

Monday, July 26

Comfort others in any sort of trial with the comfort that we receive from God.—2 Corinthians 1:4.

We do not have to look far to find brothers and sisters who need comfort. We need, though, to take the initiative to act despite our fears. For instance, we may fear not knowing what to say or what to do for someone who is in a distressing situation. Yet we can be effective comforters if we show that we care. As we get closer to the end of this system of things, world conditions will deteriorate and life will become more challenging. (2 Timothy 3:13) And the problems that we bring on ourselves because of inherited sin and imperfection mean that we will continue to need comfort. The apostle Paul was able to endure faithfully to the end of his life, thanks, in part, to the comfort he received from fellow Christians. By following their example, we too can help our brothers and sisters to remain firm in the faith.—1

Thessalonians 3:2, 3. w20.01 12-13 paragraphs 17-19

Tuesday, July 27

*You put to the test those who say they are apostles.—
Revelation 2:2.*

Anointed ones do not expect others to treat them in a special way. (Philippians 2:2, 3) They know that when Jehovah anointed them, he did not let everyone else know about it. So an anointed person is not surprised if some do not believe right away that he has been anointed. He realizes that the Bible tells us not to be quick to believe someone who says that God has given him a special responsibility. Not wanting to draw attention to himself, an anointed Christian would not tell those whom he meets for the first time that he is anointed. And he would certainly not boast about it. (1 Corinthians 4:7, 8) Anointed Christians do not search out other anointed ones, hoping to discuss their anointing with them or to form private groups for Bible study. (Galatians 1:15-17) The congregation would not be united if anointed ones did so. They would be working against the holy spirit, which helps God's people to have peace and unity.—Romans 16:17, 18. w20.01 28 paragraphs 6-7

Wednesday, July 28

As these things start to occur, stand up straight and lift up your heads, because your deliverance is getting near.—Luke 21:28.

At some point, the people whose religions were destroyed may resent the fact that Jehovah's Witnesses keep practicing their religion. We can only imagine the uproar that this might create, including on social media. The nations and their ruler, Satan, will hate us for having the only surviving religion. They will not have attained their goal to eliminate all religion from the face of the earth. So we will become the center of their attention. At this point, the nations will take on the role of Gog of Magog. They will band together to make a vicious, all-out attack on Jehovah's people. (Ezekiel 38:2, 14-16) It can be somewhat unsettling to think about those possibilities when we cannot be certain of the exact details. However, one thing is sure: We do not need to fear the great tribulation. Jehovah will give us lifesaving instructions.—Psalm 34:19. *w19.10* 16-17 paragraphs 10-11

Thursday, July 29

How many things you have done, O Jehovah my God, your wonderful works and your thoughts toward us.—Psalm 40:5.

We do more than feel appreciative; we express our appreciation to Jehovah by our words and actions. This makes us stand out as different from many today. We live in a world where people do not appreciate all that God does for them. In fact, one indication that we are living in “the last days” is that people are unthankful. (2 Timothy 3:1, 2) May we never adopt that attitude! Jehovah wants all his children to get along well with one another. In fact, the love we have for one another identifies us as being true Christians. (John 13:35) We agree with the psalmist who wrote: “How good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!” (Psalm 133:1) When we love our brothers and sisters, we prove to Jehovah that we love him. (1 John 4:20) How pleasant it is to be part of a family of brothers and sisters who are “kind to one another, tenderly compassionate”—Ephesians 4:32. w20.02 9 paragraphs 6-7

Friday, July 30

Jehovah turned his attention to Hannah.—1 Samuel 2:21.

The cause of Hannah's anxiety did not go away immediately. She still had to live in the same household as Peninnah did. And the Bible does not indicate that Peninnah's attitude changed. So Hannah likely had to continue enduring her rival's stabbing words. But Hannah was able to regain and maintain her inner peace. After leaving the matter in Jehovah's hands, Hannah was no longer overwhelmed by worry. She allowed Jehovah to comfort and soothe her. Sometime later, Hannah was even blessed with children of her own! (1 Samuel 1:2, 6, 7, 17-20) We can regain our peace even if the cause of our anxiety remains. Even though we pray intensely and attend meetings regularly, some problems may persist. But from Hannah's example, we learn that nothing can stop Jehovah from soothing our troubled heart. Jehovah will never forget us, and sooner or later he will reward our faithfulness.—Hebrews 11:6. w20.02 22 paragraphs 9-10

Saturday, July 31

*Share with a wise person, and he will become wiser.—
Proverbs 9:9.*

Elders do not hold back from sharing Bible principles that can help others to act wisely. Why is it so important that they speak up when necessary? Consider the case of Eli: High Priest Eli had two sons for whom he had deep affection. Those sons, however, had no respect for Jehovah. They held important positions as priests serving at the tabernacle. But they abused their authority, showed gross disrespect for the offerings given to Jehovah, and brazenly committed sexual immorality. (1 Samuel 2:12-17, 22) According to the Mosaic Law, Eli's sons deserved to die, but permissive Eli merely reproved them mildly and allowed them to continue serving at the tabernacle. (Deuteronomy 21:18-21) How did Jehovah view the way that Eli handled matters? He said to Eli: "Why do you keep honoring your sons more than me?" Jehovah then determined to put those two wicked men to death.—1 Samuel 2:29, 34. w20.03 19 paragraphs 4-5

Sunday, August 1

The One who sent me is with me; he did not abandon me.—John 8:29.

Even while being persecuted, Jesus had inner peace because he knew that he was making his Father happy. He remained obedient when it was difficult for him to do so. He loved his Father and built his whole life around serving Jehovah. Before he came to earth, he was God's "master worker." (Proverbs 8:30) And while on earth, he zealously taught others about his Father. (Matthew 6:9; John 5:17) That work brought Jesus great joy. (John 4:34-36) We can imitate Jesus by obeying Jehovah and "always having plenty to do in the work of the Lord." (1 Corinthians 15:58) When we are "intensely occupied" in the preaching work, we are better able to put our troubles into perspective. (Acts 18:5) For example, those we meet in our ministry often face worse problems than we do. Yet, when they learn to love Jehovah and apply his counsel, their lives improve and they become happier. Each time we see that happen, we feel more confident that Jehovah will care for us. *w19.04* 10-11 paragraphs 8-9

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

 TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

“Human Life Is Precious to Jehovah”: (10 min.)

Spiritual Gems: (10 min.)

De 21:19—Why was the local court situated at the gate of a city? (*it-1* 518 ¶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.) De 19:1-14 (10)

 APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

Initial Call: (3 min.) Begin with the sample conversation. Overcome a common objection. (12)

Return Visit: (4 min.) Begin with the sample conversation. Introduce (but do not play) the video *Why Study the Bible?* (6)

Bible Study: (5 min.) *bhs* 138 ¶8 (13)

 LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

Song 37

“Walk on Your Way in Safety”: (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video (video category THE BIBLE). Then ask the following questions: Why should we act safely? What specific things can we do to be safety conscious?

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.) *rr* chap. 11 ¶9-17

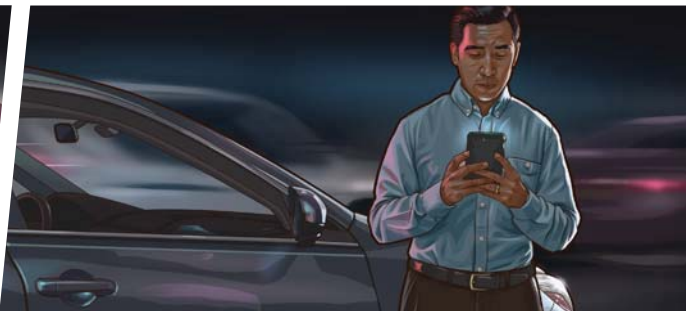
 Human Life Is Precious to Jehovah

Cities of refuge were easy to access (De 19:2, 3; *w17.11* 14 ¶4)

Cities of refuge helped to protect the Israelites from bloodguilt (De 19:10; *w17.11* 15 ¶9)

Hating our brother can lead to bloodguilt (De 19:11-13; *it-1* 344)

ASK YOURSELF, ‘What are some ways to demonstrate that I have Jehovah’s viewpoint of life?’



Concluding Comments (3 min.) | Song 108 and Prayer

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.*

DEUTERONOMY 19-21

19 “When Jehovah your God destroys the nations whose land Jehovah your God is giving you and you have dispossessed them and have settled in their cities and their houses, ² you should set apart three cities in the midst of your land that Jehovah your God is giving you to possess. ³ You should divide the territory of the land that Jehovah your God has given you to possess into three parts, and prepare the roads so that any manslayer can flee to one of those cities.

⁴ “Now this is what should take place regarding the manslayer who may flee there in order to live: When he strikes his fellow man unintentionally and he did not previously hate him; ⁵ as when he goes with his fellow man into the forest to gather wood and he raises his hand to cut the tree with the ax, but the axhead flies off the handle and hits his fellow man and he dies, the manslayer should flee to one of these cities to live. ⁶ Otherwise, in the heat of anger, the avenger of blood may chase after the manslayer, overtake him, and kill him, because the distance to the city was too far. However, he did not deserve to die, since he did not previously hate his fellow man. ⁷ That is why I am commanding you: ‘Set three cities apart.’

⁸ “If Jehovah your God enlarges your territory as he swore to your forefathers and he has given you all the land that he promised to give to your forefathers ⁹ —provided you faithfully observe all this commandment that I am giving you

today, to love Jehovah your God and always to walk in his ways—then you are to add three other cities to these three. ¹⁰ In this way no innocent blood will be spilled in your land that Jehovah your God is giving you as an inheritance, and no bloodguilt will come upon you.

¹¹ “But if a man hated his fellow man and he was waiting to attack him and he fatally wounded him and he died, and the man has fled to one of these cities, ¹² the elders of his city should then summon him from there and deliver him into the hand of the avenger of blood, and he must die. ¹³ You should not feel sorry for him, and you must remove the guilt of innocent blood out of Israel, so that it may go well for you.

¹⁴ “When you receive your inheritance in the land that Jehovah your God is giving you to possess, you must not move your neighbor’s boundary marker from the place where the ancestors set the boundaries.

¹⁵ “No single witness may convict another for any error or any sin that he may commit. On the testimony of two witnesses or on the testimony of three witnesses the matter should be established. ¹⁶ If a malicious witness testifies against a man and charges him with some transgression, ¹⁷ the two men who have the dispute will stand before Jehovah, before the priests and the judges who will be serving in those days. ¹⁸ The judges will thoroughly investigate, and if the man who testified is a false witness and has brought a false charge against his brother, ¹⁹ you should do to him just as he had schemed to do to his

brother, and you must remove what is bad from your midst.
²⁰ Those who remain will hear and be afraid, and they will never again do anything bad like this among you. ²¹ You should not feel sorry: Life will be for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

20 “If you go to war against your enemies and you see their horses and chariots and troops that outnumber yours, do not be afraid of them, for Jehovah your God who brought you up out of the land of Egypt is with you. ² When you are about to go into battle, the priest should approach and address the people. ³ He should tell them, ‘Hear, O Israel, you are about to do battle with your enemies. Do not be fainthearted. Do not be afraid or be terrified or tremble because of them, ⁴ for Jehovah your God is marching with you to fight for you against your enemies and to save you.’

⁵ “The officers too should tell the people, ‘Who has built a new house and has not inaugurated it? Let him return to his house. Otherwise, he may die in the battle and another man will inaugurate it. ⁶ And who has planted a vineyard and not begun to use it? Let him go and return to his house. Otherwise, he may die in the battle and another man will begin to use it. ⁷ And who has become engaged to a woman and has not married her? Let him go and return to his house. Otherwise, he might die in the battle and another man will marry her.’ ⁸ The officers should also ask the people, ‘Who is fearful and fainthearted? He should return to his house, so that he may not cause his brothers to lose heart as he has.’

⁹ When the officers have finished speaking to the people, they should appoint chiefs of the armies to lead the people.

¹⁰ “If you approach a city to fight against it, you should also announce to it terms of peace. ¹¹ If it gives a peaceful answer to you and opens up to you, all the people found there will become yours for forced labor, and they will serve you. ¹² But if it refuses to make peace with you and instead goes to war with you, you should besiege it, ¹³ and Jehovah your God will certainly give it into your hand, and you must strike down every male in it with the sword. ¹⁴ However, the women, the children, the livestock, and everything that is in the city, all its spoil, you may plunder for yourself, and you will eat the spoil of your enemies, which Jehovah your God has given to you.

¹⁵ “That is what you will do to all the cities very far away from you that are not of the cities of these nearby nations. ¹⁶ But in the cities of these peoples, which Jehovah your God is giving you as an inheritance, you must not allow any breathing thing to live. ¹⁷ Instead, you should devote them completely to destruction, the Hit'tites, the Am'or-ites, the Ca'naan-ites, the Per'iz-zites, the Hi'vites, and the Jeb'u-sites, just as Jehovah your God has commanded you; ¹⁸ so that they may not teach you to follow all their detestable practices that they have done for their gods, causing you to sin against Jehovah your God.

¹⁹ “If you lay siege to a city and capture it after fighting against it for many days, you should not destroy its trees by

wielding an ax against them. You may eat from them, but you should not cut them down. For should you besiege a tree of the field as you would a man? ²⁰ You may destroy only a tree that you know is not used for food. You may cut it down and build siegeworks against the city that is making war against you, until it falls.

21 “If someone is found slain in a field of the land that Jehovah your God is giving you to possess and it is not known who killed him, ² your elders and judges should go out and measure the distance from the dead body to the cities that surround it. ³ Then the elders of the city nearest to the body should take from the herd a young cow that has never been put to work, that has never pulled in a yoke, ⁴ and the elders of that city should lead the young cow down to a valley running with water where no tilling or sowing of seed has been done, and they should break the neck of the young cow there in the valley.

⁵ “And the priests, the Levites, will approach because Jehovah your God has chosen them to minister to him, to pronounce blessings in the name of Jehovah. They will declare how every dispute involving violence should be resolved. ⁶ Then all the elders of the city who are nearest to the dead body should wash their hands over the young cow whose neck was broken in the valley, ⁷ and they should declare, ‘Our hands did not shed this blood, nor did our eyes see it shed. ⁸ Do not hold this against your people Israel, whom you redeemed, O Jehovah, and do not let guilt for

innocent blood remain among your people Israel.’ Then the bloodguilt will not be held against them. ⁹ In this way you will remove the guilt of innocent blood from your midst by doing what is right in Jehovah’s eyes.

¹⁰ “If you go to war against your enemies and Jehovah your God defeats them for you and you take them captive, ¹¹ and you see among the captives a beautiful woman and you are attracted to her and you want to take her as your wife, ¹² you may bring her into your house. She should then shave her head, attend to her nails, ¹³ and remove the clothing of her captivity, and dwell in your house. She will weep for her father and her mother a whole month, and afterward you may have relations with her; you will become her husband and she will become your wife. ¹⁴ But if you are not pleased with her, you should then let her go wherever she wishes. But you may not sell her for money or treat her harshly, since you have humiliated her.

¹⁵ “If a man has two wives and he loves one more than the other and both have borne sons to him and the firstborn son belongs to the unloved one, ¹⁶ on the day that he gives his inheritance to his sons, he will not be allowed to treat the son of the loved one as his firstborn at the expense of the son of the unloved one, the firstborn. ¹⁷ He should recognize as the firstborn the unloved one’s son by giving him the double portion of everything he has, for that one is the beginning of his procreative power. The right of the firstborn’s position belongs to him.

¹⁸ “If a man has a son who is stubborn and rebellious and he does not obey his father or his mother, and they have tried to correct him but he refuses to listen to them, ¹⁹ his father and his mother should take hold of him and bring him out to the elders at the gate of his city ²⁰ and say to the elders of his city, ‘This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious, and he refuses to obey us. He is a glutton and a drunkard.’ ²¹ Then all the men of his city must stone him to death. So you must remove what is bad from your midst, and all Israel will hear and become afraid.

²² “If a man commits a sin deserving the sentence of death and he has been put to death and you have hung him on a stake, ²³ his dead body should not remain all night on the stake. Instead, you should be sure to bury him on that day, because the one hung up is something accursed of God, and you should not defile your land that Jehovah your God is giving you as an inheritance.

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

 TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

“Human Life Is Precious to Jehovah”: (10 min.)

Spiritual Gems: (10 min.)

De 21:19—Why was the local court situated at the gate of a city? (*it-1* 518 ¶1)

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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Initial Call: (3 min.) Begin with the sample conversation. Overcome a common objection. (12)

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 LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

Song 37

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Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.) *rr* chap. 11 ¶9-17

 Human Life Is Precious to Jehovah

Cities of refuge were easy to access (De 19:2, 3; *w17.11* 14 ¶4)

Cities of refuge helped to protect the Israelites from bloodguilt (De 19:10; *w17.11* 15 ¶9)

Hating our brother can lead to bloodguilt (De 19:11-13; *it-1* 344)

ASK YOURSELF, ‘What are some ways to demonstrate that I have Jehovah’s viewpoint of life?’



July 26–August 1 / Deuteronomy 19-21

Song 141 and Prayer

Opening Comments (1 minute)

Treasures From God's Word

"Human Life Is Precious to Jehovah": (10 minutes)

Cities of refuge were easy to access

Deuteronomy 19:2, 3: you should set apart three cities in the midst of your land that Jehovah your God is giving you to possess. You should divide the territory of the land that Jehovah your God has given you to possess into three parts, and prepare the roads so that any manslayer can flee to one of those cities.

w17.11 14 paragraph 4

The six cities of refuge were easy to access. Jehovah commanded Israel to distribute the cities evenly on both sides of the Jordan River. Why? So that any fugitive could find refuge quickly and conveniently. (Numbers 35:11-14) Roads leading to the cities of refuge were kept in good repair. (Deuteronomy 19:3) According to Jewish tradition,

guideposts were erected to direct fugitives to the cities. Since the cities of refuge were available, an unintentional manslayer was not forced to flee to a foreign land, where he might be tempted to take up false worship.

Cities of refuge helped to protect the Israelites from bloodguilt

Deuteronomy 19:10: In this way no innocent blood will be spilled in your land that Jehovah your God is giving you as an inheritance, and no bloodguilt will come upon you.

w17.11 15 paragraph 9

A key purpose of the cities of refuge was to protect the Israelites from bloodguilt. (Deuteronomy 19:10) Jehovah loves life, and he hates murderous “hands that shed innocent blood.” (Proverbs 6:16, 17) A just and holy God, he could not ignore even accidental bloodshed. True, an unintentional manslayer was shown mercy. Even so, he had to present his case before the elders, and if his deed was judged accidental, he had to remain in the city of refuge until the death of the high priest. This might mean spending the rest of his life

there. These serious consequences impressed on all Israelites the sanctity of human life. To honor their Life-Giver, they needed to avoid any action or inaction that could endanger the life of their fellow man.

Hating our brother can lead to bloodguilt

Deuteronomy 19:11-13: "But if a man hated his fellow man and he was waiting to attack him and he fatally wounded him and he died, and the man has fled to one of these cities, the elders of his city should then summon him from there and deliver him into the hand of the avenger of blood, and he must die. You should not feel sorry for him, and you must remove the guilt of innocent blood out of Israel, so that it may go well for you.

***it-1* 344**

Man was entitled to enjoy the life that God granted him, and anyone who deprived him of that life would be answerable to God. This was shown when God said to the murderer Cain: "Your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground." (Genesis 4:10) Even a person hating his brother, and so

wishing him dead, or slandering him or bearing false witness against him, and so endangering his life, would bring guilt upon himself in connection with the blood of his fellowman.—Leviticus 19:16; Deuteronomy 19:18-21; 1 John 3:15.

Ask yourself, 'What are some ways to demonstrate that I have Jehovah's viewpoint of life?'

[Image:] Collage: 1. A brother texts while driving. 2. The same brother texts while standing next to his parked car.

Spiritual Gems

Deuteronomy 21:19—Why was the local court situated at the gate of a city?

Deuteronomy 21:19: his father and his mother should take hold of him and bring him out to the elders at the gate of his city

***it-1* 518 paragraph 1**

The local court was situated at the gate of a city.

(Deuteronomy 16:18; 21:19; 22:15, 24; 25:7; Ruth 4:1) By

“gate” is meant the open space inside the city near the gate. The gates were places where the Law was read to the congregated people and where ordinances were proclaimed. (Nehemiah 8:1-3) At the gate it was easy to acquire witnesses to a civil matter, such as property sales, and so forth, as most persons would go in and out of the gate during the day. Also, the publicity that would be afforded any trial at the gate would tend to influence the judges toward care and justice in the trial proceedings and in their decisions. Evidently there was a place provided near the gate where the judges could comfortably preside. (Job 29:7) Samuel traveled in a circuit of Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah and “judged Israel at all these places,” as well as at Ramah, where his house was located.—1 Samuel 7:16, 17.

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 minutes) Deuteronomy 19:1-14 (*th* study 10)

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

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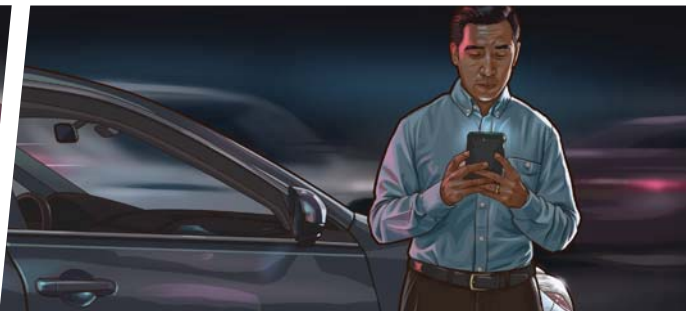
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Concluding Comments (3 min.) | Song 108 and Prayer



Being Courageous Is Not Too Difficult



Courage is the quality of being strong, bold, and valiant. It does not mean never being afraid. Rather, it means taking action *in spite of* our fears. Jehovah is the Source of true courage. (Ps 28:7) How can young ones demonstrate courage?

WATCH THE VIDEO DRAMATIZATION *IMITATE, NOT THE COWARDS, BUT THE COURAGEOUS!* AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- What situations faced by youths require courage?

- What Bible accounts inspire courage?

- How do we and observers benefit from our displaying courage?



SAMPLE CONVERSATIONS

Initial Call

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

Scripture: **Jas 1:13**

Link: Why do we suffer?

► FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:



• **bhs 9 ¶7**

Return Visit

Question: Why do we suffer?

Scripture: **1Jo 5:19**

Link: How does God feel about our suffering?

► FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:



• **bhs 117 ¶7**



Apply Yourself to the Field Ministry

Bible Study: (5 minutes) *bhs* 138 paragraph 8 (*th* study 13)

⁸ We have learned that life is a precious gift. Jehovah trusts that we will do our best never to endanger our own life or the lives of others. We do this by the way we drive our car, motorbike, or other vehicle. We avoid dangerous or violent sports. (Psalm 11:5) We also do our best to make our home safe. Jehovah commanded the Israelites: “If you build a new house, you must also make a parapet [or, low wall] for your roof, so that you may not bring bloodguilt on your house because of someone falling from it.”—Deuteronomy 22:8.

37 *Serving Jehovah Whole-Souled* (Matthew 22:37)

1. O Jehovah, Sov'reign Ruler,
You are the one I love and obey.
You deserve my full devotion;
You are my God; I'll serve you each day.
Your commands I loyally follow;
How I love reminders from you!

(CHORUS)

*O Jehovah, you are worthy;
Whole-souled devotion I give to you.*

2. Father, all your works exalt you.
Earth, moon, and stars your glory proclaim.
May I also be as faithful,
Using my strength to make known your name.
May I use my whole life to serve you,
Proving to be loyal and true.

(Chorus)

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 LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

Song 37

“Walk on Your Way in Safety”: (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video (video category THE BIBLE). Then ask the following questions: Why should we act safely? What specific things can we do to be safety conscious?

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.) *rr* chap. 11 ¶9-17

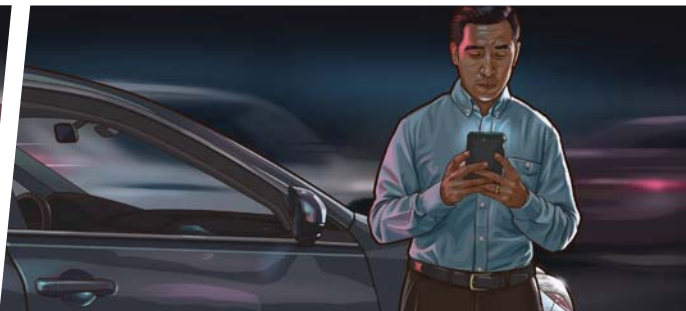
 Human Life Is Precious to Jehovah

Cities of refuge were easy to access (De 19:2, 3; *w17.11* 14 ¶4)

Cities of refuge helped to protect the Israelites from bloodguilt (De 19:10; *w17.11* 15 ¶9)

Hating our brother can lead to bloodguilt (De 19:11-13; *it-1* 344)

ASK YOURSELF, ‘What are some ways to demonstrate that I have Jehovah’s viewpoint of life?’



him.” (Ezek. 33:14-16) On the other hand, those who followed a righteous path cannot expect past obedience to excuse current rebellion. Jehovah stated that if a man “trusts in his own righteousness and does what is wrong, none of his righteous acts will be remembered, but he will die for the wrong that he has done.”—Ezek. 33:13.

⁸ Jehovah’s sense of justice is further evident in that *he gives due warning* before he acts. Ezekiel began his work some six years before the Babylonian army destroyed Jerusalem. But Ezekiel was not the first to warn God’s people that they would be held accountable. For more than a century prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, Jehovah sent the prophets Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Oded, and Jeremiah to act as watchmen. Jehovah had Jeremiah remind the Israelites: “I appointed watchmen who said, ‘Pay attention to the sound of the horn!’” (Jer. 6:17) Neither Jehovah nor those watchmen could be held accountable for the lives lost when the Babylonians finally executed Jehovah’s judgment.

⁹ **Love:** Jehovah displayed loyal love by sending his

8. What do prophetic warnings teach us about Jehovah’s justice?

9. How did Jehovah display loyal love?

watchmen to warn not only the righteous but also the wicked—the very ones who broke his heart and tarnished his reputation. Just think—the Israelites were known as Jehovah’s people, but they repeatedly turned their backs on him and ran after false gods! Jehovah conveyed the depth of his emotional pain at this betrayal by likening the nation to an adulterous wife. (Ezek. 16:32) Even so, Jehovah did not give up on them quickly. He sought reconciliation, not revenge. He wielded the sword of judgment as a last resort, not a first response. Why? He told Ezekiel: “I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that someone wicked changes his way and keeps living.” (Ezek. 33:11) That was how Jehovah felt back then, and it is how Jehovah feels today.—Mal. 3:6.

¹⁰ What can we learn from the just and loving way that Jehovah dealt with the Israelites? One lesson is that we must view the people to whom we preach, not as part of a faceless crowd, but as unique individuals. What a mistake it would be to prejudge a person as unworthy of hearing the message we bear because of his past conduct or because of his ethnic,

10, 11. What lessons can we learn from Jehovah’s dealings with his people?

SOME EXEMPLARY WATCHMEN

These watchmen faced opposition, remained loyal, and announced both warnings and good news.

ANCIENT ISRAEL

Isaiah 778–c. 732 B.C.E.

Jeremiah 647-580 B.C.E.

Ezekiel 613–c. 591 B.C.E.

FIRST CENTURY

John the Baptist 29-32 C.E.

Jesus 29-33 C.E.

Paul c. 34–c. 65 C.E.

MODERN TIMES

C. T. Russell and His Associates c. 1879-1919

The Faithful Slave 1919–Today

tribal, economic, or language background! Jehovah taught the apostle Peter a lesson that resonates today: “God is not partial, but in every nation the man who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.”—Acts 10:34, 35.

¹¹ Another key lesson is that we need to keep a close eye on ourselves; past righteous works do not excuse current wrongdoing. We do well to remember that we have the same sinful tendencies as do those to whom we preach. The counsel that the apostle Paul gave to the Corinthian congregation applies equally to us: “Let the one who thinks he is standing beware that he does not fall. No temptation has come

upon you except what is common to men.” (1 Cor. 10:12, 13) Never would we want to be one who “trusts in his own righteousness,” thinking that we can do wrong with impunity because we also do good works. (Ezek. 33:13) No matter how long we have been serving Jehovah, it is vital that we maintain a humble, obedient attitude.

¹² What, though, if we have committed serious sins in the past but now feel remorse? From Ezekiel’s message, we learn that Jehovah will punish *unrepentant* wrongdoers. However, we also learn that Jehovah is primarily a God of love, not vengeance. (1 John 4:8) If we prove by our actions that we are repentant, we should never feel that our sins are beyond God’s mercy. (Jas. 5:14, 15) Jehovah was willing to forgive the spiritually adulterous Israelites, and he is willing to forgive us.—Ps. 86:5.

“Speak to the Sons of Your People”

¹³ **Read Ezekiel 33:2, 3.** What sort of message were Jehovah’s watchmen to declare? A vital part of their

12. If we committed serious sins in the past, what should we remember?

13, 14. (a) What sort of message were the watchmen to declare?

(b) What message did Isaiah deliver?

work was to proclaim warnings. But they also delivered good news. Consider some examples.

¹⁴ Isaiah, who served from about 778 to 732 B.C.E., warned that the Babylonians would capture Jerusalem and take its inhabitants into exile. (Isa. 39:5-7) But he was also inspired to write: “Listen! Your watchmen raise their voice. In unison they shout joyfully, for they will see it clearly when Jehovah gathers back Zion.” (Isa. 52:8) Isaiah proclaimed the best of news—true worship would be restored!

¹⁵ Jeremiah, who served from 647 to 580 B.C.E., is often unjustly labeled a “calamity howler.” Without a doubt, he did an outstanding job of warning the wicked Israelites of the calamities that Jehovah would bring on them.*^[1] But he also proclaimed good news, foretelling the return of God’s people to their land and the restoration of pure worship there.—Jer. 29:10-14; 33:10, 11.

¹⁶ Ezekiel was appointed as a watchman in 613 B.C.E., and he remained at his post at least until

*^[1] The word “calamity” occurs some 60 times in the book of Jeremiah.

15. What message did Jeremiah proclaim?

16. How did Ezekiel’s message benefit the captives in Babylon?

591 B.C.E. As Chapters 5 and 6 of this publication discussed, Ezekiel zealously warned the people of Israel of the destruction that would descend on them, clearing himself of any bloodguilt for the lives that would be lost. In the process, he not only warned the exiles that Jehovah would punish apostates in Jerusalem but also helped to keep the captives in Babylon spiritually alive and fit for future work. At the end of the 70-year exile, Jehovah would plant a remnant in the restored land of Israel. (Ezek. 36:7-11) This remnant would mainly be made up of the children and grandchildren of those who paid attention to Ezekiel. As the other chapters in Section 3 of this publication highlight, Ezekiel had much good news to share, confirming that pure worship would be restored in Jerusalem.

¹⁷ Were these prophets who spoke to God's people in the period surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E. the only ones whom Jehovah has used to act as watchmen? The answer is no. At each major junction in the outworking of his purpose, Jehovah has appointed watchmen both to warn the wicked and to announce good news.

17. When has Jehovah appointed watchmen?

1. Loyal love! God is love.

We can sense his care from above.
 God by means of his precious Son
 Paid the ransom for ev'ryone,
 Giving hope that we might possess
 Life eternal and happiness.

(CHORUS)

*Hey there, all you thirsty ones,
 Come and drink life's water free.
 Yes, come drink, you thirsty ones;
 God's loyal love you'll see.*

2. Loyal love! God is love.

All his works give proof of his love.
 Love Jehovah has further shown,
 Giving Jesus the kingly throne.
 God's own purpose has come to pass.
 See! His Kingdom is here at last!

(Chorus)

3. Loyal love! God is love.

May his spirit move us to love.
 As we loyally help the meek,
 God's commandments they learn to keep.
 We are serving with godly fear,
 Preaching boldly for all to hear.

(Chorus)

MAY 2021

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

LARGE PRINT EDITION



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COVER PICTURE:

After Jesus ascends to heaven, his disciples zealously preach in Jerusalem and beyond (See study article 20, paragraph 1)

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Grant Us Boldness

(Acts 4:29)

1. As we tell about the Kingdom,
 As we witness for your name,
 There are many who oppose us
 And who try to bring us shame.
 But instead of fearing men,
 It's really you we must obey.
 So we beg you now for your spirit;
 O Jehovah, hear what we pray.

(CHORUS)

*Grant us boldness as we witness;
 Help us overcome our fear.
 Give us confidence and courage
 So that all the world may hear.
 Armageddon draws ever near,
 But until that great day is here,
 Grant us boldness as we witness.
 This is our prayer.*

2. Even though we may be fearful,
 You remember we are dust.
 Your assurance to support us
 Is a promise we can trust.
 Give attention to the threats
 Of those who persecute and blame.
 May you help us all to continue
 As we boldly speak in your name.

(Chorus)

Jehovah Will Give You Strength

“When I am weak, then I am powerful.”—2 COR. 12:10.

SONG 73

Grant Us Boldness

PREVIEW

We are living in challenging times, but Jehovah provides the help we need to endure them. In this article, we will consider how Jehovah helped the apostle Paul and Timothy to continue serving him despite their problems. We will discuss four provisions Jehovah has made available to help us endure today.

THE apostle Paul encouraged Timothy and by extension all Christians to accomplish their ministry fully. (2 Tim. 4:5) All of us take Paul’s counsel seriously. Yet, there are challenges. For many of our brothers and sisters, it takes real courage to share in the preaching work. (2 Tim. 4:2) Think, for example, of our brothers who live in lands where our work is restricted or even banned. They share in the ministry at the risk of their freedom!

² Jehovah’s people must deal with a variety of problems that could dishearten them. For instance, many have to work long hours just to provide the basic necessities for their family. They would like to do more in the ministry, but they have little energy at the end of the week. Others are severely limited in what they can do because of chronic illness or advancing age; they may even be confined to their home. Still others are constantly plagued by feelings of worthlessness. Mary,* a sister who lives in the Middle East, says: “It takes so much effort to fight my negative feelings that I’m left emotionally exhausted. Then I feel guilty because it takes time and energy away from my ministry.”

*** Name has been changed.**

1-2. What challenges do many Witnesses face?

³ Regardless of our circumstances, Jehovah can empower us to cope with personal challenges and still serve him to the extent that our circumstances allow. Before we consider how Jehovah can help us, let us examine how he strengthened Paul and Timothy to accomplish their ministry despite challenges.

STRENGTH TO ACCOMPLISH THE PREACHING WORK

⁴ Paul faced many challenges. He especially needed strength when he was beaten, stoned, and imprisoned. (2 Cor. 11:23-25) Paul openly admitted that he at times battled negative emotions. (Rom. 7:18, 19, 24) He also endured “a thorn in the flesh” of some sort, which he desperately wanted God to remove. —2 Cor. 12:7, 8.

⁵ Jehovah empowered Paul to carry out his ministry despite all the challenges he faced. Consider what Paul accomplished. For example, while he was housebound—in custody in Rome—he zealously defended the good news before Jewish leaders and perhaps before government officials. (Acts 28:17; Phil. 4:21,22) He also preached to many in the Praetorian Guard, and he witnessed to all who visited him. (Acts 28:30,

3. What will we consider in this article?

4. What challenges did Paul face?

5. What did Paul accomplish despite the challenges he faced?

31; Phil. 1:13) During that same time, Paul wrote inspired letters that benefit true Christians to this day. Furthermore, Paul's example strengthened the congregation in Rome, which resulted in his brothers' having "all the more courage to speak the word of God fearlessly." (Phil. 1:14) Although at times Paul was limited in what he could do, he made the most of his situation, and it "actually turned out for the advancement of the good news."—Phil. 1:12.

⁶ Paul realized that everything he did in Jehovah's service was with God's strength, not his own. He acknowledged that God's power was "made perfect in weakness." (Read 2 Corinthians 12:9, 10.) By means of His holy spirit, Jehovah gave Paul the power to

6. According to 2 Corinthians 12:9, 10, what enabled Paul to accomplish his ministry?



What enabled Paul and Timothy to carry out their ministry?

(See paragraphs 5-7)



accomplish his ministry fully—despite the persecution, imprisonment, and other challenges he faced.

⁷ Timothy, Paul’s younger companion, also had to rely on God’s power to carry out his ministry. Timothy accompanied Paul on long missionary journeys. Moreover, Paul sent him on additional trips to visit and encourage congregations. (1 Cor. 4:17) Timothy may have felt inadequate. Perhaps that is why Paul admonished him: “Never let anyone look down on your youth.” (1 Tim. 4:12) Furthermore, during this time, Timothy had his own thorn in the flesh—“frequent cases of sickness.” (1 Tim. 5:23) But Timothy knew that Jehovah’s powerful holy spirit would give him the strength he needed to preach the good news and serve his brothers.—2 Tim. 1:7.

STRENGTH TO REMAIN FAITHFUL DESPITE CHALLENGES

⁸ Today, Jehovah gives his people “power beyond what is normal” so that they can continue to serve him faithfully. (2 Cor. 4:7) Let us consider four provisions Jehovah makes available to strengthen us and to help us remain faithful to him: prayer, the Bible, Christian association, and our ministry.

7. What challenges did Timothy have to overcome in order to accomplish his ministry?

8. How does Jehovah strengthen his people today?

⁹ ***Strengthened through prayer.*** As recorded at Ephesians 6:18, Paul encourages us to pray to God “on every occasion.” In response, God will strengthen us. Jonnie, who lives in Bolivia, experienced that support when he underwent a series of trials. His wife and both of his parents became seriously ill at the same time. Jonnie struggled to care for the needs of the three of them. His mother died, and it took a long time for his wife and father to recover from their illnesses. Looking back, Jonnie says, “When I was under extreme pressure, what always helped me was to be specific in my prayers.” Jehovah gave Jonnie the strength he needed to endure. Ronald, an elder in Bolivia, learned that his mother had cancer. She died a month later. What helped him to cope? He says: “Praying to Jehovah allows me to pour my heart out and vent my feelings. I know that he understands me better than anybody, even better than I understand myself.” At times, we may feel overwhelmed or unsure about what we should pray for. But Jehovah invites us to pray to him even if we find it hard to put our thoughts and feelings into words.—Rom. 8:26, 27.

¹⁰ ***Strengthened by means of the Bible.*** Just as Paul relied on the Scriptures for strength and comfort, we

9. How can prayer help us?

10. As indicated at Hebrews 4:12, why is reading the Bible and meditating on what we read so important?

too can rely on them. (Rom. 15:4) As we read God's Word and meditate on it, Jehovah can use his spirit to help us understand better how the Scriptures apply to our situation. (Read Hebrews 4:12.) Ronald, mentioned earlier, says: "I'm grateful that I cultivated the habit of reading a portion of the Bible every night. I meditate a lot on Jehovah's qualities and his loving dealings with his servants. This helps me to regain my power."

¹¹ We can develop the right attitude about our circumstances by meditating on God's Word. Consider how the Bible benefited a grieving widow. An elder suggested that she could learn helpful lessons from reading the book of Job. As she did, she was at first quick to criticize Job for his wrong thinking. In her imagination she warned him: "Job! Don't be so negative!" But then she realized that her attitude had been very similar to that of Job. This helped her to re-adjust her viewpoint and strengthened her to cope with the pain of losing her husband.

¹² *Strengthened by means of Christian association.* Another way that Jehovah strengthens Christians is by means of fellow worshippers. Paul wrote that he was longing to have "an interchange of

11. How did the Bible strengthen a distressed sister?

12. How does Jehovah strengthen us by means of fellow worshippers?

Jehovah strengthens us by means of (1) prayer, (2) the Bible, (3) Christian association, and (4) the ministry (See paragraphs 9-10, 12, 14)

1



2



4



3



encouragement” with his spiritual brothers and sisters. (Rom. 1:11, 12) Mary, mentioned earlier, treasures such association. She says: “Jehovah has used brothers and sisters who were not even aware of my struggles. They said something encouraging or sent a card, and it was exactly what I needed. It also helps to open up to other sisters who have had similar struggles and learn from their experiences. And the elders always make me feel that I am a valuable part of the congregation.”

¹³ One of the best places to encourage one another is at congregation meetings. When you attend meetings, why not take the initiative to strengthen others with sincere expressions of affection and appreciation? For example, before one meeting an elder named Peter said to a sister with an unbelieving mate: “You cannot imagine how encouraging it is to see you here. You always have your six children ready and prepared with comments.” Her eyes filled with tears of gratitude as she replied: “You have no idea how much I needed to hear that today.”

¹⁴ *Strengthened by means of the ministry.* When we share Bible truths with others, we feel refreshed and invigorated, whether they respond positively or not.

13. How can we strengthen one another at congregation meetings?

14. How does sharing in the ministry affect us?

(Prov. 11:25) A sister named Stacy experienced how strengthening the ministry can be. When a family member was disfellowshipped, she was distraught, and she kept asking herself, ‘Could I have done more to help?’ Stacy could barely think of anything else. What helped her to cope with this distressing situation? The ministry! As she engaged in the preaching work, she began to focus on the people in the territory who needed her help. She says: “During that time, Jehovah gave me a Bible student who made rapid progress. That encouraged me greatly. The most stabilizing factor in my life is to get out in the ministry.”

¹⁵ Because of their circumstances, some may feel that they are not able to do much in the ministry. If that is how you feel, remember that Jehovah is pleased if you do your best. Consider again the example of Mary. When she moved to a foreign-language field, she felt very limited. She says, “For some time, all I could do was offer a simple comment or read a Bible verse or give a tract in service.” This left her feeling inadequate in comparison with fluent speakers. However, she adjusted her point of view. She began to realize that Jehovah could use her despite her limited abilities. She says, “The lifesaving truths are

15. What do you learn from Mary’s comments?

elegantly simple, and those truths are what change people's lives.”

¹⁶ Jehovah sees and appreciates our desire to share in the ministry even if we are housebound. He can open opportunities for us to give a witness to caregivers or medical personnel. If we compare our present activity with what we were able to do in the past, we may become discouraged. But if we recognize how Jehovah is helping us now, we will have the strength we need to endure any trial with joy.

¹⁷ We do not know which of the seeds of truth that we plant may take root and start to grow. (Read Ecclesiastes 11:6.) For example, Barbara, a sister in her 80's, regularly witnesses by telephone and by letter. In one of her letters, she enclosed *The Watchtower* of March 1, 2014, with the article “What God Has Done for You.” Unbeknownst to her, she had sent the letter to a married couple who were no longer Jehovah's Witnesses. They read the magazine over and over. The husband felt as if Jehovah were speaking directly to him. The couple started to attend meetings and eventually became active Witnesses again—after more than 27 years. Just imagine how encouraged

16. What can help those who are housebound to gain strength?

17. According to Ecclesiastes 11:6, why should we continue in our ministry even if we do not see immediate results?

and strengthened Barbara was to see such positive results from that one letter!

¹⁸ Jehovah provides us with ample opportunity to receive his abundant power. When we use his provisions—such as prayer, the Bible, Christian association, and the ministry—we show that we trust in Jehovah’s ability and desire to help us. Let us always rely on our heavenly Father, who delights “to show his strength in behalf of those whose heart is complete toward him.”—2 Chron. 16:9.

18. What can we do to benefit from God’s power?

PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS Page 45: While under house arrest in Rome, Paul writes letters to several congregations and preaches the message of good news to his visitors. Timothy encourages the brothers as he visits congregations.

HOW CAN WE GAIN STRENGTH THROUGH . . .

- prayer and Bible reading?
- Christian association?
- the ministry?

SONG 61

Forward, You Witnesses!

61 *Forward, You Witnesses!*

(Luke 16:16)

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

(CHORUS)

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

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

(Chorus)

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

(Chorus)