barnabas were on their way back home from their first missionary trip, "*they appointed elders* for them in each congregation, offering prayer with fasting, and they entrusted them to Jehovah, in whom they had

become believers." (Acts 14:23) Years later, Paul wrote to his traveling companion Titus, saying: "I left you in Crete so that you would correct the things that were defective and *make appointments of elders* in city after city, as I instructed you." (Titus 1:5) Likewise, Timothy, who traveled extensively with the apostle Paul, appears to have been given similar authority. (1 Timothy 5:22) Clearly, then, these appointments were made by traveling overseers, not by the apostles and older men in Jerusalem.

With this Biblical precedent in mind, the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses has adjusted how the appointments of elders and ministerial servants are made. As of September 1, 2014, appointments are being made as follows: Each circuit overseer carefully reviews the recommendations being made in his circuit. During his visits to the congregations, he will try to get to know those who are recommended, working along with them in the ministry if at all possible. After discussing the recommendations with the local body of elders, the circuit overseer has the responsibility of appointing the elders and ministerial servants in the congregations in his circuit. In this way, the arrangement is closer to the first-century pattern.

Who handle the various roles in this process? As always, "the faithful and discreet slave" has the primary responsibility of feeding the domestics. (Matthew 24:45-47) This includes searching the Scriptures, with the help of the holy spirit, in order to provide direction on the practical application of Bible principles that have a bearing on the way the worldwide congregation is organized. The faithful slave also appoints all circuit overseers and Branch

Committee members. In turn, each branch office provides practical assistance in implementing the direction given. Each body of elders has the solemn duty to review thoroughly the Scriptural qualifications of the brothers they recommend for appointment in God's congregation. Each circuit overseer has the serious responsibility to consider carefully and prayerfully the recommendations made by the elders and then to appoint the men who qualify.

[Play the video *Introduction to Philemon*.]

Digging for Spiritual Gems

Titus 1:12—Why does this text not justify showing ethnic prejudice?

Titus 1:12: A certain one of them, their own prophet, said: "Cretans are always liars, injurious wild beasts, idle gluttons."

w89 5/15 31 paragraph 5

He certainly was not agreeing with any all-encompassing racial or ethnic slur against the Cretans. We can be sure of that, for Paul knew that on Crete there were fine Christians whom God had approved and anointed with His holy spirit. (Acts 2:5, 11, 33) There were enough devoted Christians to make up congregations in "city after city." While such Christians were not perfect humans, we can

be sure that they were not liars and lazy gluttons; otherwise they would not have continued to have Jehovah's approval. (Philippians 3:18, 19; Revelation 21:8) And as we today find in all nations, likely there were on Crete honest hearted people who were saddened by the low moral standards around them and were ready to respond to the Christian message.—Ezekiel 9:4; compare Acts 13:48.

Philemon 15, 16—Why did Paul not ask Philemon to grant freedom to Onesimus?

Philemon 15, 16: Perhaps this is really why he broke away for a short while, so that you may have him back forever, no longer as a slave, but as more than a slave, as a brother who is beloved, especially so to me, but how much more so to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

w08 10/15 31 paragraph 4

Paul desired to stick strictly to his commission to 'preach the kingdom of God and teach the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ.' Therefore, he chose to stay away from involvement in social issues, such as those concerning slavery.—Acts 28:31.

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Our Christian Life and Ministry

MEETING WORKBOOK

Sample Conversations



INITIAL CALL

Question: Will we ever see a time when no one gets sick?

Scripture: Isa 33:24

Link: How will the problem of world hunger be solved?



FIRST RETURN VISIT

Question: How will the problem of world hunger be solved?

Scripture: Ps 72:16

Link: What hope is there for our loved ones who have died?



SECOND RETURN VISIT

Question: What hope is there for our loved ones who have died?

Scripture: Joh 5:28, 29

Link: Why can we trust that Bible promises will come true?



Reaching Out

(Matthew 9:37, 38)

1. Jehovah knows just what we need
To bring us joy and to succeed.
So he provides so many ways
In which to serve and spend our days.

(CHORUS)

*Reaching out, giving all,
for our God above.*

*And where the need is great, there we'll be,
reaching out in love.*

2. There's work to do in ev'ry land.
Where there's a need, we lend a hand.
By reaching out, we show we care.
We want to help and want to share.

(Chorus)

3. And here at home, in towns nearby,
We plan, we build, new skills we try.
We learn to speak a foreign tongue
And bring good news to ev'ryone.

(Chorus)

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Young Ones—Be “Zealous for Fine Works”

In his inspired letter to Titus, the apostle Paul wrote that younger men, including Titus, should strive to be “an example of fine works in every way.” (Titus 2:6, 7) Later in the same chapter, he indicated that Jehovah’s people are cleansed so that they may be “zealous for fine works.” (Titus 2:14) One of those fine works is to preach and teach about God’s Kingdom. If you are a young one, can you use the strength of your youth to serve as an auxiliary or a regular pioneer?—Proverbs 20:29.

If you would like to serve as a pioneer, develop a realistic plan of how you can become one. (Luke 14:28-30) For instance, how will you support yourself financially while serving in the full-time ministry? How will you fulfill the hour requirement? Make your situation a matter of prayer to Jehovah. (Psalm 37:5) Discuss your plan with your parents and those who have been successful as pioneers. Then take steps to reach your goal. Jehovah will surely bless your zealous efforts in his service!

Watch the video *Youths Honoring Jehovah*, and then answer the following questions:

- What challenges have some overcome to serve as pioneers, and how did they do so?
- How can parents help their children become regular pioneers?
- Why is having a schedule for preaching important?

- How can members of the congregation encourage and help a pioneer?
- What blessings come to those who serve as pioneers?

Pictures: How can I reach the goal of serving as a pioneer?

Youths Honoring Jehovah

(Several young pioneers give comments)

Before I started pioneering, I was really nervous that I wouldn't be able to get my time in every month.

It was a bit hard when I started pioneering because I didn't have a car.

My boss, he didn't give me part-time work.

I found it really hard to balance schoolwork and pioneering at the same time.

My biggest struggle was fear of man, so that really hindered me because I wasn't very good at talking to people.

Having a good routine was a struggle.

My brother and I are the only ones in the truth. My family didn't understand why we wanted to go preaching.

I didn't think that I'd make a good pioneer.

I've had Type 1 diabetes since I was five. So I was always worried about whether or not I could balance that health condition with pioneering.

The challenges don't seem that big now, but back at that time they were a really big deal. But the coolest thing was how Jehovah helped me.

Prayer to Jehovah helped me overcome my fears.

My family was a massive help from Jehovah. Because my dad was the one who first encouraged me to pioneer, when I did start pioneering, he promised that I would have the full support of my family.

When I spoke to brothers and sisters who spent their youth in the full-time service that really helped me because it was really encouraging, and it really motivated me to want to make my own memories and my own experiences in the full-time service.

So there were practical things I could do. I didn't have a car; I just walked or I caught the bus.

I had to work out what my priorities were first. So I had to find out how many hours would I have to go witnessing every week. So then I just sat down and I looked at every day and planned out which days I could go witnessing, which days I had to go to school, and also allocated time so that I could do my homework and study.

Having a schedule was really good because I could see it all out in front of me, and I could see that the hour requirement was actually attainable, so that made it a lot less daunting.

I first set short-term goals of pioneering in the special months of activity. Then I was able to begin continuous auxiliary, and then eventually I started regular pioneering.

One of the best things I did to prepare myself for pioneering was to auxiliary pioneer beforehand. It really set me up to be able to overcome any challenges that I faced while I was pioneering.

I thought about Malachi 3:10. I knew I trusted in Jehovah, but this was my chance to test him out.

I prayed, put my trust in Jehovah, and put my application in.

After my form was in for pioneering, a brother, with time, a brother called me and offered me work.

I had unemployment for three months, which wasn't a good time. But during that time, I had Jehovah as my main focus. And so he supported me, and he didn't let me down.

Asking brothers and sisters to come and work with me, maybe on days that I knew that I wouldn't get as much support, really helped. That helped me to organize my hours a little bit more, and also I'd get to know my brothers and sisters more as well.

One of the greatest joys of pioneering has been to pioneer with Mum. And we had the privilege of going to the pioneer school together, which was really special.

Psalm 16:8 reminds me that Jehovah is right beside me. When I'm preaching, it's like Jehovah is holding my hand.

So with full-time service, I love making Jehovah happy. With everything that he has given me, I'm finally able to give something back.

Looking back—pioneering—it was the best decision I've ever made. It's opened up so many different avenues of service to Jehovah, and it helped me also to have that real desire to want to stay in full-time service.

Helping someone on the road to everlasting life, it's the best feeling ever; and it's really irreplaceable.

The only thing I can say, "As a young person, start pioneering!"

video source: https://tv.jw.org/#en/mediaitems/pub-jwb_201703_7_VIDEO

WHY DESTRUCTION IS AHEAD

LUKE 13:1-21

-
- JESUS DRAWS A LESSON FROM TWO TRAGEDIES
 - CRIPPLED WOMAN HEALED ON THE SABBATH
-

Jesus has tried in many ways to move the people to think about their standing with God. Another occasion arises after his discussion with people outside the house of a Pharisee.

Some of them mention a tragic event. They speak about “the Galileans whose blood [the Roman Governor Pontius] Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices.” (Luke 13:1) What do they mean?

Perhaps these Galileans were the ones killed when thousands of Jews protested Pilate’s use of money from the temple treasury to construct an aqueduct to bring water into Jerusalem. Pilate may have acquired the money with the cooperation of the temple authorities. Those relating this tragedy may feel that the Galileans suffered the calamity

because they were guilty of wicked deeds. Jesus disagrees.

He asks: “Do you think that those Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans because they have suffered these things?” His answer is no. But he uses the incident to warn the Jews: “Unless you repent, you will all likewise be destroyed.” (Luke 13: 2, 3) Jesus then refers to another tragedy that may have occurred recently and may have been related to the construction of that aqueduct, asking:

“Those 18 on whom the tower in Siloam fell, killing them—do you think that they had greater guilt than all other men who live in Jerusalem?” (Luke 13:4) The crowd may feel that those individuals died because of some personal badness. Again Jesus disagrees. He knows that “time and unexpected events” happen and are likely responsible for this tragedy too. (Ecclesiastes 9:11) The people, though, should take a lesson from the event. “Unless you repent, you will all be destroyed, as they were,” Jesus says. (Luke 13:5) But why is he stressing this lesson now?

It has to do with where he is in the course of his ministry, and he illustrates the matter this way: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came looking for fruit on it but found none. Then he said to the vinedresser, ‘Here it is three years that I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, but have found none. Cut it down! Why should it keep the ground useless?’ In reply he said to him, ‘Master, leave it alone for one more year until I dig around it and put on manure. If it produces fruit in the future, well and good; but if not, then cut it down.’”—Luke 13:6-9.

For more than three years, Jesus has been trying to cultivate faith among the Jews. Yet, relatively few have become disciples and can be considered fruitage of his labors. Now, in the fourth year of his ministry, he is intensifying his efforts. It is as if he were digging and putting fertilizer around the Jewish fig tree by preaching and teaching in Judea and Perea. With what results? Only a small number of Jews respond. As a whole, the nation refuses to repent and is now in line for destruction.

That lack of response on the part of most once again comes to the fore shortly afterward on a Sabbath. Jesus is teaching in a synagogue. He sees a woman who, because a demon is afflicting her, has been bent double for 18 years. Showing compassion, Jesus tells her: “Woman, you are released from your weakness.” (Luke 13:12) Jesus lays his hands on her, and instantly she straightens up and starts to glorify God.

That angers the presiding officer of the synagogue, who says: “There are six days on which work ought to be done; so come and be cured on those days, and not on the Sabbath day.” (Luke 13:14) That officer is not denying that Jesus has the power to heal; rather, he is condemning the people for coming to be healed on the Sabbath! Jesus responds with clear logic: “Hypocrites, does not each one of you on the Sabbath untie his bull or his donkey from the stall and lead it away to give it something to drink? Should not this woman, who is a daughter of Abraham and whom Satan held bound for 18 years, be released from this bondage on the Sabbath day?”—Luke 13:15, 16.

The opposers feel shame, but the crowds rejoice over the glorious things they are seeing Jesus do. Then Jesus repeats here in Judea two prophetic illustrations regarding the Kingdom, which he had related earlier from a boat on the Sea of Galilee.—Matthew 13:31-33; Luke 13:18-21.



- ◇ What two tragedies does Jesus use to provide a warning, and what is the warning?
- ◇ How does the illustration of the unfruitful fig tree highlight the situation of the Jewish nation?
- ◇ Over what is the presiding officer of the synagogue critical, and how does Jesus expose the man's hypocrisy?

127 *The Sort of Person I Should Be*

(2 Peter 3:11)

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

(BRIDGE)

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

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

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THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

LARGE PRINT EDITION



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
AUGUST 5–SEPTEMBER 1, 2019

Study Article 23: August 5-11	2
“Look Out That No One Takes You Captive”!	
<hr/>	
Study Article 24: August 12-18	14
Overturn Every Reasoning That Is Against the Knowledge of God!	
<hr/>	
Study Article 25: August 19-25	26
Rely on Jehovah When Under Stress	
<hr/>	
Study Article 26: August 26–September 1	38
Help Others Deal With Stress	
<hr/>	
Finding Sure Protection From a Satanic Trap	51
<hr/>	
An Ancient Scroll “Unwrapped”	62

COVER PICTURE:

Jehovah compassionately sent angels to rescue Lot and his family
(See study article 26, paragraph 4)

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Ever Loyal (Psalm 18:25)

1. Ever loyal to Jehovah,
Loyal love we wish to show.
As a people, dedicated,
His commands we want to know.
His advice will never fail us,
And his counsel we obey.
He is loyal; we can trust him.
From his side we'll never stray.
2. Ever loyal to our brothers,
Sticking close in times of need.
Ever caring, always trusting,
Ever kind in word and deed.
We show honor to our brothers
And respect them from the heart.
Ever loyal, ever closer,
From their side we'll never part.
3. Ever loyal to their guidance
When our brothers lead the way.
When they give us clear direction,
May we loyally obey.
Then the blessing from Jehovah
Will be ours to make us strong.
When we're loyal, ever faithful,
To Jehovah we'll belong.

Overturn Every Reasoning That Is Against the Knowledge of God!

“We are overturning reasonings and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God.”—2 COR. 10:5.

SONG 124

Ever Loyal

PREVIEW

For better or worse, our thinking is influenced by our background, our culture, and our education. We may find that certain wrong attitudes have become firmly entrenched in our personality. This article will show us how we can gain control over any wrong tendencies we may have developed.

“STOP,” warned the apostle Paul. Stop what? “Stop being molded by this system of things.” (Rom. 12:2) Paul addressed those words to the first-century Christians. Why did he give such strong admonition to men and women who were dedicated to God and anointed with holy spirit?—Rom. 1:7.

² Paul was concerned because some Christians were apparently being influenced by the unwholesome reasonings and philosophies promoted by Satan’s world. (Eph. 4:17-19) That can happen to any one of us. In a desperate attempt to turn us away from Jehovah, Satan, the god of this system of things, uses various tactics. One of them is that of exploiting any tendency we may have toward selfish ambition or self-promotion. He may even use certain aspects of our background, our culture, or our education to bring us over to his way of thinking.

³ Is it possible for us to root out things that are “strongly entrenched” in our minds? (2 Cor. 10:4) Notice how Paul answers: “We are overturning reasonings and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are bringing every

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- 1. What warning did the apostle Paul write to anointed Christians?**
 - 2-3. How does Satan try to turn us against Jehovah, but how can we root out things that are “strongly entrenched” in our minds?**

thought into captivity to make it obedient to the Christ.” (2 Cor. 10:5) Yes, with Jehovah’s help we can actually gain control over wrong reasonings. Just as medicine can counteract the effects of poison, God’s Word can help us to counteract the poisonous effects of Satan’s world.

“MAKING YOUR MIND OVER”

⁴ Think back to the changes you needed to make when you first accepted the truth of God’s Word and decided to serve Jehovah. For many of us, this involved giving up some form of wrong conduct. (1 Cor. 6:9-11) How grateful we are for Jehovah’s help in overcoming such sinful practices!

⁵ However, we must never become complacent. Even though we stopped committing serious sins that we engaged in before baptism, we still need to be diligent about avoiding anything that would tempt us to return to those former deeds. How can we do that? Paul answers: “Stop being molded by this system of things, but be transformed by making your mind over.” (Rom. 12:2) So a twofold action is required. First, we need to “stop being molded,” or

4. What changes did many of us have to make when we first accepted the truth?

5. What twofold action is described at Romans 12:2?

shaped, by this world. Second, we need to “be transformed” by making our mind over.

⁶ The transformation Paul had in mind involves more than a superficial change in appearance. It touches every fiber of our being. (See the box “Transformed or Disguised?”) We need to make

6. What do we learn from the idea behind Jesus’ words recorded at Matthew 12:43-45?



Transformed or Disguised?

The Greek word translated “transformed” at Romans 12:2 indicates a change in form or composition, like the change of a caterpillar into a butterfly. To be transformed means to change what we are inside—our character, our nature. By contrast, the Greek word translated “disguising” at 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 refers to a change that is outward only, a superficial change in appearance.

over our mind—our innermost attitudes, feelings, and inclinations. So all of us need to ask ourselves, ‘Are the changes I am making to become a Christian only skin-deep, or am I truly becoming a Christian deep within?’ The difference is important. In his words recorded at **Matthew 12:43-45**, Jesus indicated what needs to be done. (Read.) The idea behind those words highlights this important truth: It is not enough to get rid of wrong thoughts; we need to fill the void with godly thinking.

“BE MADE NEW IN YOUR DOMINANT MENTAL ATTITUDE”

⁷ Is it possible to change our basic inclinations or who we really are inside? God’s Word answers: “You should continue to be made new in your dominant mental attitude, and should put on the new personality that was created according to God’s will in true righteousness and loyalty.” (Eph. 4:23, 24) Yes, it is possible to change what we are inside, but it is not easy to do. We need to do more than just suppress wrong desires and actions. We need to change our “dominant mental attitude.” That involves changing our desires, our tendencies, and our motivations. This requires continuous action.

7. How can we change what we are inside?

⁸ Let us consider the example of a brother who had a violent background. After he stopped drinking and fighting, he qualified for baptism, giving a wonderful witness in the small community where he lived. But one evening, shortly after his baptism, he faced an unexpected test. A drunk man came to his home and challenged him to a fight. Initially our brother resisted his urge to fight. But when the man eventually blasphemed Jehovah's name, it was too much for our new brother. He went out and beat up the man. What was the problem? Although his study of the Bible had helped him to suppress his violent tendencies, he had not yet been able to change his dominant mental attitude. In other words, he had not changed who he really was inside.

⁹ However, this brother did not give up. (Prov. 24: 16) With the help of the elders, he continued to make good progress. He eventually qualified to be an elder. Then one evening, right outside of the Kingdom Hall, he came face-to-face with a challenge similar to the one he had confronted years earlier. A drunk man was about to beat up one of the other elders. What did our brother do? In a calm, humble manner, he reasoned with the drunk man, eased the

8-9. How does the experience of one brother highlight the need to change what we are inside?

tension, and helped the staggering man to get home. What had happened? Our brother had changed his dominant mental attitude. Deep within, he had been transformed into a peaceable, humble person—all to Jehovah’s praise!

¹⁰ These changes do not take place overnight; nor do they occur automatically. We may need to exert “earnest effort” over a period of years. (2 Pet. 1:5) It is not as if being “in the truth” for a certain length of time were enough. We need to do our utmost to change our inner self. A number of basic steps will help us to make this change. Let us examine some of these.

HOW TO CHANGE OUR DOMINANT MENTAL ATTITUDE

¹¹ *Prayer* is the important first step. We need to pray as did the psalmist: “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and put within me a new spirit, a steadfast one.” (Ps. 51:10) We must acknowledge the need to change our dominant mental attitude and ask Jehovah for help. How can we be sure that Jehovah will help us to make the change? We can be encouraged

10. What is involved in making these changes?

11. How does prayer help us to change our dominant mental attitude?

by Jehovah's promise regarding the hard-hearted Israelites in Ezekiel's day: "I will give them a unified heart, and I will put a new spirit in them . . . and give them a heart of flesh, [that is, one sensitive to God's guidance]." (Ezek. 11:19; ftn.) Jehovah was willing to help those Israelites to change, and he is willing to help us too.

¹² *Meditation* is the second vital step. As we peer into God's Word each day, we need to take the time to meditate, or to think deeply, on what thoughts and feelings we need to change. (Read Psalm 119:59; Heb. 4:12; Jas. 1:25) We must identify any tendencies we may have to be attracted to human philosophies. We need to admit honestly what our weaknesses are and then work hard to get rid of those weaknesses.

¹³ For instance, ask yourself: 'Is there a trace of envy or jealousy in my heart?' (1 Pet. 2:1) 'Do I feel a measure of pride because of my background, education, or financial status?' (Prov. 16:5) 'Do I look down on others who do not have the same things I have or who are from a different racial background?' (Jas. 2:2-4) 'Do I feel attracted to what

12-13. (a) According to Psalm 119:59, on what do we need to meditate? (b) What questions should you ask yourself?

Satan’s world offers?’ (1 John 2:15-17) ‘Do I feel drawn to immoral and violent entertainment?’ (Ps. 97:10; 101:3; Amos 5:15) The answers to these personal questions may highlight areas that you need to work on. By conquering what might be “strongly entrenched” reasonings in our hearts, we will please our heavenly Father.—Ps. 19:14.

¹⁴ *Choosing good association* is the third necessary step. Whether we realize it or not, we are strongly influenced by those with whom we associate. (Prov. 13:20) At work or in school, we are likely surrounded by those who will not help us to develop godly thinking. However, we can find the best type of association at our Christian meetings. There is where we can be motivated, or stirred up, to “love and fine works.”—Heb. 10:24, 25, ftn.

BE “STABILIZED IN THE FAITH”

¹⁵ Remember, though, Satan is determined to change our thinking. He uses every type of reasoning to counteract the influence of the truth of God’s Word.

¹⁶ Satan continues to ask the same question he

14. Why is choosing good association so vital?

15-16. How does Satan try to change our thinking?

1 PRAYER

“Put within me a new spirit,
a steadfast one.”—Ps. 51:10.

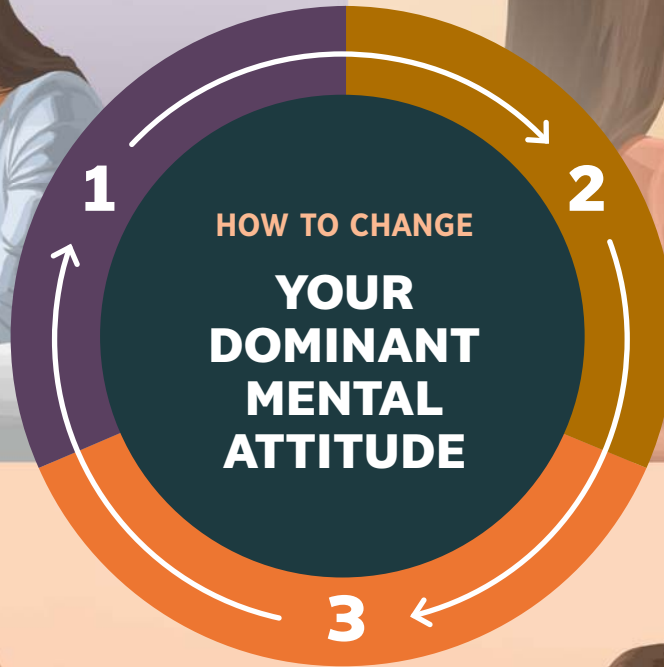
Talk to Jehovah: Admit that you need to change; ask God for the help to do it.



2 MEDITATION

“I have examined my ways,
in order to turn my feet back
to your reminders.”—Ps. 119:59.

Analyze yourself: ‘Do I sense jealousy or pride lurking in my heart? Am I drawn to immoral entertainment?’



HOW TO CHANGE
YOUR
DOMINANT
MENTAL
ATTITUDE



3 ASSOCIATION

“The one walking with the
wise will become wise.”
—Prov. 13:20.

Assess your relationships:
‘Do I spend unnecessary time
with those of the world? Do
my friends help me think
God’s thoughts?’



asked Eve in the garden of Eden: “Did God *really* say that . . . ?” (Gen. 3:1) In the world under Satan’s control, we often hear challenging questions, such as these: ‘Does God *really* not approve of same-sex marriage? Does God *really* not want you to celebrate Christmas and birthdays? Does your God *really* expect you to refuse a blood transfusion? Does a loving God *really* expect you to avoid association with disfellowshipped loved ones?’

¹⁷ We need to be convinced of our beliefs. If we leave challenging questions unanswered in our minds, they can become serious doubts. Those doubts could eventually distort our thinking and destroy our faith. What, then, do we need to do? God’s Word tells us to transform our minds, so that we may *prove to ourselves* “the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Rom. 12:2) By regular study, we can prove to ourselves the truths we have learned from the Bible. We can be fully convinced that Jehovah’s standards are right. Then, like a tree with solid roots, we will be firmly rooted, “stabilized in the faith.”—Read Colossians 2:6, 7.

17. What should we do when we are faced with questions that challenge our beliefs, and what does Colossians 2:6, 7 show can be the result?

¹⁸ No one else can stabilize your faith for you, so continue to be made new in your dominant mental attitude. Pray constantly; plead for the help of Jehovah’s spirit. Meditate deeply; continue to examine your thinking and motives. Seek good associates; surround yourself with individuals who will help you to transform your thinking. By doing so, you will counteract the poisonous effects of Satan’s world and successfully overturn “reasonings and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God.” —2 Cor. 10:5.

18. What will help us to counteract the poisonous effects of Satan’s world?

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- What twofold action is set out at Romans 12:2?
- Changing our dominant mental attitude involves what three things?
- How can we apply the counsel found at Colossians 2:6, 7?

My Prayer of Dedication

(Matthew 22:37)

1. Take my heart and may it love
Truth and wisdom from above.
Take my voice and let it sing
Praises always to my King.
2. Take my feet and take my hands;
Let them serve your wise commands.
Take my silver and my gold.
Nothing, Lord, would I withhold.
3. Take my life and bring it, Lord,
With your will, in full accord.
Take myself, may all I do
Be well-pleasing, Jah, to you.

