

- Song 141 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (1 min.)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Reflect Jehovah’s View of Life”:** (10 min.)
 Ex 21:20—Jehovah condemns murder (*it-1* 271)
 Ex 21:22, 23—Jehovah treasures the life of an unborn child (*lvs* 95 ¶16)
 Ex 21:28, 29—Jehovah expects us to take safety precautions (*w10* 4/15 29 ¶4)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (10 min.)
 Ex 21:5, 6—How do these verses illustrate the benefits of Christian dedication? (*w10* 1/15 4 ¶4-5)

Ex 21:14—How might this verse be explained? (*it-1* 1143)

What spiritual gems from this week’s Bible reading would you like to share regarding Jehovah, the field ministry, or something else?

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Ex 21:1-21 (5)

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Then invite the person to our meetings. (2)
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LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 60
- **Value Life as God Does:** (10 min.) Discussion. Play the video (video category FAMILY). Then ask the audience: What complications may arise during pregnancy? What bearing does Exodus 21:22, 23 have on the subject of abortion? Why are faith and courage needed to make a decision that pleases Jehovah? How does the resurrection hope provide comfort?
- **How Dedication Benefits Us:** (5 min.) Talk based on the January 15, 2010, *Watchtower*, page 4, paragraphs 4-7. Encourage Bible students to progress to dedication and baptism.
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- Concluding Comments (3 min. or less)
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EXODUS 21-22 | Reflect Jehovah’s View of Life



21:20, 22, 23, 28, 29

Jehovah views life as precious. How can we show that we share his view?

- Cultivate heartfelt love and respect for others.
 —Mt 22:39; 1Jo 3:15
- Show such love by increasing your zeal in the ministry.
 —1Co 9:22, 23; 2Pe 3:9
- Cultivate a proper attitude toward safety.—Pr 22:3

 **How is respect for life related to freedom from bloodguilt?**



mw020.08-E
 200501

The Miracle of Life

(Psalm 36:9)

1. Ev'ry newborn child, Ev'ry drop of rain,
Ev'ry golden ray of sun, Each head of grain—
All are gifts from God; They reveal his way.
Miracles performed by him sustain us each day.

(CHORUS)

*So, what are we to do with a gift so rare
But to love the One who gave it and show him we care.
No matter what we do, We never can earn it.
This gift is still a gift—The miracle of life.*

2. Others may give up, Lose their will to try,
Echoing the wife of Job: “Curse God and die.”
We are not that way; Praise to God we give,
Thanking him for ev'ry precious moment we live.

(CHORUS)

*So, what are we to do with a gift so rare
But to love the ones around us and show them we care.
No matter what we do, We never can earn it.
This gift is still a gift—The miracle of life.*

Exodus 21-22

21 “These are the judicial decisions that you are to convey to them:

² “If you buy a Hebrew slave, he will serve as a slave for six years, but in the seventh year, he will be set free without paying anything. ³ If he came by himself, he will go out by himself. If he is the husband of a wife, then his wife must go out with him. ⁴ If his master gives him a wife and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her children will become her master’s, and he will go out by himself. ⁵ But if the slave should insist and say, ‘I love my master, my wife, and my sons; I do not want to be set free,’ ⁶ his master must bring him before the true God. Then he will bring him up against the door or the doorpost, and his master will pierce his ear through with an awl, and he will be his slave for life.

⁷ “If a man sells his daughter as a slave, she will not go free the same way that a slave man does. ⁸ If her master is not pleased with her and he does not designate her as a concubine but causes her to be purchased by someone else, he will not be entitled to sell her to foreigners, for he has betrayed her. ⁹ If he selects her for his son, he is to grant her the rights of a daughter. ¹⁰ If he takes another wife for himself, the sustenance, the clothing, and the marriage due of the first wife are not to be diminished. ¹¹ If he will not render these three things to her, then she is to go free without paying any money.

¹² “Anyone who strikes a man so that he dies must be put to death. ¹³ But if he does it unintentionally and the true God lets it happen, I will designate for you a place where he can flee. ¹⁴ If a man becomes very angry with his fellow man and he deliberately kills him, the man must die even if you have to take him from my altar. ¹⁵ One who strikes his father or his mother must be put to death.

¹⁶ “If anyone kidnaps a man and sells him or is caught holding him, he must be put to death.

¹⁷ “Anyone who curses his father or his mother must be put to death.

¹⁸ “This is what should happen if men quarrel and one strikes his fellow man with a stone or a fist and he does not die but is confined to his bed: ¹⁹ If he is able to get up and walk around outdoors with the aid of a staff, then the one who struck him must be free from punishment. He will only make compensation for the time the injured man lost from his work until he is completely healed.

²⁰ “If a man strikes his slave man or his slave girl with a stick and that one dies by his hand, that one must be avenged. ²¹ However, if he survives for one or two days, he is not to be avenged, because he is someone bought with his owner’s money.

²² “If men should struggle with each other and they hurt a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely but no fatality results, the offender must pay the damages imposed on him by the husband of the woman; and he must pay it

through the judges. ²³ But if a fatality does occur, then you must give life for life, ²⁴ eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, ²⁵ burn for burn, wound for wound, blow for blow.

²⁶ “If a man strikes the eye of his slave man or the eye of his slave girl and he destroys it, he is to let the slave go free in compensation for his eye. ²⁷ And if he knocks out the tooth of his slave man or of his slave girl, he is to let the slave go free in compensation for his tooth.

²⁸ “If a bull gores a man or a woman and that one dies, the bull must be stoned to death and its meat is not to be eaten; but the owner of the bull is free from punishment. ²⁹ But if a bull was in the habit of goring and its owner had been warned but he would not keep it under guard and it killed a man or a woman, the bull is to be stoned and its owner is also to be put to death. ³⁰ If a ransom is imposed on him, he must give as the redemption price for his life all that may be imposed on him. ³¹ Whether it gored a son or a daughter, it is to be done to the bull’s owner according to this judicial decision. ³² If the bull gored a slave man or a slave girl, he will give the price of 30 shekels to that one’s master, and the bull will be stoned to death.

³³ “If a man uncovers or digs a pit and does not cover it and a bull or a donkey falls into it, ³⁴ the owner of the pit is to make compensation. He is to pay the price to its owner, and the dead animal will become his. ³⁵ If a man’s bull hurts another’s bull and it dies, then they must sell the live bull and

divide the price paid for it; they should also divide the dead animal. ³⁶ Or if it was known that a bull had been in the habit of goring but its owner would not keep it under guard, he must make compensation with bull for bull, and the dead one will become his own.

22 “If a man steals a bull or a sheep and he slaughters or sells it, he is to compensate with five bulls for the bull and four sheep for the sheep.

² (“If a thief is found in the act of breaking in and he gets struck and dies, there is no bloodguilt for him. ³ But if it happens after sunrise, there is bloodguilt for him.)

“He must make compensation. If he has nothing, then he must be sold for the things he stole. ⁴ If what he stole is found alive in his possession, whether it is a bull or a donkey or a sheep, he is to make double compensation.

⁵ “If anyone puts his animals out to graze in a field or a vineyard and lets them graze in someone else’s field, he is to make compensation with the best of his own field or with the best of his own vineyard.

⁶ “If a fire starts and spreads to thornbushes and it causes sheaves or standing grain or a field to be consumed, the one who started the fire must make compensation for what was burned.

⁷ “If a man gives his fellow man money or articles to keep and these are stolen from the fellow man’s house, if the thief is found, he must make double compensation. ⁸ If the thief is

not found, the owner of the house must be brought before the true God in order to determine whether he put his hand on the goods of his fellow man. ⁹ In all cases of illegal possession of goods, concerning a bull, a donkey, a sheep, a garment, or anything lost of which he may say, 'This is mine!' both parties will present their case before the true God. The one whom God pronounces guilty is to make double compensation to his fellow man.

¹⁰ "If a man gives his fellow man a donkey or a bull or a sheep or any domestic animal to keep and it dies or gets maimed or gets led away while nobody is looking, ¹¹ there should be an oath made between them before Jehovah, that he did not lay his hand on the goods of his fellow man; and the owner must accept it. The other man is not to make compensation. ¹² But if the animal has been stolen from him, he is to make compensation to its owner. ¹³ If it was torn by a wild animal, he is to bring it as evidence. He is not to make compensation for something torn by a wild animal.

¹⁴ "But if anybody asks to borrow an animal from his fellow man and it gets maimed or it dies while its owner is not with it, the man who borrowed it must make compensation. ¹⁵ If its owner is with it, he is not to make compensation. If it was hired, the money paid for the hire is the compensation.

¹⁶ "Now if a man seduces a virgin who is not engaged and he lies down with her, he must pay the bride-price for her to become his wife. ¹⁷ If her father absolutely refuses to give

her to him, he is to pay the money at the rate of the bride-price.

¹⁸ “You must not allow a sorceress to live.

¹⁹ “Anyone lying down with an animal must surely be put to death.

²⁰ “Whoever sacrifices to any gods but Jehovah alone is to be devoted to destruction.

²¹ “You must not mistreat a foreign resident or oppress him, for you were foreign residents in the land of Egypt.

²² “You must not afflict any widow or fatherless child. ²³ If you afflict him at all, so that he cries out to me, I will unfailingly hear his outcry; ²⁴ and my anger will blaze, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives will become widows, and your children will be fatherless.

²⁵ “If you lend money to anyone poor of my people, someone who is dwelling with you, you must not become like a moneylender to him. You must not charge him interest.

²⁶ “If you seize the garment of your fellow man as security for a loan, you are to return it to him by sunset. ²⁷ For it is his only covering, his clothing to cover his body; in what will he lie down to sleep? When he cries out to me, I will certainly hear, for I am compassionate.

²⁸ “You must not curse God nor curse a chieftain among your people.

²⁹ “You must not hesitate to make offerings from your abundant produce and the overflow of your presses. The firstborn of your sons you are to give to me. ³⁰ This is what you should do with your bull and your sheep: Seven days it will continue with its mother. On the eighth day, you are to give it to me.

³¹ “You should prove yourselves holy people to me, and you must not eat the flesh of anything in the field that has been torn by a wild animal. You should throw it to the dogs.

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 **How is respect for life related to freedom from bloodguilt?**



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August 31–September 6 / Exodus 21-22

- Song 141 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (1 minute)

Treasures From God's Word

“Reflect Jehovah's View of Life”: (10 minutes)

Exodus 21:20, 22, 23, 28, 29

Jehovah views life as precious. How can we show that we share his view?

- Cultivate heartfelt love and respect for others.—Matthew 22:39; 1 John 3:15
- Show such love by increasing your zeal in the ministry.—1 Corinthians 9:22, 23; 2 Peter 3:9

Pictures: Collage: 1. A young brother carries the groceries upstairs for an elderly woman. 2. A sister preaches to a woman at a water pump.

- Cultivate a proper attitude toward safety.—Proverbs 22:3

Picture: A brother yawning while driving late at night.

How is respect for life related to freedom from bloodguilt?

Exodus 21:20—Jehovah condemns murder

Exodus 21:20: “If a man strikes his slave man or his slave girl with a stick and that one dies by his hand, that one must be avenged.

it-1 271

A Hebrew slave owner was permitted to strike his slave man or slave girl with a stick if the slave was disobedient or rebellious. But if the slave died under the beating, the slave owner was to be punished. If the slave lived for a day or two afterward, however, this would be evidence tending to indicate that the slave owner did not have murder in his heart. He had the right to mete out disciplinary punishment, for the slave was “his money.” A man would be very unlikely to want to destroy completely his own valuable property, thereby suffering a loss. Also, if the slave died after the passage of a day or more, it might not be certain whether death was from the beating or from some other cause. So if

the slave continued alive a day or two, the master would not be punished.—Exodus 21:20, 21.

Exodus 21:22, 23—Jehovah treasures the life of an unborn child

Exodus 21:22, 23: “If men should struggle with each other and they hurt a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely but no fatality results, the offender must pay the damages imposed on him by the husband of the woman; and he must pay it through the judges. But if a fatality does occur, then you must give life for life,

Ivs 95 paragraph 16

Every human life is important to Jehovah. Even an unborn baby is precious to him. Under the Law of Moses, if a person accidentally hurt a pregnant woman and either she **or** her baby died, Jehovah held that person guilty of manslaughter. This meant that even though it was an accident, someone had been killed and the life had to be compensated for. (Read Exodus 21:22, 23.) To God, an unborn baby is a living

person. Knowing that, how do you think he feels about abortion? How do you think he feels when he sees millions of unborn babies killed every year?

Exodus 21:28, 29—Jehovah expects us to take safety precautions

Exodus 21:28, 29: “If a bull gores a man or a woman and that one dies, the bull must be stoned to death and its meat is not to be eaten; but the owner of the bull is free from punishment. But if a bull was in the habit of goring and its owner had been warned but he would not keep it under guard and it killed a man or a woman, the bull is to be stoned and its owner is also to be put to death.

w10 4/15 29 paragraph 4

The sanctions of the Law also applied to injuries caused by domestic animals. If a bull killed a person by goring, the owner had to destroy the bull to keep other people safe. Because he could not eat the meat or sell it to others for food, killing that animal was a big loss. But suppose that

after a bull had injured a person, its owner did not keep the animal under guard. What then? If that same bull later killed someone, the bull *and its owner* would be put to death. That law gave pause to anyone inclined to be careless with his livestock.—Exodus 21:28, 29.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

Exodus 21:5, 6—How do these verses illustrate the benefits of Christian dedication?

Exodus 21:5, 6: But if the slave should insist and say, 'I love my master, my wife, and my sons; I do not want to be set free,' his master must bring him before the true God. Then he will bring him up against the door or the doorpost, and his master will pierce his ear through with an awl, and he will be his slave for life.

w10 1/15 4 paragraphs 4-5

4 Christian dedication is a serious matter. It is more than a mere commitment. How, though, does making a dedication benefit us? By way of comparison, let us consider how making a commitment in human relationships brings

benefits. One example is friendship. To enjoy the privilege of having a friend, you have to accept the responsibility of being a friend. That involves a commitment—you feel an obligation to care about your friend. One of the most outstanding friendships described in the Bible is that of David and Jonathan. They even made a covenant of friendship with each other. (Read 1 Samuel 17:57; 18:1, 3.) Although friendships with that level of commitment are rare, most friendships flourish when companions are committed, or feel some obligation, to each other.—Proverbs 17:17; 18:24.

5 The Law that God gave to Israel describes another relationship in which people benefited by making a commitment. If a slave wanted the security of belonging permanently to a good master, he could enter a permanent and binding agreement with him. The Law states: “If the slave should insistently say, ‘I really love my master, my wife and my sons; I do not want to go out as one set free,’ then his master must bring him near to the true God and must bring him up against the door or the doorpost; and his master must pierce his ear through with an awl, and he must be his

slave to time indefinite.”—Exodus 21:5, 6.

Exodus 21:14—How might this verse be explained?

Exodus 21:14: If a man becomes very angry with his fellow man and he deliberately kills him, the man must die even if you have to take him from my altar.

it-1 1143

The statement at Exodus 21:14 may mean that even a priest was to be executed for murder, or that the act of taking hold of the horns of the altar would not shield any willful murderer.—Compare 1 Kings 2:28-34.

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(th study 5)

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200501



Our Christian Life and Ministry

MEETING WORKBOOK

Sample Conversations

INITIAL CALL

Question: Where can we find help to deal with grief?

Scripture: **2Co 1:3, 4**

Link: What happens to someone who dies?

FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE
TEACHING TOOLBOX:



• **bhs 71 ¶4**

RETURN VISIT

Question: What happens to someone who dies?

Scripture: **Ec 9:5, 10**

Link: What hope do we have for the dead?

FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE
TEACHING TOOLBOX:



• **bhs 63 ¶6**

Draw Close to God

The Father of Fatherless Boys

Exodus 22:22-24

“A FATHER of fatherless boys . . . is God in his holy dwelling.” (Psalm 68:5) Those inspired words convey a touching lesson about Jehovah God—he is sensitive to the needs of disadvantaged ones. His concern for children who lose a parent in death was clearly evident in the Law he gave to Israel. Let us examine the Bible’s first reference to the “fatherless boy,” found at Exodus 22:22-24.

God warns: “You people must not afflict any . . . fatherless boy.” (Verse 22) This was not a mere plea for humanitarianism; it was a divine command. A child who lost his father—and hence his protector and sustainer—was vulnerable. No one was to “afflict” such a child in any way. In other Bible translations, the word “afflict” is rendered “abuse,” “mistreat,” and “take advantage of.” To wrong a fatherless child was a serious matter in God’s eyes. Just how serious?

The Law continues: “If you should afflict him at all, then if he cries out to me at all, I shall unfailingly hear his outcry.” (Verse 23) The account switches from the plural “you” in verse 22 to the singular “you” in verse 23. The individual and the nation as a whole were equally responsible for obeying this divine precept. Jehovah was watching; he inclined his ear to the fatherless boys, ever ready to respond to their cries for help.—Psalm 10:14; Proverbs 23:10, 11.

What, then, would happen if someone were to wrong a fatherless boy, giving that child reason to cry out to God? “My anger will indeed blaze,” says Jehovah, “and I shall certainly kill you with the sword.” (Verse 24) One Bible reference work says that this “is literally ‘and my nose will become hot,’ which is an idiom for intense anger.” Notice that Jehovah did not leave it up to the human judges in Israel to enforce this law. God himself would execute judgment upon anyone who took advantage of a defenseless child.—Deuteronomy 10:17, 18.

Jehovah has not changed. (Malachi 3:6) His heart goes out to children who lack a parent or parents. (James 1:27) Make no mistake—the Father of fatherless boys is provoked to righteous anger by the victimization of innocent children. Those who would seek to exploit a vulnerable child will not escape “the burning anger of Jehovah.” (Zephaniah 2:2) Such wicked ones will learn that “it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”—Hebrews 10:31.

[Footnote]

The expression “fatherless boy” appears some 40 times in the Bible. Although the Hebrew word thus rendered is in the masculine gender, we should not think that the principles underlying such statements excluded girls who lost a father. The Mosaic Law upheld the rights of fatherless girls as well.—Numbers 27:1-8.

It Means Their Life

(Ezekiel 3:17-19)

1. In this year of goodwill
by our God, all need to hear
That the day of his anger
will come, and it is near.

(CHORUS)

*It means their life, but not just theirs;
It means our own life as well.
It means their life if they obey,
So all the nations we must tell;
We must tell.*

2. There's a message to preach,
so we spread it all abroad.
We invite all to come and
be reconciled to God.

(Chorus)

(BRIDGE)

It's urgent, it's important,
That people listen, learn, and live.
We tell them, and we teach them;
Life-giving truth we freely give.

(Chorus)

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Value Life as God Does

(Overall scene: husband and wife on visit with doctor regarding pregnancy)

Wife speaking:

When Thomas and I first learned I was pregnant, we were both really shocked.

But then we grew more and more excited. And we were so thrilled when we saw our little girl for the first time.

We really didn't care if it was a boy or a girl; we just wanted the baby to be healthy.

Unfortunately, our hopes were completely destroyed when the doctor told us that the baby would likely be born with severe problems and could even die.

My husband and his parents are not Jehovah's Witnesses, but they do feel abortion is wrong. Still, they thought that we should listen to our doctor's advice.

I couldn't believe this was happening. I even questioned why Jehovah would allow it. I really felt it was more than I could bear.

Thomas asked me what I wanted to do, and I told him that I could never have an abortion. He agreed that normally it would be wrong but felt that in our situation God would understand.

I was so overwhelmed. I was being pressured to make a decision I knew was wrong but that everyone was telling me was best for my child. I had never felt so alone.

I needed Jehovah more than ever, so I poured out my heart to him in prayer.

And then I did research. I showed Thomas the scripture I had found. "If men should struggle with each other "and they hurt a pregnant woman ". . . if a fatality does occur, then you must give life for life."

Jehovah views even the unintentional killing of an unborn child as a serious sin. So how could we intentionally take the life of our child?

I made my decision clear to our doctor and to my in-laws.

There was a chance the diagnosis was incorrect, and I'd love to say that's what occurred; but it did not.

My daughter Chloe only lived a few weeks after she was born, and losing her was the hardest thing I've ever had to endure. But Jehovah gave me the courage to explain my beliefs to my husband, my in-laws, and the medical staff, and they all expressed admiration for my strong faith.

And I've never regretted the decision I made.

Even though Chloe only lived those few weeks, I'm so grateful for the time I had with her.

I know Jehovah remembers every detail about her, and he'll give her back to me in the resurrection in perfect health, because all life is truly precious in his eyes.

How Dedication Benefits Us

⁴ Christian dedication is a serious matter. It is more than a mere commitment. How, though, does making a dedication benefit us? By way of comparison, let us consider how making a commitment in human relationships brings benefits. One example is friendship. To enjoy the privilege of having a friend, you have to accept the responsibility of being a friend. That involves a commitment—you feel an obligation to care about your friend. One of the most outstanding friendships described in the Bible is that of David and Jonathan. They even made a covenant of friendship with each other. (*Read 1 Samuel 17:57; 18:1, 3.*) Although friendships with that level of commitment are rare, most friendships flourish when companions are committed, or feel some obligation, to each other.—Prov. 17:17; 18:24.

⁵ The Law that God gave to Israel describes another relationship in which people benefited by making a commitment. If a slave wanted the security of belonging permanently to a good master, he could enter a permanent and binding agreement with him. The Law states: “If the slave should insistently say, ‘I really love my master, my wife and my sons; I do not want to go out as one set free,’ then his master must bring him near to the true God and must bring him

up against the door or the doorpost; and his master must pierce his ear through with an awl, and he must be his slave to time indefinite.”—Ex. 21:5, 6.

⁶ Marriage is a relationship that requires a high level of commitment. It is a commitment, not to a contract, but to a person. Two people who merely live together without getting married can never enjoy real security; neither can their children. But partners who are committed to each other in honorable marriage have an impelling Scriptural reason for striving to resolve their difficulties with love when problems arise.—Matt. 19:5, 6; 1 Cor. 13:7, 8; Heb. 13:4.

⁷ In Bible times, people benefited from having binding contracts in business and employment. (Matt. 20:1, 2, 8) Today, the same holds true. For example, we benefit from having a binding written agreement, or written contract, before we begin a business venture or start working as an employee in a company. Hence, if commitment enhances relationships such as friendship, marriage, and employment, how much more will making an unreserved dedication benefit you in your relationship with Jehovah! Let us now consider how people in the past have benefited from being dedicated to Jehovah God and how this was far more than just a commitment.

JESUS IS HANDED OVER AND LED AWAY TO DIE

**MATTHEW 27:31, 32 MARK 15:20, 21
LUKE 23:24-31 JOHN 19:6-17**

- **PILATE TRIES TO RELEASE JESUS**
 - **JESUS IS CONDEMNED AND SENT TO DIE**
-

Despite Jesus' having been viciously abused and ridiculed, Pilate's efforts to release him do not move the chief priests and their accomplices. They want nothing to prevent having Jesus put to death. They keep shouting: "To the stake with him! To the stake with him!" Pilate responds: "Take him yourselves and execute him, for I do not find any fault in him." —John 19:6.

The Jews do not convince Pilate that Jesus is worthy of death on a political charge, but what about a religious one? They fall back on the charge of blasphemy that was raised at Jesus' trial before the Sanhedrin. "We have a law," they say, "and according to the law he ought to die, because he made

himself God's son." (John 19:7) This is a new charge for Pilate.

He goes back into his palace and tries to find a way to release this man who has borne up under severe treatment and about whom Pilate's own wife had a dream. (Matthew 27:19) What of this new charge that the Jews are making—that the prisoner is "God's son"? Pilate knows that Jesus is from Galilee. (Luke 23:5-7) Yet he asks Jesus: "Where are you from?" (John 19:9) Could Pilate be wondering whether Jesus might have lived before and, in some sense, be of divine origin?

Pilate had heard directly from Jesus that he is a king but that his Kingdom is no part of this world. Not needing to elaborate on what he earlier said, Jesus remains silent. His refusal to reply stings Pilate's pride, and he indignantly says to Jesus: "Are you refusing to speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and I have authority to execute you?"—John 19:10.

Jesus says simply: "You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been granted to you



from above. This is why the man who handed me over to you has greater sin.” (John 19:11) Jesus likely does not have in mind one specific individual. Rather, he means that Caiaphas, his accomplices, and Judas Iscariot bear a heavier responsibility than Pilate does.

Impressed by Jesus’ comportment and words, and increasingly fearful that Jesus may be of divine origin, Pilate tries again to release him. However, the Jews bring up another fear that Pilate must have. They threaten: “If you release this man, you are not a friend of Caesar. Everyone who makes himself a king speaks against Caesar.”—John 19:12.

The governor brings Jesus outside once more and, sitting on the judgment seat, tells the people: “See! Your king!” The Jews will not relent, though. “Take him away! Take him away! To the stake with him!” they shout. Pilate pleads: “Shall I execute your king?” The Jews have long chafed under Roman rule; still, the chief priests boldly assert: “We have no king but Caesar.”—John 19:14, 15.

Cowardly caving in under the Jews’ relentless demands, Pilate hands Jesus over to be executed. The

soldiers strip the scarlet-colored cloak off Jesus and put on his outer garments. As Jesus is led off, he must bear his own torture stake.

It is now well into the morning of Friday, Nisan 14. Jesus has been awake since early Thursday morning and has suffered one agonizing experience after another. As he struggles under the weight of the stake, Jesus' strength gives out. So the soldiers force a passerby, Simon from Cyrene in Africa, to carry the stake to the place of execution. Many people follow, some beating themselves in grief and bewailing what is happening.

Jesus says to the grieving women: "Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for me. Weep instead for yourselves and for your children; for look! days are coming when people will say, 'Happy are the barren women, the wombs that did not give birth and the breasts that did not nurse!' Then they will start saying to the mountains, 'Fall over us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us over!' If they do these things when the tree is moist, what will occur when it is withered?" —Luke 23:28-31.

Jesus is referring to the Jewish nation. It is like a dying tree that still has some moisture left, for Jesus is present and so are a number of Jews who believe in him. When these are taken out from the nation, only a spiritually withered national organization will remain, being like a dead tree. There will be intense weeping when the Roman armies act as God's executioners against that nation!

- ◇ The religious leaders make what charge against Jesus?
- ◇ Why does Pilate grow fearful?
- ◇ How do the chief priests get Pilate to have Jesus executed?
- ◇ What does Jesus mean by referring to the tree as “moist” and then “withered”?

15 Praise Jehovah's Firstborn!

(Hebrews 1:6)

1. Praise Jehovah's Firstborn,
God's duly appointed King.
He reigns for truth and justice;
Rich blessings his rule will bring.

With dignity and splendor
And love for God's great name,
He'll vindicate Jehovah,
His sov'reignty proclaim.

(CHORUS)

*Praise Jehovah's Firstborn!
All praise God's anointed Son.
Installed upon Mount Zion,
His Kingship has now begun!*

2. Praise Jehovah's Firstborn,
Who died so that we may live.
He humbly paid the ransom;
Our sins God can now forgive.

The bride of Christ awaits him,
Adorned for him in white.
This marriage in the heavens
Will prove God's rule is right.

(Chorus)

JULY 2020

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

LARGE PRINT EDITION



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
AUGUST 31–SEPTEMBER 27, 2020

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COVER PICTURE:

When David met Goliath’s challenge, he turned what seemed to be a disadvantage into an opportunity to see God’s power at work (See study article 29, paragraph 11)

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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.

Do Not Think More of Yourself Than Is Necessary

“I tell everyone there among you not to think more of himself than it is necessary to think, but to think so as to have a sound mind.”—ROM. 12:3.

SONG 130

Be Forgiving

PREVIEW

Today, we live in a world filled with proud, selfish people. We need to be careful that their attitude does not rub off on us. This article will consider three areas in which we should not think more of ourselves than is necessary.

WE HUMBLY submit to Jehovah’s standards, realizing that Jehovah always knows what is best for us. (Eph. 4:22-24) Humility moves us to put Jehovah’s will above our own and to consider others superior to us. As a result, we enjoy good relationships with Jehovah and fellow believers.—**Read Philippians 2:3.**

² If we are not careful, though, we could be influenced by people in Satan’s system who are proud and selfish.* Apparently, this was a danger to some in the first century C.E., for the apostle Paul wrote to the Romans: “I tell everyone there among you not to think more of himself than it is necessary to think, but to think so as to have a sound mind.” (Rom. 12:3) Paul acknowledged that we need to think something of ourselves. However, humility will help us to keep a balanced view of ourselves. This article will consider three areas in which humility will help us avoid thinking too much of ourselves.

* **EXPRESSIONS EXPLAINED:** A **proud** person tends to think too much of himself and not enough of others. Thus, a proud person is **selfish**. On the other hand, humility helps an individual to be unselfish. **Humility** is defined as freedom from pride or arrogance, being lowly in mind.

1. According to Philippians 2:3, how does our having humility promote good relationships with others?
2. What did the apostle Paul acknowledge, and what will we consider in this article?

Those areas are (1) our marriage, (2) our privileges of service, and (3) our use of social media.

SHOW HUMILITY IN YOUR MARRIAGE

³ Jehovah created marriage to be a source of happiness for a husband and wife. No one is perfect, though, so conflicts are likely to happen. In fact, Paul wrote that those who marry can expect a measure of tribulation. (1 Cor. 7:28) Some find that they are constantly fighting with their spouse, and they may conclude that they were just not meant for each other. If they have been influenced by the world, they will be quick to think that divorce is the answer. They will feel that the most important thing is to be good to themselves.

⁴ We must avoid becoming dissatisfied with our marriage. We realize that the only Scriptural grounds for divorce is sexual immorality. (Matt. 5:32) So when faced with the tribulation that Paul wrote about, we would not want to let pride cause us to begin wondering: ‘Is this marriage fulfilling my needs? Am I getting the love I deserve? Would I find greater happiness with another person?’ Notice

3. Why are conflicts likely to arise in marriage, and how do some react to those conflicts?

4. What must we avoid?

the focus on *self* in those questions. The wisdom of the world would tell you to follow your heart and do what makes *you* happy, even if that means ending your marriage. Godly wisdom says you should “look out not only for your own interests, but also for the interests of others.” (Phil. 2:4) Jehovah wants you to preserve your marriage, not to end it. (Matt. 19:6) He wants you to think of him first, not yourself.

⁵ A husband and a wife should treat each other with love and respect. (Read Ephesians 5:33.) The Bible teaches us to focus on giving rather than on receiving. (Acts 20:35) What quality will help a married couple to show love and respect? The answer is humility. Husbands and wives who are humble will seek, not their own advantage, but “that of the other person.”—1 Cor. 10:24.

⁶ Humility has helped many Christian couples find greater happiness in their marriage. For example, a husband named Steven says: “If you are a team, you will work together, especially when there are problems. Instead of thinking ‘what is best for

5. According to Ephesians 5:33, how should a husband and a wife treat each other?

6. What do you learn from the comments made by Steven and Stephanie?

me?” you will think ‘what is best for *us?*’” His wife, Stephanie, feels similarly. “Nobody wants to live with an opponent,” she says. “When a conflict arises, we identify the problem. We then pray, do research, and talk it out. We attack the problem, not each other.” Husbands and wives truly benefit when they do not think more of themselves than is necessary.

SERVE JEHOVAH WITH “ALL HUMILITY”

⁷ We view it as a privilege to serve Jehovah in any way we can. (Ps. 27:4; 84:10) If a brother is able to make himself available for a special privilege of service, that is commendable. In fact, the Bible states: “If a man is reaching out to be an overseer, he is desirous of a fine work.” (1 Tim. 3:1) However, when he receives an assignment, he should not think more of himself than is necessary. (Luke 17:7-10) His goal should be to serve others humbly. —2 Cor. 12:15.

⁸ The Bible contains warning examples of people who thought too much of themselves. *Diotrephes*

7. What attitude should a brother have when he receives a privilege of service?

8. What do we learn from the examples of Diotrephes, Uzziah, and Absalom?

immodestly sought to have “the first place” in the congregation. (3 John 9) *Uzziah* proudly tried to perform a task that Jehovah had not assigned him to do. (2 Chron. 26:16-21) *Absalom* slyly tried to win the support of the public because he wanted to be king. (2 Sam. 15:2-6) As those Bible accounts clearly show, Jehovah is not pleased with people who seek their own glory. (Prov. 25:27) In time, pride and ambition lead only to disaster. —Prov. 16:18.

⁹ In contrast with those warning examples, consider *Jesus*, “who, although he was existing in God’s

9. What example did Jesus set?



Instead of being rivals,
a humble couple will work
together as a team

(See paragraph 6)



Those who are entrusted with responsibility should be known not only for their ability but also for their humility
(See paragraph 11)

form, gave no consideration to a seizure, namely, that he should be equal to God.” (Phil. 2:6) Jesus, whose authority is second only to Jehovah’s, does not think more of himself than is necessary. He told his disciples: “The one who conducts himself as a lesser one among all of you is the one who is great.”

(Luke 9:48) What a blessing it is to serve with pioneers, ministerial servants, elders, and circuit overseers, who imitate Jesus in displaying humility! Humble servants of Jehovah contribute to the loving spirit that identifies God's organization.—John 13:35.

¹⁰ What if it seems that there are problems in the congregation and you feel that they are not being dealt with properly? Rather than complain, you can show humility by supporting those taking the lead. (Heb. 13:17) To help you do that, ask yourself: 'Are the problems that I see really so serious that they need to be corrected? Is this the right time to correct them? Is it my place to correct them? In all honesty, am I really trying to promote unity, or am I trying to promote myself?'

¹¹ Jehovah values humility more than ability and unity more than efficiency. Therefore, do your best to serve Jehovah with humility. In doing so, you will promote unity in the congregation. (Read Ephesians 4:2, 3.) Be active in the ministry. Look for ways to serve others by doing kind things for

10. What should you do if you feel that problems in the congregation are not being handled properly?

11. According to Ephesians 4:2, 3, what are the results when we serve Jehovah with humility?

them. Be hospitable to all, including those who do not have positions of responsibility. (Matt. 6:1-4; Luke 14:12-14) As you humbly work with the congregation, others will notice not only your ability but also your humility.

SHOW HUMILITY WHEN USING SOCIAL MEDIA

¹² Jehovah made us to enjoy pleasant association with friends and family members. (Ps. 133:1) Jesus had good friends. (John 15:15) The Bible describes the benefits of having true friends. (Prov. 17:17; 18:24) And it tells us that it is not good for us to isolate ourselves. (Prov. 18:1) Many feel that social media is a way to have a lot of friends and to avoid feeling isolated. However, we need to be cautious about using this method of communication.

¹³ Studies have found that people who spend a lot of time scrolling through social media postings might actually end up feeling lonely and depressed. Why? One possible reason is that people often post on social media photos that depict the highlights of their lives, showing selected images of themselves,

12. Does the Bible encourage us to have friends? Explain.

13. Why are some who use social media prone to loneliness and depression?

their friends, and the exciting places they have been. A person who views those images might conclude that, by comparison, his or her own life is ordinary—even dull. “I started feeling discontent when I saw others having all this fun on the weekends and I was at home bored,” admits a 19-year-old Christian sister.

¹⁴ Of course, social media can be used for a good purpose—for example, to keep in touch with family and friends. Have you observed, though, that some of the material that people post on social media is designed to promote the people themselves? “Look at me” seems to be the message they want to convey. Some even post rude and obscene comments on their own photos or about the photos that others post. This too is contrary to the humility and fellow feeling that Christians are encouraged to cultivate.—Read 1 Peter 3:8.

¹⁵ If you use social media, ask yourself: ‘Might the comments, photos, or videos that I post give others the impression that I am bragging? Could I make others feel jealous?’ The Bible says: “Everything in the world—the desire of the flesh and the

14. How can the Bible’s counsel at 1 Peter 3:8 help us with regard to the use of social media?

15. How can the Bible help us to avoid promoting ourselves?



If you post material online, does it give the impression that you are bragging or that you are humble?

(See paragraph 15)

desire of the eyes and the showy display of one's means of life—does not originate with the Father, but originates with the world.” (1 John 2:16) One Bible version renders the phrase “showy display of one's means of life” as “wanting to appear important.” Christians do not feel the need for promoting themselves. They follow the Bible's admonition: “Let us not become egotistical, stirring up

competition with one another, envying one another.” (Gal. 5:26) Humility will help us avoid getting caught up in the world’s spirit of self-promotion.

“THINK SO AS TO HAVE A SOUND MIND”

¹⁶ We need to cultivate humility because those who are proud do not have “a sound mind.” (Rom. 12:3) Proud people are contentious and egotistical. Their thinking and actions often cause them to hurt themselves and others. Unless they change their way of thinking, their minds will be blinded and corrupted by Satan. (2 Cor. 4:4; 11:3) A humble person, on the other hand, has a sound mind. He has a balanced and reasonable view of himself, recognizing that in many ways others are superior to him. (Phil. 2:3) And he knows that “God opposes the haughty ones, but he gives undeserved kindness to the humble ones.” (1 Pet. 5:5) Those with a sound mind do not want to have Jehovah as an opponent.

¹⁷ To remain humble, we must apply the Bible’s counsel to “strip off the old personality with its practices, and clothe [ourselves] with the new personality.” That takes hard work. We need to study

16. Why should we avoid pride?

17. What must we do to remain humble?

Jesus' example and try to imitate him as closely as possible. (Col. 3:9, 10; 1 Pet. 2:21) But it is worth the effort. As we cultivate humility, our family life will improve, we will promote unity in the congregation, and we will know how to avoid using social media in a negative way. Above all, we will have Jehovah's blessing and favor.

PICTURE DESCRIPTION Page 8: An elder who has the ability to speak at a convention and to oversee other brothers also appreciates the privilege of taking the lead in the ministry and cleaning the Kingdom Hall.

HOW CAN YOU SHOW HUMILITY . . .

- in your marriage?
- in carrying out your privileges of service?
- in your use of social media?

117 *The Quality of Goodness*

(2 Chronicles 6:41)

1. O Jehovah, God of goodness,
 You have blessed us all our days!
 You are holy, ever loyal,
 And so good in all your ways.
 You show favor, granting mercy,
 Far beyond what we deserve.
 You're so worthy of our worship,
 And it's you we gladly serve.
2. Your own goodness is reflected
 In the people whom you choose;
 And the proof is in their conduct
 And the preaching of good news.
 Your good teaching, your good shepherds,
 Bear good fruit in many lands.
 May you grant us holy spirit,
 And may goodness guide our hands.
3. May you bless our deeds of goodness
 To our brothers, great or small.
 May we show them special favor
 As we work at good t'ward all.
 In each fam'ly, congregation,
 In each town and neighborhood,
 With your blessing and your spirit,
 May we be a force for good.