

Song 51 and Prayer | Opening Comments (1 min.)

 TREASURES
FROM GOD'S WORD

“Pay Your Vows”: (10 min.)

Spiritual Gems: (10 min.)

Nu 30:10-12—How do we know that Elkanah approved of Hannah’s vow to offer Samuel to Jehovah’s service? (1Sa 1:11; *it-2* 28 ¶1)

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.) Nu 30:1-16 (5)

 APPLY YOURSELF
TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

Return Visit Video: (5 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Return Visit: God’s Purpose—Isa 55:11* (video category OUR MEETINGS AND

MINISTRY). Stop the video at each pause, and ask the audience the questions that appear in the video.

Return Visit: (3 min.) Use the sample conversation. (6)

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 LIVING
AS CHRISTIANS

Song 5

Learn Endurance From Creation: (15 min.)

Discussion. Play the video (video category THE BIBLE). Then ask the following questions for each of the plants and animals featured in the video. What does this creation teach us about endurance? How can we show similar endurance in our life as Christians?

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.)
rr chap. 8 ¶16-22

 Pay Your Vows

Israelite vows were voluntary but binding (Nu 30:2; *it-2* 1162)

Vows may include abstaining from things not prohibited (Nu 30:3, 4; *it-2* 1162)

Jehovah now deals with his worshippers individually (Nu 30:6-9; *w04* 8/1 27 ¶3)

The two most important vows a Christian can make today are the dedication vow and the marriage vow.



ASK YOURSELF, ‘Am I living up to the vows that I have made?’

51 *To God We Are Dedicated!*

(Matthew 16:24)

1. To Christ, by our God, Jehovah, we have been drawn
 To be his disciples from now on.
From Jehovah's lofty throne,
 How the light of truth has shone.
In our hearts, our faith has grown;
 Our lives we vow to disown.

(CHORUS)

*To God we are dedicated; This is our choice.
In him and in Jesus we now rejoice.*

2. In prayer we have come before Jehovah to say
 We'll serve him forever and obey.
It's a joy beyond compare,
 One that we are glad to share,
As Jehovah's name we bear,
 And Kingdom truth we declare.

(Chorus)

Numbers 30-31

30 Then Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes of Israel, saying: “This is the word that Jehovah has commanded: ² If a man makes a vow to Jehovah or swears an oath to impose on himself a vow of abstinence, he must not violate his word. He should do everything he vowed he would do.

³ “And if a woman makes a vow to Jehovah or she imposes a vow of abstinence on herself when she is young and living in the house of her father ⁴ and her father hears her vow or her abstinence vow that she has imposed on herself and her father offers no objection, all her vows will stand, and every abstinence vow that she has imposed on herself will stand. ⁵ But if her father forbids her when he hears that she has imposed vows or abstinence vows on herself, it will not stand. Jehovah will forgive her because her father forbade her.

⁶ “However, if she should marry a husband while under her vow or the rash promise that she has imposed on herself ⁷ and her husband hears of it and offers no objection on the day he hears of it, her vows or her abstinence vows that she has imposed on herself will stand. ⁸ But if her husband forbids her on the day he hears of it, he may annul the vow or the rash promise that she imposed on herself, and Jehovah will forgive her.

⁹ “But if a widow or a divorced woman makes a vow, everything that she has imposed on herself will be binding on her.

¹⁰ “However, if a woman imposed the vow or the abstinence vow on herself while in the house of her husband ¹¹ and her husband heard it and has not objected or disapproved, all her vows or any abstinence vow that she imposed on herself will stand. ¹² But if on the day he heard them her husband completely annulled whatever vows or abstinence vow she swore to, they will not stand. Her husband annulled them, and Jehovah will forgive her.

¹³ Regarding any vow or any oath involving an abstinence vow to practice self-denial, her husband should establish it or her husband should annul it. ¹⁴ But if her husband offers no objection at all from day to day, he also establishes all her vows or all her abstinence vows that are upon her. He establishes them because he did not object on the day he heard her make them. ¹⁵ But if he annuls them later, sometime after the day he heard them, he will bear the consequences of her guilt.

¹⁶ “These are the regulations that Jehovah commanded Moses relating to a husband and his wife, and relating to a father and his young daughter living in his house.”

31 Jehovah then told Moses: ² “Take vengeance for the Israelites on the Mid'i-an-ites. Afterward you will be gathered to your people.”

³ So Moses spoke to the people, saying: “Equip men from among you for battle against Mid'i-an and to execute Jehovah’s vengeance on Mid'i-an. ⁴ You should send 1,000 of each tribe of all the tribes of Israel into the army.” ⁵ So

from the thousands of Israel, 1,000 were assigned from each tribe, 12,000 equipped for battle.

⁶ Then Moses sent them out, 1,000 from each tribe to the army, along with Phin'e-has the son of El-e-a'zar the priest for the army, who had the holy utensils and the signal trumpets in his hand. ⁷ They waged war against Mid'i-an, just as Jehovah had commanded Moses, and they killed every male. ⁸ Along with the others slain, they killed the kings of Mid'i-an, namely, E'vi, Re'kem, Zur, Hur, and Re'ba, the five kings of Mid'i-an. They also killed Ba'laam the son of Be'or with the sword. ⁹ But the Israelites carried off captive the women and children of Mid'i-an. They also plundered all their domestic animals, all their livestock, and all their possessions. ¹⁰ And all their cities in which they had settled and all their encampments they burned with fire. ¹¹ And they took all the spoil and all the plunder, both humans and animals. ¹² Then they brought the captives, the plunder, and the spoil to Moses and El-e-a'zar the priest and to the assembly of the Israelites, to the camp in the desert plains of Mo'ab near the Jordan at Jer'i-cho.

¹³ Then Moses and El-e-a'zar the priest and all the chieftains of the assembly went out to meet them outside the camp. ¹⁴ But Moses grew indignant at the appointed men of the combat forces, the chiefs of the thousands and the chiefs of the hundreds who were coming in from the military expedition. ¹⁵ Moses said to them: "Have you preserved all the females alive? ¹⁶ Look! They are the ones who by Ba'laam's word induced the Israelites to commit

unfaithfulness toward Jehovah over the affair of Pe'or, so that the scourge came upon the assembly of Jehovah.

¹⁷ Now you should kill every male among the children and kill every woman who has had sexual relations with a man.

¹⁸ But you may keep alive all the young girls who have not had sexual relations with a man. ¹⁹ And you should camp outside the camp seven days. Every one of you who has killed someone and every one of you who has touched someone slain should purify himself on the third day and on the seventh day, you and your captives. ²⁰ And you should purify from sin every garment, every article of skin, everything made of goat hair, and every article of wood.”

²¹ El·e·a'zar the priest then said to the men of the army who had gone into the battle: “This is the statute of the law that Jehovah commanded Moses, ²² ‘Only the gold, the silver, the copper, the iron, the tin, and the lead, ²³ everything that can be processed with fire, you should pass through the fire, and it will be clean. However, it should also be purified by the water for cleansing. Everything that cannot be processed with fire, you should pass through the water. ²⁴ And you should wash your garments on the seventh day and be clean, and then you may come into the camp.’”

²⁵ Jehovah then said this to Moses: ²⁶ “Take an inventory of the plunder, counting the captives both of humans and animals; do this together with El·e·a'zar the priest and the heads of the paternal houses of the assembly. ²⁷ Divide what was plundered into two parts to be shared between

those in the army who took part in the battle and all the rest of the assembly. ²⁸ As a tax for Jehovah, you should take from the soldiers who went out into the battle one soul out of every 500, of the people, the herd, the donkeys, and the flock. ²⁹ You should take it from their half and give it to El-e-a'zar the priest as Jehovah's contribution. ³⁰ From the half given to the Israelites, you should take one out of 50, of the people, the herd, the donkeys, the flock, and every sort of domestic animal, and give them to the Levites, who care for the responsibilities connected with Jehovah's tabernacle."

³¹ So Moses and El-e-a'zar the priest did just as Jehovah had commanded Moses. ³² The spoils, the rest of the plunder that the people of the expedition had taken, amounted to 675,000 of the flock, ³³ 72,000 of the herd, ³⁴ and 61,000 donkeys. ³⁵ The women who had not had sexual relations with a man amounted to 32,000 women. ³⁶ The half that was the share of those who went out into the battle amounted to 337,500 of the flock. ³⁷ The tax for Jehovah from the flock amounted to 675. ³⁸ And there were 36,000 of the herd, and the tax on them for Jehovah was 72. ³⁹ And there were 30,500 donkeys, and the tax on them for Jehovah was 61. ⁴⁰ And there were 16,000 humans, and the tax on them for Jehovah was 32 persons. ⁴¹ Then Moses gave the tax as Jehovah's contribution to El-e-a'zar the priest, just as Jehovah had commanded Moses.

⁴² From the half belonging to the Israelites, which Moses had divided off from the portion that belonged to the men

who waged war, ⁴³ that half of the flock amounted to 337,500, ⁴⁴ and of the herd, 36,000, ⁴⁵ and of the donkeys, 30,500, ⁴⁶ and of the people, 16,000. ⁴⁷ Then Moses took from the half belonging to the Israelites one out of 50, of the people and of the animals, and gave them to the Levites, who cared for the responsibility of Jehovah's tabernacle, just as Jehovah had commanded Moses.

⁴⁸ Then the appointed men who were of the thousands of the army, the chiefs of the thousands and the chiefs of the hundreds, approached Moses, ⁴⁹ and they said to Moses: "Your servants have taken the count of the men of war who are under our command, and not one has been reported missing from us. ⁵⁰ So let us each present what he has found as Jehovah's offering, articles of gold, ankle chains, bracelets, signet rings, earrings, and other jewelry, in order to make atonement for ourselves before Jehovah."

⁵¹ So Moses and El-e-a'zar the priest accepted the gold from them, all the jewelry. ⁵² All the gold of the contribution that they made to Jehovah amounted to 16,750 shekels, from the chiefs of the thousands and the chiefs of the hundreds. ⁵³ The men of the army had each taken plunder for himself. ⁵⁴ Moses and El-e-a'zar the priest accepted the gold from the chiefs of the thousands and of the hundreds and brought it into the tent of meeting as a reminder for the people of Israel before Jehovah.

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Spiritual Gems: (10 min.)

Nu 30:10-12—How do we know that Elkanah approved of Hannah’s vow to offer Samuel to Jehovah’s service? (1Sa 1:11; *it-2* 28 ¶1)

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.) Nu 30:1-16 (5)

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Discussion. Play the video (video category THE BIBLE). Then ask the following questions for each of the plants and animals featured in the video. What does this creation teach us about endurance? How can we show similar endurance in our life as Christians?

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.)
rr chap. 8 ¶16-22

 Pay Your Vows

Israelite vows were voluntary but binding (Nu 30:2; *it-2* 1162)

Vows may include abstaining from things not prohibited (Nu 30:3, 4; *it-2* 1162)

Jehovah now deals with his worshippers individually (Nu 30:6-9; *w04* 8/1 27 ¶3)

The two most important vows a Christian can make today are the dedication vow and the marriage vow.



ASK YOURSELF, ‘Am I living up to the vows that I have made?’

May 10-16 / Numbers 30-31

Song 51 and Prayer

Opening Comments (1 minute)

Treasures From God's Word

"Pay Your Vows": (10 minutes)

Israelite vows were voluntary but binding

Numbers 30:2: If a man makes a vow to Jehovah or swears an oath to impose on himself a vow of abstinence, he must not violate his word. He should do everything he vowed he would do.

it-2 1162

Voluntary, but Binding When Once Made. Vows were wholly voluntary. However, once a man made a vow, fulfillment was compulsory by divine law. Thus a vow was spoken of as being 'bound upon his soul,' implying that his very life became surety for the performance of his word. (Numbers 30:2; see also Romans 1:31, 32.) Since life is at stake, it is understandable why the Scriptures urge one to use extreme

caution before making a vow, carefully considering the obligations to be assumed. The Law stated: "In case you vow a vow to Jehovah . . . God will without fail require it of you, and it would indeed become a sin on your part. But in case you omit making a vow, it will not become a sin on your part."—Deuteronomy 23:21, 22.

Vows may include abstaining from things not prohibited

Numbers 30:3, 4: "And if a woman makes a vow to Jehovah or she imposes a vow of abstinence on herself when she is young and living in the house of her father and her father hears her vow or her abstinence vow that she has imposed on herself and her father offers no objection, all her vows will stand, and every abstinence vow that she has imposed on herself will stand.

***it-2* 1162**

A solemn promise made to God to perform some act, make some offering or gift, enter some service or condition, or abstain from certain things not unlawful in themselves. A vow was a voluntary expression made of one's own free will.

Being a solemn promise, a vow carried the force of an oath or a swearing, and at times the two expressions accompany each other in the Bible. (Numbers 30:2; Matthew 5:33) "Vow" is more the declaration of intent, while "oath" denotes the appeal made to a higher authority attesting to the truthfulness or binding nature of the declaration. Oaths often accompanied attestation to a covenant.—Genesis 26:28; 31:44, 53.

Jehovah now deals with his worshippers individually

Numbers 30:6-9: "However, if she should marry a husband while under her vow or the rash promise that she has imposed on herself and her husband hears of it and offers no objection on the day he hears of it, her vows or her abstinence vows that she has imposed on herself will stand. But if her husband forbids her on the day he hears of it, he may annul the vow or the rash promise that she imposed on herself, and Jehovah will forgive her. "But if a widow or a divorced woman makes a vow, everything that she has imposed on herself will be binding on her.

w04 8/1 27 paragraph 3

Numbers 30:6-8—*Can a Christian man set aside his wife's vows?* With regard to vows, Jehovah now deals with his worshipers individually. For example, dedication to Jehovah is a personal vow. (Galatians 6:5) A husband does not have the authority to set aside or cancel such a vow. A wife, though, should avoid making a vow that conflicts with God's Word or her duties toward her husband.

The two most important vows a Christian can make today are the dedication vow and the marriage vow.

Ask yourself, 'Am I living up to the vows that I have made?'

[Image:] Collage: People making vows. 1. A young woman prays. 2. A couple exchange rings at their wedding ceremony.

Spiritual Gems

Numbers 30:10-12—How do we know that Elkanah approved of Hannah's vow to offer Samuel to Jehovah's service?

Numbers 30:10-12: "However, if a woman imposed the vow or the abstinence vow on herself while in the house of her husband and her husband heard it and has not objected or disapproved, all her vows or any abstinence vow that she imposed on herself will stand. But if on the day he heard them her husband completely annulled whatever vows or abstinence vow she swore to, they will not stand. Her husband annulled them, and Jehovah will forgive her.

1 Samuel 1:11: And she made this vow: "O Jehovah of armies, if you look upon the affliction of your servant and remember me and you do not forget your servant and give to your servant a male child, I will give him to Jehovah all the days of his life, and no razor will touch his head."

***it-2* 28 paragraph 1**

Persons could be devoted to Jehovah's exclusive service in connection with the sanctuary. It was a right that parents

could exercise. Samuel was one such person, promised to tabernacle service by a vow of his mother Hannah before his birth. This vow was approved by her husband Elkanah. As soon as Samuel was weaned, Hannah offered him at the sanctuary. Along with him, Hannah brought an animal sacrifice. (1 Samuel 1:11, 22-28; 2:11) Samson was another child specially devoted to God's service as a Nazirite.— Judges 13:2-5, 11-14; compare the father's authority over a daughter as outlined in Numbers 30:3-5, 16.

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

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Make Wise Decisions Regarding Alcoholic Beverages

All Christians need to exercise self-control regarding alcoholic beverages. (Pr 23:20, 29-35; 1Co 6:9, 10) If a Christian chooses to drink, he should do so in moderation. He must also avoid dependence on alcohol and avoid stumbling others. (1Co 10:23, 24; 1Ti 5:23) Certainly, no one, especially young ones, should be pressured to consume alcoholic beverages.



WATCH THE WHITEBOARD ANIMATION *THINK PAST THE DRINK*, AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- Why must all Christians obey laws regarding drinking alcohol?—Ro 13:1-4

- Why should we avoid letting others pressure us to drink alcohol?—Ro 6:16

- How can we avoid pitfalls related to alcoholic beverages?



SAMPLE CONVERSATIONS

Initial Call

Question: What is God's purpose for humans?

Scripture: Ge 1:28

Link: How do we know that God will accomplish his purpose for humans?

► FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:



• bhs 29 ¶1

Return Visit

Question: How do we know that God will accomplish his purpose for humans?

Scripture: Isa 55:11

Link: What will life be like when God fulfills his purpose?

► FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:



• bhs 29 ¶2



5

God's Wondrous Works

(Psalm 139)

1. O God, you know my rest and waking,
When I lie down and when I rise anew.
You search my thoughts, my inmost inclination,
The words I speak, the ways I walk,
you know them too.
You saw when I was made in secret,
My very bones not hidden from your sight.
You saw my form; its parts were down in writing.
I love the wonder of your ways
and praise your might.
Your knowledge, God, is wondrous, awe-inspiring;
Of this my soul is very well-aware.
If I should fear that darkness might enfold me,
Your spirit, God, would find me, even there.
Where could I hide from you, Jehovah,
Or be concealed, be hidden from your face?
Not in the Grave nor in the highest heaven,
Not in the dark nor in the sea;
there is no place.

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Learn Endurance From Creation

Raw Transcript

How does a camel survive in this harsh environment? Jehovah has uniquely equipped the camel for desert life. What is inside the camel's famous hump? It's mostly fat. A healthy camel's hump can weigh 36 kilograms, or 80 pounds. It can draw on this fat reserve when food is limited. When given an opportunity, a thirsty camel can drink up to 95 liters, or 25 gallons, of water in just a few minutes. Yet, their bodies lose little moisture, even in extreme heat. As a result, they can go weeks or even months without drinking water. The camel's impressive ability to absorb and conserve nourishment and water enables it to endure. High in the mountains of North America, living conditions are unfavorable for most plants. Yet, the bristlecone pine not only survives but can thrive at some 3,000 meters, or 10,000 feet, above sea level. These remarkable trees can live for thousands of years. One key to their survival lies in their roots. Shallow branching roots spread out and gather up as much water as possible. Large, strong roots firmly anchor the trees against intense winds. These remarkable trees are designed to make the most of a challenging environment. As a result, they are among the oldest living organisms on the planet. Butterflies play a vital role in

pollinating flowers. They also accomplish amazing feats of endurance. Each year in North America, as many as 300 million monarch butterflies complete a migration of some 4,000 kilometers, or 2,500 miles, from as far north as Canada to a forest in Mexico. Butterflies are also surprisingly resilient. Some butterflies have been observed feeding and flying with up to 70 percent of their wing surfaces missing. Butterflies may appear to be delicate and fragile, but these small creatures display remarkable endurance.

As its name suggests, most arctic terns breed in the earth's far northern regions, where they take advantage of the short Arctic summer to feed and raise chicks. But as winter approaches, they fly south to the Antarctic region, where they greet the arrival of summer in the Southern Hemisphere. When summer ends, they return to the Arctic, completing the longest-known annual migration of any animal. What guides the arctic tern to reach its destination? Scientists believe that the arctic terns can sense the earth's magnetic field and use it for orientation. But how they do this still remains a mystery. Jehovah has given the arctic tern an accurate means of guidance to complete its long journey.

The blacksmith lapwing, or plover, is found in Africa. It nests on the ground, often near water. Its choice of nest location can bring it in contact with much larger animals. When its nest is threatened, the lapwing sounds the alarm.

Sometimes a lapwing will attempt to draw an intruder away from its nest. At other times, the bird will courageously stand its ground, spreading its wings and crying harshly. Lapwings have been known to attack humans and square off against elephants and buffalo, at times giving the larger animal a sharp strike with its beak. Jehovah gave the lapwing the instinctive courage to protect its young, enabling it to survive. Very little rain falls in the arid wilderness of Sinai. One of the few types of trees to grow here is the acacia. The wood of the acacia tree is dense, hard, and resistant to insects. Some types of acacia trees are protected by thick bark and long, sharp thorns. Acacia trees often grow closely together. The branches of some acacias interlock together, forming dense canopies. Other acacias grow in tangled thickets. These natural defenses help the acacia tree to endure.

video source: https://www.jw.org/en/library/videos/#en/mediaitems/VODBibleCreation/pub-jwbcov_201705_9_VIDEO

the earth—but only for a limited period of time. The Gentile Times, or “the appointed times of the nations,” ended in 1914 when Jehovah conferred kingship on Jesus Christ. (Luke 21:24) As a descendant of King David, Jesus indeed had “the legal right” to the Messianic Kingdom.*^[2] (Gen. 49:10) Hence, in Jesus, Jehovah fulfilled his solemn promise to give David a permanent heir to an everlasting Kingdom.—Luke 1:32, 33.

¹⁵ *What we can learn from the prophecy.* We can have the utmost confidence in the King, Jesus Christ. Why? Because unlike worldly rulers who may be elected by humans or may usurp ruling authority, Jesus was chosen by Jehovah and “given . . . a kingdom” to which he has the legal right. (Dan. 7:13, 14) Surely the King whom Jehovah himself has appointed deserves our confidence!

“My Servant David” Will “Become Their Shepherd”

¹⁶ Jehovah, the Supreme Shepherd, deeply cares

*^[2] Jesus’ line of descent from David is well-documented in the inspired Gospels.—Matt. 1:1-16; Luke 3:23-31.

15. Why can we have the utmost confidence in the King, Jesus Christ?

16. How does Jehovah feel about his sheep, and how were “the shepherds of Israel” in Ezekiel’s day treating the flock?

about the welfare of his sheep—his earthly worshippers. (Ps. 100:3) When he entrusts the care of his sheep to human undershepherds—those in positions of authority—he closely watches how they treat his sheep. Imagine, then, how Jehovah must have felt about “the shepherds of Israel” in Ezekiel’s day. Those leaders shamelessly ruled “with harshness and tyranny.” As a result, the flock suffered, with many abandoning pure worship.—Ezek. 34:1-6.

¹⁷ What would Jehovah do? “I will demand an accounting,” he said to the harsh rulers of Israel. He further promised: “I will rescue my sheep.” (Ezek. 34:10) Jehovah always proves true to his word. (Josh. 21:45) In 607 B.C.E., he rescued his sheep by using the invading Babylonians to strip those selfish shepherds of rulership. Seventy years later, he rescued his sheep-like worshippers from Babylon and brought them back to their homeland so that they could restore true worship there. But Jehovah’s sheep remained vulnerable, for they would continue under the domination of worldly powers. “The appointed times of

17. How did Jehovah rescue his sheep?

the nations” would run for many more centuries.
—Luke 21:24.

¹⁸ Back in 606 B.C.E., about a year after Jerusalem’s destruction and decades before the Israelites were delivered from Babylonian exile, Jehovah inspired Ezekiel to relate a prophecy that reflects how deeply the Supreme Shepherd cares about the eternal welfare of his sheep. The prophecy describes *how the Messianic Ruler will shepherd Jehovah’s sheep*.

¹⁹ *What the prophecy says. (Read Ezekiel 34:22-24.)* God “will raise up one shepherd,” whom he calls “my servant David.” The words “one shepherd” along with the singular use of “servant” imply that the Ruler would not revive a dynasty of kings in David’s line but would be the one *permanent* heir of David. The Shepherd-Ruler will feed God’s sheep and become “a chieftain among them.” Jehovah will “make a covenant of peace” with his sheep. “Blessings will pour down [on them] like the rains,” and they will experience a delightful condition of security, refreshing prosperity, and fruitfulness. Why, peace will prevail

18, 19. What prophecy did Ezekiel relate in 606 B.C.E.?

not only among humans but also between humans and animals!—Ezek. 34:25-28.

²⁰ *How the prophecy is fulfilled.* By calling this Ruler “my servant David,” God pointed prophetically to Jesus, the descendant of David who has the legal right to rule. (Ps. 89:35, 36) When on earth, Jesus proved to be “the fine shepherd,” giving his life “in behalf of the sheep.” (John 10:14, 15) But now he is a heavenly Shepherd. (Heb. 13:20) In 1914, God installed Jesus as King and entrusted him with the responsibility to shepherd and feed God’s sheep on earth. Shortly afterward, in 1919, the newly enthroned King appointed “the faithful and discreet slave” to feed the “domestics”—God’s loyal worshippers who have the heavenly or the earthly hope. (Matt. 24:45-47) Under Christ’s direction, the faithful slave has kept God’s sheep well-fed with spiritual food. This food has helped them to promote peace and security in the spiritual paradise that is now taking shape.

²¹ What do Ezekiel’s words about “a covenant of peace” and rains of blessings mean for the future? In 20, 21. (a) How is the prophecy about “my servant David” fulfilled? (b) What do Ezekiel’s words about “a covenant of peace” mean for the future?

the coming new world, Jehovah's pure worshippers on earth will experience to the full the blessings of the "covenant of peace." In a literal, global paradise, faithful humans will never again be threatened by war, crime, famine, sickness, or wild animals. (Isa. 11: 6-9; 35:5, 6; 65:21-23) Are you not thrilled at the prospect of everlasting life on a paradise earth where God's sheep will "dwell in security, with no one to make them afraid"?—Ezek. 34:28.

²² *What we can learn from the prophecy.* Like his Father, Jesus deeply cares about the welfare of the sheep. The Shepherd-King sees to it that his Father's sheep are well-fed spiritually and that they enjoy peace and security in the spiritual paradise. How reassuring it is to be under the care of such a Ruler! Those serving as undershepherds need to reflect Jesus' concern for the sheep. Elders are to shepherd the flock "willingly" and "eagerly" and to be examples that the sheep can imitate. (1 Pet. 5:2, 3) Never would an elder want to mistreat one of Jehovah's sheep! Remember Jehovah's words to the harsh shepherds of

22. How does Jesus feel about the sheep, and how can those serving as undershepherds reflect his concern?

Israel in Ezekiel’s day: “I will demand an accounting.” (Ezek. 34:10) The Supreme Shepherd keeps a close eye on how his sheep are treated—and so does his Son.

“David My Servant Will Be Their Chieftain Forever”

²³ Jehovah wants his worshippers to serve together in unity. In a prophecy about restoration, God promised that he would gather his people—representatives of both the two-tribe kingdom of Judah and the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel—and reunite them as “one nation,” as if causing two “sticks” to “become one” in his hand. (Ezek. 37:15-23) In a fulfillment of the prophecy, God restored a united nation of Israel to the Promised Land in 537 B.C.E.*^[3] But that unity was only a token of a far grander and more lasting unity to come. After promising to unify Israel, Jehovah gave Ezekiel a prophecy about how *the future Ruler would bring true worshippers together earth wide in a bond of unity that would last forever.*

*[3] Ezekiel’s prophecy about two sticks and how it was fulfilled will be discussed in Chapter 12 of this publication.

23. What promise did Jehovah make regarding unifying the nation of Israel, and how did he fulfill it?

4 “Jehovah Is My Shepherd”

(Psalm 23)

1. Jehovah God is my Shepherd;
I'll follow where he will lead.
He knows my hopes and my heart's desire;
He knows what I truly need.
To watered pastures he leads me,
To places secure and blessed.
And he guides me always with loyal love
To where I find peace and rest.
He guides me always with loyal love
To where I find peace and rest.
2. Refreshing are all your pathways,
The ways of your righteousness.
For your name's sake never let me stray
From walking in faithfulness.
In valleys deep in the shadows,
Assured by your staff and rod,
I will fear no danger of lasting harm,
For you are my Friend and God.
I fear no danger of lasting harm,
For you are my Friend and God.
3. Jehovah, you are my Shepherd;
I follow where you will lead.
You strengthen me, and you give me rest;
You give all I truly need.
As you most surely are living,
So sure is my hope in you.
May your loyal love and your care for me
Pursue me my whole life through.
Your loyal love and your care for me
Pursue me my whole life through.

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LARGE PRINT EDITION



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COVER PICTURE:

David was responsible and reliable when caring for his father's flock, even protecting the sheep from an attacking bear (See study article 9, paragraph 4)

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Welcome One Another

(Romans 15:7)

1. Welcome to all who gather here this day
To hear God's Word and to learn his way.
Life-giving truth he offers to us all;
With thankfulness of heart, we respond to his call.
2. Thanks to our God for brothers such as these,
Who welcome us and who seek to please.
May we keep holding men of that sort dear,
And now we welcome others who meet with us here.
3. God's invitation reaches all mankind,
That all sincere ones the truth may find.
God by his Son has drawn us to His side.
So welcome one another with hearts opened wide.

As a Congregation, Help Bible Students to Progress to Baptism

“Each respective member . . . contributes to the growth of the body.”—EPH. 4:16.

SONG 85

Welcome One Another

PREVIEW

Not all of us presently have the privilege of conducting a Bible study. However, all of us can help someone to progress to baptism. In this article, we will see how each of us can help a student to reach that goal.

“I LOVED what I was learning in my Bible study,” says Amy, who lives in Fiji. “I knew that it was the truth. But it was not until I began associating with the brothers and sisters that I made needed changes and progressed to baptism.” Amy’s experience highlights this important truth: A Bible student is more likely to make steady progress toward baptism when he receives help from others in the congregation.

² Each publisher can contribute to the increase of the congregation. (Eph. 4:16) A pioneer named Leilani, who lives in Vanuatu, notes: “It has been said that it takes a village to raise a child. I think the same is true about making disciples; it usually takes a congregation to bring someone into the truth.” Family members, friends, and teachers all play a role in helping a child to progress to maturity. They do this by encouraging the child and teaching him important lessons. Similarly, publishers can advise, encourage, and set a good example for Bible students, helping them to progress to baptism.—Prov. 15:22.

³ Why should the publisher who conducts the Bible study welcome the help that other publishers can give the student? Note what Ana, a special pioneer in

1-2. Who can help a Bible student to progress to baptism?

3. What do you learn from the comments made by Ana, Dorin, and Leilani?

Moldova, says, “It is very difficult for one person to fill all the needs that a Bible student has when he starts to progress.” Dorin, a special pioneer serving in that same country, observes, “Often, other publishers say something that touches the student’s heart, something that I would never have thought of.” Leilani mentions another reason, “The love and warmth shown to the student can help him to identify Jehovah’s people.”—John 13:35.

⁴ However, you may wonder, ‘How can I personally help a Bible student to progress when I am not the one who conducts the study?’ Let us consider what we can do when we are invited to sit in on a Bible study and what we can do when the Bible student begins to attend meetings. We will also see how elders can help Bible students to progress to baptism.

WHEN YOU SIT IN ON A BIBLE STUDY

⁵ At a Bible study, the teacher is primarily responsible for helping the student to understand God’s Word. If the teacher invites you to accompany him, you should view yourself as his partner. Your role is to support him. (Eccl. 4:9, 10) What, specifically, can

4. What will we discuss in this article?

5. What role do you play when you are invited to sit in on a Bible study?

you do to help make the Bible study session productive?

⁶ *Prepare for the Bible study.* First, ask the teacher to tell you a little about the student. (Read Proverbs 20:18.) You could ask: “What is the Bible student’s background? What topic will you be studying with him? What is your objective for this session? Is there anything that I should or should not do or say while at the study? What might encourage the student to progress?” Obviously, the teacher would not share any confidential information, but what he does share can be helpful. A missionary named Joy has this type of discussion with those who accompany her on a Bible study. She acknowledges: “This discussion helps my companion to be interested in the student and to know how to contribute to the study.”

⁷ If you are invited to sit in on a study, it would be good if you could prepare the material that will be discussed. (Ezra 7:10) Dorin, the brother quoted earlier, says: “I appreciate it when my companion prepares for the study. Then he can participate in a meaningful way.” Additionally, the student will likely notice that both of you are well-prepared, and this

6. When you are going to sit in on a Bible study, how can you apply the principle found at Proverbs 20:18?

7. Why do you as a companion need to prepare for the study?



When you are going to sit in on a Bible study, prepare the material that will be considered
(See paragraphs 5-7)

will set a good example for him. Even if you are not able to prepare the material thoroughly, at least take some time to get the key points of the lesson in mind.

⁸ Prayer is an important part of a Bible study session, so think in advance about what to say if you are asked to offer a prayer. Then your prayer will likely be more meaningful. (Ps. 141:2) Hanae, who lives in Japan, still remembers the prayers offered by a sister who accompanied her Bible teacher. She says: “I felt her strong friendship with Jehovah, and I wanted to be like her. I also felt loved when she included my name in her prayers.”

8. How could you make sure that your prayer at a Bible study is meaningful?

⁹ ***Support the teacher during the study.*** “A helpful companion follows along in the study,” says Omamuyovbi, a special pioneer in Nigeria. “The companion contributes meaningfully but does not talk too much, realizing that the teacher takes the lead.” How can you know when and how to contribute to the study? (Prov. 25:11) Listen attentively while the teacher and the student are talking. (Read James 1:19.) Only then will you be ready to assist if fitting. Of course, you must use good judgment. For instance, you would not want to talk too much, interrupt the teacher’s line of reasoning, or introduce a different topic. But with a brief comment, illustration, or question, you could help clarify the point being taught. At times, you may feel that you cannot add much to the study. But if you commend the student and show personal interest in him, you will do much to help him to progress.

¹⁰ ***Share your experience.*** If it is appropriate, you could briefly tell the student how you learned the truth, how you overcame a challenge, or how you have seen Jehovah’s helping hand in your life. (Ps. 78:4, 7) Your experience could be just what the stu-

9. According to James 1:19, what can you do to be a helpful companion at a Bible study?

10. How might your experience help a Bible student?

dent needs to hear. It may strengthen his faith or encourage him to continue progressing to baptism. And it might show him how to overcome a trial that he is facing. (1 Pet. 5:9) Gabriel, who lives in Brazil and now serves as a pioneer, remembers how he benefited when he was studying the Bible. He recalls: “When I heard the brothers’ experiences, I learned that Jehovah sees the challenges we face. And if they could overcome them, I could too.”

WHEN THE BIBLE STUDENT ATTENDS MEETINGS

¹¹ For a Bible student to progress to baptism, he must regularly attend congregation meetings and benefit from them. (Heb. 10:24, 25) Likely, the teacher will invite him to his first meeting. When he attends, all of us can encourage him to keep on coming to the Kingdom Hall. How, specifically, can we do that?

¹² *Warmly welcome the student.* (Rom. 15:7) If the student is made to feel welcome at the meetings, he will likely be more inclined to continue coming to the Kingdom Hall. Without overwhelming him, greet the student warmly, and introduce him to others. Do

11-12. Why should we warmly welcome a Bible student who attends meetings?



not assume that he is being cared for; the teacher may be delayed or have responsibilities to handle. Pay close attention to what the student says, and show a personal interest in him. What effect could your warm welcome have? Note the experience of Dmitrii, who was baptized just a few years ago and now serves as a ministerial servant. Recalling his first meeting, he says: “A brother saw me waiting nervously outside the Kingdom Hall and kindly accompanied me inside. Many came up to greet me. I was really surprised. I liked it so much that I wished we had a meeting every day of the week. I felt something I had not experienced anywhere else.”

¹³ *Set a good example.* Your conduct can help to convince the Bible student that he has found the truth. (Matt. 5:16) Vitalii, who now serves as a pioneer in Moldova, says: “I learned how others in the congre-

13. What effect can your conduct have on a Bible student?



All of us can encourage the student to continue attending meetings (See paragraph 11)

gation lived, thought, and behaved. This convinced me that Jehovah’s Witnesses truly walk with God.”

¹⁴ To qualify for baptism, the student needs to apply what he is learning. This is not always easy. But when the student observes how you benefit from applying Bible principles, he may well be motivated to imitate you. (1 Cor. 11:1) Consider the experience of Hanae, mentioned earlier. She comments: “The brothers and sisters were living examples of what I was learning. I saw how I could be encouraging and forgiving and how I could show love. They always spoke favorably about others. I wanted to imitate them.”

¹⁵ *Make friends with the student.* As the student continues attending meetings, keep showing

14. How might your example help someone to keep progressing?

15. How does Proverbs 27:17 help us to see why we should make friends with a Bible student as he continues attending meetings?

personal interest in him. (Phil. 2:4) Why not talk with him? Without being too personal, you could commend him for any positive changes he has made and ask him about his Bible study, his family, and his work. These conversations might draw you closer together. When you befriend the student, you help him to progress to baptism. (Read Proverbs 27:17.) Hanae now serves as a regular pioneer. Recalling when she first started to attend meetings, she says: “As I made friends in the congregation, I began looking forward to the meetings, and I attended even when I felt tired. I enjoyed the company of my new friends, and this helped me to end my friendships with those who did not share my beliefs. I wanted to get closer to Jehovah and to the brothers and sisters. Hence, I decided to get baptized.”

¹⁶ As the student continues to progress and make changes, help him to feel that he *belongs* in the congregation. You can do this by being hospitable. (Heb. 13:2) Looking back on his days as a Bible student, Denis, who serves in Moldova, remembers: “Several times, my wife and I were invited to socialize with the brothers. We heard how they had seen Jehovah help them. That encouraged us. These occasions

16. What else can you do to help a Bible student to feel at home in the congregation?

helped to convince us that we wanted to serve Jehovah and that a wonderful life awaited us.” Once the Bible student qualifies as a publisher, you can also invite him to accompany you in the ministry. Diego, a publisher from Brazil, says: “Many brothers invited me to go out in the ministry. This was the best way to get to know them well. As I did, I learned a lot, and I felt closer to Jehovah and Jesus.”

HOW CAN ELDERS HELP?

¹⁷ *Make time for Bible students.* Elders, your loving interest can help students to progress to baptism. Could you regularly talk to Bible students at the meetings? They will sense your interest if you remember their name, especially when they start commenting. Could you rearrange your schedule every so often to accompany a publisher when he studies the Bible with someone? You may have a bigger impact on the student than you can imagine. A pioneer named Jackie, who lives in Nigeria, relates: “Many students are shocked to learn that the brother who accompanied me to their study is an elder. One Bible student said: ‘My pastor would never do that. He visits only the rich and only if they pay him!’” That student now attends meetings.

17. How can elders help Bible students?



Elders, your warm interest can help students to progress
(See paragraph 17)

18 *Train and encourage Bible teachers.* Elders, you have the weighty responsibility of helping publishers to be effective in their ministry, including their Bible study work. (Read Acts 20:28.) If someone is shy about conducting a Bible study in your presence, offer to conduct the study. Jackie, quoted earlier, relates: “Elders regularly inquire about my Bible students. When I face challenges in conducting a Bible study, they offer helpful advice.” Elders can do a great deal to encourage and to motivate the teachers to persevere. (1 Thess. 5:11) Jackie adds: “I like it when elders encourage me and tell me that they appreciate my hard work. Such words refresh me like a glass of cold water on a hot day. Their commendation

18. How can elders fulfill the responsibility entrusted to them as recorded at Acts 20:28?

boosts my confidence and increases the joy I get from the Bible study work.”—Prov. 25:25.

¹⁹ Even if we do not presently conduct a Bible study, we can still help someone to grow spiritually. Without taking over, we can with our well-prepared comments support the teacher during a study session. We can befriend the students when they come to the Kingdom Hall, and we can serve as good examples for them. And elders can encourage the students by making time for them and the teachers by training and commending them. Really, what greater joy could we have than knowing that we played even a small part in helping someone come to love and serve our Father, Jehovah?

19. What joy can all of us have?

HOW CAN YOU HELP BIBLE STUDENTS TO PROGRESS TO BAPTISM . . .

- when you are invited to sit in on a Bible study?
- when they begin attending meetings?
- if you serve as an elder?

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)