

Monday, September 13

*Everyone proud in heart is detestable to Jehovah.—
Proverbs 16:5.*

Elders work hard for the benefit of their brothers and sisters. And they do not let their authority make them unduly proud. Instead, they treat the congregation tenderly. (1 Thessalonians 2:7, 8) Their deep love and humble attitude affect how they speak to others. Andrew, an experienced elder, says: “I have found that the brothers and sisters generally respond well to an elder’s kindness and genuine warmth. These qualities motivate the congregation to cooperate with the elders.” Another longtime elder, named Tony, comments: “I try to apply the counsel found at Philippians 2:3 and constantly work at viewing others as superior to me. This helps me to avoid acting like a dictator.” Elders must be humble, just as Jehovah is humble. Although Jehovah is the Sovereign of the universe, he “stoops down” to raise “the lowly from the dust.” (Psalm 18:35; 113:6, 7) In fact, Jehovah detests those who are proud and arrogant.

w19.09 16-17 paragraphs 11-12

Tuesday, September 14

Take my yoke upon you.—Matthew 11:29.

To find refreshment under Jesus' yoke, we must keep the right perspective. We are doing Jehovah's work, so it must be done Jehovah's way. We are the workers, and Jehovah is the Master. (Luke 17:10) If we try to do his work our way, we will find ourselves fighting against the yoke. On the other hand, we can do extraordinary things and overcome any obstacle if we follow Jehovah's guidance. Remember that nobody can stop his will from being accomplished! (Romans 8:31; 1 John 4:4) Our goal is to bring glory to our loving Father, Jehovah. Those in the first century who were motivated by greed or self-interest soon became unhappy and abandoned Jesus' yoke. (John 6:25-27, 51, 60, 66; Philippians 3:18, 19) By contrast, those who were motivated by an unselfish love of God and love of neighbor happily carried that yoke throughout their life on earth, with the prospect of serving with Christ in heaven. Like them, we will remain happy by carrying Jesus' yoke with the right motive.

w19.09 20 paragraph 1; 24-25 paragraphs 19-20

Wednesday, September 15

*You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.—
John 8:32.*

Think of the blessings you enjoy because you have been liberated from long-held unscriptural beliefs. What a joy to have such freedom! You can expect greater freedom to come. In the near future, Jesus will act decisively to eliminate false religion and corrupt human rulership. God will protect “a great crowd” who serve him, and then he will allow them to enjoy blessings in an earthly paradise. (Revelation 7:9, 14) A vast number will be resurrected and will have the opportunity to be liberated from all the effects of Adam’s sin. (Acts 24:15) During the Thousand Year Reign, Jesus and his corulers will help to raise mankind to perfect physical and spiritual health. This time of restoration and liberation will be like the Jubilee in Israel. The result for all on earth who serve Jehovah loyally will be human perfection, free from sin.

w19.12 12-13 paragraphs 14-16

Thursday, September 16

Barnabas came to his aid.—Acts 9:27.

In the first century C.E., a generous man named Joseph (surnamed Barnabas) made himself available to be used by Jehovah. (Acts 4:36, 37) After Saul became a believer, many of the brothers were afraid to approach him because of his reputation as a persecutor of the congregations. However, warmhearted Barnabas came to Saul's aid. (Acts 9:21, 26-28) Later, the elders in Jerusalem saw the need to provide encouragement to the brothers as far as Antioch of Syria. Whom did they send? Barnabas! They chose well. We are told that Barnabas "began to encourage them all to continue in the Lord with heartfelt resolve." (Acts 11:22-24) Likewise today, Jehovah can help us to become a "son of comfort" to fellow Christians. For example, he might use us to comfort those who have lost loved ones in death. Or he may move us to visit or make a phone call to someone who is sick or depressed to share a few kind words. Will you allow Jehovah to use you as he did Barnabas?—1 Thessalonians 5:14.

w19.10 22 paragraph 8

Friday, September 17

Whoever forgives a transgression seeks love, but the one who keeps harping on a matter separates close friends.— Proverbs 17:9.

Sometimes when we work closely with our friends, we become aware not only of their strengths but also of their weaknesses. What can help us deal with this challenge? Realistically, we cannot expect perfection from our brothers and sisters. Therefore, once we have formed close friendships, we need to work hard at keeping those newly formed bonds alive. If our friends make a mistake, we may need to give kind but frank counsel based on God's Word. (Psalm 141:5) And if they hurt us, we need to forgive them. Once we have forgiven them, we must avoid the temptation to bring the offense up again in the future. How vital it is during these critical times to focus on the strengths of our brothers and sisters rather than on their weaknesses! Doing so strengthens the bond we share with them, and we will need close friends during the great tribulation. *w19.11 6* paragraph 13, 16

Saturday, September 18

*Make disciples of people of all the nations, . . . teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you.—
Matthew 28:19, 20.*

As we conduct Bible studies, we have to try our best to “make disciples ... , teaching them to observe all the things [Jesus has] commanded.” We need to help people understand how important it is for them to take their stand for Jehovah and his Kingdom. This means trying to motivate people to make the truth their own by applying what they learn, dedicating their life to Jehovah, and getting baptized. Only then will they survive Jehovah’s day. (1 Peter 3:21) There is very little time between now and the end of this system of things. For this reason, we cannot afford to keep studying the Bible with people who have no clear intention of becoming Christ’s disciples. (1 Corinthians 9:26) Our work is urgent! There are many people who have yet to hear the Kingdom message before it is too late. *w19.10* 11-12 paragraphs 14-15

Sunday, September 19

*He will . . . put the incense on the fire before Jehovah.—
Leviticus 16:13.*

On the yearly Day of Atonement, the nation of Israel came together and animal sacrifices were offered up. Those sacrifices helped to remind the Israelites that they needed to be cleansed of sin! First, though, the high priest had the task of pouring holy incense onto fiery coals and filling the room with a sweet-smelling aroma. What can we learn from that? The Bible indicates that the acceptable prayers of Jehovah's faithful worshippers are like incense. (Psalm 141:2; Revelation 5:8) It was with great respect that the high priest brought the incense into the presence of Jehovah. Similarly, when we approach Jehovah in prayer, we do so with deep respect. We are in awe of him. We deeply appreciate that our Creator allows us to approach him and draw close to him, as a child to a father. (James 4:8) He accepts us as his friends! (Psalm 25:14) We appreciate this privilege so much that we would never want to disappoint him. *w19.11 20-21*
paragraphs 3-5

Song 97 and Prayer | Opening Comments (1 min.)

 TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

“How to Make Your Way Successful”: (10 min.)

Spiritual Gems: (10 min.)

Jos 2:4, 5—Why did Rahab mislead the king’s men who were searching for the spies? (w04 12/1 9 ¶1)

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

Bible Reading: (4 min.) Jos 2:1-16 (10)

 APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

Return Visit Video: (5 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Return Visit: The Bible—Job 26:7* (video category OUR MEETINGS AND MINISTRY). Stop the video at each pause, and ask the audience the questions that appear in the video.

Return Visit: (3 min.) Use the sample conversation. (11)

Return Visit: (5 min.) Begin with the sample conversation. Then offer the *Enjoy Life Forever!* brochure, and start a Bible study. (16)

 LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

Song 56

“Keep Training Your Powers of Discernment”: (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video “*Maintain a Good Conscience*” (video category FAMILY).

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.) rr chap. 13 ¶15-21

 How to Make Your Way Successful

[Play the video *Introduction to Joshua*.]

Study and apply God’s Word (Jos 1:7, 8; w13 1/15 8 ¶7)

Trust in Jehovah as you carry out his will (Jos 1:9; w13 1/15 11 ¶20)

ASK YOURSELF, ‘In what situations do I need godly courage?’



97 *Life Depends on God's Word*

(Matthew 4:4)

1. Life depends on Jehovah's Word,
All the things he has said.
We must live not on bread alone;
Live by his Word instead.
Even now we have peace and joy,
Future blessings assured.

(CHORUS)

*Man must live not on bread alone;
Life depends on God's Word.
There we find what we daily need;
Life depends on God's Word.*

2. True accounts in God's written Word
Tell about those of old.
Men and women who walked in faith—
They were loyal and bold.
We're encouraged each time we read
All they did and endured.

(Chorus)

3. Day by day as we read God's Word,
He gives comfort and hope.
When the trials of life arise,
He gives wisdom to cope.
May we treasure within our heart
All we've read and we've heard.

(Chorus)

JOSHUA 1-2

1 After the death of Moses the servant of Jehovah, Jehovah said to Joshua the son of Nun, the minister of Moses: ² “Moses my servant is dead. Now get up, cross the Jordan, you and all this people, and go into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel. ³ I will give you every place on which you set your foot, just as I promised Moses. ⁴ Your territory will extend from the wilderness up to Leb'a-non and to the great river, the Eu-phra'tes—all the land of the Hit'tites—and to the Great Sea on the west. ⁵ No one will be able to take a stand against you as long as you live. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will neither desert you nor abandon you. ⁶ Be courageous and strong, for you are the one who will cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their forefathers I would give to them.

⁷ “Only be courageous and very strong, and observe carefully the entire Law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not deviate from it either to the right or to the left, so that you may act wisely wherever you go. ⁸ This book of the Law should not depart from your mouth, and you must read it in an undertone day and night, in order to observe carefully all that is written in it; for then your way will be successful and then you will act wisely. ⁹ Have I not commanded you? Be courageous and strong. Do not be struck with terror or fear, for Jehovah your God is with you wherever you go.”

¹⁰ Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people:
¹¹ “Pass throughout the camp and give this command to the people, ‘Get provisions ready, because in three days you will cross the Jordan to go in and take possession of the land that Jehovah your God is giving you to possess.’”

¹² And to the Reu'ben-ites, the Gad'ites, and the half tribe of Ma-nas'seh, Joshua said: ¹³ “Remember what Moses the servant of Jehovah commanded you: ‘Jehovah your God is giving you rest and has given you this land. ¹⁴ Your wives, your children, and your livestock will dwell in the land that Moses has given you on this side of the Jordan, but all you mighty warriors should cross over in battle formation ahead of your brothers. You must help them ¹⁵ until Jehovah gives your brothers rest, just as he has given you, and they also take possession of the land that Jehovah your God is giving them. Then return to the land you were given to occupy and take possession of it, the land that Moses the servant of Jehovah gave you on the east side of the Jordan.’”

¹⁶ They answered Joshua: “We will do all that you have commanded, and we will go wherever you send us. ¹⁷ Just as we listened to everything Moses said, so we will listen to you. Only may Jehovah your God be with you just as he was with Moses. ¹⁸ Any man who rebels against your order and does not obey every command you give him will be put to death. Only be courageous and strong.”

2 Then Joshua the son of Nun secretly sent two men out from Shit'tim as spies. He told them: “Go and inspect the land, especially Jer'i-cho.” So they went and came to the

house of a prostitute named Ra'hab, and they stayed there.

² The king of Jer'i-cho was told: "Look! Israelite men have come in here tonight to spy out the land." ³ At that the king of Jer'i-cho sent word to Ra'hab: "Bring out the men who came and are staying in your house, for they have come to spy out the entire land."

⁴ But the woman took the two men and hid them. Then she said: "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from." ⁵ And at dark when the city gate was about to be closed, the men went out. I do not know where the men went, but if you quickly chase after them, you will catch up with them." ⁶ (However, she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them among stalks of flax laid in rows on the roof.) ⁷ So the men chased after them in the direction of the Jordan at the fords, and the city gate was shut once the pursuers had gone out.

⁸ Before the men lay down to sleep, she came up to them on the roof. ⁹ She said to the men: "I do know that Jehovah will give you the land and that the fear of you has fallen upon us. All the inhabitants of the land are disheartened because of you, ¹⁰ for we heard how Jehovah dried up the waters of the Red Sea before you when you left Egypt and what you did to the two kings of the Am'or-ites, Si'hon and Og, whom you devoted to destruction on the other side of the Jordan.

¹¹ When we heard about it, we lost heart, and no one has any courage because of you, for Jehovah your God is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath. ¹² Now, please, swear to me by Jehovah that, because I showed

loyal love to you, you will also show loyal love to my father's household; and you must give me a sign of good faith.

¹³ You must spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and you must save us from death.”

¹⁴ At that the men said to her: “We will give our lives for yours! If you do not tell about our mission, then we will show loyal love and faithfulness toward you when Jehovah gives us the land.” ¹⁵ After that she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was on a side of the city wall. In fact, she was dwelling on the wall. ¹⁶ Then she said to them: “Go to the mountainous region and hide there for three days, so that those pursuing you may not find you. Then, after your pursuers have come back, you can go on your way.”

¹⁷ The men said to her: “We will be free from guilt respecting this oath that you made us swear ¹⁸ unless, when we come into the land, you tie this cord of scarlet thread in the window by which you let us down. You should gather your father, your mother, your brothers, and all your father's household with you into the house. ¹⁹ Then if anyone goes out the doors of your house into the open, his blood will be on his own head, and we will be free from guilt. But if harm comes to anyone who remains with you in the house, his blood will be on our heads. ²⁰ But if you report our mission, we will be free from guilt respecting your oath that you made us swear.” ²¹ She replied: “Let it be according to your words.”

With that she sent them off, and they went their way. Afterward, she tied the scarlet cord in the window.²² So they left and went to the mountainous region and stayed there for three days, until the pursuers returned. The pursuers had been looking for them on every road but did not find them.²³ The two men then descended from the mountainous region and crossed the river and came to Joshua the son of Nun. They related to him all the things that had happened to them.²⁴ Then they said to Joshua: “Jehovah has handed over the entire land to us. In fact, all the inhabitants of the land are disheartened because of us.”

Song 97 and Prayer | Opening Comments (1 min.)

 TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

“How to Make Your Way Successful”: (10 min.)

Spiritual Gems: (10 min.)

Jos 2:4, 5—Why did Rahab mislead the king’s men who were searching for the spies? (w04 12/1 9 ¶1)

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

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[Play the video *Introduction to Joshua.*]

Study and apply God’s Word (Jos 1:7, 8; w13 1/15 8 ¶7)

Trust in Jehovah as you carry out his will (Jos 1:9; w13 1/15 11 ¶20)

ASK YOURSELF, ‘In what situations do I need godly courage?’



Introduction to Joshua

Raw Transcript

An introduction to the book of Joshua. The book of Joshua is named after its writer, Joshua the son of Nun, who succeeded Moses as leader of Israel. The book likely covers a period of more than 20 years, starting in 1473 B.C.E. and ending in about 1450 B.C.E. when the book was completed. The book of Joshua can be divided into four sections: Israel's entry into Canaan, the conquest of the land, the apportioning of it to the individual tribes, and Joshua's final exhortations. The book provides valuable lessons on the need for courage, faith, and obedience—especially when God's people face strong enemies. In chapters 1 and 2, Jehovah tells Joshua to be courageous and strong, the Israelites prepare to cross the Jordan River, and Joshua sends out two spies who go to Jericho. The spies go to the home of Rahab, a prostitute. Moved by faith in Jehovah, she hides the spies, thereby disobeying the order of the king. In chapters 3 to 6, Israel miraculously crosses the Jordan River on dry ground, even though the river is at flood stage. The Israelites observe the Passover and begin to eat the produce of the land. Joshua then meets a man with a drawn sword. The man is “the prince of Jehovah's army.” Through him, Jehovah tells Joshua how to conquer Jericho. Chapters 6 to

12 describe the conquest of the Promised Land. In chapter 6, Jericho falls. Only Rahab and her father's household are spared. In chapter 7, Achan is exposed for disobeyingly taking spoil from Jericho. He is put to death along with his family, who no doubt helped to conceal his sin. Did you know? Rahab and Achan provide contrasting lessons in faith and obedience. Though a Canaanite, Rahab was saved because she obeyed the spies and showed courageous faith in Jehovah. Although Achan was a member of God's dedicated nation and witnessed Jehovah bringing down the walls of Jericho, he was put to death because of his disobedience, lack of faith, and greed. In chapter 8, Ai is conquered and reduced to "a permanent mound of ruins." Joshua then reads God's Law to the people. Half of the nation stands in front of Mount Gerizim and the other half in front of Mount Ebal. In chapter 9, the Gibeonites trick Joshua into making a covenant with them and he spares their lives. Chapters 10 to 12 contain a record of some of Israel's God-given victories. God even hurls great hailstones at the Amorites and makes the sun stand still so that Israel can "take vengeance on its enemies." In chapters 13 to 22, the Promised Land is apportioned among the tribes of Israel, the tabernacle is set up at Shiloh, and the Israelites select six cities of refuge for the unintentional manslayer. In chapter 22, the tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of

Manasseh go to their inheritance east of the Jordan. Chapters 23 and 24 contain Joshua's farewell speeches. He tells the people to "fear Jehovah and serve him with integrity and faithfulness." Joshua as well as Aaron's son Eleazar then die. Also, the Israelites fulfill their sworn oath to bury the bones of Jacob's son Joseph in the Promised Land. As you read the book of Joshua, note how Jehovah blesses faithful and obedient ones; see how he fights for his people; and observe how he fulfills all his promises, thus strengthening our faith in our future inheritance under his glorious Kingdom.

source: <https://www.jw.org/en/library/videos/books-of-bible-intros/book-of-joshua>

September 13-19 / Joshua 1-2

Song 97 and Prayer

Opening Comments (1 minute)

Treasures From God's Word

"How to Make Your Way Successful": (10 minutes)

[Play the video *Introduction to Joshua*.]

Study and apply God's Word

Joshua 1:7, 8: "Only be courageous and very strong, and observe carefully the entire Law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not deviate from it either to the right or to the left, so that you may act wisely wherever you go. This book of the Law should not depart from your mouth, and you must read it in an undertone day and night, in order to observe carefully all that is written in it; for then your way will be successful and then you will act wisely.

w13 1/15 8 paragraph 7

To have the courage needed to do God's will, we must study

and apply his Word. That is what Joshua was told to do when he became Moses' successor: "Be courageous and very strong to take care to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. . . . This book of the law should not depart from your mouth, and you must in an undertone read in it day and night, in order that you may take care to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way successful and then you will act wisely." (Joshua 1:7, 8) Joshua followed that counsel, and 'his way was successful.' If we do likewise, we will have greater courage and success in God's service.

Trust in Jehovah as you carry out his will

Joshua 1:9: Have I not commanded you? Be courageous and strong. Do not be struck with terror or fear, for Jehovah your God is with you wherever you go."

w13 1/15 11 paragraph 20

It is challenging to pursue a godly course in the face of trials that beset us in this evil and troubled world. However, we are not alone. God is with us. So is his Son, the Head of the

congregation. We also have over 7,000,000 fellow Witnesses of Jehovah worldwide. With them, let us keep on exercising faith and declaring the good news while we bear in mind our 2013 yeartext: “Be courageous and strong. . . . Jehovah your God is with you.”—Joshua 1:9.

Ask yourself, ‘In what situations do I need godly courage?’

[Image:] Collage: 1. A brother preaches to a workmate during their lunch break. 2. A brother remains faithful during an interrogation by the police.

Spiritual Gems

Joshua 2:4, 5—Why did Rahab mislead the king’s men who were searching for the spies?

Joshua 2:4, 5: But the woman took the two men and hid them. Then she said: “Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from. And at dark when the city gate was about to be closed, the men went out. I do not know where the men went, but if you quickly chase after them, you will catch up with them.”

w04 12/1 9 paragraph 1

Rahab protects the spies at the risk of her life because she has come to have faith in Jehovah. Therefore, she is under no obligation to divulge the spies' whereabouts to men who are seeking to harm God's people. (Matthew 7:6; 21:23-27; John 7:3-10) In fact, Rahab was "declared righteous by works," including the act of misdirecting the emissaries of the king.—James 2:24-26.

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) Joshua 2:1-16 (*th* study 10)

Song 97 and Prayer | Opening Comments (1 min.)

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ASK YOURSELF, ‘In what situations do I need godly courage?’



Return Visit: The Bible—Job 26:7

2021-09

Raw transcript

Hi, Mia. It's nice to see you again. As I mentioned last week, I'm Kiara, and this is Anna. The last time we spoke, I left you with the question, Why can we trust the Bible? Right, I remember. If the Bible is trustworthy, then it should be in harmony with established scientific facts, right? Yeah, I can agree with that. If you have just a minute, I'd like to show you a brief video that illustrates the Bible's scientific accuracy. It's called The Earth Hangs Upon Nothing. OK. During the time when the Bible was written, many people had mistaken ideas about the shape of the earth. A theory written after the Bible was completed was that the universe emerged from a cosmic egg and that the earth was supported by various creatures. In contrast, about the year 1473 B.C.E., Moses wrote that the earth is suspended "upon nothing." And around the year 732 B.C.E., the prophet Isaiah wrote that the earth is a circle, or sphere. These Bible writers contradicted ideas that were popular at the time. It was some 200 years

after Isaiah's day that the Greek philosopher Pythagoras may have proposed that the earth is a sphere. And more than 3,000 years passed from Moses' writings until scientists such as Isaac Newton realized that the earth seemed to hang upon nothing. Now, keeping those points in mind, let's read what the Bible said some 3,500 years ago. Anna, would you please read for us Job 26:7? It says: "He stretches out the northern sky "over empty space, suspending the earth upon nothing." Thank you so much. Based off of what we learned in the video, why do you think it's surprising that the Bible says that the earth is suspended "upon nothing"? Well, people didn't believe that at the time. Exactly. That point always amazes me! So if we can trust the Bible in scientific matters, in what other areas is the Bible trustworthy? The video we showed you is part of a free Bible study course with the use of this brochure. If you'll read it, I'd be happy to leave it with you. And next time, we'll discuss some of the questions that the Bible answers. They can be found in lesson 1. OK, sure. It sounds interesting.

HOW TO OFFER THE *ENJOY LIFE FOREVER!* BROCHURE ON THE INITIAL CALL

Similar to our tracts, the back cover of the brochure includes an intriguing question. Try the following:

- ▶ Ask the multiple-choice question
- ▶ Read the Bible’s answer at Psalm 37:29
- ▶ Discuss the points under “What That Can Mean for You.” If time allows, read the scriptures and highlight the artwork
- ▶ Offer to answer the question posed near the bottom of the page, and begin discussing the first lesson

FOCUS AND GOALS FOR EACH SECTION

LESSONS	FOCUS	STUDENT GOALS
1 01-12	Consider how the Bible can help you and how you can come to know its Author	Encourage the student to read the Bible, prepare for the study, and start attending meetings
2 13-33	See what God has done for us and the kind of worship that pleases him	Motivate the student to share the truth with others and to become a publisher
3 34-47	Consider what God expects from his worshippers	Motivate the student to dedicate his life to Jehovah and get baptized
4 48-60	Learn how to remain in God’s love	Teach the student how to distinguish right from wrong and to make spiritual progress



SAMPLE CONVERSATIONS

Initial Call

Question: Where can we find practical advice for daily living?

Scripture: 2Ti 3:16, 17

Link: Why can you trust the Bible?

▶ FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:



• *Iffi* 3

Return Visit

Question: Why can you trust the Bible?

Scripture: Job 26:7

Link: What are some questions that the Bible answers?

▶ FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:



• *Iffi* 12



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56

Make the Truth Your Own

(Proverbs 3:1, 2)

1. The way of the truth is the best way of living,
But no one can live your life for you.
So take the advice that Jehovah is giving;
Believe what he tells you is true.

(CHORUS)

Make the truth your own.

Make it live, yes, make it real.

And then feel the joy

Jehovah gives you

When you make the truth your own.

2. The effort you make and the time you are spending
In service to God and his Kingdom
Will yield rich results and a life that's unending,
A life full of good things to come.

(Chorus)

3. Compared with our God, we are all little children
And need his direction and counsel.
So walk ev'ry day with our Father in heaven;
Receive his rich blessing in full.

(Chorus)

Song 97 and Prayer | Opening Comments (1 min.)

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Bible Reading: (4 min.) Jos 2:1-16 (10)

 APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

Return Visit Video: (5 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Return Visit: The Bible—Job 26:7* (video category OUR MEETINGS AND MINISTRY). Stop the video at each pause, and ask the audience the questions that appear in the video.

Return Visit: (3 min.) Use the sample conversation. (11)

Return Visit: (5 min.) Begin with the sample conversation. Then offer the *Enjoy Life Forever!* brochure, and start a Bible study. (16)

 LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

Song 56

“Keep Training Your Powers of Discernment”: (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video “*Maintain a Good Conscience*” (video category FAMILY).

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.) rr chap. 13 ¶15-21

 How to Make Your Way Successful

[Play the video *Introduction to Joshua*.]

Study and apply God’s Word (Jos 1:7, 8; w13 1/15 8 ¶7)

Trust in Jehovah as you carry out his will (Jos 1:9; w13 1/15 11 ¶20)

ASK YOURSELF, ‘In what situations do I need godly courage?’



Maintain a Good Conscience

Raw transcript

Every day we make choices that can affect our relationship with Jehovah. When there's a clear Scriptural command, the right choice may seem easy. But what if there's not? How can we be sure we're making a wise decision? An invitation to our niece's wedding arrived. Thomas was excited about it. I was excited too. But the ceremony was being held at a local church. I wondered if it would still be OK for me to attend. Even though Thomas wasn't yet willing to accept a Bible study, he gradually softened over the years since I came into the truth. I knew he understood why I would never enter a church for worship, but what about attending a wedding? Jehovah approves of weddings. That afternoon, I went to help Amy plan a menu for the pioneer school lunch coming up. She noticed I was a bit distracted, so I told her my concerns about the wedding. But you're not thinking of going, are you? Amy sure had a strong opinion on the matter, but I didn't feel she really understood my situation. Although I appreciated her concern, I felt like she was judging me. The next day, I decided to visit Charlotte and Allan and ask their advice. Like me, Charlotte had come into the truth many years before Allan, so they really understood my situation. Is Amy right? Would it be wrong to attend the wedding? What would you do if you were me? Charlotte explained that in

situations where there's no specific Bible command, it becomes a matter of conscience. And what one person's conscience allows may be different from another. The important thing is that we make decisions that leave us with a good conscience. But how do I do that? Dear Emma, it's really a matter of training. Allan showed me the scripture at Hebrews 5:14, where the apostle Paul wrote: "Solid food belongs to mature people, "to those who through use "have their powers of discernment trained to distinguish both right and wrong." But Paul didn't just write those words; he lived them. He carefully studied the principles in God's Word. And as a result, he was able to make decisions that left him with a good conscience. So even when there's no stated law on a matter, we can always find a Bible principle that can give us insight into God's thinking. So I made it a matter of prayer, and then I got to work. I researched articles in the Watch Tower Publications Index and the Research Guide. I found a really good thought in chapter 2 of the "God's Love" book. I also read about others who faced similar situations and what Bible principles they found helpful. Then I meditated on all these. As I kept studying, I was able to bring my conscience in harmony with Jehovah's spirit, not just with my heart. I realized that having a Bible-trained conscience doesn't mean everyone will always think exactly alike—and that's OK. But if we train our conscience by applying Bible principles, it will guide us along in life, so that each of us can remain in God's love.



Keep Training Your Powers of Discernment

An athlete must continue to train his muscles in order to remain skilled. Similarly, we must put forth repeated effort to train and to maintain our powers of discernment. (Heb 5:14) Although we may be inclined simply to copy the decisions of others, we must exercise our own thinking ability and decide for ourselves. Why? Each of us will render an account for our own decisions.—Ro 14:12.

We should not assume that we will make good decisions simply because we have been baptized for many years. To make wise decisions, we need to rely fully on Jehovah, his Word, and his organization.—Jos 1:7, 8; Pr 3:5, 6; Mt 24:45.

On what should I rely when making decisions?

- Personal opinion
- Viewpoints of others
- Bible principles

WATCH THE VIDEO DRAMATIZATION “*MAINTAIN A GOOD CONSCIENCE,*” AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:



- What decision did Emma face?



- Why should we avoid expressing our personal opinions regarding conscience matters?



- What wise counsel did one couple share with Emma?



- Where did Emma find helpful information regarding her situation?

about Jehovah's *arrangement* for worship, but from Ezekiel, we learn about Jehovah's *standards* for worship. To teach us about Jehovah's *arrangement* for pure worship, Paul reveals the meanings of such features of the spiritual temple as the high priest, the sacrifices, the altar, and the Most Holy. But to emphasize Jehovah's high *standards* for pure worship, Ezekiel's temple vision gives us a detailed picture that impresses on our mind and heart many lessons about Jehovah's standards.

¹⁴ Where, then, does our adjusted understanding leave us? It certainly does not mean that Ezekiel's vision conveys less meaning for us today. In order to see how the vision benefits us, let us take a closer look at how it must have benefited the faithful Jews back in Ezekiel's day and thereafter.

What Did the Vision Mean to the Jewish Exiles?

¹⁵ In order to find the Bible's answer to that question, let us consider a series of related questions that will help us to see a full and complete picture. **First, what was the overall prophetic message of the vision?** Sim-

15. (a) What was the overall prophetic message of Ezekiel's vision? (b) What contrast do we find between Ezekiel chapter 8 and Ezekiel chapters 40 to 48?

ply put, the overall message was that pure worship would be restored! This was surely clear to Ezekiel. He had already written what is now chapter 8 of Ezekiel, in which Jehovah graphically illustrated the deplorable condition of the temple in Jerusalem. And Ezekiel must have been delighted to write in detail about a stunning contrast, as now found in chapters 40 to 48. Here we see, not pure worship corrupted, but pure worship as it should have been—a glorious ideal of worshipping Jehovah according to the Mosaic Law.

¹⁶ To restore the worship of Jehovah to its rightful state, it would have to be elevated. Over a century earlier, the prophet Isaiah was inspired to write: “In the final part of the days, the mountain of the house of Jehovah will become firmly established above the top of the mountains, and it will be raised up above the hills.” (Isa. 2:2) Isaiah clearly foresaw that Jehovah’s pure worship would be restored and elevated, as if placed on the loftiest of mountains. And now, where did Ezekiel find himself in this divine vision?

16. How did Ezekiel’s temple vision confirm what Isaiah had foretold a century earlier?

He was “on a very high mountain,” looking at the house of Jehovah! (Ezek. 40:2) Ezekiel’s vision thus confirmed that pure worship would be restored.

¹⁷ Consider a brief overview of what Ezekiel saw and heard, as recorded in Ezekiel chapters 40 to 48. He watched as the angel measured the gates, the wall, the courtyards, and the sanctuary of the temple. (Ezek. 40-42) Then came a thrilling event: Jehovah’s glorious arrival at the temple! Jehovah gave counsel to his wayward people, to the priests, and to the chieftains. (Ezek. 43:1-12; 44:10-31; 45:9-12) Ezekiel saw a river flowing from the sanctuary, bringing life and blessings as it emptied into the Dead Sea. (Ezek. 47:1-12) And he saw the land itself divided into precise parcels, with pure worship taking its place near the center of the land. (Ezek. 45:1-8; 47:13–48:35) What was the overall impression? Clearly, Jehovah was reassuring his people that pure worship would be restored and exalted. He would bless his house of worship with his presence, and he would cause blessings to flow from that temple, bringing healing, life, and order to the restored land.

17. Provide an overview of Ezekiel chapters 40 to 48.

18 Second, was the vision meant to be taken literally? No. Ezekiel and his fellow exiles to whom he described his vision likely saw immediately that it was not meant to be taken literally. Why not? Recall that Ezekiel saw this temple on “a very high mountain.” While that tied in nicely with Isaiah’s prophecy, it did not fit the physical location of the temple. Solomon’s temple had been situated on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem, and that was where it would one day be rebuilt. But was that “a very high mountain”? No. In fact, Mount Moriah is ringed by other summits that are of equal or greater height. Also, the temple complex that Ezekiel saw was huge. With its broad perimeter enclosed by a wall, it was too large to fit on top of Mount Moriah. It would not even have fit within the city limits of the Jerusalem of Solomon’s day! Then, too, the exiles surely did not expect that a literal river would flow from the temple sanctuary and then empty into the Dead Sea, where it would heal those lifeless waters. Finally, the mountainous terrain of the Promised Land did not allow for straight,

18. Was the temple vision meant to be taken literally? Explain.

parallel borders between the tribes, as described in the vision. So the vision did not suggest a literal interpretation.

19 Third, what effect was the vision meant to have on Ezekiel’s people? When contemplating Jehovah’s lofty standards for pure worship, the people should have been moved to shame. Jehovah told Ezekiel to “describe the temple to the house of Israel.” Ezekiel’s description of this temple was to be so thorough that the Israelites could, in effect, “study its plan.” Why were the people to ponder over that temple? As we have seen, it was not in order to build it. Rather, it was, as Jehovah said, “so that they will feel ashamed because of their errors.”—**Read Ezekiel 43:10-12.**

20 Why might this vision touch the consciences of righteous people and move them to shame? Note what Ezekiel was told: “Son of man, pay attention, watch, and listen carefully to everything I tell you about *the statutes and the laws of the temple of Jehovah.*” (Ezek. 44:5) Again and again, Ezekiel heard about statutes and laws. (Ezek. 43:11, 12; 44:24; 46:14) **19-21. Jehovah meant for Ezekiel’s vision to have what effect on the people, and why might it move them in that way?**

Ezekiel was often reminded, too, about Jehovah’s standards—even the standard for the length of a cubit and the standard for accurate weights. (Ezek. 40:5; 45:10-12; compare Proverbs 16:11.) Why, over 50 times in this one vision, Ezekiel records the original-language words for “measure” and “measurement”!

²¹ Measurements, weights, laws, statutes—what was Jehovah telling his people? It seems that he was reminding them, in powerful language, of this vital truth: Jehovah alone sets the standards for pure worship. Those who had departed from those standards needed to feel ashamed! In what ways, though, did the vision teach the Jews such lessons? In the following chapter, we will consider some specific examples. That will help us to see more clearly what this remarkable vision means for us today.

YOUR PLACE IN PURE WORSHIP

- 1** What simple approach are we taking in our discussion of Ezekiel's temple vision?
- 2** Why do we no longer say that Ezekiel saw the great spiritual temple that the apostle Paul later described?
- 3** For Ezekiel and his fellow exiles, what was the overall prophetic message of the temple vision?

89 *Listen, Obey, and Be Blessed*

(Luke 11:28)

1. If we have listened to Christ, will we show it?
His teaching shines as it shows us the way.
It makes us happy to hear and to know it,
But we'll be blessed if we know and obey.

(CHORUS)

*Listen, obey, and be blessed
When you hear God's will expressed.
If you'd be happy and enter his rest,
Listen, obey, and be blessed.*

2. Our way of life, like a house, gives protection
When it is built on the rock, not on sand.
If we apply Jesus' loving direction,
We'll build a life which on bedrock will stand.

(Chorus)

3. Just as a tree rooted deep by the waters
Gives of its fruit when each season arrives,
If we obey as God's own sons and daughters,
We'll all be blessed and enjoy endless lives.

(Chorus)

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COVER PICTURE:

Jesus' disciples were drawn to him because he never assumed a superior attitude. He enjoyed association with his friends (See study article 29, paragraph 12)

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101 *Working Together in Unity*

(Ephesians 4:3)

1. From a world divided and cold,
 God has brought us into his fold.
 Unity and peace we possess,
 Bringing us happiness.
 Unity we cherish;
 Harmony is sweet.
 In God's work there's much to be done.
 He directs us now through his Son.
 May we serve obediently,
 Working in harmony.
2. As we pray to be of one mind,
 Always tender, loving, and kind,
 Love will grow and praise will increase,
 Giving us joy and peace.
 Peace is so refreshing,
 Bringing such delight.
 As we show true brotherly love,
 God will grant us peace from above.
 With his help, united we'll be,
 Serving him endlessly.

Avoid Stirring Up Competition —Promote Peace

“Let us not become egotistical, stirring up competition with one another, envying one another.”—GAL. 5:26.

SONG 101

Working Together in Unity

PREVIEW

Like small cracks that can weaken a clay vessel, the spirit of competition can weaken a congregation. If the congregation is not strong and united, it cannot be a peaceful place to worship God. This article will discuss why we should avoid developing a competitive spirit and what we can do to promote peace in the congregation.

IN THE world today, many people are selfishly motivated by a spirit of competition. A businessman may resort to cutthroat tactics to get ahead of his competitors. An athlete in a sporting event may deliberately injure a player on the other team in order to win the game. A student competing for a place at a prestigious university may cheat on the entrance exams. As Christians, we recognize that such conduct is wrong; it is part of “the works of the flesh.” (Gal. 5:19-21) However, could it be that some of Jehovah’s servants might stir up competition in the congregation without even realizing it? That is an important question because a spirit of competition can affect the unity of our brotherhood.

² In this article, we will discuss the negative qualities that can cause us to stir up competition with our brothers. We will also consider the examples of faithful men and women in Bible times who did not give in to the spirit of competition. First, let us consider how we can examine our motives.

EXAMINE YOUR MOTIVES

³ From time to time, it is a good idea to examine

-
1. What effect can a spirit of competition have on people?
 2. What will we discuss in this article?
 3. What questions should we ask ourselves?

our motives. We might ask ourselves: ‘Do I measure my worth by comparing myself with others? Am I motivated by a desire to view myself as the best at whatever I do or at least to see myself as better than a particular brother or sister? Or do I simply want to give my very best to Jehovah?’ Why should we ask those questions? Note what God’s Word says.

⁴ The Bible urges us to avoid comparing ourselves with others. (Read Galatians 6:3, 4.) Why? On the one hand, if we think we are doing better than our brother, we may become prideful. On the other hand, if we compare ourselves unfavorably with others, we will likely get discouraged. Either way, we will not be thinking with a sound mind. (Rom. 12:3) A sister named Katerina,* who lives in Greece, says: “I used to compare myself with others who seemed prettier, more effective in the ministry, and better at making friends. As a result, I felt worthless.” We must remember that Jehovah drew us to him, not because we are beautiful, articulate, or popular, but because we are willing to love

* Names have been changed.

4. Why should we avoid comparing ourselves with others, as mentioned at Galatians 6:3, 4?

him and to listen to his Son.—John 6:44; 1 Cor. 1: 26-31.

⁵ Another question we could ask ourselves is this, ‘Am I known as a peacemaker, or do I often find myself in the middle of a dispute?’ Note the experience of a brother named Hyun, who lives in South Korea. At one time, he viewed some who had privileges of service as his rivals. He says, “I was critical of these brothers, and I often disagreed with the things they said.” With what result? “My attitude caused disunity in the congregation,” he admits. Some of Hyun’s friends helped him to recognize his problem. Hyun made needed adjustments, and today he serves as an effective elder. If we see in ourselves a tendency to stir up competition rather than to promote peace, we must take action.

GUARD AGAINST EGOTISM AND ENVY

⁶ Read Galatians 5:26. What undesirable qualities can lead to manifesting a spirit of competition? One is *egotism*. An egotistical person is proud and selfish. Another bad trait is *envy*. Not only does an envious person want what another person has

-
5. What do you learn from the experience of a brother named Hyun?
 6. According to Galatians 5:26, what undesirable qualities contribute to a spirit of competition?

but he also wants to deprive the other person of what he has. Really, envy is a form of hatred. We certainly want to avoid those bad traits like the plague!

⁷ The negative qualities of egotism and envy could be likened to impurities contaminating the fuel that powers an aircraft. The plane may be able to take off, but the contaminants can block the fuel lines, causing the engines to lose power just before landing and the plane to crash. Similarly, someone may serve Jehovah for a while. But if he is motivated by egotism and envy, he will crash. (Prov. 16:18) He will stop serving Jehovah and will harm himself and others. How, though, can we guard against egotism and envy?

⁸ We can combat egotism by keeping in mind the apostle Paul's counsel to the Philippians: "Do nothing out of contentiousness or out of egotism, but with humility consider others superior to you." (Phil. 2:3) If we consider others superior to us, we will not compete with those who may have greater talents and abilities than we possess. On the contrary, we will be happy for them. That is especially

7. How could the damage caused by egotism and envy be illustrated?

8. How can we combat egotism?

true if they are using their abilities in Jehovah's service to his praise. In turn, if our gifted brothers and sisters are following Paul's advice, they will be focusing on qualities that they appreciate in us. As a result, we will all promote peace and unity in the congregation.

⁹ We can control our tendency toward envy by cultivating modesty, that is, by being aware of our own limitations. If we are modest, we will not try to prove that we are more talented or more capable than everyone else. Instead, we will look at how we can learn from those who are more capable than we are. For example, suppose a brother in the congregation gives excellent public talks. We might ask him how he goes about preparing his talks. If a sister is a fine cook, we might ask her for suggestions that will help us to improve in that area. And if a young Christian does not make friends easily, he might ask for advice from someone who is good at making friends. In these ways we can avoid envy and improve our own skills.

LEARN FROM BIBLE EXAMPLES

¹⁰ Consider the incident involving *Gideon*, who

9. How can we control our tendency to be envious?

10. What challenge did Gideon face?

was from the tribe of Manasseh, and the men of the tribe of Ephraim. With Jehovah’s backing, Gideon and his 300 men had a remarkable victory for which they could have taken great pride. The men of Ephraim met Gideon, not to commend him, but to quarrel with him. It appears that their pride was hurt because Gideon had not invited them from the beginning to join in the fight against God’s enemies. They were so focused on protecting the honor of their tribe that they failed to see the big picture—Gideon had just helped to honor Jehovah’s name and to protect His people.—Judg. 8:1.

¹¹ Gideon humbly said to the men of Ephraim: “What have I done compared with you?” He then

11. How did Gideon respond to the men of Ephraim?

Because he was humble, Gideon maintained peace with the Ephraimites (See paragraphs 10-12)



gave them a specific example of how Jehovah had blessed them. As a result, the men “calmed down.” (Judg. 8:2, 3) Gideon willingly set pride aside in order to maintain peace among God’s people.

¹² What can we learn from this account? From the example of the Ephraimites, we learn that we should not become more focused on protecting our own honor than on honoring Jehovah. As family heads and elders, we can learn a lesson from Gideon. If someone is upset by something we did, we should try to see things from his perspective. We can also commend the person for what he has done well. That will require humility on our part, especially if the other person is clearly in the wrong. But peace is worth much more than our personal pride.

¹³ Think, too, of the example of *Hannah*. She was married to a Levite named Elkanah, who loved her very much. But Elkanah had another wife, Peninnah. Elkanah loved Hannah more than he loved Peninnah; however, “Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.” Because of this, Peninnah taunted Hannah “relentlessly in order to upset her.” How did Hannah react? She became very

12. What do we learn from the example of the Ephraimites and that of Gideon?

13. What challenge did Hannah face, and how did she overcome it?

upset! “She would weep and not eat.” (1 Sam. 1:2, 6, 7) Yet, there is no record that Hannah tried to take revenge on Peninnah in some way. Instead, she poured out her heart to Jehovah and trusted that he would make matters right. Did Peninnah’s attitude toward Hannah change? The Bible does not say. But we do know that Hannah regained and maintained her inner peace. “Her face was no longer downcast.”—1 Sam. 1:10, 18.

¹⁴ What can we learn from Hannah’s example? If someone tries to compete with you in some way, remember that you are in control of the situation. You do not have to allow yourself to be drawn into the competition. Instead of repaying evil for evil, try to make peace with the person. (Rom. 12:17-21) Even if he does not respond, you will maintain your inner peace.

¹⁵ Finally, consider what we can learn from the examples of the disciple *Apollos* and the apostle *Paul*. Both men had an excellent knowledge of the Scriptures. Both were prominent and influential teachers. And both had helped to make many disciples. But neither man viewed the other as a rival.

14. What do we learn from Hannah’s example?

15. How were Apollos and Paul similar?



Because she trusted in Jehovah to make matters right, Hannah regained her inner peace (See paragraphs 13-14)

¹⁶ Apollos was “a native of Alexandria,” which was a center of learning in the first century. He was apparently a gifted speaker, and he was “well-versed in the Scriptures.” (Acts 18:24) When Apollos spent time in Corinth, some in the congregation made it obvious that they preferred him over other brothers, including Paul. (1 Cor. 1:12, 13) Did Apollos promote that divisive attitude? We cannot imagine that he did. In fact, some time after Apollos left Corinth, Paul urged him to return there. (1 Cor. 16:12) Paul would never have done that if he had felt that Apollos was dividing the congregation. Clearly, Apollos used his gifts in a good way—to proclaim the good news and to strengthen his brothers. We can also be sure that Apollos was a humble man. For example, there is no record that he took offense

16. How would you describe Apollos?



Because they realized that Jehovah was blessing the work, Apollos and Paul were not rivals

(See paragraphs 15-18)

when Aquila and Priscilla “explained the way of God more accurately to him.”—Acts 18:24-28.

¹⁷ The apostle Paul was aware of the good work done by Apollos. But Paul did not feel threatened by him. Paul’s humility, modesty, and reasonableness are seen in the counsel that he gave to the congregation in Corinth. Instead of being flattered by those who were saying “I belong to Paul,” he directed all attention to Jehovah God and to Jesus Christ.—1 Cor. 3:3-6.

¹⁸ What can we learn from the examples of Apollos and Paul? We may work hard for Jehovah, and we may help many progress to baptism. But we re-

17. How did Paul promote peace?

18. Based on 1 Corinthians 4:6, 7, what do we learn from the examples of Apollos and Paul?



Avoid Stirring Up Competition

We might unintentionally contribute to a spirit of competition in the congregation if we inappropriately share our opinion as to who is the best speaker, who gives the best comments, or who is the most productive pioneer. We might compare one elder with another whose particular gifts we appreciate. Elders are only human, and if an elder finds himself being constantly compared with another, he could begin to view his brother as a rival. That would be damaging to the congregation.

alize that any success we have is only because of Jehovah's blessing. From the examples of Apollos and Paul, we learn another lesson—the more prominence we have, the greater our opportunity to promote peace. How grateful we are when appointed men promote peace and unity by basing their counsel on God's Word and by focusing attention, not on

themselves, but on our model, Christ Jesus!—Read **1 Corinthians 4:6, 7.**

¹⁹ Each one of us has some God-given talent or ability. We can use that gift “in ministering to one another.” (1 Pet. 4:10) We may feel that the part we play is small. But the small acts that promote unity are like the small stitches that hold a garment together. May we work hard to remove from ourselves any trace of a competitive spirit. Let us be determined to do all we can to promote peace and unity in the congregation.—Eph. 4:3.

19. What can each of us do? (See also the box “Avoid Stirring Up Competition.”)

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- Why should we examine our motives?
- How can we avoid promoting a spirit of competition?
- What did you learn from the examples set by Gideon, Hannah, Apollos, and the apostle Paul?

“Taste and See That Jehovah Is Good”

(Psalm 34:8)

1. Our service to God we cherish;
We value our priv’lege to preach.
We buy out the time and give God our best,
For many we still need to reach.

(CHORUS)

*God’s Word invites us: ‘Come taste and see—
See that Jehovah is good.’
Godly devotion brings greatest gain,
We know we’ve done all we could.*

2. For those in the full-time service,
Rich blessings and treasures abound.
By trusting in God to care for our needs,
In all things contentment is found.

(Chorus)