

- Song 122 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“The Way to Sin and Death”:** (10 min.)
[Play the video *Introduction to James.*]
Jas 1:14—Improper thoughts can easily stimulate improper desires (*g17.4 14*)
Jas 1:15—Improper desires can often lead to sin and death (*g17.4 14*)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
Jas 1:17—Why is Jehovah called “the Father of the celestial lights”? (*it-2 253-254*)

Jas 2:8—What is “the royal [or, “kingly,” ftn.] law”? (*it-2 222 ¶4*)

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) Jas 2:10-26 (5)

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

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LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 45
- **“Continue Considering These Things”:** (8 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Avoid What Erodes Loyalty—Improper Entertainment.*
- **Parents—Prepare Your Teen to Avoid Sexting:** (7 min.) Talk by an elder based on the November 2013 *Awake!* pages 4-5.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *jy chap. 86 ¶1-7*
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JAMES 1-2 | The Way to Sin and Death

1:14, 15

When improper thoughts enter your mind, do this:

- Make a conscious effort to focus on something else.—Php 4:8
- Reflect on the hurtful consequences of giving in to temptation.—De 32:29
- Pray.—Mt 26:41



 When you have improper thoughts, what upbuilding things could you think about instead?

1. Nations are troubled as never before.
People are fearful of what lies in store.
Firm and immovable we need to be,
Serving our God faithfully.

(CHORUS)

*Steadfast we all need to be;
Far from this world we keep free,
Standing firm to the end,
Unending life we'll see.*

2. Snares of the world and temptations abound.
We can resist if our thinking is sound.
Hating what's bad while we love what is true
Makes us immovable too.

(Chorus)

3. Give to God worship that comes from the heart.
In the Lord's service may we have a part.
Preach the good news, always holding it fast.
Soon the last days will have passed.

(Chorus)

James 1-2

1 James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the 12 tribes that are scattered about:

Greetings!

2 Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you meet with various trials, **3** knowing as you do that this tested quality of your faith produces endurance. **4** But let endurance complete its work, so that you may be complete and sound in all respects, not lacking in anything.

5 So if any one of you is lacking in wisdom, let him keep asking God, for he gives generously to all and without reproaching, and it will be given him. **6** But let him keep asking in faith, not doubting at all, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven by the wind and blown about. **7** In fact, that man should not expect to receive anything from Jehovah; **8** he is an indecisive man, unsteady in all his ways.

9 But let the lowly brother rejoice over his exaltation, **10** and the rich one over his humiliation, because like a flower of the field he will pass away. **11** For just as the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the plant, and its flower falls off and its outward beauty perishes, so too the rich man will fade away in the midst of his pursuits.

12 Happy is the man who keeps on enduring trial, because on becoming approved he will receive the crown of life, which Jehovah promised to those who continue loving Him. **13** When under trial, let no one say: "I am being tried by God." For with evil things God cannot be tried, nor does he himself try anyone. **14** But each one is tried by being drawn out and enticed by his own desire. **15** Then the desire, when it has become fertile, gives birth to sin; in turn sin, when it has been carried out, brings forth death.

¹⁶ Do not be misled, my beloved brothers. ¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect present is from above, coming down from the Father of the celestial lights, who does not vary or change like the shifting shadows. ¹⁸ It was his will to bring us forth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

¹⁹ Know this, my beloved brothers: Everyone must be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger, ²⁰ for man's anger does not bring about God's righteousness. ²¹ Therefore, put away all filthiness and every trace of badness, and accept with mildness the implanting of the word that is able to save you.

²² However, become doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves with false reasoning. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, this one is like a man looking at his own face in a mirror. ²⁴ For he looks at himself, and he goes away and immediately forgets what sort of person he is. ²⁵ But the one who peers into the perfect law that belongs to freedom and continues in it has become, not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work; and he will be happy in what he does.

²⁶ If any man thinks he is a worshipper of God but does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he is deceiving his own heart, and his worship is futile. ²⁷ The form of worship that is clean and undefiled from the standpoint of our God and Father is this: to look after orphans and widows in their tribulation, and to keep oneself without spot from the world.

2 My brothers, you are not holding to the faith of our glorious Lord Jesus Christ while showing favoritism, are you? ² For if a man with gold rings on his fingers and in splendid clothing comes into your meeting, but a poor man in filthy clothing also enters, ³ do you look with favor on the one wearing the splendid clothing and say, "You take this seat here in a fine place," and do you say to the poor one, "You keep standing" or, "Take that seat there under my footstool"?

⁴ If so, do you not have class distinctions among yourselves, and have you not become judges rendering wicked decisions?

⁵ Listen, my beloved brothers. Did not God choose those who are poor from the world's standpoint to be rich in faith and heirs of the Kingdom, which he promised to those who love him? ⁶ But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who oppress you and drag you before law courts? ⁷ Do they not blaspheme the fine name by which you were called? ⁸ If, now, you carry out the royal law according to the scripture, "You must love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing quite well. ⁹ But if you continue showing favoritism, you are committing sin, and you are convicted by the law as transgressors.

¹⁰ For if anyone obeys all the Law but makes a false step in one point, he has become an offender against all of it. ¹¹ For the one who said, "You must not commit adultery," also said, "You must not murder." If, now, you do not commit adultery but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of law. ¹² Keep on speaking and behaving in such a way as those do who are going to be judged by the law of a free people. ¹³ For the one who does not practice mercy will have his judgment without mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

¹⁴ Of what benefit is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but he does not have works? That faith cannot save him, can it? ¹⁵ If any brothers or sisters are lacking clothing and enough food for the day, ¹⁶ yet one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but you do not give them what they need for their body, of what benefit is it? ¹⁷ So, too, faith by itself, without works, is dead.

¹⁸ Nevertheless, someone will say: "You have faith, and I have works. Show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works." ¹⁹ You believe that there is one God, do

you? You are doing quite well. And yet the demons believe and shudder. ²⁰ But do you care to know, O empty man, that faith without works is useless? ²¹ Was not Abraham our father declared righteous by works after he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? ²² You see that his faith was active along with his works and his faith was perfected by his works, ²³ and the scripture was fulfilled that says: "Abraham put faith in Jehovah, and it was counted to him as righteousness," and he came to be called Jehovah's friend.

²⁴ You see that a man is to be declared righteous by works and not by faith alone. ²⁵ In the same manner, was not Ra'hab the prostitute also declared righteous by works after she received the messengers hospitably and sent them out by another way?

²⁶ Indeed, just as the body without spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

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JAMES 1-2 | The Way to Sin and Death

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 When you have improper thoughts, what upbuilding things could you think about instead?

September 30–October 6 / James 1-2

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Treasures From God's Word

"The Way to Sin and Death": (10 minutes)

[Play the video *Introduction to James.*]

The Way to Sin and Death

James 1:14, 15

When improper thoughts enter your mind, do this:

- Make a conscious effort to focus on something else.—Philippians 4:8

Philippians 4:8: Finally, brothers, whatever things are true, whatever things are of serious concern, whatever things are righteous, whatever things are chaste, whatever things are lovable, whatever things are well-spoken-of, whatever things are virtuous, and whatever things are praiseworthy, continue considering these things.

- Reflect on the hurtful consequences of giving in to temptation.—Deuteronomy 32:29

Deuteronomy 32:29: If only they were wise! They would ponder over this. They would think about their outcome.

- Pray.—Matthew 26:41

Matthew 26:41: Keep on the watch and pray continually, so that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit, of course, is eager, but the flesh is weak.”

When you have improper thoughts, what upbuilding things could you think about instead?

James 1:14—Improper thoughts can easily stimulate improper desires

James 1:14: But each one is tried by being drawn out and enticed by his own desire.

***g17.4* 14**

What is temptation?

You are tempted when you are attracted to something—especially something wrong. To illustrate, while shopping you see a desirable item. The thought flashes into your mind that you could easily steal the item and not get caught. However, your conscience says no! So you dismiss the thought and move on. At that point, the temptation is over, and you are the victor.

What the Bible Says

Being tempted does not make you a bad person. The Bible acknowledges that we all experience temptation. (1 Corinthians 10:13) What really matters is how we act when tempted. Some dwell on the improper desire and sooner or later give in to it. Others promptly dismiss it as wrong.

James 1:15—Improper desires can often lead to sin and death

James 1:15: Then the desire, when it has become fertile, gives birth to sin; in turn sin, when it has been carried out, brings forth death.

g17.4 14

The Bible reveals the steps that lead to wrongdoing. James 1:15 says: “The [improper] desire, when it has become fertile [literally, “has conceived,” footnote], gives birth to sin.” Put simply, when we dwell on a wrong desire, we reach a point where our acting on it becomes as inevitable as a pregnant woman’s giving birth. Yet, we can avoid being slaves to improper desires. We can gain the mastery over them.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

James 1:17—Why is Jehovah called “the Father of the celestial lights”?

James 1:17: Every good gift and every perfect present is from above, coming down from the Father of the celestial lights, who does not vary or change like the shifting shadows.

***it-2* 253-254**

Jehovah is “the Father of the celestial lights.” (James 1:17) Not only is he the “Giver of the sun for light by day, the statutes of the moon and the stars for light by night” (Jeremiah 31:35) but he is also the Source of all spiritual enlightenment. (2 Corinthians 4:6) His law, judicial decisions, and word are a light to those allowing themselves to be guided by them. (Psalm 43:3; 119:105; Proverbs 6:23; Isaiah 51:4) The psalmist declared: “By light from you we can see light.” (Psalm 36:9; compare Psalm 27:1; 43:3.) Just as the light of the sun continues to get brighter from dawn until “the day is firmly established,” so the path of the righteous ones, illuminated by godly wisdom, gets lighter and lighter. (Proverbs 4:18) To follow the course that Jehovah outlines is to walk in his light. (Isaiah 2:3-5) On the other hand, when a person looks at things in an impure way or with evil design, he is in great spiritual darkness. As Jesus put it: “If your eye is wicked, your whole body will be dark. If in reality the light that is in you is darkness, how great that darkness is!”—

Matthew 6:23; compare Deuteronomy 15:9; 28:54-57; Proverbs 28:22; 2 Peter 2:14.

James 2:8—What is “the royal [or, “kingly,” footnote.] law”?

James 2:8: If, now, you carry out the royal law according to the scripture, “You must love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing quite well.

***it-2* 222 paragraph 4**

“Kingly Law.” The “kingly law” rightly has the prominence and importance among other laws governing human relationships that a king would have among men. (James 2:8) The tenor of the Law covenant was love; and “you must love your neighbor as yourself” (the kingly law) was the second of the commandments on which all the Law and the Prophets hung. (Matthew 22:37-40) Christians, though not under the Law covenant, are subject to the law of the King Jehovah and his Son, the King Jesus Christ, in connection with the new covenant.

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AN ENEMY OF GOD

4 The Bible tells us that God has an enemy who is “called Devil and Satan.” Satan used a snake to speak to Eve in the garden of Eden. (Revelation 12:9; Genesis 3:1) He made it look as though the snake was talking.—See Endnote 7.

5 So, did God create Satan the Devil? No! **An angel** who had been in heaven when God prepared the earth for Adam and Eve **changed and became the Devil.** (Job 38:4, 7) How was that possible? Well, how does an honest person change and become a thief? He was not born a thief. But he desires, or wants, something that doesn’t belong to him. He **keeps thinking about it**, and his wrong desire becomes stronger. Then, when he gets a chance, he steals it. He has turned himself into a thief.—**Read James 1:13-15;** see Endnote 8.

6 This is what happened to that angel. After Jehovah created Adam and Eve, he told them to have children and “fill the earth.” (Genesis 1:27, 28) That angel may have thought, ‘All those people could worship me instead of Jehovah!’ The more he thought about it, the more he desired what belongs to Jehovah. That angel wanted people to worship him. So he lied to Eve and misled her. (**Read Genesis 3:1-5.**) By doing that, he became Satan the Devil, an enemy of God.

7 Adam and Eve disobeyed God and ate the fruit.

4, 5. (a) Who spoke to Eve through a snake in the garden of Eden?
(b) How can a person who is honest become a thief?

6. How did an angel become an enemy of God?

7. (a) Why did Adam and Eve die? (b) Why do we grow old and die?

45 *The Meditation of My Heart*

(Psalm 19:14)

1. The meditation of my heart,
 The thoughts I ponder through the day—
 May they be pleasing to you, Lord,
 And keep me steadfast in your way.
When worries weigh upon my mind
 And make me restless in the night,
Then may I meditate on you
 And things I know to be upright.
2. Whatever things are chaste and true,
 Whatever virtue there may be,
Whatever things well-spoken-of—
 May thoughts of these bring peace to me.
How precious are your thoughts, O God!
 Beyond all counting is their sum.
So may I ponder your own words,
 Absorbed in them may I become.

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“Continue Considering These Things”

What things? Philippians 4:8 says to consider things that are true, of serious concern, righteous, chaste, lovable, well-spoken-of, virtuous, and praiseworthy. Of course, Christians are not restricted to thinking only on Scriptural topics. However, the meditation of our heart should be pleasing to Jehovah. It should not weaken our resolve to be faithful to him.—Ps 19:14.

We have a challenge to avoid unwholesome thoughts. We must contend not only with our own imperfect flesh but also with Satan, “the god of this system of things.” (2Co 4:4) Because he controls the world’s mass media, much of the content on television, the radio, the Internet, and in print is debased. If we are not selective in what we fill our mind with, our thinking will be corrupted, and eventually our conduct will be affected.—Jas 1:14, 15.



WATCH THE VIDEO *AVOID WHAT ERODES LOYALTY—IMPROPER ENTERTAINMENT*, AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:



- What was the brother viewing on his phone, and how did it affect him?



- How was he helped by Galatians 6:7, 8 and Psalm 119:37?

Avoid What Erodes Loyalty—Improper Entertainment.

I guess I'm not the only one whose loyalty was tested. But for me, it was a little more subtle.

My phone was a door to just about everything. But that door opened to some places I shouldn't have gone.

At first I thought, 'It's not pornography, so it's OK.' But still what I was seeing filled my mind with immoral thoughts, and I couldn't stop.

Galatians 6:7, 8 reads: "Do not be misled: God is not one to be mocked. "For whatever a person is sowing, this he will also reap."

Reap what you sow.

Reap what you sow.

I was sowing unclean desires and reaping a double heart, desensitized to things Jehovah hates.

"Turn my eyes away from looking at what is worthless." (Psalms 119:37)

It wasn't just whether an image is considered pornography. Anything that stirs up unclean thoughts is worthless, and I should turn my eyes away. But I had to do more.

Those weren't just the psalmist's words; they had to be my words. Words I've had to act on ever since to stay loyal to Jehovah.



How to Talk to Your Teen About Sexting



THE CHALLENGE

You have heard that sexting is common among young people. ‘Would *my* teenager do that?’ you may wonder.

You want to discuss the matter with your child—but how? Before answering, consider why some young people have become involved in sexting and why you should be concerned.*

* “Sexting” refers to the act of sending sexually explicit messages, photos, or videos via cell phone. For more information, go to the [jw.org](http://www.jw.org) Web site and read the online article “Young People Ask—What Should I Know About Sexting?”—Look under BIBLE TEACHINGS > TEENAGERS.



WHY IT HAPPENS

- Some teenagers send sexually explicit messages **to flirt** with someone they like.
- In other cases, a girl sends an explicit photo of herself **because she is pressured** by a boy to do so.
- Sometimes a boy will mass forward an explicit photo of a girl either **to entertain** his friends or **to retaliate** after a breakup.

Whatever the cause, a teenager armed with a cell phone can get into a lot of trouble. “In the click of a button,” says the book *CyberSafe*, “lives are changed forever.”

Many people fail to realize that once a photo goes into cyberspace, the sender loses control over how the photo will be used. In one case, reports a bulletin from the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), an 18-year-old girl “committed suicide after a nude photo she had transmitted via her cell phone to her boyfriend also was sent to hundreds of teenagers in her school. Other students, who apparently continued to forward the image, allegedly harassed the girl.”

Sexting also raises legal issues. In some places, for example, minors who have sent sexually explicit images to other minors have been charged with child-pornography offenses and have been required to register as sex offenders. As a parent, you too can be held liable if your name is on the cell-phone contract or if you fail to take measures to prevent your child from sexting.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Set clear rules. Although you cannot fully control your teenager's cell-phone use, you *can* make sure that he or she knows your rules—as well as the consequences for breaking those rules. Remember, too, that as a parent, you have the right to monitor your teenager's cell phone. —*Bible principle: Ephesians 6:1.*

Help your teenager to reason on the problem. You could say: “There are many opinions as to what constitutes sexting. How would you define the term?” “What kinds of photos do you think are inappropriate?” “In some places the law considers a minor who sends a nude photo of a minor to be guilty of a crime. Do you

Think beyond the send button

think it's that bad?” “Why would sexting be morally wrong?” Listen carefully to his or her reasoning, and help your teenager to think beyond the send button. —*Bible principle: Hebrews 5:14.*

Present hypothetical scenarios. You could say to your daughter: “Suppose a girl is being pressured by a boy to ‘sex’ him. What should she do? Give in so that she does not lose the friendship? Refuse the request but flirt with him anyway? End the relationship? Tell an adult?” Help your daughter to reason on the matter. Of course, you can use a similar approach with a son.—*Bible principle: Galatians 6:7.*

Appeal to your teenager's sense of goodness. Ask questions such as these: How important to you is a good reputation? What traits do you want to be known for? How would you feel about yourself if you humiliated someone by forwarding an inappropriate picture? How would you feel if you took a stand for what is right? Help your teen to “hold a good conscience.”—1 Peter 3:16.

Set the example yourself. The Bible says that godly wisdom is chaste and free from hypocrisy. (James 3:17) Do your values reflect those words? “We need to set good examples ourselves and not view images and Web sites that could be viewed as unsavory or illegal,” says the book *CyberSafe*. ■

KEY SCRIPTURES

“Children, be obedient to your parents.”—Ephesians 6:1.

“Mature people . . . have their perceptive powers trained to distinguish both right and wrong.” —Hebrews 5:14.

“Whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap.”—Galatians 6:7.

SUGGESTION

If talking about sexting will be awkward for you or your teen, you might try this approach:

First, have your teen talk about what *others* are doing. Then say: “I've heard a lot about sexting. Is this practice common?”

Next, find out how he or she feels about what others are doing. You could ask: “Do you think people grasp the consequences of sexting?”

Then, discuss what your teenager would do. Respond by saying: “Let's talk about what you should do if you receive an explicit text.”

Tip: You could use a news report to start a discussion. For example: “I read about a girl whose explicit photo was forwarded all over her school. Does this kind of thing really happen?”

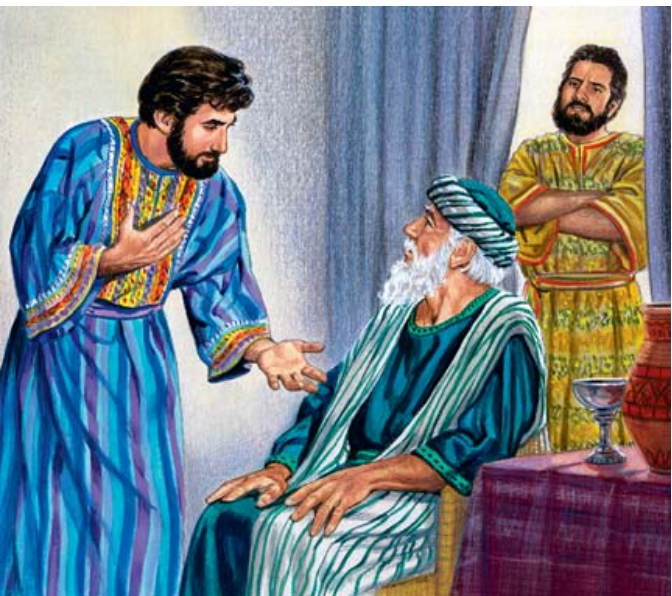
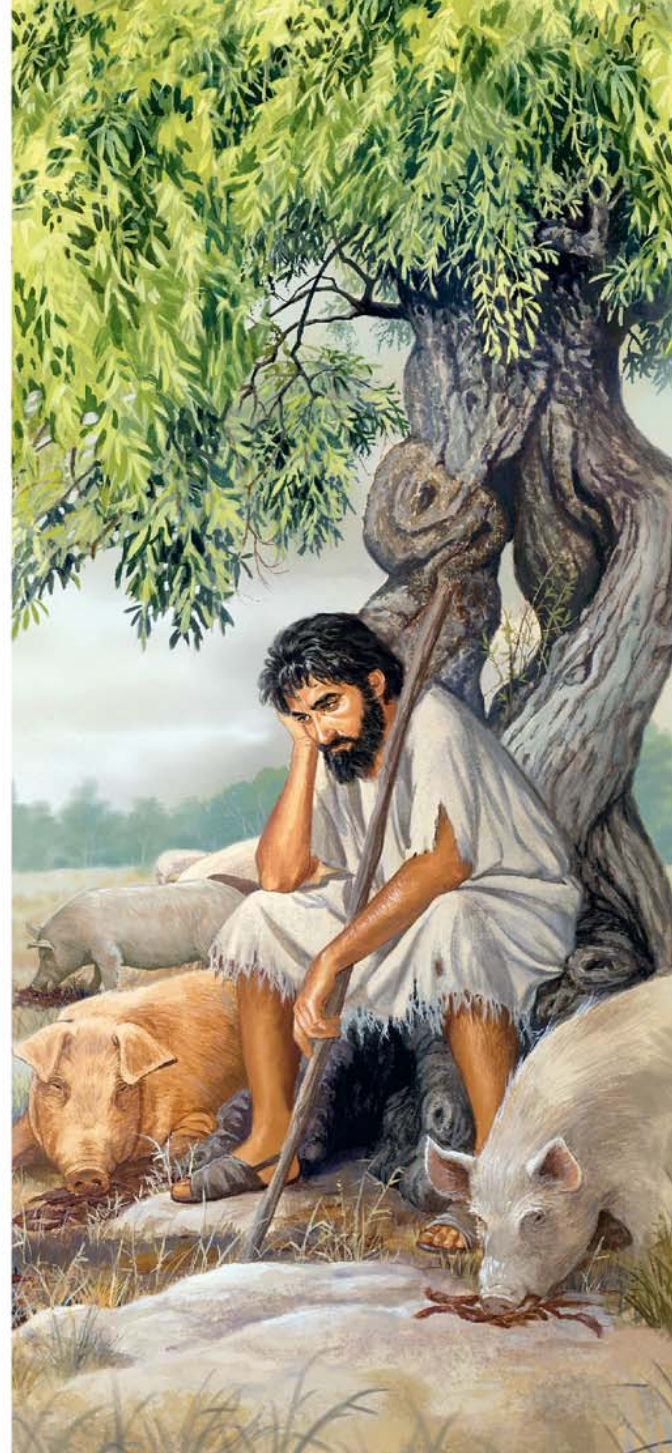
THE SON WHO WAS LOST RETURNS

LUKE 15:11-32

• ILLUSTRATION OF THE SON WHO WAS LOST

Jesus has given the illustrations of the lost sheep and the lost drachma coin while likely still in Perea east of the Jordan River. The message that both teach is that we should rejoice when a sinner repents and returns to God. The Pharisees and the scribes have been critical of Jesus because he welcomes people of that sort. But do such critics learn something from Jesus' two illustrations? Do they grasp how our Father in heaven feels toward repentant sinners? Jesus now gives a touching illustration that emphasizes this same important lesson.

The illustration involves a father who has two sons, the younger son being the principal character of this illustration. Both the Pharisees and the scribes, as well as others hearing what Jesus relates, should be able to learn from what is said about this



younger son. However, not to be overlooked is what Jesus relates about the father and the older son, for the attitudes they display are instructive too. So think about all three of these men as Jesus tells the illustration:

“A man had two sons,” Jesus begins. “The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the property that should come to me.’ So he divided his belongings between them.” (Luke 15:11, 12) Note that this younger son is not seeking his inheritance because his father has died. The father is still alive. Yet the son wants his portion *now* so that he can be independent and do with it as he chooses. And what is that?

“A few days later,” Jesus explains, “the younger son gathered all his things together and traveled to a distant country and there squandered his property by living a debauched life.” (Luke 15:13) Rather than remaining in the security of his home, with a father who cared for his children and provided for them, this son goes off to another land. There he squanders all his inheritance in wanton indulgence,

pursuing sensual pleasures. Then he comes into hard times, as Jesus goes on to relate:

“When he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred throughout that country, and he fell into need. He even went and attached himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to herd swine. And he longed to be filled with the carob pods that the swine were eating, but no one would give him anything.”—Luke 15:14-16.

God’s Law categorized pigs as unclean, yet this son has to work as a herder of swine. He is racked with hunger, which reduces him to wanting to eat what normally is food only for animals, the pigs he is herding. In the son’s calamity and despair, “he came to his senses.” What does he do? He says to himself: “How many of my father’s hired men have more than enough bread, while I am dying here from hunger! I will get up and travel to my father and say to him: ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Make me as one of your hired men.’” Then he gets up and goes to his father. —Luke 15:17-20.

How will his father react? Will he turn on his son angrily and scold him about the folly of leaving home in the first place? Will the father display an indifferent, unwelcoming attitude? If it were you, how would you react? What if it were your son or daughter?

THE LOST SON IS FOUND

Jesus describes how the father feels and acts: “While [the son] was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him and was moved with pity, and he ran and embraced him and tenderly kissed him.” (Luke 15:20) Even if the father has heard of his son’s debauched living, he welcomes his son back. Will the Jewish leaders, who claim to know and worship Jehovah, see from this how our heavenly Father feels toward repentant sinners? Will they also recognize that Jesus has been showing the same welcoming spirit?

- ◇ To whom does Jesus tell this illustration, and why?
- ◇ Who may be considered the principal character, and what happens to him?

1. Lovingly Jehovah

Made provision through his Son
For our sins to be forgiven
And for death to be undone.
If we truly are repentant,
His forgiveness we can claim
On the basis of Christ's ransom,
Asking pardon in his name.

2. We receive such mercy

When we act like God above
And forgive each other freely,
Showing empathy and love.
Putting up with one another,
Putting hurtfulness away;
Showing honor to our brother,
Showing love's surpassing way.

3. Mercy is a virtue

That we all should cultivate.
It will keep us from resentment,
From the bitterness of hate.
When we imitate Jehovah,
Who is unsurpassed in love,
We will truly be forgiving;
We will be like God above.

AUGUST 2019

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

LARGE PRINT EDITION



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SEPTEMBER 30–OCTOBER 27, 2019

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COVER PICTURE:

While under house arrest in Rome, Paul writes his letter to the congregation in Philippi. During that time, Paul also makes good use of opportunities to preach to his guards and to visitors (See study article 32, paragraph 16)

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1. God's Word and all its promises
Give reason to endure.
The things you've learned and come to love
Are all well-founded and sure.

Be stabilized in holy faith,
Keeping God's day close in mind.
Stand firm in your integrity;
By tests you will be refined.
2. Maintain the love you had at first,
Which somehow could be lost.
Despite the trials you will meet,
Endure no matter the cost.

Whatever test may come your way,
Never yield to doubt or fear.
Jehovah will provide escape,
Our God ever will be near.
3. All those enduring to the end
Are those who will be saved.
The book of life will list their names,
A record clearly engraved.

So let endurance be your aim;
Let it have its work complete.
Jehovah's favor you will know;
With joy you will be replete.

“We Do Not Give Up”!

“Therefore, we do not give up.”—2 COR. 4:16.

SONG 128

Enduring to the End

PREVIEW

No matter how long we have been serving Jehovah, we want to keep on growing and improving as Christians. The apostle Paul urged his fellow believers never to give up! His letter to the Philippians contains motivating encouragement to help us endure in our race for life. This article will show us how to apply Paul’s inspired words.

CHRISTIANS are in a race for life. Whether we have just started running or we have been in the race for years, we need to keep running until we cross the finish line. The counsel that the apostle Paul gave to Christians in Philippi can spur us on to complete the race. Some members of that first-century congregation had been serving Jehovah for years when they received Paul’s letter. They were running well, but Paul reminded them of the need to keep running with endurance. He wanted them to keep following his example of “pressing on toward the goal.”—Phil. 3:14.

² Paul’s advice to the Philippians was timely. The congregation faced hostility from the start. It all began when, in response to the divine invitation to “step over into Macedonia,” Paul and Silas arrived in Philippi about 50 C.E. (Acts 16:9) There they found a woman named Lydia, who “was listening, and Jehovah opened her heart wide” to the good news. (Acts 16:14) She soon got baptized along with her household. However, the Devil was not idle. Men of the city dragged Paul and Silas before the civil magistrates and falsely accused them of causing a disturbance. As a result, Paul and Silas were

-
1. What must Christians do to finish the race for life?
 2. Why was Paul’s advice to the Philippians timely?

beaten, imprisoned, and later urged to leave the city. (Acts 16:16-40) Did they give up? Never! And what about the brothers and sisters in the newly formed congregation? Commendably, they too endured! No doubt they were greatly encouraged by the good example that Paul and Silas set for them.

³ Paul was determined not to give up. (2 Cor. 4:16) He knew, however, that in order to run the race to the finish, he would have to stay focused on the goal. What can we learn from Paul's example? What modern-day examples of faith show us that we can overcome obstacles to endurance? And how can our hope for the future strengthen our resolve never to give up?

HOW PAUL'S EXAMPLE CAN BENEFIT US

⁴ Consider how Paul was exerting himself when he wrote to the Philippians. He was under house arrest in Rome. His freedom to preach was severely limited. Yet, he kept busy by witnessing to visitors and writing letters to distant congregations. Likewise today, many Christians who are housebound take advantage of every opportunity to share the good news with those who come to their home.

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3. What did Paul realize, and what questions will we consider?
 4. How did Paul stay active in spite of his circumstances?

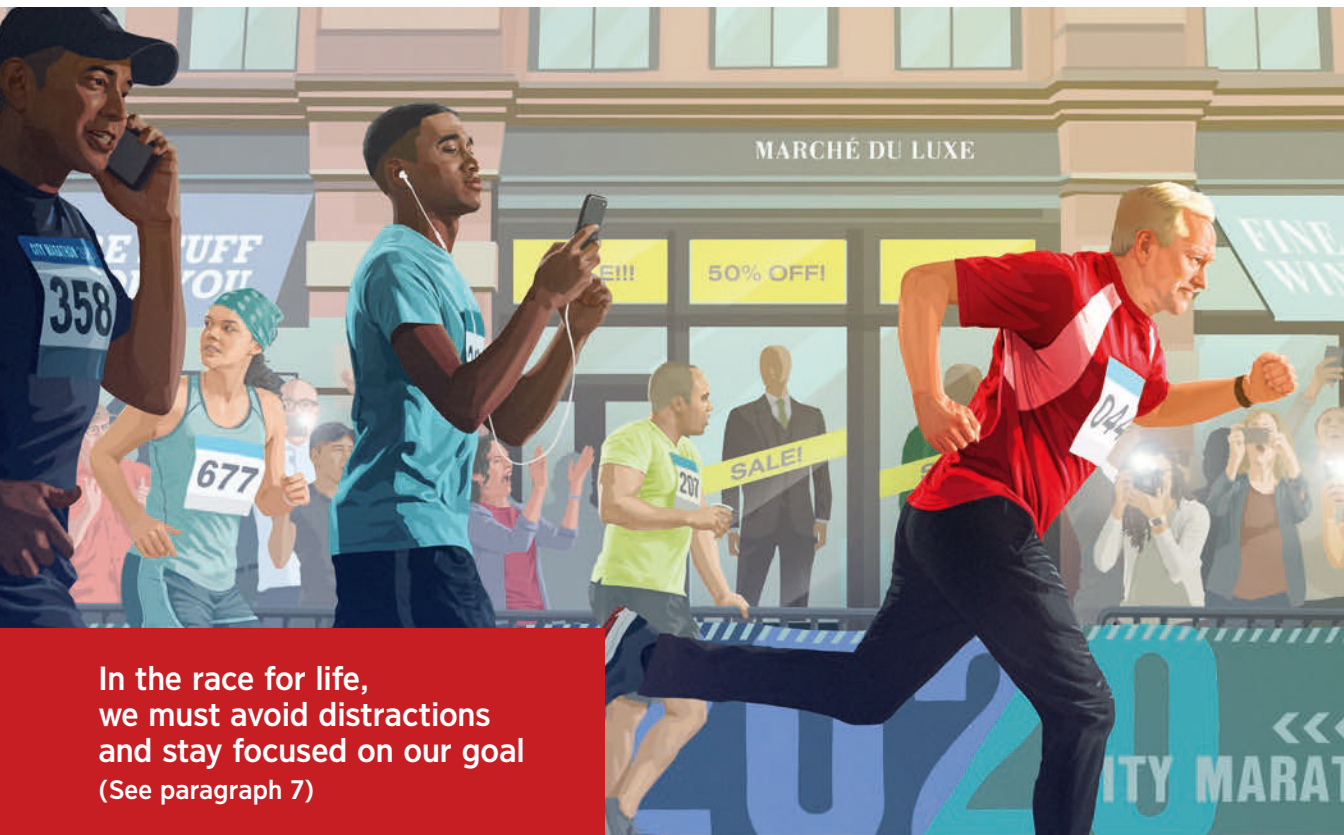
They also write encouraging letters to householders who cannot be reached by a personal visit.

⁵ Paul did not allow himself to be distracted, either by past accomplishments or by past mistakes. In fact, he said that “forgetting the things behind” was essential to “stretching forward to the things ahead,” that is, to completing the race successfully. (Read **Philippians 3:12-14**.) What were some of the things that could have distracted Paul? First, his accomplishments in Judaism were impressive. Yet, he viewed those things as “a lot of refuse.” (Phil. 3:3-8) Second, he did not allow guilt over his earlier persecution of Christians to paralyze him. And third, he did not reason that he had already done enough for Jehovah. Paul had a productive ministry despite being imprisoned, beaten, stoned, and shipwrecked, as well as lacking food and clothing. (2 Cor. 11:23-27) However, regardless of what he had already accomplished and suffered, Paul knew that he must press on. The same is true of us.

⁶ How can we imitate Paul’s example in “forgetting the things behind”? Some of us may need to

5. According to his words found at **Philippians 3:12-14**, what helped Paul to keep his eyes on the goal?

6. What are some of “the things behind” that we may need to forget?



In the race for life,
we must avoid distractions
and stay focused on our goal
(See paragraph 7)

overcome feelings of guilt because of past sins. If so, why not start a personal study project that focuses on Christ's ransom sacrifice? If we study, meditate, and pray about that upbuilding subject, we may do much to relieve unnecessary guilt. We may even stop punishing ourselves for sins that Jehovah has forgiven. Consider another lesson we can learn from Paul. Some may have given up a potentially lucrative career in order to pursue Kingdom interests. If so, can we forget the things behind by

refusing to look back longingly at material opportunities we might have missed? (Num. 11:4-6; Eccl. 7:10) “The things behind” might even include things that we accomplished or trials that we endured in the past. Of course, looking back on the way Jehovah has blessed and supported us over the years can draw us closer to our Father. However, we never want to become self-satisfied, imagining that our work is done.—1 Cor. 15:58.

⁷ Paul well understood Jesus’ words: “Exert yourselves vigorously.” (Luke 13:23, 24) Paul knew that, like Christ, he must exert himself to the very end. He thus compared the Christian course to a race. (Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.) A runner in a race stays focused on the finish line and avoids distractions. For example, runners in an urban race today may follow a course that is lined with businesses and other potential diversions. Can you imagine that a runner would stop to examine the goods displayed in the store windows? Not if he wants to win! In the race for life, we too must avoid distractions. If we stay focused on our goal, exerting ourselves vigorously as Paul did, we will win the prize!

7. According to 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, what is necessary in order to win the race for life? Illustrate.

MEETING CHALLENGES TO OUR FAITH

⁸ Let us now consider three challenges that could cause us to slow down. They are postponed expectations, declining physical strength, and long-lasting trials. We can benefit from learning how others have coped with these circumstances.—Phil. 3:17.

⁹ *Postponed expectations.* We naturally long for the good things that Jehovah has promised. In fact, when Jehovah’s prophet Habakkuk expressed a yearning for Jehovah to bring an end to the wicked conditions in Judah, Jehovah instructed him to “keep in expectation.” (Hab. 2:3) However, when the fulfillment of our expectations appears to be delayed, it may dampen our enthusiasm. We could even lose heart. (Prov. 13:12) This happened at the beginning of the 20th century. At that time, many anointed Christians expected to receive their heavenly reward in 1914. When that did not happen, how did faithful ones deal with their delayed expectations?

¹⁰ Consider the example of two loyal ones who

-
8. What three challenges will we consider?
 9. How can postponed expectations affect us?
 10. How did one couple deal with delayed expectations?

met such a challenge. Brother Royal Spatz was baptized in 1908 at the age of 20. He was very confident that he would soon receive his reward. In fact, when he proposed marriage in 1911, he told his prospective bride, Pearl: “You know what is going to happen in 1914. If we are going to get married, we better do it soon!” Did this Christian couple give up the race for life when they did not receive their heavenly reward in 1914? No, because their primary focus was on faithfully doing God’s will, not on gaining their reward. They were determined to run the race with endurance. And, indeed, Royal and Pearl remained active and faithful until they

Royal and Pearl Spatz did not see their hope fulfilled in 1914, but they continued faithful for many decades
(See paragraph 10)



finished their earthly course many decades later. No doubt you long to see Jehovah vindicate his name and sovereignty and fulfill all his promises. Be assured that these things will happen in Jehovah's due time. Until then, may we keep busy serving our God, never allowing postponed expectations to discourage us or slow us down.

¹¹ *Declining physical strength.* Unlike a literal runner, you do not need to be physically strong in order to continue growing stronger spiritually. In fact, many whose physical strength has declined still maintain a fiery determination to keep progressing spiritually. (2 Cor. 4:16) For example, Brother Arthur Secord* was 88 years old and infirm after having served at Bethel for 55 years. A nurse approached his bed to care for his needs. She looked at him and affectionately said: "Brother Secord, this body has traveled many miles in Jehovah's service." Arthur, however, was not living in the past. He gazed into her eyes, smiled, and replied: "Yes, that's true. But it's not what we have

* See Brother Secord's life story, "My Part in Advancing Right Worship," in *The Watchtower*, June 15, 1965.

11-12. Why can we keep moving forward even if our physical strength has declined? Give an example.

done that is important. It's what we do from here on that counts."

¹² Perhaps you have served Jehovah for many years and now find that failing health prevents you from doing as much as you once did. If so, do not despair. Be assured that Jehovah cherishes the faithful service you have accomplished in the past. (Heb. 6:10) And as for the present, remember that whole-souled devotion is not measured by how much we do in Jehovah's service. Rather, we reveal the depth of our devotion by showing a positive spirit and by doing all that we physically can. (Col. 3:23) Jehovah understands our limitations and does not require more than we can give.—Mark 12:43, 44.

¹³ *Long-lasting trials.* Some of Jehovah's servants have endured decades of hardship and persecution. For example, Anatoly Melnik* was just 12 years old when his father was arrested, imprisoned, and exiled to Siberia, more than 4,000 miles (7,000 km) away from his family in Moldova. One year later,

* See Brother Melnik's life story, "Taught From Childhood to Love God," in *Awake!*, October 22, 2004.

13. How does the experience of Anatoly and Lidiya encourage us to press forward in spite of many trials?



Even in old age, Arthur Secord (far left) was eager to keep progressing. Anatoly and Lidiya Melnik endured faithfully despite many hardships

(See paragraphs 11, 13)

Anatoly, his mother, and his grandparents were also exiled to Siberia. In time, they were able to attend meetings in another village, but they had to walk 20 miles (30 km) in the snow, enduring sub-zero temperatures. Later, Brother Melnik spent three years in prison, away from his wife, Lidiya, and their one-year-old daughter. In spite of years of hardship, Anatoly and his family continued to move steadily forward. Now 82 years of age, Ana-

toly serves on a Branch Committee in Central Asia. Like Anatoly and Lidiya, may we do all we can in Jehovah’s service, continuing to endure as we have done in the past.—Gal. 6:9.

MOTIVATED BY OUR HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

¹⁴ Paul was confident that he would finish the race and reach his goal. As an anointed Christian, he looked forward to gaining “the prize of the upward call of God.” However, to reach that goal, he realized that he had to keep “pressing on.” (Phil. 3:14) Paul shared with the Philippians an interesting comparison to help them keep focused on their goal.

¹⁵ Paul reminded the Philippians of their heavenly citizenship. (Phil. 3:20) Why did such citizenship matter? In those days, Roman citizenship was highly prized.* However, anointed Christians had a much better citizenship, one that would bring

* Because Philippi was a Roman colony, the city’s inhabitants enjoyed a form of Roman citizenship. So Paul’s illustration was meaningful to his audience.

14. What did Paul realize he had to do to reach his goal?

15. How did Paul use the subject of citizenship to encourage the Philippian Christians to keep “pressing on”?

far greater advantages. Roman citizenship paled in comparison! For this reason, Paul encouraged the Philippians to “carry on as citizens in a manner worthy of the good news about the Christ.” (Phil. 1:27, ftn.) Anointed Christians today set a fine example as they press on toward their goal of everlasting life in heaven.

¹⁶ Whether our hope is everlasting life in heaven or on a paradise earth, we must keep pressing on toward that goal. No matter what our circumstances, we must not look at the things behind; nor should we let anything hinder our progress. (Phil. 3:16) The fulfillment of our expectations may seem to be delayed, or our physical strength may be declining. We may have endured hardship and persecution for many years. Whatever the case, “do not be anxious over anything.” Rather, let your petitions and supplications be made known to God, and he will give you a peace that is beyond your imagination.—**Read Philippians 4:6, 7.**

¹⁷ Like a runner who exerts himself as he races down the homestretch, may we stay fully focused

16. Whether our hope is to live in heaven or on earth, what must we continue to do according to Philippians 4:6, 7?

17. What will we consider in the next article?

on the goal of finishing the race for life. To the extent that our strength and circumstances allow, may we exert ourselves and progress eagerly toward the wonderful things ahead. What must we do in order to press on in the right direction and at a pace that we can maintain? The next article will help us to set proper priorities and to “make sure of the more important things.”—Phil. 1:9, 10.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- How does Paul’s example motivate us to press on with our eyes on the goal?
- How can we continue running in the race for life in spite of postponed expectations, declining strength, and long-lasting trials?
- What moved Paul to exert himself vigorously?

79 *Teach Them to Stand Firm*

(Matthew 28:19, 20)

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

(CHORUS)

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

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

(Chorus)

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

(Chorus)

