

## Monday, August 23

*He is going ahead of you into Galilee. You will see him there.—Matthew 28:7.*

Most of Jesus' disciples were Galileans. So a mountain in Galilee—rather than a private home in Jerusalem—would be a reasonable place to gather with a large number of people. Also, the resurrected Jesus had already met with his 11 apostles in a private home in Jerusalem. If Jesus wanted to instruct only the apostles to preach and make disciples, he could have done that in Jerusalem instead of asking them and the women and others to meet him in Galilee. (Luke 24:33, 36) Jesus' command to make disciples was not limited to Christians living in the first century. How do we know? Jesus concluded his instructions to his followers with the words: "I am with you all the days until the conclusion of the system of things." (Matthew 28:19, 20) Today the disciple-making work is in full swing. Think of it! Nearly 300,000 people each year get baptized as Jehovah's Witnesses and become disciples of Jesus Christ! w20.01 2 paragraph 1; 3 paragraphs 5-6

## Tuesday, August 24

*He remembered us when we were low.—Psalm 136:23.*

Young, but diagnosed with a debilitating disease. Getting older and unable to find work. Being elderly and becoming increasingly limited in what you can do in Jehovah's service. If you are experiencing something like one of the situations just mentioned, you may feel that you are not useful anymore. Those situations can rob you of joy, destroy your self-respect, and interfere with your relationships with other people. This world reflects Satan's view of human life. Satan has always treated humans as if they were of little value. He heartlessly offered Eve a path to freedom, knowing full well that the penalty for disobeying God was death. Satan has always controlled this world. So it is not surprising that many of its leaders reflect his lack of respect for human life and dignity. Jehovah, on the other hand, wants us to feel good about ourselves, and he supports us when we face situations that could make us feel worthless.—Romans 12:3.

w20.01 14 paragraphs 1-4

## Wednesday, August 25

*You must not prophesy in the name of Jehovah, or you will die by our hand.—Jeremiah 11:21.*

For at least 40 years, Jeremiah lived among disloyal people, including neighbors and possibly some relatives from his hometown of Anathoth. (Jeremiah 12:6) However, he did not isolate himself. In fact, he expressed his feelings to his loyal secretary Baruch and ultimately to us. (Jeremiah 8:21; 9:1; 20:14-18; 45:1) We can well imagine that as Baruch wrote down Jeremiah's eventful story, the two developed deep affection and respect for each other. (Jeremiah 20:1, 2; 26:7-11) For many years, Jeremiah had boldly warned the Israelites about what was going to happen to Jerusalem. (Jeremiah 25:3) In a further attempt to move the people to repentance, Jehovah asked Jeremiah to write His warnings on a scroll. (Jeremiah 36:1-4) As Jeremiah and Baruch worked closely together on this God-given task, which probably lasted several months, they no doubt had faith-strengthening conversations. w19.11 2-3 paragraphs 3-

## Thursday, August 26

*Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.—Matthew 23:12.*

How should we treat anointed brothers and sisters? It would be wrong to admire a person too much, even if he is an anointed brother of Christ. (Matthew 23:8-11) When the Bible speaks of the elders, it encourages us to “imitate their faith,” but it does not tell us that we can make any human our leader. (Hebrews 13:7) It is true that the Bible says that some are “worthy of double honor.” But this is because they “preside in a fine way” and “work hard in speaking and teaching,” not because they are anointed. (1 Timothy 5:17) If we give anointed ones too much praise and attention, we could embarrass them. Or even worse, we could cause them to become proud. (Romans 12:3) None of us would want to do anything that might cause one of Christ’s anointed brothers to make such a serious mistake!—Luke 17:2.

w20.01 29 paragraph 8

## Friday, August 27

*Besides those things of an external kind, there is . . . the anxiety for all the congregations.—2 Corinthians 11:28.*

The apostle Paul had many reasons for feeling anxious. The problems his brothers and sisters faced weighed heavily on his mind. (2 Corinthians 2:4) Opposers beat him and threw him in prison. He also had to endure hardships that caused anxiety, such as being “low on provisions.” (Philippians 4:12) And considering that he had been shipwrecked at least three times at that point in his life, we can only imagine the anxiety he experienced when traveling by boat. (2 Corinthians 11:23-27) How did Paul deal with the anxiety? Paul felt anxious for his brothers and sisters when they faced challenges, but he did not try to fix all their problems by himself. Paul was modest. He arranged for others to help in caring for the congregation, trustworthy men such as Timothy and Titus. The work those brothers did no doubt helped to reduce Paul’s anxiety.—Philippians 2:19, 20; Titus 1:1, 4, 5. w20.02 23 paragraphs 11-12

## **Saturday, August 28**

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

Jehovah also expects us to obey him. He deserves our obedience because he is our Creator, the Sustainer of our life, and the wisest of all parents. However, the primary reason why we obey Jehovah is that we love him. (1 John 5:3) Although there are many reasons why we should obey Jehovah, he does not force us to do so. Jehovah gave us the gift of free will, so he is happy when we choose to obey him out of love for him. Parents want their children to be safe. That is why they establish standards of behavior. When children obey those guidelines, they show that they put trust in their parents and respect them. How much more important it is, then, that we know our heavenly Father's standards and live by them. When we do, we show Jehovah that we love and respect him and we also benefit ourselves. (Isaiah 48:17, 18) By contrast, those who reject Jehovah and his standards end up hurting themselves.—Galatians 6:7, 8.

w20.02 9-10 paragraphs 8-9

## **Sunday, August 29**

*Let your servant girl speak to you, and listen to the words of your servant girl.—1 Samuel 25:24.*

Like Abigail, we need to have the courage to speak up if we see someone heading down a dangerous path. (Psalm 141:5) We must be respectful, but we must also be bold. When we lovingly offer a person necessary counsel, we prove that we are a true friend. (Proverbs 27:17) Elders in particular must have the courage to speak to those in the congregation who take a false step. (Galatians 6:1) Elders humbly realize that they too are imperfect and may one day need counsel. But elders do not let that hold them back from reproving those who need discipline. (2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:9) When counseling a person, they try to use their gift of speech to teach him skillfully and patiently. They love their brother, and that love moves them to action. (Proverbs 13:24) But their primary concern is to honor Jehovah by upholding his standards and protecting the congregation from harm.—Acts 20:28. w20.03 20 paragraphs 8-9

Song 3 and Prayer | Opening Comments (1 min.)

 TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

“Serving Jehovah Is Not Too Difficult”: (10 min.)

Spiritual Gems: (10 min.)

De 29:4—How are the Israelites a warning example for us? (*it-1 665 ¶3*)

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 29:1-18 (2)

 APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

Initial Call: (3 min.) Begin with the sample conversation. Leave a [jw.org](http://jw.org) contact card. (1)

Return Visit: (4 min.) Begin with the sample conversation. Offer a Bible study, and introduce (but do not play) the video *What Happens at a Bible Study?* (6)

Bible Study: (5 min.) *Ivs 226-227 ¶3-5* (13)

 LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

Song 73

“Being Courageous Is Not Too Difficult”: (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Imitate, Not the Cowards, But the Courageous!* (video category PROGRAMS AND EVENTS).

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.) *rr chap. 12 ¶15-21*

 Serving Jehovah Is Not Too Difficult

Learning and obeying God’s commandments is not beyond our reach (De 30:11-14; *w09 11/1 31 ¶2*)

Jehovah has given each one of us a choice (De 30:15; *w09 11/1 31 ¶1*)

Jehovah urges us to choose life (De 30:19; *w09 11/1 31 ¶4*)

Serving Jehovah is not too difficult if we rely on him for direction and strength.



# 3

## *Our Strength, Our Hope, Our Confidence*

(Proverbs 14:26)

1. O Jehovah, you have given us  
a hope that we hold dear.  
It's a hope we find so thrilling  
we want the world to hear.  
But at times this life's anxieties  
are the cause of fears within,  
And the hope that burned so brightly  
has suddenly grown dim.

*(CHORUS)*

*You're our strength, you're our hope,  
you're our confidence.*

*Whatever we lack, you supply.*

*When we preach, when we teach,  
we have confidence*

*because it's on you we rely.*

2. So Jehovah, please instill in us  
a heart that won't forget,  
For you've always been our comfort  
when troubled times we've met.  
And these thoughts that lift and strengthen us  
can revive that dying flame,  
For they fill our hearts with courage  
to speak about your name.

*(Chorus)*

## DEUTERONOMY 29-30

**29** These are the words of the covenant that Jehovah commanded Moses to make with the people of Israel in the land of Mo'ab, in addition to the covenant that he made with them at Hor'eb.

<sup>2</sup> Moses then called together all Israel and said to them: “You have seen all that Jehovah did before your eyes in the land of Egypt to Phar'aoh and all his servants and all his land, <sup>3</sup> the great judgments that your eyes saw, those great signs and miracles. <sup>4</sup> But Jehovah has not given you a heart to understand and eyes to see and ears to hear, down to this day. <sup>5</sup> ‘While I kept guiding you for 40 years in the wilderness, your garments did not wear out on you and your sandals did not wear out on your feet. <sup>6</sup> You did not eat bread, and you did not drink wine or anything alcoholic, so that you would know that I am Jehovah your God.’ <sup>7</sup> You eventually came to this place, and Si'hon the king of Hesh'bon and Og the king of Ba'shan came out to meet us in battle, but we defeated them. <sup>8</sup> After that we took their land and gave it as an inheritance to the Reu'ben-ites, the Gad'ites, and the half tribe of the Ma-nas'sites. <sup>9</sup> Therefore, observe the words of this covenant and obey them, so that everything you do will turn out well.

<sup>10</sup> “All of you are stationed today before Jehovah your God, the heads of your tribes, your elders, your officers, every man of Israel, <sup>11</sup> your children, your wives, and your foreign resident who is in the midst of your camp, from the one gathering your wood to the one drawing your water. <sup>12</sup> You

are here in order to enter into the covenant of Jehovah your God and his oath, which Jehovah your God is making with you today <sup>13</sup> in order that he may establish you today as his people and that he may be your God, just as he has promised you and just as he swore to your forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

<sup>14</sup> “Now it is not with you alone that I am making this covenant and this oath, <sup>15</sup> but it is with those standing here with us today before Jehovah our God and with those who are not here with us today. <sup>16</sup> (For you well know how we lived in the land of Egypt and how we passed through the midst of various nations on our journey. <sup>17</sup> And you used to see their detestable things and their disgusting idols of wood and stone, silver and gold, that were among them.)

<sup>18</sup> Beware that there may not be a man or a woman, a family or a tribe among you today whose heart turns away from Jehovah our God to go serve the gods of those nations, that there may not be a root among you producing poisonous fruit and wormwood.

<sup>19</sup> “But if someone hears the words of this oath and boasts in his heart, saying, ‘I will have peace, though I insist on walking in the ways of my own heart,’ to the ruin of everything in his path, <sup>20</sup> Jehovah will not be willing to forgive him. Instead, Jehovah’s great anger will blaze against that man, and the entire curse written in this book will certainly come upon him, and Jehovah will indeed wipe out his name from under the heavens. <sup>21</sup> Jehovah will then single him out from all the tribes of Israel for calamity in accord with the

entire curse of the covenant that is written in this book of the Law.

<sup>22</sup> “When the future generation of your sons and the foreigner from a distant land see the plagues of the land, the maladies that Jehovah has brought upon it— <sup>23</sup> sulfur and salt and burning, so that its whole land will not be sown or sprout, nor will any vegetation spring up in it, like the overthrow of Sod'om and Go-mor'rah, Ad'mah and Ze-boi'im, which Jehovah overthrew in his anger and in his wrath— <sup>24</sup> they and all the nations will say, ‘Why did Jehovah do this to this land? What caused this great, burning anger?’ <sup>25</sup> Then they will say, ‘It was because they abandoned the covenant of Jehovah, the God of their forefathers, which he made with them when he brought them out of the land of Egypt. <sup>26</sup> But they went and served other gods and bowed down to them, gods that they had not known and that he had not permitted them to worship. <sup>27</sup> Then Jehovah’s burning anger came against that land by bringing upon it the entire curse written in this book. <sup>28</sup> Therefore, Jehovah uprooted them from their soil in his anger and fury and great indignation and deported them to another land, where they are today.’

<sup>29</sup> “The things concealed belong to Jehovah our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our descendants forever, so that we may carry out all the words of this Law.

**30** “When all these words come upon you, the blessing and the curse that I have put before you, and you call them to mind in all the nations where Jehovah your God has dispersed you, <sup>2</sup> and you return to Jehovah your God and

listen to his voice according to all that I am commanding you today, you and your sons, with all your heart and all your soul,<sup>3</sup> Jehovah your God will then bring back your captives and show you mercy and regather you from all the peoples where Jehovah your God has scattered you.<sup>4</sup> Even if your people are dispersed to the extremity of the heavens, from there Jehovah your God will gather you and bring you back.<sup>5</sup> Jehovah your God will bring you into the land your fathers took possession of, and you will possess it; and he will make you prosper and will multiply you more than your fathers.<sup>6</sup> Jehovah your God will cleanse your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love Jehovah your God with all your heart and all your soul and you may live.<sup>7</sup> Then Jehovah your God will bring all these curses upon your enemies, who hated and persecuted you.

<sup>8</sup> “You will then return and listen to the voice of Jehovah and observe all his commandments that I am commanding you today.<sup>9</sup> Jehovah your God will make you abundantly prosperous in all the work of your hands, multiplying your children and your livestock and the produce of your ground, for Jehovah will again delight to make you prosper, just as he delighted in your forefathers.<sup>10</sup> For then you will listen to the voice of Jehovah your God and keep his commandments and statutes written in this book of the Law, and you will return to Jehovah your God with all your heart and all your soul.

<sup>11</sup> “Now this commandment that I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it beyond your reach.

<sup>12</sup> It is not in the heavens, so that you have to say, ‘Who will ascend to the heavens and get it for us, so that we may hear it and observe it?’ <sup>13</sup> Nor is it on the other side of the sea, so that you have to say, ‘Who will cross over to the other side of the sea and get it for us, so that we may hear it and observe it?’ <sup>14</sup> For the word is very near you, in your own mouth and in your own heart, so that you may do it.

<sup>15</sup> “See, I do put before you today life and good, and death and bad. <sup>16</sup> If you listen to the commandments of Jehovah your God that I am commanding you today, by loving Jehovah your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his judicial decisions, then you will live and multiply, and Jehovah your God will bless you in the land you are going to possess.

<sup>17</sup> “But if your heart turns away and you do not listen and you are enticed and bow down to other gods and serve them, <sup>18</sup> I tell you today that you will certainly perish. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess. <sup>19</sup> I take the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you today that I have put life and death before you, the blessing and the curse; and you must choose life so that you may live, you and your descendants, <sup>20</sup> by loving Jehovah your God, by listening to his voice, and by sticking to him, for he is your life and by him you will endure a long time in the land that Jehovah swore to give to your forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”

Song 3 and Prayer | Opening Comments (1 min.)

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Learning and obeying God’s commandments is not beyond our reach (De 30:11-14; *w09 11/1 31 ¶2*)

Jehovah has given each one of us a choice (De 30:15; *w09 11/1 31 ¶1*)

Jehovah urges us to choose life (De 30:19; *w09 11/1 31 ¶4*)

Serving Jehovah is not too difficult if we rely on him for direction and strength.



**August 23-29 / Deuteronomy 29-30**

## **Song 3 and Prayer**

**Opening Comments** (1 minute)

### **Treasures From God's Word**

**"Serving Jehovah Is Not Too Difficult":** (10 minutes)

**Learning and obeying God's commandments is not beyond our reach**

**Deuteronomy 30:11-14:** "Now this commandment that I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it beyond your reach. It is not in the heavens, so that you have to say, 'Who will ascend to the heavens and get it for us, so that we may hear it and observe it?' Nor is it on the other side of the sea, so that you have to say, 'Who will cross over to the other side of the sea and get it for us, so that we may hear it and observe it?' For the word is very near you, in your own mouth and in your own heart, so that you may do it.

**w09 11/1 31 paragraph 2**

Is it difficult to know what God requires of us and then to do it? Moses states: "This commandment that I am commanding

you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it far away.” (Verse 11) Jehovah does not ask the impossible. His requirements are reasonable and reachable. They are also knowable. We do not have to ascend “into the heavens” or journey “to the other side of the sea” in order to learn what God expects of us. (Verses 12,13) The Bible plainly tells us how we should live.—Micah 6:8.

## **Jehovah has given each one of us a choice**

**Deuteronomy 30:15:** “See, I do put before you today life and good, and death and bad.

### **w09 11/1 31 paragraph 1**

“I have often had the unreasoning fear that I would prove unfaithful to Jehovah.” So stated one Christian woman who felt that her bad experiences as a child doomed her to failure. Is that the case? Are we really helpless victims of circumstance? No. Jehovah God has given us the gift of free will, so we can make our own choices about how we will live. Jehovah wants us to make the right choices, and his Word, the Bible, tells us how we can do that. Consider the words of

Moses, as found in Deuteronomy chapter 30.

## **Jehovah urges us to choose life**

**Deuteronomy 30:19:** I take the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you today that I have put life and death before you, the blessing and the curse; and you must choose life so that you may live, you and your descendants,

### **w09 11/1 31 paragraph 4**

Does it matter to Jehovah which course we choose? Of course it does! Inspired by God, Moses said: "Choose life." (Verse 19) How, though, do we choose life? Moses explained: "By loving Jehovah your God, by listening to his voice and by sticking to him." (Verse 20) If we come to love Jehovah, we will want to listen obediently to him and stick loyally to him, come what may. By means of such a course, we choose life—the best way of life now with the prospect of life everlasting in God's coming new

Serving Jehovah is not too difficult if we rely on him for direction and strength.

[Image:] A young brother leaving for a Christian meeting while his unbelieving family relaxes at home.

## **Spiritual Gems**

**Deuteronomy 29:4—How are the Israelites a warning example for us?**

**Deuteronomy 29:4:** But Jehovah has not given you a heart to understand and eyes to see and ears to hear, down to this day.

### ***it-1* 665 paragraph 3**

Jehovah, through his servants, spoke of the stubborn, disobedient Israelites as having 'uncircumcised ears.' (Jeremiah 6:10; Acts 7:51) They are as though stopped up with something that impedes hearing. They are ears that have not been opened by Jehovah, who gives ears of understanding and obedience to those who seek him but allows the spiritual hearing of the disobedient ones to become dulled. (Deuteronomy 29:4; Romans 11:8) The apostle Paul foretold a time when some professing to be Christians would apostatize from the true faith, not wanting to hear the truth of God's Word, but desiring to have their

ears “tickled” by things pleasing to them, and would therefore listen to false teachers. (2 Timothy 4:3, 4; 1 Timothy 4:1) Also, one’s ears may “tingle” because of hearing startling news, especially news of calamity.—1 Samuel 3:11; 2 Kings 21:12; Jeremiah 19:3.

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 29:1-18 (*th*  
study 2)

Song 3 and Prayer | Opening Comments (1 min.)

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## 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?

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- What Bible accounts inspire courage?

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

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## 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**



## REMAIN IN GOD'S LOVE

“Build yourselves up on your most holy faith . . .  
Keep yourselves in God’s love.”—JUDE 20, 21.

WE ALL want to be strong and healthy. So we try to eat good food, exercise regularly, and take care of our body. Although this takes effort, we enjoy the results, so we don’t give up. But we also need to be strong and healthy in another way.

<sup>2</sup> Even though we have made a good start in getting to know Jehovah, we need to keep making our relationship with him stronger. When Jude encouraged Christians, “Keep yourselves in God’s love,” he explained how they could do this. He told them: “Build yourselves up on your most holy faith.” (Jude 20, 21) So how can we build strong faith?

### KEEP BUILDING YOUR FAITH

<sup>3</sup> It is important for you to be personally convinced that Jehovah’s ways are best. Satan wants you to think that God’s standards are too difficult to live up to and that you will be happier if you decide for yourself what is right and what is wrong. Ever since

1, 2. What can we do to remain in God’s love?

3-5. (a) How would Satan like you to feel about Jehovah’s standards? (b) How do you feel about Jehovah’s laws and principles?

the garden of Eden, Satan has tried to make people believe this. (Genesis 3:1-6) And he is still trying hard today.

<sup>4</sup> Is Satan right? Are Jehovah's standards too restrictive? No. To illustrate, imagine you are walking in a beautiful park. You notice a high fence blocking off a certain area. Maybe you think, 'Why is this fence in my way?' But at that moment, you hear a lion roar on the other side of the fence. How do you feel about the fence now? You are grateful that it is protecting you from being the lion's next meal! Jehovah's principles are like that fence, and the Devil is like that lion. God's Word warns us: "Keep your senses, be watchful! Your adversary, the Devil, walks about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone."—1 Peter 5:8.

<sup>5</sup> Jehovah wants us to have the best life possible. He does not want us to be deceived by Satan. That is why he has given us laws and principles to protect us and make us happy. (Ephesians 6:11) James wrote: "The one who peers into the perfect law that belongs to freedom and continues in it . . . will be happy in what he does."—James 1:25.

<sup>6</sup> When we follow Jehovah's direction, our lives improve and our friendship with him grows stronger. For example, we benefit when we accept his invitation to pray to him often. (Matthew 6:5-8; 1 Thessalonians 5:17) We are happy when we obey

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6. How can we become convinced that God's ways are best?

## *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)*



## 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?

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

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## 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**



## **Imitate, Not the Cowards, But the Courageous!**

Raw transcript

I thought we were going home, but everyone wanted to go to another gathering. I told them I had service plans the next morning. I was hoping to get this new Bible study going, and I needed some time to prepare. It didn't go over so well. They started pressuring me, saying: "Well, what if he's not there?" "Yeah, why go through all that work for nothing?" It kept getting worse. "Just skip it," they said. "Come on, Tyler. "Don't make us drive you all the way home first—just come." Everyone was against me. I didn't know what to do. But then I remembered a family worship. We studied about Caleb. What gave him the courage to be different? "Jehovah is with us," he said. That helped me to remember that Jehovah is with me too. I told them that the gathering sounded really fun, but if it meant missing my Bible study, it wasn't worth it. I told them I would find my own ride home. Everything was going fine until Mr. Craig started talking about evolution. He said: "The wide variations "of living things on earth are the result of the evolutionary process. "All living creatures, including us, descended from a common ancestor." Most of the class agreed with him, but the other Witnesses chose to stay quiet. I wanted to speak up like Tyler did, but I was

scared to. But then I remembered my Bible study. Last week, we studied about Jael. She probably felt scared too when facing the terrifying Sisera. But she used the tools she had to come to the assistance of Jehovah, and he blessed her for it. It made me think, ‘What tools do I have?’ I think there are good reasons to believe that God designed all living things. My phone contains a lot of information—my contacts, notes, e-mails, pictures. But it didn’t come that way. I put it there. That’s just a phone. What about the information for this plant? Where did it come from? I’m really glad I took a stand, and it even led to a good witness. Recently, after school, I saw Tomiko give a good witness. She even started a Bible study. But not everyone was a fan, especially these kids. They saw me out preaching last week. They started saying things like: “No one wants to read your garbage! “Why do you always push your ideas on people? Do your parents force you?” At that point, I would have given almost anything for them to leave me alone. But last week, we studied about the prophet Micaiah at family worship. He could have easily lied to the king, but instead he spoke the truth, and he made Jehovah’s heart proud. I wanted to make Jehovah’s heart proud too. Then I told them: “You want the truth? “No one forces me to preach; “I do it because I want to. “Jehovah’s Witnesses love people, and we want to share

with them good news from the Bible.” One of them said that I gave the wrong answer. But I didn’t think so. Kevin and I were having a great morning. We met a lot of nice people. But then we saw those same kids from school. Kevin said that we should just leave and that we didn’t need any trouble. At that point, I could feel my palms starting to sweat. But I knew I’d have to face them again. Then I thought about Jeremiah. I recently did some personal study on him. And when threatened, he bravely told his opposers: “I am in your hand.” He stayed the course! I wanted to stay the course. They said, “We told you to stop forcing your stupid ideas on people.” But I told them I wasn’t going anywhere. Then he just laughed and said I wasn’t worth it. My boss called me into his office, and he offered me a promotion to a full-time position, which would mean a lot more money. I was in a meeting at work, and they told me how much they appreciate me and my good work ethic. And then suddenly they offered me this full scholarship to start pursuing a career. My uncle told me he’d back me financially if I ever wanted to stop working for him and start my own construction business. A few weeks later, a brother was giving a talk at our circuit assembly. He read Mark 10:21, where Jesus told the rich young ruler: “One thing is missing about you: “Go, sell what things you have and give to the poor, and you will have

treasure in heaven; and come be my follower.” Then he made the point: Instead of grabbing on to a rich spiritual opportunity, that young ruler just let it slide by. Then he asked us, “Is ‘one thing missing’ from your life?” He was right. Something was missing. I’m baptized, but am I really giving Jehovah my all? Could I do it? Could I do more? I was determined not to let a spiritual opportunity, like full-time service, pass me by. You need courage not only when things are bad. But you also need it to pursue a life of self-sacrifice. And when you do, you’ll have no regrets because nothing will ever be missing from your life.

video source: [https://www.jw.org/en/library/videos/#en/mediaitems/TeenSpiritualGrowth/pub-jwbcov\\_201805\\_18\\_VIDEO](https://www.jw.org/en/library/videos/#en/mediaitems/TeenSpiritualGrowth/pub-jwbcov_201805_18_VIDEO)

Symbolically, these anointed ones were like the stick “for Judah”—a nation that included Davidic kings and Levitical priests. However, as time went on, these spiritual Jews were joined by more and more of those with an earthly hope. Such ones were like “the stick of Ephraim”—a nation that did not include Davidic kings and Levitical priests. Together, both groups serve unitedly as Jehovah’s people under their one King, Jesus Christ.—Ezek. 37:24.

### **“They Will Be My People”**

<sup>15</sup> Ezekiel’s prophecy itself suggests that many individuals would be moved to join the anointed in pure worship. Jehovah stated about his people: “I will . . . make them *many*” and, “my *tent* will be over them.” (Ezek. 37:26, 27; ftn.) These statements bring to mind what was prophesied to the apostle John some 700 years after Ezekiel’s time, namely, that “the One seated on the throne [would] spread his tent” over “a great crowd.” (Rev. 7:9, 15) Today, the anointed and the great crowd dwell as one nation, God’s people, under his protective tent.

**15. How are the prophetic statements found at Ezekiel 37:26, 27 being fulfilled today?**

<sup>16</sup> The unification of spiritual Jews with those having an earthly hope was also prophesied by Zechariah, himself a returned exile. He stated that “ten men out of . . . the nations” would “take firm hold of the robe of a Jew” and say: “We want to *go with* you, for we have heard that God is with *you people*.” (Zech. 8:23) The description “a Jew” refers, not to an individual person, but to a group of people, “you people,” today represented by the anointed remnant, or spiritual Jews. (Rom. 2:28, 29) The “ten men” represent those with an earthly hope. They “take firm hold of” the anointed and “go with” them. (Isa. 2:2, 3; Matt. 25:40) The expressions “take firm hold” and “go with you” highlight the complete unification of these two groups.

<sup>17</sup> It may have been Ezekiel’s unification prophecy that Jesus had in mind when he described himself as a shepherd under whose direction his sheep (the anointed) and the “other sheep” (those with an earthly hope) would become “one flock.” (John 10:16;

**16. What prophecy did Zechariah give regarding the unification of spiritual Israel with those having an earthly hope?**

**17. How did Jesus describe the unity we enjoy today?**

Ezek. 34:23; 37:24, 25) How well these words of Jesus and those of the ancient prophets describe the amazing spiritual unity that we enjoy today, no matter what future hope we may have! While false religion has splintered into countless groups, we experience the miracle of unity.

### **“My Sanctuary Is in Their Midst Forever”**

<sup>18</sup> The final words of Ezekiel’s unification prophecy highlight what ensures that our unity will never be broken. (**Read Ezekiel 37:28.**) Jehovah’s people are united because his sanctuary, or pure worship, is “in their midst.” And his sanctuary remains among them as long as they keep themselves sanctified, or set apart from Satan’s world. (1 Cor. 6:11; Rev. 7:14) Jesus stressed the importance of being no part of the world. In a heartfelt prayer in behalf of his disciples, he said: “Holy Father, watch over them . . . so that they may be one . . . They are no part of the world . . . Sanctify them by means of the truth.” (John 17: 11, 16, 17) Note how Jesus connects being “one” with being “no part of the world.”

**18. As indicated at Ezekiel 37:28, why is it of vital importance that God’s people be “no part of the world”?**

<sup>19</sup> This is the only recorded instance in which Jesus addressed God as “Holy Father.” Jehovah is absolutely pure and upright. Jehovah commanded ancient Israel: “You must be holy, because I am holy.” (Lev. 11:45) As “imitators of God,” we want to obey that command in all our conduct. (Eph. 5:1; 1 Pet. 1:14, 15) When referring to humans, “holy” means “set apart.” Jesus thus emphasized during the last evening before his death that his disciples would remain united as long as they kept themselves separate from this world and its divisiveness.

### **“Watch Over Them Because of the Wicked One”**

<sup>20</sup> The outstanding unity clearly evident earth wide among Jehovah’s Witnesses today proves that Jehovah answered Jesus’ petition: “Watch over them because of the wicked one.” (**Read John 17:14, 15.**) Indeed, it deepens our trust in God’s protection to see that Satan has failed to destroy the unity of God’s people. In Ezekiel’s prophecy, Jehovah stated that the

**19. (a) How do we prove that we are “imitators of God”? (b) During the last evening before his death, Jesus emphasized what important truth about unity?**

**20, 21. (a) What deepens our trust in Jehovah’s protection? (b) What is your resolve?**

two sticks became one in *his* hand. So Jehovah himself has miraculously united his people under his protective hand—beyond the reach of Satan.

<sup>21</sup> What, then, should be our resolve? To continue to work hard to do our share in contributing to the precious unity we now enjoy. In what important way can each one of us do so? By regularly engaging in pure worship at Jehovah’s spiritual temple. What such worship involves will be considered in the following chapters.

### **YOUR PLACE IN PURE WORSHIP**

- 1** The prophecy about the two sticks highlights what important truth about pure worship? (Ezek. 37:19)
- 2** Why do we conclude that this unification prophecy would see its greater fulfillment after 1914? (Ezek. 37:24)
- 3** What can you personally do to contribute to the precious unity we now enjoy? (1 Pet. 1: 14, 15)

## *Encourage One Another*

(Hebrews 10:24, 25)

1. As we encourage one another  
To serve Jehovah faithfully,  
We find the bonds of love are strengthened;  
Fine works bring peace and unity.  
The love we find among God's people  
Gives each the courage to endure.  
Our congregation is a refuge,  
A place where we can feel secure.
2. A word when spoken at the right time  
Is, oh, how comforting to hear!  
We hear these words of consolation  
From friends so faithful and so dear.  
How good it is to work together  
With those whose hopes and goals we share!  
We seek to strengthen one another  
And help each one his burden bear.
3. As we with eyes of faith are seeing  
The nearness of Jehovah's day,  
We need our gathering together  
To keep us walking in the way.  
United with Jehovah's people,  
We hope to serve eternally.  
So we encourage one another  
To hold to our integrity.

JUNE 2021

# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

LARGE PRINT EDITION



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AUGUST 2-29, 2021

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### COVER PICTURE:

A brother, accompanied by his wife, conducts a Bible study with a young man who has a printed copy of the *Enjoy Life Forever!* book (See study article 22, paragraph 2)

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# 113            *Our Possession of Peace*

(John 14:27)

1. Praise Jehovah, God of peace,  
    God of unity.  
    He will make all wars to cease,  
    Bring in harmony.  
Prince of Peace is Christ his Son,  
    Tender, calm, and kind.  
When the fight for right he's won,  
    Perfect peace we'll find.
  
2. We have left off angry words,  
    Making quarrels cease.  
    We have made from spears and swords,  
    Implements of peace.  
If this peace we want to keep,  
    Then we must forgive.  
    Peacefully as Jesus' sheep,  
    May we learn and live.
  
3. Peace from God gives proof to all;  
    He has blessed our way.  
    His commands we gladly keep,  
    Ready to obey.  
We would recommend our way,  
    Show our peaceful care  
    Till the Kingdom's perfect day  
    Brings peace ev'rywhere.

# Do Not Stumble “These Little Ones”

*“Do not despise one of these little ones.”—MATT. 18:10.*

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## SONG 113

Our Possession of Peace

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## PREVIEW

Because of imperfection, we may do or say things that hurt our brothers and sisters. How do we react? Are we eager to repair our relationship? Are we quick to apologize? Or do we conclude that if they are hurt, it is their problem, not ours? Or what if we often take offense at the words or actions of others? Do we justify our reaction by saying that this is just who we are—this is our personality? Or do we see our reaction as a weakness that we need to overcome?

**JEHOVAH** has drawn each of us to him. (John 6:44) Think of what that means. As Jehovah carefully examined all the billions of people in this world, he saw something precious in you—a sincere heart that could grow to love him. (1 Chron. 28:9) Jehovah knows you, understands you, and loves you. How reassuring that is!

<sup>2</sup> Jehovah cares deeply about you, and he also cares about all your Christian brothers and sisters. To illustrate this point, Jesus compared Jehovah to a shepherd. If 1 sheep out of 100 strays from the flock, what will the shepherd do? He will “leave the 99 on the mountains and set out on a search for the one that is straying.” When the shepherd finds the sheep, he will not scold it for straying. He will rejoice. The point? Every sheep is important to Jehovah. Jesus said: “It is not a desirable thing to my Father who is in heaven for *even one* of these little ones to perish.”—Matt. 18:12-14.

<sup>3</sup> We would certainly never want to be a source of discouragement to any of our brothers or sisters. How can we avoid stumbling others? And what can we do if someone hurts us? We will answer those

- 
1. What has Jehovah done for each of us?
  2. How did Jesus illustrate Jehovah’s interest in each of His sheep?
  3. What will we discuss in this article?

questions in this article. But first, let us learn more about “these little ones” referred to in Matthew chapter 18.

## WHO ARE “THESE LITTLE ONES”?

<sup>4</sup> “These little ones” are Jesus’ disciples of all ages. Regardless of their physical age, they are “as young children” in the sense that they are willing to be taught by Jesus. (Matt. 18:3) Although they may come from different backgrounds and cultures and have different viewpoints and personalities, they all exercise faith in Christ. He, in turn, loves them very much.—Matt. 18:6; John 1:12.

<sup>5</sup> All “these little ones” are precious to Jehovah. To understand how he feels, consider how we feel about children. They are precious to us. We want to protect them because they lack the strength, experience, and wisdom of adults. In fact, while we do not like to see anyone get hurt, we get especially upset—even angry—when someone hurts a child. In the same way, Jehovah wants to protect us. He gets upset—even angry—when someone stumbles or hurts one of His people!—Isa. 63:9; Mark 9:42.

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4. Who are “these little ones”?

5. How does Jehovah feel when someone stumbles or hurts one of His people?

<sup>6</sup> In what other way are Jesus' disciples like "little ones"? Well, whom does the world consider important? The rich, the famous, and the powerful. In contrast, Jesus' disciples seem to be unimportant, insignificant "little ones." (Read 1 Corinthians 1:26-29.) But Jehovah does not view them that way.

<sup>7</sup> Jehovah loves all his servants, whether they have been serving him for many years or they are new in the truth. All our brothers and sisters are important to Jehovah, so they should also be important to us. We want to "have love for the *whole* association of brothers," not just some of them. (1 Pet. 2:17) We should be willing to do whatever we can to protect and care for them. If we learn that we have hurt or offended someone, we should not simply brush it off, concluding that the person is too sensitive and needs to get over it. Why might some become offended? Perhaps because of their background, some brothers and sisters have a very low opinion of themselves. Others are new in the truth; they have not yet learned how to deal with people's imperfections. Whatever the case, we should do what we can

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6. According to 1 Corinthians 1:26-29, how does the world view Jesus' disciples?

7. How does Jehovah want us to feel about our brothers and sisters?

to make things right. Additionally, though, a person who is often offended by others needs to recognize that this is an undesirable personality trait that he needs to work on. He needs to do that for his own peace of mind and for the well-being of others.

## CONSIDER OTHERS AS SUPERIOR

<sup>8</sup> What prompted Jesus to talk about “these little ones”? His disciples had asked him a question: “Who really is greatest in the Kingdom of the heavens?” (Matt. 18:1) Many Jews at that time viewed position and rank as very important. One scholar says: “Men lived and died in quest of honor, reputation, fame, approval, and respect.”

<sup>9</sup> Jesus knew that his disciples would have to work hard to root out from their heart the spirit of competition that was entrenched in Jewish culture. He told them: “Let the one who is the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the one taking the lead as the one ministering.” (Luke 22:26) We conduct ourselves as “the youngest” when we “consider others superior” to us. (Phil. 2:3) The more we cultivate that attitude, the less likely we are to stumble others.

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8. What popular attitude affected Jesus' disciples?

9. What did Jesus' disciples have to do?

<sup>10</sup> All our brothers and sisters are superior to us in one way or another. It is not hard to see this when we focus on their positive qualities. We should take to heart the counsel that the apostle Paul gave to the Corinthians: “Who makes you different from another? Indeed, what do you have that you did not receive? If, in fact, you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not receive it?” (1 Cor. 4:7) We should beware of any temptation to draw attention to ourselves or to think of ourselves as superior to others. If a brother gives stimulating talks or a sister is gifted at starting Bible studies, he or she should be quick to give the credit to Jehovah.

### **FORGIVE “FROM YOUR HEART”**

<sup>11</sup> Soon after Jesus warned his followers not to stumble others, he gave an illustration about a king and his slave. The king canceled a large debt that the slave could never repay. Later, that same slave was unwilling to cancel the much smaller debt of his fellow slave. In the end, the king threw that merciless slave into prison. The lesson? Jesus said: “My heavenly Father will also deal with you in the same way

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10. What counsel of Paul should we take to heart?

11. What was the point of Jesus’ illustration about a king and his slave?

if each of you does not forgive your brother from your heart.”—Matt. 18:21-35.

<sup>12</sup> The slave’s actions harmed not only him but others too. First, he heartlessly harmed his fellow slave by having him “thrown into prison until he could pay back what he owed.” Second, he hurt other slaves who observed what he had done. When his “fellow slaves saw what had happened, they became greatly distressed.” Similarly, our actions affect others. If someone wrongs us and we refuse to forgive him, what can happen? First, we hurt him by denying him our forgiveness, attention, and affection. Second, we make others in the congregation uncomfortable when they notice that we are not at peace with that person.

<sup>13</sup> When we forgive our brothers and sisters, we benefit ourselves and others. That was the experience of one pioneer whom we will call Crystal. She was hurt by a sister in the congregation. Crystal recalls: “Her unloving words would sometimes cut me like a knife. In the ministry, I didn’t even want to be put in the same car group with her. I started to lose my zeal and my joy.” Crystal felt that she had good reason for being upset. But she did not give

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12. If we refuse to forgive, how do we hurt others?

13. What do you learn from the experience of one pioneer?



Will you hold on to  
resentment or forgive  
from the heart?  
(See paragraphs 13-14)

in to resentment or self-pity. She humbly applied the Scriptural counsel found in the article “Forgive From Your Heart” in *The Watchtower* of October 15, 1999. She forgave her sister. Crystal says: “I now realize that we’re all striving to put on the new personality and that Jehovah forgives us freely and daily. I feel as if the weight of the world were lifted off my shoulders. I have regained my joy.”

<sup>14</sup> We know that we should forgive; that is the right thing to do. But we may still struggle to do so. The apostle Peter may have felt that way at times.

---

**14.** According to Matthew 18:21, 22, what struggle did the apostle Peter seem to have and what do you learn from Jesus’ reply?

**(Read Matthew 18:21, 22.)** What can help? First, meditate on how much Jehovah has forgiven you. (Matt. 18:32, 33) We do not deserve his forgiveness, but he offers it freely. (Ps. 103:8-10) At the same time, “we are also under obligation to love one another.” So forgiveness is not optional. We owe it to our brothers and sisters to forgive them. (1 John 4:11) Second, meditate on what happens when we forgive. We may help the person who has wronged us, unify the congregation, protect our friendship with Jehovah, and remove a burden from our shoulders. (2 Cor. 2:7; Col. 3:14) Finally, pray to the One who asks us to forgive. Do not allow Satan to disrupt the peace you enjoy with your fellow worshippers. (Eph. 4:26, 27) We need Jehovah’s help if we are to avoid falling into Satan’s trap.

## **DO NOT LET YOURSELF BE STUMBLER**

<sup>15</sup> What, though, if a fellow believer has acted in a way that is very troubling to you? What should you do? Make every effort to maintain peace. Turn to Jehovah in earnest prayer. Ask him to bless the person who offended you and to help you see the good qualities in that person—the very qualities

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**15.** In line with Colossians 3:13, what can we do if we are troubled by the actions of a brother or a sister?

that Jehovah loves about him. (Luke 6:28) If you cannot overlook what your brother has done, consider how you should approach him. It is always best to assume that the brother would never intentionally hurt you. (Matt. 5:23, 24; 1 Cor. 13:7) When you speak to him, give him the benefit of the doubt. What if he does not want to make peace? “Continue putting up with” him. Do not give up on your brother. (Read Colossians 3:13.) Most important, never hold on to resentment, for that could harm your friendship with Jehovah. Never allow anything to stumble you. In doing so, you prove that you love Jehovah more than anything else.—Ps. 119:165.

<sup>16</sup> We treasure the privilege of serving Jehovah unitedly as “one flock” under “one shepherd”! (John 10:16) The book *Organized to Do Jehovah’s Will*, page 165, states: “Benefiting from that unity, you have the responsibility to help maintain it.” Thus, we need to “train ourselves to see our brothers and sisters as Jehovah sees them.” To Jehovah, we are all precious “little ones.” Is that how you view your brothers and sisters? Jehovah notices and values everything you do to help them and care for them.—Matt. 10:42.

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16. What responsibility does each of us have?

<sup>17</sup> We love our fellow worshippers. So we are “determined not to put a stumbling block or an obstacle before a brother.” (Rom. 14:13) We consider our brothers and sisters to be superior to us, and we want to forgive them from our heart. May we not allow ourselves to be stumbled by others. Rather, let us choose to “pursue the things making for peace and the things that build one another up.”—Rom. 14:19.

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17. What are we determined to do?

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**PICTURE DESCRIPTION Page 47:** A sister is upset with another sister in the congregation. After the two privately resolve the matter, they put it behind them and serve together happily.

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#### HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- Who are “these little ones” referred to in Matthew chapter 18?
- How can we consider others as superior?
- If we struggle to forgive, what can we do?

## 1. Lovingly Jehovah

Made provision through his Son  
For our sins to be forgiven  
And for death to be undone.

If we truly are repentant,

His forgiveness we can claim  
On the basis of Christ's ransom,  
Asking pardon in his name.

## 2. We receive such mercy

When we act like God above  
And forgive each other freely,  
Showing empathy and love.

Putting up with one another,

Putting hurtfulness away;  
Showing honor to our brother,  
Showing love's surpassing way.

## 3. Mercy is a virtue

That we all should cultivate.

It will keep us from resentment,  
From the bitterness of hate.

When we imitate Jehovah,

Who is unsurpassed in love,  
We will truly be forgiving;  
We will be like God above.