

## Monday, August 23

*He is going ahead of you into Galilee. You will see him there.*

—Matt. 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." (Matt. 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 ¶1; 3 ¶5-6*

## Tuesday, August 24

*He remembered us when we were low.—Ps. 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 peo-

ple. 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.—Rom. 12:3. *w20.01 14 ¶1-4*

## Wednesday, August 25

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

For at least 40 years, Jeremiah lived among disloyal people, including neighbors and possibly some relatives from his hometown of Anathoth. (Jer. 12:6) However, he did not isolate himself. In fact, he expressed his feelings to his loyal secretary Baruch and ultimately to us. (Jer. 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. (Jer. 20:1, 2; 26:7-11) For many years, Jeremiah had boldly warned the Israelites about what was going to happen to Jerusalem. (Jer. 25:3) In a further attempt to move the people to repentance, Jehovah asked Jeremiah to write His warnings on a scroll. (Jer. 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 ¶3-4*

## Thursday, August 26

*Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.—Matt. 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. (Matt. 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. (Heb. 13:7) It is true that the Bible says that some are “worthy of double honor.” But this is because they “pre- side in a fine way” and “work hard in speaking and teaching,” not because they are anointed. (1 Tim. 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. (Rom. 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 ¶8

## Friday, August 27

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

The apostle Paul had many reasons for feeling anxious. The problems his brothers and sisters faced weighed heavily on his mind. (2 Cor. 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.” (Phil. 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 Cor. 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. —Phil. 2:19, 20; Titus 1:1, 4, 5. *w20.02* 23 ¶11-12

## Saturday, August 28

*Children, be obedient to your parents.—Eph. 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. (Isa. 48:17, 18) By contrast, those who reject Jehovah and his standards end up hurting themselves.—Gal. 6:7, 8. *w20.02* 9-10 ¶8-9

## Sunday, August 29

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

Like Abigail, we need to have the courage to speak up if we see someone heading down a dangerous path. (Ps. 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. (Prov. 27:17) Elders in particular must have the courage to speak to those in the congregation who take a false step. (Gal. 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 Tim. 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. (Prov. 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 ¶8-9*

## Monday, August 30

*For all things I have the strength through the one who gives me power.—Phil. 4:13.*

Jehovah caused Moses to become a deliverer of the Israelites. But when did Jehovah use him? Was it when Moses felt qualified after being “instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians”? (Acts 7:22-25) No, Jehovah used Moses only after He had shaped him into a humble, mild-tempered man. (Acts 7:30, 34-36) Jehovah gave Moses the courage to stand before the most powerful rul-

er in Egypt. (Ex. 9:13-19) From this we see that Jehovah uses those who display godly qualities and who rely on him for strength. Throughout history, Jehovah has caused his servants to fulfill many different roles. What will he cause you to become? Much depends on how willing you are to exert yourself. (Col. 1:29) If you make yourself available, Jehovah can cause you to become a zealous evangelizer, an effective teacher, a capable comforter, a skilled worker, a supportive friend, or whatever else he needs to accomplish his will. *w19.10 21 ¶5; 25 ¶14*

## Tuesday, August 31

*I have called you friends.  
—John 15:15.*

Good friends will help us to stay loyal to Jehovah. And the best way to make good friends is to be a good friend. (Matt. 7:12) For example, the Bible encourages us to expend ourselves in behalf of others, especially those who are “in need.” (Eph. 4:28) When we are absorbed in helping others, we are more likely to be happy. (Acts 20:35) The friends we make will support us when we face trials, helping us to maintain our inner peace. Just as Elihu listened when Job spoke about his trials, our friends help us by patiently listening as we put our concerns into words. (Job 32:4) We should not expect our friends to make decisions for us, but we are wise if we listen to their Bible-based advice. (Prov. 15:22) And just as King David humbly accepted the help of his friends, we should not be too proud to accept the help our friends offer when we are in need. (2 Sam. 17:27-29) Really, such good friends are a gift from Jehovah.—Jas. 1:17. *w19.04 11 ¶12; 12 ¶14-15*

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)

C F G C G/B

O Je - ho - vah, you have giv - en us a  
So Je - ho - vah, please in - still in us a

Am F Gsus4 G

hope that we hold dear. It's a  
heart that won't for - get, For you've

C F G Am Am/G

hope we find so thrill - ing we  
al - ways been our com - fort when

F Dm7 Gsus4 G

want the world to hear. But at  
trou - bled times we've met. And these

# Our Strength, Our Hope, Our Confidence

C F G C C/B

times this life's anx - i - e - ties are the  
thoughts that lift and strength - en us can re -

Am F Gsus4 G G7/F

cause of fears with - in, And the  
vive that dy - ing flame, For they

C/E F G Am

hope that burned so bright - ly has  
fill our hearts with cour - age to

F Dm7 E7sus4 E7 Chorus

sud - den - ly grown dim. You're our  
speak a - bout your name.

# Our Strength, Our Hope, Our Confidence

Am Am/G G/F F C/E

strength, you're our hope, you're our confidence. What -

Dm7 Am/C Bb Fadd9 G7sus4 G7

ever we lack, you supply. When we

Am Am/G G/F F Dm7

preach, when we teach, we have confidence be -

C/E F6 F/G G13 C

cause it's on you we rely.

(See also Ps. 72:13, 14; Prov. 3:5, 6, 26; Jer. 17:7.)

will be uncertain of your survival. **67** In the morning you will say, 'If only it were evening!' and in the evening you will say, 'If only it were morning!' because of the dread you will feel in your heart and because of what your eyes will see. **68** And Jehovah will certainly bring you back to Egypt by ship, by the way that I told you, 'You will never see it again,' and there you will have to sell yourselves to your enemies as male and female slaves, but there will be no buyer."

**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 Ho'reb.<sup>a</sup>

**2** 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'ao and all his servants and all his land.<sup>b</sup> **3** the great judgments\* that your eyes saw, those great signs and miracles.<sup>c</sup> **4** But Jehovah has not given you a heart to understand and eyes to see and ears to hear, down to this day.<sup>d</sup> **5** 'While I kept guiding you for 40 years in the wilderness,<sup>e</sup> your garments did not wear out on you and your sandals did not wear out on your feet.<sup>f</sup> **6** 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>g</sup> **7** You eventually came to this place, and Si'hon the king of Hesh'-bon<sup>g</sup> and Og the king of Ba'shan<sup>h</sup> came out to meet us in battle, but we defeated them.<sup>i</sup> **8** 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>j</sup>

**29:3** \*Or "trials."

CHAP. 29

- a Ex 24:8
- b Ex 19:4  
Jos 24:5
- c De 4:34  
Ne 9:10
- d Ro 11:8
- e De 1:3  
De 8:2
- f De 8:4  
Ne 9:21  
Mt 6:31
- g Nu 21:26
- h Nu 21:33
- i Ps 135:10, 11
- j Nu 32:33  
De 3:12, 13

Second Col.

- a De 4:6  
De 8:18  
Jos 1:7, 8  
1Ki 2:3  
Ps 103:17, 18  
Lu 11:28
- b Ne 8:2
- c Ex 12:38
- d De 1:3  
De 29:1
- e Ex 19:5  
De 7:6  
De 28:9
- f Ex 6:7  
Ex 29:45
- g Ge 17:1, 7  
Ge 22:16, 17
- h Ge 26:3
- i Ge 28:13
- j De 2:4
- k Nu 25:1, 2

- l De 11:16  
Heb 3:12

- m Heb 12:15

**9** Therefore, observe the words of this covenant and obey them, so that everything you do will turn out well.<sup>a</sup>

**10** "All of you are stationed today before Jehovah your God, the heads of your tribes, your elders, your officers, every man of Israel, **11** your children, your wives,<sup>b</sup> and your foreign resident<sup>c</sup> who is in the midst of your camp, from the one gathering your wood to the one drawing your water. **12** 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>d</sup> **13** in order that he may establish you today as his people<sup>e</sup> and that he may be your God,<sup>f</sup> just as he has promised you and just as he swore to your forefathers, Abraham,<sup>g</sup> Isaac,<sup>h</sup> and Jacob.<sup>i</sup>

**14** "Now it is not with you alone that I am making this covenant and this oath, **15** but it is with those standing here with us today before Jehovah our God and with those who are not here with us today. **16** (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>j</sup> **17** And you used to see their detestable things and their disgusting idols<sup>\*k</sup> of wood and stone, silver and gold, that were among them.) **18** 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,<sup>l</sup> that there may not be a root among you producing poisonous fruit and wormwood.<sup>m</sup>

**19** "But if someone hears the words of this oath and boasts in his heart, saying, 'I will have

**29:17** \*The Hebrew term may be related to a word for "dung" and is used as an expression of contempt.

peace, though I insist on walking in the ways of my own heart,<sup>7</sup> to the ruin of everything\* in his path, **20** Jehovah will not be willing to forgive him.<sup>a</sup> Instead, Jehovah's great anger will blaze against that man, and the entire curse written in this book will certainly come upon him,<sup>b</sup> and Jehovah will indeed wipe out his name from under the heavens. **21** 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.

**22** "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— **23** 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 Sodom and Go-mor'rah,<sup>c</sup> Ad'mah and Ze-boi'im,<sup>d</sup> which Jehovah overthrew in his anger and in his wrath— **24** they and all the nations will say, 'Why did Jehovah do this to this land?'<sup>e</sup> What caused this great, burning anger?' **25** Then they will say, 'It was because they abandoned the covenant of Jehovah,<sup>f</sup> the God of their forefathers, which he made with them when he brought them out of the land of Egypt.<sup>g</sup> **26** 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>h</sup> **27** Then Jehovah's burning anger came against that land by bringing upon it the entire curse written in this book.<sup>i</sup> **28** Therefore, Jehovah uprooted them from their soil in his anger<sup>j</sup> and

## CHAP. 29

- a Jos 24:19  
b De 27:26  
De 28:15  
c Ge 19:24  
Jude 7  
d Ge 10:19  
Ge 14:2  
e 1Ki 9:8, 9  
2Ch 7:21, 22  
Jer 22:8, 9  
f 1Ki 19:10  
g Jer 31:32  
h Jg 2:12  
i Le 26:16  
De 27:26  
j De 28:45, 63  
1Ki 14:15  
2Ki 17:18  
Lu 21:24

## Second Col.

- a Ezr 9:7  
Da 9:7  
b Ro 11:33  
c Ps 78:5  
Ec 12:13

## CHAP. 30

- d De 11:26-28  
De 28:2, 15  
e 1Ki 8:47  
Ne 1:9  
Eze 18:28  
Joe 2:13  
f 2Ki 17:6  
2Ch 36:20  
g Isa 55:7  
1Jo 1:9  
h De 4:29  
i Jer 29:14  
j La 3:22  
k Ezr 1:2, 3  
Ps 147:2  
Jer 32:37  
Eze 34:13  
l De 28:64  
Zep 3:20  
m Ne 1:9  
n Jer 32:37, 39  
o De 6:5

- p Ge 12:2, 3  
Jer 25:12  
La 3:64  
Ro 12:19

fury and great indignation and deported them to another land, where they are today.<sup>a</sup>

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

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

**3** Jehovah your God will then bring back your captives<sup>i</sup> and show you mercy<sup>j</sup> and regather you from all the peoples where Jehovah your God has scattered you.<sup>k</sup> **4** 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>l</sup> **5** 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>m</sup> **6** Jehovah your God will cleanse<sup>n</sup> your heart and the heart of your offspring,<sup>n</sup> so that you will love Jehovah your God with all your heart and all your soul\* and you may live.<sup>o</sup> **7** Then Jehovah your God will bring all these curses upon your enemies, who hated and persecuted you.<sup>p</sup>

**8** "You will then return and listen to the voice of Jehovah and observe all his commandments that I am commanding you today. **9** Jehovah your God

**30:1** \*Lit., "and you bring them back to your heart." **30:2, 6** \*See Glossary. **30:6** #Lit., "circumcise."

**29:19** \*Lit., "the well-watered one along with the dry one." **29:26** \*Lit., "not apportioned to them."

will make you abundantly prosperous in all the work of your hands,<sup>a</sup> 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>b</sup> **10** 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>c</sup>

**11** "Now this commandment that I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it beyond your reach.\*<sup>d</sup> **12** 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>e</sup> **13** 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?' **14** For the word is very near you, in your own mouth and in your own heart,<sup>f</sup> so that you may do it.<sup>g</sup>

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

**17** "But if your heart turns away<sup>l</sup> and you do not listen and you are enticed and bow down to other gods and serve them,<sup>m</sup> **18** I tell you today that you will certainly perish.<sup>n</sup> You will not

30:10 \*See Glossary. 30:11 \*Lit., "nor is it far away."

## CHAP. 30

- a Isa 65:21, 22  
Mal 3:10  
b Jer 32:37, 41  
c Ne 1:9  
Ac 3:19  
d Isa 45:19  
e Ro 10:6  
f Ro 10:8  
g Mt 7:21  
Jas 1:25  
h De 11:26  
i De 6:5  
j Le 18:5  
k Le 25:18  
De 30:5  
l De 29:18  
Heb 3:12  
m De 4:19  
n De 8:19  
Jos 23:15  
1Sa 12:25

## Second Col.

- a De 11:26  
De 27:26  
De 28:2, 15  
b De 32:47  
c Jos 24:15  
d De 10:12  
e De 4:4  
f Ge 12:7  
Ge 15:18

## CHAP. 31

- g Ex 7:7  
De 34:7  
Ac 7:23  
h Nu 20:12  
De 3:27  
i De 9:3  
j Nu 27:18  
De 3:28  
Jos 1:2  
k Nu 21:23, 24  
l Nu 21:33, 35  
m Ex 23:23  
n Nu 33:52  
De 7:2, 24  
De 20:16  
o Jos 1:6  
Ps 27:14  
Ps 118:6  
p Nu 14:9  
De 7:18  
q De 4:31  
Jos 1:5  
Heb 13:5  
r Jos 10:25

live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess.

**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;<sup>a</sup> and you must choose life so that you may live,<sup>b</sup> you and your descendants,<sup>c</sup> **20** by loving Jehovah your God,<sup>d</sup> by listening to his voice, and by sticking to him,<sup>e</sup> 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."<sup>f</sup>

**31** Then Moses went out and spoke these words to all Israel, **2** saying to them: "I am 120 years old today.<sup>g</sup> I can no longer lead you,<sup>h</sup> for Jehovah has said to me, 'You will not cross this Jordan.'<sup>h</sup> **3** Jehovah your God is the one crossing before you, and he himself will annihilate these nations before you, and you will drive them away.<sup>i</sup> Joshua is the one who will lead you across,<sup>j</sup> just as Jehovah has spoken. **4** Jehovah will do to them just as he did to Si'hon<sup>k</sup> and to Og,<sup>l</sup> the kings of the Amorites, and to their land when he annihilated them.<sup>m</sup> **5** Jehovah will defeat them for you, and you are to do to them according to the whole commandment that I have given you.<sup>n</sup> **6** Be courageous and strong.<sup>o</sup> Do not be afraid or struck with terror before them,<sup>p</sup> for Jehovah your God is the one marching with you. He will neither desert you nor abandon you."<sup>q</sup>

**7** Moses then called Joshua and said to him before the eyes of all Israel: "Be courageous and strong,<sup>r</sup> for you are the one who will bring this people into the land that Jehovah swore to their forefathers to give to them, and

31:2 \*Lit., "go out and come in."

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

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Song 73

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## **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.)

 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.





## 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?

---

- 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

---

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

# Grant Us Boldness

(Acts 4:29)

Dm

As we tell a - bout the King - dom, As we  
E - ven though we may be fear - ful, You re -

C/D

wit - ness for your name, There are  
mem - ber we are dust. Your as -

R.H.

Dm

Eb

man - y who op - pose us And who try to bring us shame.  
sur - ance to sup - port us Is a prom - ise we can trust.

Eb/D

A/C#

But in - stead of fear - ing  
Give at - ten - tion to the

# Grant Us Boldness

Dm C/E

men, threats      It's real - ly      you      we      must      o -  
Of those who      per - se - cute      and

F Eb/G F/A

bey. blame.      So we beg you now for your spir - it;      O Je -  
May you help us all to con - tin - ue      As we

G/B Csus4 C Chorus F

ho - vah, hear what we pray.      Grant us bold - ness as we wit - ness;  
bold - ly speak in your name.

Fsus4

Help us o - ver - come our fear.      Give us

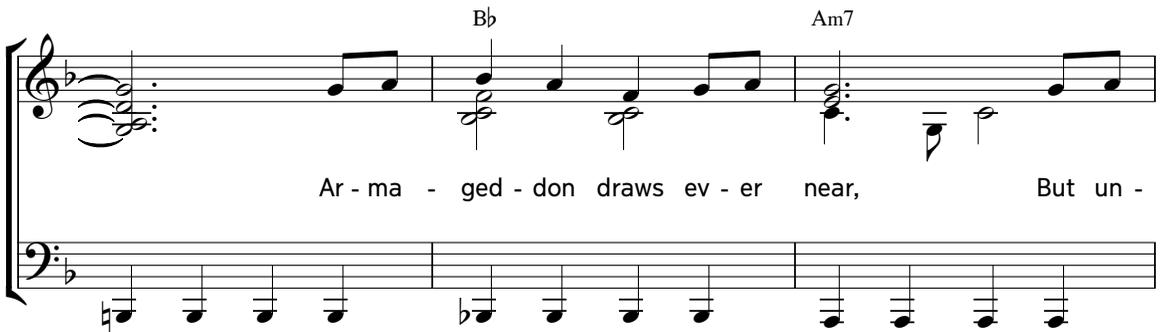
Grant Us Boldness

Dm11 G/B



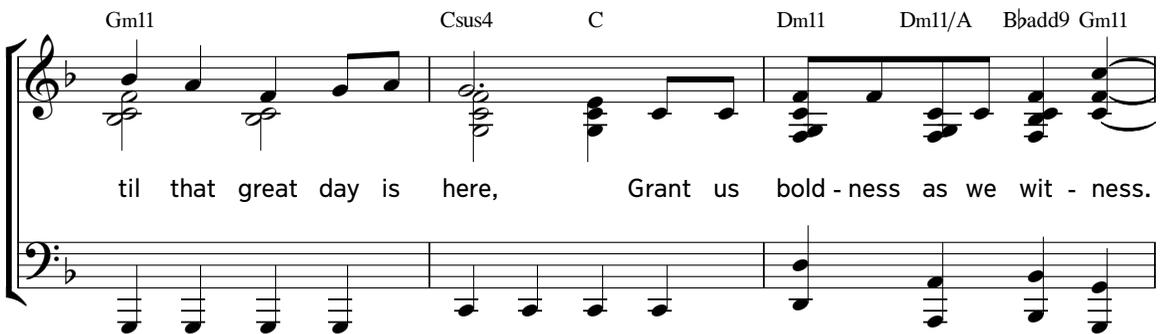
con - fi - dence and cour - age So that all the world may hear.

Bb Am7



Ar - ma - ged - don draws ev - er near, But un -

Gm11 Csus4 C Dm11 Dm11/A Bbadd9 Gm11



til that great day is here, Grant us bold - ness as we wit - ness.

Csus4 Fsus4 F



This is our 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?

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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?

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• **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)

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14. Since 1919, how has the prophecy of the joining of the sticks seen its greater fulfillment?

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

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

point of the prophecy was to illustrate how two groups would become united. Above all, the prophecy highlights that this unity is brought about by Jehovah. So, what important truth about pure worship does this prophetic illustration of the joining of the two sticks highlight? Put simply, this: Jehovah himself will cause his worshippers to “become one.”—Ezek. 37:19.

<sup>14</sup> Since 1919, after God’s people had been spiritually cleansed and had begun to enter a spiritual paradise, the prophecy of the joining of the sticks began to see its greater fulfillment. At that time, the majority of those brought together in unity had the hope of becoming kings and priests in heaven. (Rev. 20:6) 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.

<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; 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

Today, the anointed and the “other sheep” worship Jehovah unitedly as “one flock”

SEE PARAGRAPH 17

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

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

---

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?

... 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.”

<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 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)

D Bm G D6/F#

As we en - cour - age one an - oth - er To  
 A word when spo - ken at the right time Is,  
 As we with eyes of faith are see - ing The

Em11 A7sus4 A7 D D/C# Gma7/B A13

serve Je - ho - vah faith - ful - ly, We  
 oh, how com - fort - ing to hear! We  
 near - ness of Je - ho - vah's day, We

D Bm G G#°

find the bonds of love are strength - ened; Fine  
 hear these words of con - so - la - tion From  
 need our gath - er - ing to - geth - er To

D/A D#° Em7 G/A A7 Dsus4 D

works bring peace and u - ni - ty. The  
 friends so faith - ful and so dear. How  
 keep us walk - ing in the way. U -

R.H.

# Encourage One Another

G Gma7 G6 F#m Bm D7/A

love we find a - mong God's peo - ple Gives  
 good it is to work to - geth - er With  
 nit - ed with Je - ho - vah's peo - ple, We

Gma7 A9/G F#m7 Bm7 E13sus4 E7 G/A A13

each the cour - age to en - dure. Our  
 those whose hopes and goals we share! We  
 hope to serve e - ter - nal - ly. So

D Bm G G#o

con - gre - ga - tion is a ref - uge, A  
 seek to strength - en one an - oth - er And  
 we en - cour - age one an - oth - er To

D/A D#o Em7 G/A A7 D

place where we can feel se - cure.  
 help each one his bur - den bear.  
 hold to our in - teg - ri - ty.

(See also Luke 22:32; Acts 14:21, 22; Gal. 6:2; 1 Thess. 5:14.)

JUNE 2021

# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:  
AUGUST 2-29, 2021

## IN THIS ISSUE

Study Article 22: August 2-8 2

**Help Your Bible Students to Become Baptized Disciples**

Study Article 23: August 9-15 8

**With Jehovah, You Are Never Alone**

Study Article 24: August 16-22 14

**You Can Escape From Satan's Snares!**

Study Article 25: August 23-29 20

**Do Not Stumble "These Little Ones"**

DID YOU KNOW? 25

**In Jesus' day, what kinds of taxes did people have to pay?**

LIFE STORY 26

**Taking Steps With Jehovah in Mind**

QUESTIONS FROM READERS 31

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Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*.

*The Watchtower* (ISSN 0043-1087) June 2021 is published by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; Harold L. Corkern, President; Mark L. Questell, Secretary-Treasurer; 1000 Red Mills Road, Wallkill, NY 12589-3299, and by Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Canada, PO Box 4100, Georgetown, ON L7G 4Y4. © 2021 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. Printed in Canada.

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Visit the [jw.org](https://jw.org) website, or scan code



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210203

# Our Possession of Peace

(John 14:27)

B $\flat$  Eb/B $\flat$  B $\flat$  B $\flat$ /D Cm11 B $\flat$  B $\flat$  F/C B $\flat$ /D Cm/E $\flat$  F/A B $\flat$

Praise Je - ho - vah, God of peace, God of u - ni - ty.  
 We have left off an - gry words, Mak - ing quar - rels cease.  
 Peace from God gives proof to all; He has blessed our way.

B $\flat$  Cm/A D7 Gm D/A Gm/B $\flat$  G7/B C7 C7/E C7 F F7

He will make all wars to cease, Bring in har - mo - ny.  
 We have made from spears and swords, Im - ple - ments of peace.  
 His com - mands we glad - ly keep, Read - y to o - bey.

B $\flat$  F7/C B $\flat$ /D B $\flat$ ma7/D F/E $\flat$  Eb G7/D C7 Gm7/D C7/E C7 F

Prince of Peace is Christ his Son, Ten - der, calm, and kind.  
 If this peace we want to keep, Then we must for - give.  
 We would rec - om - mend our way, Show our peace - ful care

E $\flat$ 7 $\flat$ 5 D D7 Gsus4 Gm E $^{\circ}$  B $\flat$ /F F7 F7sus4 B $\flat$

When the fight for right he's won, Per - fect peace we'll find.  
 Peace - ful - ly as Je - sus' sheep, May we learn and live.  
 Till the King - dom's per - fect day Brings peace ev - 'ry - where.

**SONG 113**

Our Possession of Peace

**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?

## Do Not Stumble “These Little Ones”

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

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

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?

## 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.

<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, wheth-

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4. Who are “these little ones”?

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

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?

er 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 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.”

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8. What popular attitude affected Jesus’ disciples?

<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.

<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 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 in to resentment or self-pity. She humbly applied the Scriptural counsel found in the arti-

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9. What did Jesus’ disciples have to do?

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

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

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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)

cle “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. **(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 STUMBLLED**

<sup>15</sup> What, though, if a fellow believer has acted in a way that is very troubling to

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

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

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 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,

16. What responsibility does each of us have?

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.

<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.

17. What are we determined to do?

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**PICTURE DESCRIPTION Page 23:** 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?

# Be Forgiving

(Psalm 86:5)

B $\flat$  F/A Gm Dm/F E $\flat$

Lov - ing - ly Je - ho - vah Made pro - vi - sion through his Son  
 We re - ceive such mer - cy When we act like God a - bove  
 Mer - cy is a vir - tue That we all should cul - ti - vate.

B $\flat$ /D Cm11 B $\flat$ /D E $\flat$  F7sus4

For our sins to be for - giv - en And for death to be un - done.  
 And for - give each oth - er free - ly, Show - ing em - pa - thy and love.  
 It will keep us from re - sent - ment, From the bit - ter - ness of hate.

F7 B $\flat$  Cm7 B $\flat$ /D F/E $\flat$  E $\flat$  Cm Dm7 Cm/E $\flat$  Cm7 F

If we tru - ly are re - pen - tant, His for - give - ness we can claim  
 Put - ting up with one an - oth - er, Put - ting hurt - ful - ness a - way;  
 When we im - i - tate Je - ho - vah, Who is un - sur - passed in love,

D7sus4 D7 Gm9 Gm E $\flat$ m/G $\flat$  B $\flat$ /F F7sus4 F7 B $\flat$

On the ba - sis of Christ's ran - som, Ask - ing par - don in his name.  
 Show - ing hon - or to our broth - er, Show - ing love's sur - pass - ing way.  
 We will tru - ly be for - giv - ing; We will be like God a - bove.