

- Song 14 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- **“The End of All Things Has Drawn Close”:** (10 min.)
 1Pe 4:7—“Be sound in mind, and be vigilant with a view to prayers” (w13 11/15 3 ¶1)
 1Pe 4:8—“Have intense love for one another” (w99 4/15 22 ¶3)
 1Pe 4:9—“Be hospitable to one another without grumbling” (w18.03 14-15 ¶2-3)

- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 1Pe 3:19, 20—When and how did Jesus preach to “the spirits in prison”? (w13 6/15 23)

1Pe 4:6—Who were “the dead” to whom “the good news was declared”? (w08 11/15 21 ¶8)

What has this week’s Bible reading taught you about Jehovah?

What other spiritual gems have you discovered in this week’s Bible reading?

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) 1Pe 3:8-22 (10)

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **First Return Visit Video:** (5 min.) Play and discuss the video.
- **First Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Use the sample conversation. (6)
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LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 137
- **“Chaste Conduct and Deep Respect Win Hearts”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Jehovah Strengthens Us to Carry Our Load* (video category INTERVIEWS AND EXPERIENCES).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *jy* chap. 88 ¶1-11
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 61 and Prayer

1 PETER 3-5 | “The End of All Things Has Drawn Close”

4:7-9

We will soon face the greatest tribulation the world has ever seen. How can we keep spiritually strong now and into the future?

- Pray continually, using every form of prayer
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ASK YOURSELF, ‘What are some practical ways that I can show intense love and warm hospitality to brothers and sisters locally and around the world?’



14 *Praising Earth's New King* (Psalm 2:12)

1. A multitude is gathering
 from ev'ry tribe and nation,
 Collected by the Christ and his
 anointed congregation.
God's Kingdom has been brought to birth;
 We pray his will be done on earth.
This hope is a gift of priceless worth,
 Giving joy and consolation.

(CHORUS)

*Praise our God, Jehovah; Praise his Son forever—
 King of all kings and the Lord of lords.
Now unitedly we bow to his rule
 And praise him with one accord.*

2. We praise the Christ, our reigning King,
 with sounds of jubilation.
 This Prince of Peace will be our Judge
 and bring about salvation.
We see the joys that lie ahead:
 An earth released from fear and dread;
The time for our Lord to raise the dead.
 What a time for exultation!

(Chorus)

1 Peter 3-5

3 In the same way, you wives, be in subjection to your husbands, so that if any are not obedient to the word, they may be won without a word through the conduct of their wives, ² because of having been eyewitnesses of your chaste conduct together with deep respect. ³ Do not let your adornment be external—the braiding of hair and the wearing of gold ornaments or fine clothing— ⁴ but let it be the secret person of the heart in the incorruptible adornment of the quiet and mild spirit, which is of great value in the eyes of God. ⁵ For this is how the holy women of the past who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, subjecting themselves to their husbands, ⁶ just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you have become her children, provided you continue doing good and do not give in to fear.

⁷ You husbands, in the same way, continue dwelling with them according to knowledge. Assign them honor as to a weaker vessel, the feminine one, since they are also heirs with you of the undeserved favor of life, in order for your prayers not to be hindered.

⁸ Finally, all of you have unity of mind, fellow feeling, brotherly affection, tender compassion, and humility. ⁹ Do not pay back injury for injury or insult for insult. Instead, repay with a blessing, for you were called to this course, so that you might inherit a blessing.

¹⁰ For “whoever would love life and see good days must guard his tongue from bad and his lips from speaking deception. ¹¹ Let him turn away from what is bad and do what is good; let him seek peace and pursue it. ¹² For the eyes of Jehovah are on the righteous, and his ears listen to their supplication, but the face of Jehovah is against those doing bad things.”

¹³ Indeed, who will harm you if you become zealous for what is good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are happy. However, do not fear what they fear, nor be disturbed. ¹⁵ But sanctify the Christ as Lord in your hearts, always ready to make a defense before everyone who demands of you a reason for the hope you have, but doing so with a mild temper and deep respect.

¹⁶ Maintain a good conscience, so that in whatever way you are spoken against, those who speak against you may be put to shame because of your good conduct as followers of Christ. ¹⁷ For it is better to suffer because you are doing good, if it is God's will to allow it, than because you are doing evil. ¹⁸ For Christ died once for all time for sins, a righteous person for unrighteous ones, in order to lead you to God. He was put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit. ¹⁹ And in this state he went and preached to the spirits in prison, ²⁰ who had formerly been disobedient when God was patiently waiting in Noah's day, while the ark was being constructed, in which a few people, that is, eight souls, were carried safely through the water.

²¹ Baptism, which corresponds to this, is also now saving you (not by the removing of the filth of the flesh, but by the request to God for a good conscience), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

²² He is at God's right hand, for he went to heaven, and angels and authorities and powers were made subject to him.

4 Since Christ suffered in the flesh, you too arm yourselves with the same mental disposition; because the person who has suffered in the flesh has desisted from sins, ² so that he may live the remainder of his time in the flesh, no more for the desires of men, but for God's will. ³ For the time that has passed by is sufficient for you to have done the will of the nations when you carried on in acts of brazen conduct, unbridled passions, overdrinking, wild parties,

drinking bouts, and lawless idolatries. ⁴ They are puzzled that you do not continue running with them in the same decadent course of debauchery, so they speak abusively of you. ⁵ But these people will render an account to the one who is ready to judge those living and those dead. ⁶ In fact, this is why the good news was declared also to the dead, so that although they are judged in the flesh from the standpoint of men, they might live in harmony with the spirit from God's standpoint.

⁷ But the end of all things has drawn close. Therefore, be sound in mind, and be vigilant with a view to prayers. ⁸ Above all things, have intense love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. ⁹ Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰ To the extent that each one has received a gift, use it in ministering to one another as fine stewards of God's undeserved kindness that is expressed in various ways. ¹¹ If anyone speaks, let him do so as speaking pronouncements from God; if anyone ministers, let him do so as depending on the strength that God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. The glory and the might are his forever and ever. Amen.

¹² Beloved ones, do not be surprised about the fiery trials that you are experiencing, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ On the contrary, go on rejoicing over the extent to which you are sharers in the sufferings of the Christ, so that you may rejoice and be overjoyed also during the revelation of his glory. ¹⁴ If you are being reproached for the name of Christ, you are happy, because the spirit of glory, yes, the spirit of God, is resting upon you.

¹⁵ However, let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or a wrongdoer or a busybody in other people's matters. ¹⁶ But if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not feel ashamed, but let him keep on glorifying God while bearing this name. ¹⁷ For it is the appointed time for the judgment to start with the house of God. Now if it starts

first with us, what will the outcome be for those who are not obedient to the good news of God? ¹⁸ “And if the righteous man is being saved with difficulty, what will happen to the ungodly man and the sinner?” ¹⁹ So, then, let those who are suffering in harmony with the will of God keep on entrusting themselves to a faithful Creator while they are doing good.

5 Therefore, as a fellow elder, a witness of the sufferings of the Christ and a sharer of the glory that is to be revealed, I make this appeal to the elders among you: ² Shepherd the flock of God under your care, serving as overseers, not under compulsion, but willingly before God; not for love of dishonest gain, but eagerly; ³ not lording it over those who are God’s inheritance, but becoming examples to the flock. ⁴ And when the chief shepherd has been made manifest, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

⁵ In the same way, you younger men, be in subjection to the older men. But all of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because God opposes the haughty ones, but he gives undeserved kindness to the humble ones.

⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time, ⁷ while you throw all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. ⁸ Keep your senses, be watchful! Your adversary, the Devil, walks about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone. ⁹ But take your stand against him, firm in the faith, knowing that the same kind of sufferings are being experienced by the entire association of your brothers in the world. ¹⁰ But after you have suffered a little while, the God of all undeserved kindness, who called you to his everlasting glory in union with Christ, will himself finish your training. He will make you firm, he will make you strong, he will firmly ground you. ¹¹ To him be the might forever. Amen.

¹² Through Sil-va'nus, whom I regard as a faithful brother, I have written you in few words in order to encourage you and to give an earnest witness that this is the true undeserved kindness of God. Stand firm in it. ¹³ She who is in Babylon, a chosen one like you, sends you her greetings, and so does Mark, my son. ¹⁴ Greet one another with a kiss of love.

May all of you who are in union with Christ have peace.

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October 21-27

1 Peter 3-5

- Song 14 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 minutes or less)

Treasures From God's Word

“The End of All Things Has Drawn Close”: (10 minutes)

1 Peter 4:7-9

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Ask Yourself, ‘What are some practical ways that I can show intense love and warm hospitality to brothers and sisters locally and around the world?’

1 Peter 4:7—“Be sound in mind, and be vigilant with a view to prayers”

1 Peter 4:7: But the end of all things has drawn close. Therefore, be sound in mind, and be vigilant with a view to prayers.

w13 11/15 3 paragraph 1

“The most difficult time of the night to stay awake is just before the dawn of a new day,” says a former night worker. Very likely, others who have to remain awake all night would agree. Present-day Christians face a similar challenge because the long night of Satan’s wicked system of things is now at the darkest point in its history. (Romans 13:12) How dangerous it would be for us to fall asleep at this late hour! It is imperative that we “be sound in mind” and heed the Scriptural exhortation to “be vigilant with a view to prayers.”—1 Peter 4:7.

1 Peter 4:8—“Have intense love for one another”

1 Peter 4:8: Above all things, have intense love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.

w99 4/15 22 paragraph 3

Finally, keep firmly in mind the apostle Peter’s loving admonition: “The end of all things has drawn close. Be sound in mind, therefore, and be vigilant with a view to prayers. Above all things, have intense love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.” (1 Peter 4:7, 8) It is so easy to let human imperfections—

other people's and our own—work their way into our hearts and minds and become obstacles, stumbling blocks. Satan well knows this human weakness. Divide and conquer is one of his wily tactics. We must, therefore, be quick to cover over such sins with intense love for one another and not “allow place for the Devil.”—Ephesians 4:25-27.

1 Peter 4:9—“Be hospitable to one another without grumbling”

1 Peter 4:9: Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.

18.03 14-15 paragraphs 2-3

2 Among other things, Peter urged his brothers: “Be hospitable to one another.” (1 Peter 4:9) The word “hospitality” in Greek literally means “fondness for, or kindness to, strangers.” Note, however, that Peter urged his Christian brothers and sisters to be hospitable “to one another,” to those whom they already knew and associated with. How would being hospitable help them?

3 It would draw them together. Consider your own experience. Have you had the pleasure of being invited to someone's home? Did that occasion not leave you with warm memories? When you entertained some from your congregation, was your friendship not deepened? By extending hospitality, we get to know our brothers and sisters in a more personal way than we can in other settings. Christians in Peter's day needed to draw ever closer as conditions grew worse. The same is true for Christians in these “last days.”—2 Timothy 3:1.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

1 Peter 3:19, 20—When and how did Jesus preach to “the spirits in prison”?

1 Peter 3:19, 20: And in this state he went and preached to the spirits in prison, who had formerly been disobedient when God was patiently waiting in Noah’s day, while the ark was being constructed, in which a few people, that is, eight souls, were carried safely through the water.

w13 6/15 23

Questions From Readers

The Bible says that Jesus “preached to the spirits in prison.” (1 Peter 3:19) What does this mean?

The apostle Peter identifies these spirits as those who had “once been disobedient when the patience of God was waiting in Noah’s days.” (1 Peter 3:20) Clearly, Peter was referring to spirit creatures who chose to join Satan’s rebellion. Jude mentions the angels who “did not keep their original position but forsook their own proper dwelling place,” saying that God “has reserved [them] with eternal bonds under dense darkness for the judgment of the great day.”—Jude 6.

In what way were spirit creatures disobedient in Noah’s day? Before the Deluge, these wicked spirits materialized in human form—something that God had not purposed for them. (Genesis 6:2, 4) Furthermore, those angels who had sex with women were practicing a perversion. God did not create spirit creatures to

engage in sexual relations with women. (Genesis 5:2) These wicked, disobedient angels will be destroyed in God's due time. For now, as Jude notes, they are in a condition of "dense darkness"—a spiritual prison, so to speak.

When and how did Jesus preach to these "spirits in prison"? Peter writes that this occurred after Jesus was "made alive in the spirit." (1 Peter 3:18, 19) Note, too, that Peter says that Jesus "preached." Peter's use of the past tense suggests that the preaching occurred before Peter wrote his first letter. It seems, then, that sometime after his resurrection, Jesus made a proclamation to the wicked spirits regarding the fully justified punishment they are due to receive. It was not a preaching that held out any hope for them. It was a preaching of judgment. (Jonah 1:1, 2) Once Jesus had demonstrated his faith and loyalty to death and then was resurrected—proving that the Devil indeed had no hold on him—Jesus had the basis for making such a condemnatory proclamation.—John 14:30; 16:8-11.

In the future, Jesus will bind and throw into the abyss both Satan and those angels. (Luke 8:30, 31; Revelation 20:1-3) Until that time, these disobedient spirits are in a condition of dense spiritual darkness, and their final destruction is certain.—Revelation 20:7-10.

1 Peter 4:6—Who were “the dead” to whom “the good news was declared”?

1 Peter 4:6: In fact, this is why the good news was declared also to the dead, so that although they are judged in the flesh from the standpoint of men, they might live in harmony with the spirit from God’s standpoint.

w08 11/15 21 paragraph 8

These were ones who were ‘dead in their trespasses and sins,’ or who were spiritually dead, before they heard the good news. (Ephesians 2:1) After putting faith in the good news, though, they began to “live” spiritually.

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Sample Conversation

First Return Visit

Francisco (Publisher 1): Hey, it is good to find your home, in case you don't recall, my name's Francisco.

Shane (Publisher 2): And I'm Shane.

Ian (Householder): Hello, Good to see you.

Francisco (Publisher 1): You two, in the last time we were here. We left the question, why do we suffer? Notice the answer that the Bible gives here, 1 John 5:19, Shane, will you please read that?

Shane (Publisher 2): Sure, It says:

19 We know that we originate with God, but the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one.

Francisco (Publisher 1): Thank you, so according to this verse, who controls the world, is it a God or someone else?

Ian (Householder): Hmm, It says the wicked one. Does that mean the devil?

Francisco (Publisher 1): Yes, he's the real ruler of the world. Do you think we're seeing evidence of his rule in the world around us?

Ian (Householder): For sure, All of the crime and hatred that exists.

Sample Conversation

Francisco (Publisher 1): Exactly, and in other parts of the Bible shows that Satan influence has led to sin and death for all mankind.

Ian (Householder): I've never heard that before, but it makes a lot of sense.

Francisco (Publisher 1): You're right, It does. So God doesn't cause her suffering, but he does care about it. Maybe next time we can discuss how God feels about her suffering. You may find out the answer addresses some of those nagging questions you had about God.

Ian (Householder): I'd like that.



Our Christian Life and Ministry

MEETING WORKBOOK


Sample Conversations

●○○
INITIAL CALL →

Question: How do we know that our suffering is not punishment from God?

Scripture: **Jas 1:13**

Link: Why do we suffer?




○○○
FIRST RETURN VISIT →

Question: Why do we suffer?

Scripture: **1Jo 5:19**

Link: How does God feel about our suffering?




○○●
SECOND RETURN VISIT

Question: How does God feel about our suffering?

Scripture: **Isa 63:9**

Link: What will God do to end our suffering?



Why Study the Bible?—Full Length

From the moment we can talk, we ask questions.

Why is the sky blue?

What are the stars made of?

Why do bad things happen?

Where do we come from?

Why do people die?

People go to great lengths to find answers. Today, there is more information available than ever before. But the big questions—questions about life, suffering, and death—still remain. Where can we find answers?

What if the answers have been there all along in the Bible?

A lot of people say, the Bible is full of myths and legends. That it's outdated. Or it's just too hard to understand. But is the Bible really the problem, or is it what people think they know about the Bible?

People think the Bible says that God controls the world. But how could that be? This world is out of control! It's full of pain and suffering, sickness and death, poverty and disaster.

How could a loving God be responsible for all of this? What the Bible says may surprise you. It says: "The Evil One controls the whole world." (1 John 5:19 ERV) In other words, there's an evil power behind the world's problems, someone who's pulling the strings behind the scenes. That's why, no matter how hard we try, humans just cannot solve the world's problems.

The good news is: The Bible says things will not always be like this! It tells us why we're in this situation, how God will fix it, and how we can deal with it in the meantime.

The Bible is providing answers to life's big questions for millions of people around the world. Would you like to be one of them?

Jehovah's Witnesses would be happy to study the Bible with you. Fill in the online request for a Bible study, and a Witness in your area will call to discuss the Bible at a time and place convenient for you.

137 Faithful Women, Christian Sisters

(Romans 16:2)

1. Sarah and Esther, Mary, Ruth, and others—
All these were capable women, loyal wives.
Godly devotion was foremost in their lives.
They were faithful women, ones we know by name.
There were others favored by Jehovah;
Nameless in the record, their faith was just the same.
2. Goodness and courage, loyal love and kindness—
Lovable qualities in all humankind,
Virtues these excellent women bring to mind.
They were fine examples we appreciate.
In the same way now our Christian sisters
Show a faithful spirit we all can imitate.
3. Mothers and daughters, sisters, wives, and widows,
Willingly laboring, glad to do your part.
Modest your bearing, submissive is your heart,
Having God's approval, may you never fear.
Christian sisters, may Jehovah keep you
Firm in your conviction, your prize is drawing near.

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A CHANGE FOR THE RICH MAN AND FOR LAZARUS

LUKE 16:14-31

• ILLUSTRATION OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

Jesus has been giving his disciples fine counsel about the use of material riches. But his disciples are not the only ones listening. Pharisees are also present, and they ought to take to heart Jesus' counsel. Why? Because they are "money lovers." On hearing what Jesus is saying, they 'begin to sneer at him.'—Luke 15:2; 16:13, 14.

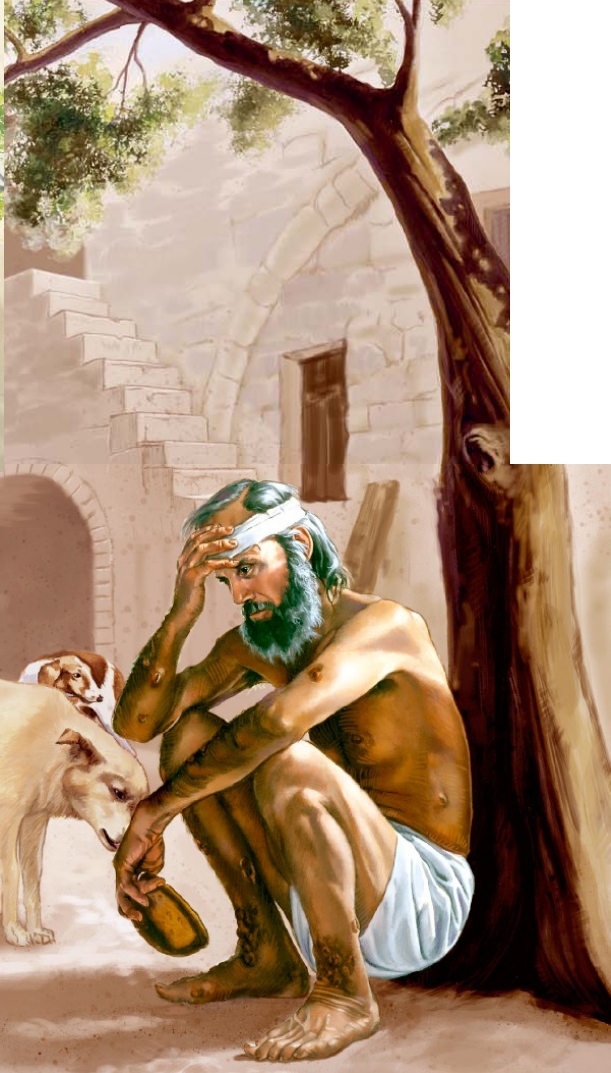
That does not intimidate Jesus, though. He says to them: "You are those who declare yourselves righteous before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is considered exalted by men is a disgusting thing in God's sight."—Luke 16:15.

The Pharisees have long been "exalted by men," but this is a time of change, a time for the tables to turn. The highly exalted ones who are rich in worldly goods, political power, and religious influ-

ence are to be brought down. The common people who recognize their spiritual need are to be raised up. Jesus makes it clear that a major change is taking place, saying:

“The Law and the Prophets were until John. From then on, the Kingdom of God is being declared as good news, and every sort of person is pressing forward toward it. Indeed, it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the Law to go unfulfilled.” (Luke 3:18; 16:16, 17) How do Jesus’ words indicate that a change is occurring?

The Jewish religious leaders proudly profess adherence to the Law of Moses. Recall that when Jesus restored sight to a man in Jerusalem, the Pharisees pridefully said: “We are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses.” (John 9:13, 28, 29) One purpose of the Law given through Moses was to lead humble ones to the Messiah, that is, to Jesus. John the Baptist identified Jesus as the Lamb of God. (John 1:29-34) Starting with John’s ministry, humble Jews, especially among the poor,



have been hearing about “the Kingdom of God.” Yes, there is “good news” for all wanting to be subjects of God’s Kingdom and benefit from it.

The Mosaic Law is not going unfulfilled; rather, it has led to the Messiah. Moreover, the obligation to keep it is ending. For example, the Law allowed for divorce on various grounds, but now Jesus explains that “everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and whoever marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery.” (Luke 16:18) How such pronouncements enrage the legalistically minded Pharisees!

Jesus now relates an illustration that underscores the magnitude of the change that is taking place. It features two men—each of whose status, or situation, changes dramatically. In considering the illustration, bear in mind that among those hearing it are money-loving Pharisees who are being exalted by men.

“There was a rich man,” Jesus says, “who used to dress in purple and linen, enjoying himself day after day with magnificence. But a beggar named Laz-

arus used to be put at his gate, covered with ulcers and desiring to be filled with the things dropping from the table of the rich man. Yes, even the dogs would come and lick his ulcers.”—Luke 16:19-21.

The Pharisees are money lovers, so is there any doubt whom Jesus is illustrating by this “rich man”? These Jewish religious leaders also like to deck themselves out in costly, fancy clothing. And beyond whatever actual wealth they might have, they seem rich in the privileges they enjoy and opportunities they have. Yes, illustrating them by a man clothed in royal purple reflects their favored position, and the white linen reflects their self-righteousness.—Daniel 5:7.

How do these rich, proud leaders view the poor, the common people? They contemptuously

- ◇ What contrast exists between the situation of the Jewish religious leaders and that of the common people?
- ◇ As Jesus indicates, what change takes place beginning with John’s ministry?
- ◇ Who are like the rich man in Jesus’ illustration, and who are like Lazarus?

consider them *'am ha-'a'rets*, or people of the land (earth), who neither know the Law nor deserve to be taught it. (John 7:49) That reflects the situation of the “beggar named Lazarus,” who hungers for even the meager “things dropping from the table of the rich man.” Like Lazarus covered with ulcers, the common people are looked down on, as if they are spiritually diseased.

That sad situation has existed for some time, but Jesus knows that the time has come for a great change in the condition of both those who are like the rich man and those who are like Lazarus.

THE CHANGE FOR THE RICH MAN AND FOR LAZARUS

Jesus goes on to describe this dramatic change in circumstances. “Now in the course of time,” he says, “the beggar died and was carried off by the angels to Abraham’s side. Also, the rich man died and was buried. And in the Grave he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and he saw Abraham from afar and Lazarus by his side.”—Luke 16:22, 23.

Those listening to Jesus know that Abraham is long dead and in the Grave. The Scriptures make it

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Forward, You Witnesses!

(Luke 16:16)

1. Firm and determined in this time of the end,
Prepared are God's servants the good news to defend.
The Devil has fought and opposed them.
With Jehovah, they take their stand against him.

(CHORUS)

*Then forward, you Witnesses, ever strong of heart!
Rejoice that in God's work, you too may have a part!
Go tell far and wide that the Paradise is near
And that soon all its blessings will be here.*

2. Servants of Jah do not seek a life of ease;
The world and its rulers we do not try to please.
Unspotted at all times remaining,
Our integrity we will keep maintaining.

(Chorus)

3. God and his Kingdom are mocked and pushed aside;
His great name is slandered, its holiness denied.
Let's share in its sanctification,
And declare it to ev'ry tribe and nation.

(Chorus)

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LARGE PRINT EDITION



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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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He Will Make You Strong

(1 Peter 5:10)

1. There was a reason why God brought the truth to you
And called you from the darkness to the light.
Within your heart, he saw the longing that you had
To search for him and practice what is right.
You promised him in prayer to do his will;
He helped you then, and he will help you still.

(CHORUS)

*With Jesus' blood He bought you,
to God you now belong.*

*So he will make you firm,
and he will make you strong.*

*He'll guide you and protect you,
as he has all along.*

*Yes, he will make you firm,
and he will make you strong.*

2. God gave his own beloved Son in your behalf;
On this account, He wants you to succeed.
If He did not withhold the gift of His dear Son,
Then never doubt He'll give the strength you need.
He won't forget the faith and love you've shown;
He will not fail to care for all His own.

(Chorus)

Adjusting to a New Assignment

“God is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his name.”—HEB. 6:10.

SONG 38

He Will Make You Strong

PREVIEW

At times, brothers and sisters in full-time service may have to leave their assignment, or they may receive a new assignment. This article discusses the challenges they face and what can help them to make a successful transition. It also considers what others can do to encourage and support them, as well as principles that can help all of us to deal with changes.

“AFTER we had spent 21 wonderful years in our missionary assignment, all four of our parents had become infirm,” recall Robert and Mary Jo. “We were happy to take care of them. Still, it was painful to leave what had become the home of our hearts.”

² “When we learned that our health would not permit us to return to our assignment, we wept,” relate William and Terrie. “Our dream of serving Jehovah in a foreign land was over.”

³ “We knew that our persecutors wanted to close the branch office where I was serving,” says Aleksey. “But it was still a shock when it happened and we had to leave Bethel.”

⁴ Add to these the experiences of thousands of Bethel family members and others who have received new assignments.* These faithful brothers and sisters may find it challenging to leave a cherished assignment. What can help them to deal with

*** Similarly, upon reaching a certain age, many responsible brothers have turned over their responsibilities to younger brothers. See the articles “Older Christians—Jehovah Treasures Your Loyalty,” in *The Watchtower* of September 2018, and “Maintain Inner Peace Despite Changing Circumstances,” in *The Watchtower* of October 2018.**

1-3. What are some reasons why full-time servants may have to change assignments?

4. What questions will we discuss in this article?

the change? How can you assist them? The answers to those questions can help all of us to deal with changing circumstances in life.

HOW TO DEAL WITH A CHANGE

⁵ Whether we serve in the field or at Bethel, we can develop deep affection for people and even for the place where we serve. If for any reason we have

5. In what ways can a change of assignment affect us?

Why may leaving an assignment be challenging for full-time servants?

(See paragraph 5)



to leave, our heart feels torn. We miss those who stay behind, and we worry about them, especially if we had to leave because of persecution. (Matt. 10:23; 2 Cor. 11:28, 29) Further, taking up a new assignment—or even returning home—often means experiencing culture shock. “We had become unfamiliar with our own culture and even with preaching in our native language,” say Robert and Mary Jo. “We felt as if we didn’t fit in anymore.” Some who get a change of assignment may suddenly face unexpected financial challenges. They may feel uncertain, insecure, and discouraged. What can help?

⁶ *Stay close to Jehovah.* (Jas. 4:8) How can we do that? By trusting in him as the “Hearer of prayer.” (Ps. 65:2) “Pour out your hearts before him,” says Psalm 62:8. Jehovah can do “more than superabundantly beyond all the things we ask or conceive.” (Eph. 3:20) He does not limit himself to what we specifically ask for in our prayers. He may do the unexpected, beyond anything that we could ever think of, to solve our problems.

⁷ To remain close to Jehovah, read the Scriptures

6. How can we stay close to Jehovah?

7. (a) What will help us to remain close to Jehovah? (b) According to Hebrews 6:10-12, what will result from our continuing to serve Jehovah faithfully?



It is essential that we draw close to Jehovah and trust in him
(See paragraphs 6-7)

daily and ponder on them. One former missionary says: “Maintain a regular schedule of family worship and meeting preparation, just as you did in your former assignment.” Also, continue to be fully involved in preaching the good news in your new congregation. Jehovah remembers those who continue to serve him faithfully, even if they cannot do all they did before.—Read Hebrews 6:10-12.

⁸ *Keep your life simple.* Do not let the anxieties of Satan’s world “choke” your spiritual activity. (Matt. 13:22) Reject pressure from the world or from well-meaning friends or relatives to seek financial security in Satan’s system. (Read 1 John 2:15-17.) Trust

8. How can the words found at 1 John 2:15-17 help you to keep your life simple?

in Jehovah, who promises to provide for all our spiritual, emotional, and material needs “at the right time.”—Heb. 4:16; 13:5, 6.

⁹ *Avoid unnecessary debt.* (Read Proverbs 22:3, 7.) A move can be surprisingly costly, and it is easy to get into debt. To minimize the debt, beware of buying on credit things you do not really need. When we are under emotional pressure, as when caring for sick loved ones, we may find it difficult to decide how much debt to take on. In such situations, remember that “prayer and supplication” can help you to make wise decisions. In response to your prayers, Jehovah can grant you the peace that will “guard your hearts and your mental powers,” helping you to think things through calmly.—Phil. 4:6, 7; 1 Pet. 5:7.

¹⁰ *Maintain good relationships.* Share your feelings and experiences with good friends, especially those who may have experienced similar joys and challenges. Doing so can promote emotional healing. (Eccl. 4:9, 10) The friends you made in your former assignment will remain your friends. Now, in your new assignment, you need to make new friends.

9. According to Proverbs 22:3, 7, why is it important to avoid unnecessary debt, and what can help us to make wise decisions?

10. How can we cultivate new friendships?

Remember that to have a friend, you need to be a friend. How can you cultivate new friendships? Share the rich experiences Jehovah has given you, and let others sense your joy in Jehovah's service. Even if some in the congregation do not understand your enthusiasm for full-time service, others may be drawn to your example and become good friends. Be mindful, though, not to draw undue attention to your own accomplishments, and do not focus on negative feelings.

¹¹ If you had to leave your assignment because of your mate's health, do not blame him or her. On the other hand, if you yourself had health problems, do not feel guilty, thinking that you let your mate down. Remember, you are "one flesh," and you promised before Jehovah to care for each other under all circumstances. (Matt. 19:5, 6) If you left an assignment because of an unplanned pregnancy, make sure your child knows that he is more important to you than your assignment was. Reassure your child that you view him as "a reward" from God. (Ps. 127:3-5) At the same time, tell him about the rewarding experiences you had in your assignment. Doing so can motivate your child to use his

11. How can you keep your marriage happy?

life in Jehovah's joyful service just as you have done.

HOW OTHERS CAN HELP

¹² Commendably, many congregations and individuals do what they can to enable those in full-time service to remain in their assignments. They do so by encouraging them to continue their work, by giving them financial or other material support, or by helping them to care for their family members back home. (Gal. 6:2) If those in full-time service receive a new assignment to your congregation, do not view the change of assignment as an indication that they somehow failed or were disciplined.* Instead, help them to make the transition easier. Give them a warm welcome and commend them for the work they have done, even if poor health limits what they can do at present. Get to know them. Learn from their wealth of knowledge, training, and experience.

* The elders in the congregation where they have been serving should write a letter of introduction as soon as possible, so as not to delay their continuing to serve as a pioneer, as an elder, or as a ministerial servant.

12. (a) How can we help those in full-time service to continue in their assignments? (b) How can we make their transition to a new assignment easier?

WAYS THE CONGREGATION CAN HELP



Offer practical assistance
(See paragraph 13)



Involve reassigned ones in your ministry
(See paragraph 14)

13 Initially, those receiving a new assignment may need your help to obtain housing, transportation, work, and other basic necessities. They may also need current information about everyday matters, such as paying taxes and obtaining insurance. Most important, they need, not pity, but understanding. They may be struggling to deal with their own health problems or those of their relative. They may be grieving over the death of a loved one.* And they also may grieve, even if in private, over the loss of association with their spiritual family in their former assignment. It takes time to process such deep and often very mixed emotions.

14 In the meantime, your support and example can help them to adjust. “In my previous assignment, I conducted Bible studies every day,” says a sister who served for many years in a foreign land. “In my new one, it was difficult even to get the opportunity to open the Bible or to show a video in the ministry. But local publishers invited me on their calls and studies. Seeing those zealous and courageous

* See the series “Help for Those Who Grieve,” in the 2018 *Awake!* No. 3.

13. What help can we provide for those receiving a new assignment?

14. How did local publishers help one sister to adjust to her new assignment?

brothers and sisters conduct progressive Bible studies gave me a more positive outlook. I learned to start conversations in the new territory. All of this helped me to regain joy.”

KEEP MOVING FORWARD!

¹⁵ You can make a success of your new assignment. Do not consider a change to be a failure or a step backward. Look for Jehovah’s hand in your life and keep preaching. Imitate the faithful Christians of the first century. Wherever they were, they “went through the land declaring the good news of the word.” (Acts 8:1, 4) Your efforts to keep on preaching may yield good results. For example, pioneers who were expelled from one country moved to a neighboring land where there also was a great need in their language. Within months, new rapidly growing groups were formed.

¹⁶ “The joy of Jehovah is your strength.” (Neh. 8:10, ftn.) We must find our joy primarily in Jehovah and not in our assignment, no matter how much we treasure it. Therefore, keep walking with Jehovah, looking to him for wisdom, guidance, and support. Remember that you came to love your former

15. How can you make a success of your new assignment?

16. How can you find joy in a new assignment?

assignment because you put your heart into helping the people there. Put your heart into your present assignment and see how Jehovah helps you to love it too.—Eccl. 7:10.

¹⁷ We must remember that our service to Jehovah is eternal, but our present assignment is temporary. In the new world, all of us may have a change of assignment. Aleksey, mentioned at the outset,

17. What must we remember about our present assignment?

Look for ways to expand your ministry in your home territory
(See paragraphs 15-16)



believes that his current experiences are preparing him for that. “I always knew that Jehovah and the new world are real, but somehow they seemed a little distant,” Aleksey says. “Now I see Jehovah right in front of my eyes and the new world as the next stop on my journey.” (Acts 2:25) No matter what our assignment is, let us keep walking with Jehovah. He will never leave us, but he will help us to find joy in doing whatever we can in his service—wherever that may be.—Isa. 41:13.

PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS Page 44: A couple obliged to leave the missionary work in a foreign land say a tearful goodbye to their congregation. **Page 46:** Back in their country of origin, the same couple persistently pray to Jehovah to help them cope with the challenges they face. **Page 53:** With Jehovah’s help, the couple are back in full-time service. They use the language skills they learned as missionaries to share the good news with immigrants in their new congregation’s territory.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- What can help us to deal with a change of assignment?
- How can we help others who have received a new assignment?
- How can we keep moving forward in Jehovah’s service?

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.

