

Saturday, January 1

From infancy you have known the holy writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

—2 Tim. 3:15.

Timothy's faith was built on facts that drew him closer to Jehovah. You too must logically reason on what you have learned about Jehovah from reading the Bible. To start with, you need to prove to yourself at least three basic truths. First, you need to be convinced that Jehovah God is the Creator of all things. (Ex. 3:14, 15; Heb. 3:4; Rev. 4:11) Second, you must prove to yourself that the Bible is God's inspired message to mankind. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17) And third, you need to confirm that Jehovah has an organized group of people who are worshipping him under Christ's headship and that Jehovah's Witnesses are that group. (Isa. 43:10-12; John 14:6; Acts 15:14) This does not require that you become a walking encyclopedia of Bible knowledge. Your goal should be to use your "power of reason" to strengthen your conviction that you have the truth.—Rom. 12:1. *w20.07* 10 ¶8-9

Sunday, January 2

It was granted the locusts, not to kill them, but to torment them five months.—Rev. 9:5.

This prophecy describes a swarm of locusts that have human faces and 'what seem to be crowns of gold' on their heads. (Rev. 9:7) They torment "those people [God's enemies] who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads" for a period of five months, the average life span of a locust. (Rev. 9:4) This does indeed appear to be a description of Jehovah's

anointed servants. They boldly proclaim God's judgments against this wicked system of things and, as a result, make its supporters very uncomfortable. Are we saying that the locusts described at Joel 2:7-9 are not the same as the locusts presented in the book of Revelation? Yes. In the Bible, it is not unusual for a symbol to convey different meanings in different settings. For example, at Revelation 5:5, Jesus is called "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," whereas at 1 Peter 5:8, the Devil is described as "a roaring lion." *w20.04* 3 ¶8; 5 ¶10

Monday, January 3

The eyes of Jehovah are everywhere, watching both the bad and the good.—Prov. 15:3.

Hagar, the maidservant of Sarai, acted foolishly after she was given as a wife to Abram. Hagar became pregnant and then began to look down on Sarai, who had no children of her own. The situation became so bad that Sarai chased Hagar away. (Gen. 16:4-6) From our imperfect viewpoint, Hagar might appear to be no more than a spiteful woman who got what she deserved. But Jehovah saw more in Hagar. He sent his angel to her. When the angel found her, he helped her to adjust her attitude and blessed her. Hagar sensed that Jehovah had been watching her and knew all about her situation. She was moved to call him "a God of sight, . . . the one who sees me." (Gen. 16:7-13) What did Jehovah see in Hagar? He was fully aware of her background and everything she had been through. While Jehovah did not excuse Hagar's disrespect for Sarai, we can be sure that he took Hagar's background and her situation into account. *w20.04* 16 ¶8-9

Tuesday, January 4

I have run the race to the finish.

—2 Tim. 4:7.

The apostle Paul said that all true Christians are in a race. (Heb. 12:1) And all of us, young or old, energetic or tired, must endure to the end if we want to receive the prize that Jehovah offers us. (Matt. 24:13) Paul had freeness of speech because he had successfully “run the race to the finish.” (2 Tim. 4:7, 8) But what, specifically, is the race that Paul spoke about? Paul sometimes used features from the games held in ancient Greece to teach important lessons. (1 Cor. 9:25-27; 2 Tim. 2:5) On a number of occasions, he used running as in a footrace to illustrate the Christian course of life. (1 Cor. 9:24; Gal. 2:2; Phil. 2:16) A person enters this “race” when he dedicates himself to Jehovah and gets baptized. (1 Pet. 3:21) He crosses the finish line when Jehovah grants him the prize of everlasting life.—Matt. 25:31-34, 46; 2 Tim. 4:8. *w20.04* 26 ¶1-3

Wednesday, January 5

Take up the complete suit of armor from God.—Eph. 6:13.

“The Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the wicked one.” (2 Thess. 3:3) How does Jehovah protect us? Jehovah has made available to us a suit of armor that can protect us from Satan’s attacks. (Eph. 6:13-17) This spiritual armor is strong and effective! But it will protect us only if we put on each piece of the armor—and keep it on. For instance, the belt of truth represents the truths found in God’s Word, the Bible. Why must we wear this

belt? Because Satan is “the father of the lie.” (John 8:44) He has had thousands of years to practice his lying and has misled “the entire inhabited earth”! (Rev. 12:9) But the truths contained in the Bible protect us from being deceived. How do we wear this symbolic belt? We do so by learning the truth about Jehovah, by worshipping him “with spirit and truth,” and by conducting ourselves honestly in all things.—John 4:24; Eph. 4:25; Heb. 13:18. *w21.03* 26-27 ¶3-5

Thursday, January 6

He will also enter into the land of the Decoration.—Dan. 11:41.

What made that land especially precious was that it was the location where true worship was practiced. Since Pentecost 33 C.E., that “land” is not a single, literal geographic location; it cannot be, for Jehovah’s people are spread throughout the earth. Rather, “the land of the Decoration” today is the realm of activity of Jehovah’s people that includes such things as their worship of Jehovah through meetings and the field ministry. During the last days, the king of the north has repeatedly entered into “the land of the Decoration.” For example, when Nazi Germany filled the role of the king of the north, particularly during the second world war, that king entered into “the land of the Decoration” by persecuting and killing God’s people. After World War II when the Soviet Union took on the role of the king of the north, that king entered into “the land of the Decoration” by persecuting God’s people, exiling them. *w20.05* 13 ¶7-8

Friday, January 7

Close friendship with Jehovah belongs to those who fear him, and he makes his covenant known to them.—Ps. 25:14.

Consider some pre-Christian men who became friends of God. Abraham was a man who showed outstanding faith. Over 1,000 years after Abraham's death, Jehovah called him "my friend." (Isa. 41:8) So not even death can separate Jehovah from his close friends. Abraham is alive in Jehovah's memory. (Luke 20: 37, 38) Another example is Job. Before an assembly of the angels in heaven, Jehovah spoke confidently about Job. Jehovah called him "an upright man of integrity, fearing God and shunning what is bad." (Job 1:6-8) And how did Jehovah feel about Daniel, who served God faithfully in a pagan land for about 80 years? Three times angels assured that aged man that he was "very precious" to God. (Dan. 9:23; 10:11, 19) We can be certain that Jehovah longs for the day when he will resurrect his beloved friends who have died.—Job 14:15. *w20.05* 26-27 ¶3-4

Saturday, January 8

Teach me your regulations.

—Ps. 119:68.

A good student may learn about God's laws, even admire them. But will the student obey Jehovah out of love for him as a Person? Remember, Eve knew God's law, but she did not truly love the Lawgiver; nor did Adam. (Gen. 3:1-6) So we must do more than teach others about God's righteous requirements and standards. Jehovah's requirements and standards are appealing and beautiful. (Ps. 119:97, 111, 112) But our students may not see them that way un-

less they see Jehovah's love behind those laws. So we might ask our students: "Why do you think God asks his servants to do this or to refrain from doing this? What does that tell us about him as a Person?" If we help our students to think about Jehovah and to develop real love for his glorious name, we are more likely to reach their heart. Our students will come to love not only the laws but also the Lawgiver. They will grow in faith and will be helped to endure fiery tests to come.—1 Cor. 3: 12-15. *w20.06* 10 ¶10-11

Sunday, January 9

Be quick to listen, slow to speak.

—Jas. 1:19.

We need to be patient because it takes time for a person to heal spiritually. Many formerly inactive ones admit that they responded only after repeated visits by the elders and others in the congregation. A sister named Nancy, from Southeast Asia, writes: "A close friend in the congregation helped me a great deal. She loved me like an older sister. She reminded me of the good times we shared in the past. She would listen patiently as I expressed my feelings, and she did not hesitate to give me advice. She proved to be a true friend, ready to help at any time." Empathy is like a powerful ointment; it can help to heal hurt feelings. Some inactive ones have struggled for years with bitter feelings toward someone in the congregation. These feelings have stifled the desire to return to Jehovah. Some may think that they were treated unjustly. They may need someone who will listen to them and understand their feelings. *w20.06* 26 ¶10-11

Song 124 and Prayer | Opening Comments (1 min.)

 TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

“Betrayal—How Contemptible!”: (10 min.)

Spiritual Gems: (10 min.)

Jg 16:1-3—How are we to understand these verses? (w05 3/15 27 ¶6)

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.) Jg 16:18-31 (10)

 APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

Initial Call Video: (5 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Initial Call: God Cares—Mt 10:29-31* (video category OUR MEETINGS AND MINISTRY). Stop the video at each pause, and ask the audience the questions that appear in the video.

Initial Call: (3 min.) Use the sample conversation. (3)

Initial Call: (5 min.) Begin with the sample conversation. Then offer the *Enjoy Life Forever!* brochure, and introduce (but do not play) the video *Why Study the Bible?* (9)

 LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

Song 131

The Bible Saved Our Marriage: (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video (video category FAMILY). Then ask the audience: Which Bible principles helped each couple to save their marriage? How did restoring a good spiritual routine help them? Why must couples not give up in combating marital problems? Where can couples seek spiritual help? —Jas 5:14, 15.

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.) rr chap. 18 ¶9-15, box 18A

 Betrayal—How Contemptible!

Delilah was tempted to betray Samson for money (Jg 16:4, 5; w12 4/15 8 ¶4)

Delilah nagged Samson until he revealed his secret (Jg 16:15-18; w05 1/15 27 ¶5)

Christians must show loyalty in the family and in the congregation (1Th 2:10; w12 4/15 11-12 ¶15-16)

Jehovah rewards those who remain loyal. —Ps 18:25, 26.



Ever Loyal

(Psalm 18:25)

Bb7sus4 Bb7 Eb Fm11 Bb7/F Eb/G Ab

Ev - er loy - al to Je - ho - vah, Loy - al
 Ev - er loy - al to our broth - ers, Stick - ing
 Ev - er loy - al to their guid - ance When our

R.H.

Eb/Bb Gm Gm7 Ab C7sus4 C7

love we wish to show. As a
 close in times of need. Ev - er
 broth - ers lead the way. When they

Fm Gm11 C7/G Fm/Ab Bb/C C7

peo - ple, ded - i - cat - ed, His com -
 car - ing, al - ways trust - ing, Ev - er
 give us clear di - rec - tion, May we

R.H.

Fm Ab/Eb Dm11 G7

mands we want to know. His ad -
 kind in word and deed. We show
 loy - al - ly o - bey. Then the

Ever Loyal

Cm Ab Eb/G G7

vice will nev - er fail us, And his
 hon - or to our broth - ers
 bless - ing from Je - ho - vah Will be

R.H.

Cm Eb/F F9 Bb Bb/Ab Eb/G

coun - sel we o - bey. He is
 spect them from the heart. Ev - er
 ours to make us strong. When we're

Fm7 Bb Bb/Ab Eb/G Cm9 Cm

loy - al; we can trust him. From his
 loy - al, ev - er clos - er, From their
 loy - al, ev - er faith - ful, To Je -

R.H. R.H.

Fm7 Bb7sus4 Bb7 Eb

side we'll nev - er stray.
 side we'll nev - er part.
 ho - vah we'll be - long.

R.H.

(See also Ps. 149:1; 1 Tim. 2:8; Heb. 13:17.)

8 Later when he was going back to take her home,^a he turned aside to look at the dead body of the lion, and there in the lion's carcass was a swarm of bees and honey. 9 So he scraped the honey out into his hands and ate it as he walked along. When he rejoined his father and mother, he gave them some to eat. But he did not tell them that he had scraped the honey out of the carcass of a lion.

10 His father went down to the woman, and Samson held a banquet there, for that was what the young men used to do. 11 When they saw him, they brought 30 groomsmen to accompany him. 12 Then Samson said to them: "Please let me tell you a riddle. If during the seven days of the banquet you solve it and tell me the answer, I will have to give you 30 linen garments and 30 outfits of clothing. 13 But if you are unable to tell me the answer, you must give me 30 linen garments and 30 outfits of clothing." They said: "Tell us your riddle; we want to hear it." 14 So he said to them:

"Out of the eater came something to eat,
And out of the strong came something sweet."^b

They were unable to solve the riddle for three days. 15 On the fourth day, they said to Samson's wife: "Trick your husband^c so that he will tell us the answer to the riddle. Otherwise, we will burn you and your father's house with fire. Did you invite us here to take our possessions?" 16 So Samson's wife wept over him and said: "You must hate me; you do not love me.^d You told a riddle to my people, but you have not told the answer to me." At this he said to her: "Why, I have not told it even to my own father and mother!

CHAP. 14

a Ge 24:67
Mt 1:24

b Jg 14:8, 9

c Jg 16:5

d Jg 16:15

Second Col.

a Jg 16:16, 18

b Jg 14:14

c Jg 14:15

d Jg 13:24, 25
Jg 14:6
Jg 15:14

e Jos 13:2, 3
Jg 1:18

f Jg 14:12

g Jg 14:2

h Jg 14:11
Jg 15:1, 2

CHAP. 15

i Jg 14:17

j Jg 14:11, 20

Should I tell it to you?" 17 But she kept weeping over him the rest of the seven-day banquet. He finally told her on the seventh day, because she had pressured him. Then she told her people the answer to the riddle.^a 18 So on the seventh day before the sun set,^{*} the men of the city said to him:

"What is sweeter than honey,
And what is stronger than a lion?"^b

He replied to them:

"If you had not plowed with
my young cow,^c
You would not have solved
my riddle."

19 Then Jehovah's spirit empowered him,^d and he went down to Ash'ke-lon^e and struck down 30 of their men and took their clothing and gave the outfits to those who had answered the riddle.^f He was furious as he went back up to his father's house.

20 Samson's wife^g was then given to one of his groomsmen who had accompanied him.^h

15 After a while, in the days of the wheat harvest, Samson went to visit his wife, bringing a young goat. He said: "I wish to go in to my wife in the bedroom."^{*} But her father did not allow him to go in. 2 Her father said: "I thought, 'You must surely hate her.'ⁱ So I gave her to your groomsmen.^j Is not her younger sister more attractive than she is? Please, take her instead." 3 However, Samson said to them: "This time I cannot be blamed by the Philis'tines for harming them."

4 So Samson went and caught 300 foxes. Then he took torches, turned the foxes tail to

14:18 *Or possibly, "before he went into the interior room." 15:1 *Or "the interior room."

tail, and put one torch between each pair of tails. **5** Then he set fire to the torches and sent the foxes out into the fields of standing grain of the Phi-lis'-tines. He set on fire everything from sheaf to standing grain, as well as the vineyards and the olive groves.

6 The Phi-lis'tines asked: "Who did this?" They were told: "It was Samson, the son-in-law of the Tim'nite, because he took his wife and gave her to his groomsman."^a At that the Phi-lis'tines went up and burned her and her father with fire.^b **7** Then Samson said to them: "If this is how you act, I will not quit until I take revenge on you."^c **8** Then he struck them down one after the other* with a great slaughter, after which he went down and stayed in a cave[#] of the crag E'tam.

9 Later the Phi-lis'tines came up and camped in Judah and were tramping about in Le'-hi.^d **10** Then the men of Judah said: "Why have you come up against us?" to which they answered: "We have come up to capture* Samson, to do to him just as he did to us." **11** So 3,000 men of Judah went down to the cave[#] of the crag E'tam and said to Samson: "Do you not know that the Phi-lis'tines are ruling over us?"^e So why have you done this to us?" He said to them: "As they did to me, so I did to them." **12** But they said to him: "We have come to capture* you and to hand you over to the Phi-lis'tines." Then Samson said: "Swear to me that you yourselves will not assault me." **13** They said to him: "No, we will only tie you and hand you over to them, but we will not put you to death."

15:8 *Lit., "struck them leg on thigh."
15:8, 11 *Or "cleft." 15:10, 12 *Or "tie."

CHAP. 15

a Jg 14:11, 20

b Jg 14:15

c Jg 14:4

d 2Sa 23:11, 12

e Jg 13:1

Second Col.

a Jg 13:24, 25
Jg 14:5, 6

b Jg 16:9, 12

c Jg 3:31

d Jg 16:30

e Jg 15:9

f Ex 17:6

g Ge 49:16
Jg 2:16
Jg 13:1, 5
Jg 16:31
Heb 11:32

So they bound him with two new ropes and brought him up from the crag. **14** When he came to Le'hi, the Phi-lis'tines shouted triumphantly at meeting him. Then Jehovah's spirit empowered him,^a and the ropes on his arms became like linen threads that were scorched with fire, and his fetters melted off his hands.^b **15** He now found a fresh jawbone of a male donkey; he reached out and grabbed it and struck down 1,000 men with it.^c **16** Then Samson said:

"With the jawbone of a donkey—one heap, two heaps!
With the jawbone of a donkey I struck down 1,000 men."^d

17 When he finished speaking, he threw the jawbone away and called that place Ra'math-le'hi.^{*e} **18** Then he became very thirsty, and he called on Jehovah and said: "It was you who gave this great salvation into the hand of your servant. But now am I to die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?" **19** So God split open a hollow that was in Le'hi, and water flowed from it.^f When he drank, his spirit* returned and he revived. That is why he named the place En-hak-kor'e,[#] which is in Le'hi to this day.

20 And he judged Israel in the days of the Phi-lis'tines for 20 years.^g

16 One time Samson went to Gaz'a and saw a prostitute there, and he went in to her. **2** The Gaz'ites were told: "Samson has come here." So they surrounded him and lay in ambush for him all night long in the city gate. They stayed quiet the whole night, saying

15:17 *Meaning "Lofty Place of the Jawbone." 15:19 *Or "strength." #Meaning "Spring of the One Calling."

to themselves: "When daylight comes, we will kill him."

3 However, Samson kept lying there until midnight. Then he got up at midnight and grabbed the doors of the city gate and the two side posts and pulled them out along with the bar. He put them on his shoulders and carried them up to the top of the mountain that faces Heb'ron.

4 After that he fell in love with a woman in the Valley* of So'rek whose name was De-li'-lah.^a **5** So the lords of the Phi-lis'tines approached her and said: "Trick* him^b and find out what gives him such great strength and how we can overpower him and tie him and subdue him. For this we will each give you 1,100 silver pieces."

6 De-li'lah later said to Samson: "Please tell me where your great power comes from and what can be used to tie you and subdue you." **7** Samson said to her: "If they tie me with seven fresh bowstrings* that have not been dried out, I will grow as weak as an ordinary man." **8** So the lords of the Phi-lis'tines brought up to her seven fresh bowstrings that had not been dried out, and she tied him with them. **9** Now they set an ambush in the inner room, and she called out to him: "The Phi-lis'tines are upon you, Samson!" At that he tore apart the bowstrings, just as easily as a thread of flax* comes apart when it touches fire.^c The secret of his power did not become known.

10 Then De-li'lah said to Samson: "Look! You have fooled me* and told me lies. Now tell me, please, what can be used to tie you." **11** So he said to her: "If they tie me up with new ropes

16:4 *Or "Wadi." 16:5 *Or "Persuade."
16:7 *Or "sinews." 16:9 *Or "tow."
16:10 *Or "trifled with me."

CHAP. 16
a Jg 16:18

b Jg 14:15

c Jg 15:14

Second Col.

a Jg 16:9

b Jg 16:7,11

c Jg 14:16

d Jg 16:7
Jg 16:11
Jg 16:13

e Jg 14:17

f Nu 6:5
Jg 13:5,7

g Jg 16:5

that have not been used for work, I will grow as weak as an ordinary man." **12** So De-li'-lah took new ropes and tied him with them and called out: "The Phi-lis'tines are upon you, Samson!" (All the while the ambush was set in the inner room.) At that he tore them off his arms like threads.^a

13 After that De-li'lah said to Samson: "Up until now you have fooled me and told me lies.^b Tell me what can be used to tie you." Then he said to her: "If you weave the seven braids of my head with the warp thread." **14** So she fixed them with a pin and called out to him: "The Phi-lis'tines are upon you, Samson!" So he woke up from his sleep and pulled out the loom pin and the warp thread.

15 She now said to him: "How can you say, 'I love you,'^c when your heart is not with me? These three times you have fooled me and have not told me the source of your great power."^d **16** Because day after day she kept nagging him and pressuring him, he* was weary to the point of dying.^e **17** So he finally opened his heart to her, saying: "A razor has never touched my head, because I am a Naz'i-rite of God from birth.^f If I am shaved, my power will leave me and I will grow weak and become like all other men."

18 When De-li'lah saw that he had opened his heart to her, she immediately summoned the Phi-lis'tine lords,^g saying: "Come up this time, for he has opened his heart to me." So the Phi-lis'tine lords came up to her, bringing the money with them. **19** She made him fall asleep on her knees; then she called the man and had him shave off the seven braids of his head. After that

16:16 *Or "his soul." 16:17 *Lit., "from my mother's womb."

she began to have control over him, for his power was leaving him. **20** Now she called out: "The Phi-lis'tines are upon you, Samson!" He woke up from his sleep and said: "I will go out as at other times^a and shake myself free." But he did not know that Jehovah had left him. **21** So the Phi-lis'tines seized him and bored his eyes out. Then they brought him down to Gaz'a and bound him with two copper fetters, and he became a grinder of grain in the prison. **22** But the hair of his head started to grow back again after he had been shaved.^b

23 The Phi-lis'tine lords gathered together to offer a great sacrifice to Da'gon^c their god and to celebrate, for they were saying: "Our god has given Samson our enemy into our hand!" **24** When the people saw him, they praised their god and said: "Our god has given into our hand our enemy, the one who devastated our land^d and killed so many of us."^e

25 Because their heart was cheerful, they said: "Call Samson to provide us some amusement." So they called Samson out of the prison to entertain them; they made him stand between the pillars. **26** Then Samson said to the boy holding him by the hand: "Let me feel the pillars that support the house, so that I can lean against them." **27** (Incidentally, the house was full of men and women. All the Phi-lis'tine lords were there, and on the roof there were about 3,000 men and women who were looking on while Samson provided amusement.)

28 Samson^f now called out to Jehovah: "Sovereign Lord Jehovah, remember me, please, and strengthen me,^g please, just this once, O God, and let me take re-

CHAP. 16

a Jg 16:9
Jg 16:12
Jg 16:14

b Jg 13:5

c 1Sa 5:4

d Jg 15:4, 5

e Jg 15:7, 8
Jg 15:15, 16

f Heb 11:32

g Jg 14:5, 6
Jg 14:19
Jg 15:14

Second Col.

a Jg 16:21

b Jg 16:27

c Jg 14:19
Jg 15:7, 8
Jg 15:15, 16

d Jg 13:2

e Jg 13:8

f Jg 2:16
Jg 15:20

CHAP. 17

g Jos 17:14, 15

h Ex 20:4
Le 26:1
De 27:15

i Ex 28:6
Jg 8:27

j Ge 31:19

venge on the Phi-lis'tines for one of my two eyes."^a

29 Then Samson braced himself against the two middle pillars that supported the house, and he leaned on them with his right hand on one and his left hand on the other. **30** Samson called out: "Let me^{*} die with the Phi-lis'tines!" Then he pushed with all his might, and the house fell on the lords and all the people in it.^b So he killed more at his death than he had killed during his life.^c

31 Later his brothers and all his father's family came down to take him back. They brought him up and buried him between Zo'rah^d and Esh'ta-ol in the tomb of Ma-no'ah^e his father. He had judged Israel for 20 years.^f

17 There was a man of the mountainous region of E'phra-im^g named Mi'cah. **2** He said to his mother: "The 1,100 silver pieces that were taken from you about which you pronounced a curse, which I heard—look! the silver is with me. I was the one who took it." At that his mother said: "May Jehovah bless my son." **3** So he gave the 1,100 pieces of silver back to his mother, but his mother said: "I will without fail sanctify the silver to Jehovah for my hand for my son to use in making a carved image and a metal statue."^h Now I give it back to you."

4 After he returned the silver to his mother, his mother took 200 silver pieces and gave them to the silversmith. He made a carved image and a metal statue;^{*} and they were put in Mi'cah's house. **5** This man Mi'cah had a house of gods, and he made an eph'odⁱ and teraphim statues^j and installed^k one of

16:30 *Or "my soul." 17:3, 4 *Or "molten statue." 17:5 *Or "household gods; idols." ^kLit., "filled the hand of."

Song 124 and Prayer | Opening Comments (1 min.)

 TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

“Betrayal—How Contemptible!”: (10 min.)

Spiritual Gems: (10 min.)

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 LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

Song 131

The Bible Saved Our Marriage: (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video (video category FAMILY). Then ask the audience: Which Bible principles helped each couple to save their marriage? How did restoring a good spiritual routine help them? Why must couples not give up in combating marital problems? Where can couples seek spiritual help? —Jas 5:14, 15.

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 Betrayal—How Contemptible!

Delilah was tempted to betray Samson for money (Jg 16:4, 5; w12 4/15 8 ¶4)

Delilah nagged Samson until he revealed his secret (Jg 16:15-18; w05 1/15 27 ¶5)

Christians must show loyalty in the family and in the congregation (1Th 2:10; w12 4/15 11-12 ¶15-16)

Jehovah rewards those who remain loyal. —Ps 18:25, 26.



January 3-9 / Judges 15-16

Song 124 and Prayer

Opening Comments (1 minute)

Treasures From God's Word

"Betrayal—How Contemptible!": (10 minutes)

Delilah was tempted to betray Samson for money

Judges 16:4, 5: After that he fell in love with a woman in the Valley of Sorek whose name was Delilah. So the lords of the Philistines approached her and said: "Trick him and find out what gives him such great strength and how we can overpower him and tie him and subdue him. For this we will each give you 1,100 silver pieces."

w12 4/15 8 paragraph 4

First, consider conniving Delilah, with whom Judge Samson had fallen in love. Samson was intent on leading the fight against the Philistines on behalf of God's people. Perhaps knowing that Delilah had no loyal love for Samson, the five Philistine lords offered her a large bribe to find out the secret of his superior strength so that they could eliminate him. Mercenary Delilah accepted their offer, but her attempts to uncover Samson's secret failed three times. She then kept on pressuring him "with her words all the time and kept urging him." Finally, "his soul got to be impatient to the point of dying." So he told her that his hair had never been cut and that if it was, he would lose his power. Knowing that, Delilah had Samson's hair shaved off while he was asleep on her lap, and then she turned him over to his enemies to do to him whatever they wanted. (Judges 16:4, 5, 15-21) How contemptible her action was! All because of her greed, Delilah betrayed someone who loved her.

Delilah nagged Samson until he revealed his secret

Judges 16:15-18: She now said to him: "How can you say, 'I love you,' when your heart is not with me? These three times you have fooled me and have not told me the source of your great power." Because day after day she kept nagging him and pressuring him, he was weary to the point of dying. So he finally opened his heart to her, saying: "A razor has never touched my head, because I am a Nazirite of God from birth. If I am shaved, my power will leave me and I will grow weak and become

like all other men." When Delilah saw that he had opened his heart to her, she immediately summoned the Philistine lords, saying: "Come up this time, for he has opened his heart to me." So the Philistine lords came up to her, bringing the money with them.

w05 1/15 27 paragraph 5

Judges 14:16, 17; 16:16. Applying pressure by weeping and nagging can damage a relationship.—
Proverbs 19:13; 21:19.

[Image:] Samson sleeping on Delilah's lap as she signals a man to shave off his braids.

Christians must show loyalty in the family and in the congregation

1 Thessalonians 2:10: You are witnesses, God is also, of how loyal and righteous and blameless we behaved toward you believers.

w12 4/15 11-12 paragraphs 15-16

15 How can those who are married remain loyal to their mates? God's Word says: "Rejoice with the wife [or husband] of your youth" and, "See life with the wife [or husband] whom you love." (Proverbs 5:18; Ecclesiastes 9:9) As both mates grow older, they must be "fully present" in their relationship, both physically and emotionally. That means being attentive *to each other*, spending time *with each other*, and drawing closer *to each other*. They have to focus on preserving their marriage and their relationship with Jehovah. To that end, couples need to study the Bible *together*, regularly work in the ministry *together*, and pray *together* for Jehovah's blessing.

Remain Loyal to Jehovah

16 There are members of the congregation who committed serious sins and who were reprovved "with severity, that they may be healthy in the faith." (Titus 1:13) For some, their conduct has required that they be disfellowshipped. For "those who have been trained by it," the discipline has helped them to become spiritually restored. (Hebrews 12:11) What if we have a relative or a close friend who is disfellowshipped? Now our loyalty is on the line, not to that person, but to God. Jehovah is watching us to see whether we will abide by his command not to have contact with *anyone* who is disfellowshipped.—Read 1 Corinthians 5:11-13.

Jehovah rewards those who remain loyal.—Psalm 18:25, 26.

Spiritual Gems

Judges 16:1-3—How are we to understand these verses?

Judges 16:1-3: One time Samson went to Gaza and saw a prostitute there, and he went in to her. The Gazites were told: "Samson has come here." So they surrounded him and lay in ambush for him all night long in the city gate. They stayed quiet the whole night, saying to themselves: "When daylight comes, we will kill him." However, Samson kept lying there until midnight. Then he got up at midnight and grabbed the doors of the city gate and the two side posts and pulled them out along with the bar. He put them on his shoulders and carried them up to the top of the mountain that faces Hebron.

w05 3/15 27 paragraph 6

Samson was single-minded in the pursuit of his objective, his fight against the Philistines. His staying at the house of a prostitute at Gaza was for the purpose of fighting against God's enemies. Samson needed a lodging place for the night in an enemy city, and it could be found in the house of a prostitute. Samson had no immoral purpose in mind. He left the woman's house at midnight, grabbed the city gates and the two side posts, and carried them to the top of a mountain near Hebron, which was some 37 miles [60 kilometers] away. This was done with divine approval and God-given strength.—Judges 16:1-3.

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) Judges 16:18-31 (*th* study 10)

Song 124 and Prayer | Opening Comments (1 min.)

 TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

“Betrayal—How Contemptible!”: (10 min.)

Spiritual Gems: (10 min.)

Jg 16:1-3—How are we to understand these verses? (w05 3/15 27 ¶6)

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.) Jg 16:18-31 (10)

 APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

Initial Call Video: (5 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Initial Call: God Cares—Mt 10:29-31* (video category OUR MEETINGS AND MINISTRY). Stop the video at each pause, and ask the audience the questions that appear in the video.

Initial Call: (3 min.) Use the sample conversation. (3)

Initial Call: (5 min.) Begin with the sample conversation. Then offer the *Enjoy Life Forever!* brochure, and introduce (but do not play) the video *Why Study the Bible?* (9)

 LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

Song 131

The Bible Saved Our Marriage: (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video (video category FAMILY). Then ask the audience: Which Bible principles helped each couple to save their marriage? How did restoring a good spiritual routine help them? Why must couples not give up in combating marital problems? Where can couples seek spiritual help? —Jas 5:14, 15.

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.) rr chap. 18 ¶9-15, box 18A

 Betrayal—How Contemptible!

Delilah was tempted to betray Samson for money (Jg 16:4, 5; w12 4/15 8 ¶4)

Delilah nagged Samson until he revealed his secret (Jg 16:15-18; w05 1/15 27 ¶5)

Christians must show loyalty in the family and in the congregation (1Th 2:10; w12 4/15 11-12 ¶15-16)

Jehovah rewards those who remain loyal. —Ps 18:25, 26.



Initial Call: God Cares—Mt 10:29-31

Publisher: When tragedies strike, many people have a hard time believing that God cares about us. Have you ever felt that way?

Householder: Honestly? Yeah. I want to believe he cares, but he hasn't done much for me; that's for sure. Last year my father had a heart attack, and I just lost my job.

Publisher: I'm sorry to hear that. How's your father recovering?

Householder: He's OK now. We were really worried about him for a while.

Publisher: I'm glad he's improving. When we face problems, it helps to know that someone cares. How do we know that God cares about us as individuals? Please note Jesus' words at Matthew 10:29-31. Tom, would you please read that for us?

Householder: Sure. "Two sparrows sell for a coin of small value, do they not? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground "without your Father's knowledge. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. So have no fear; you are worth more than many sparrows."

Publisher: Thank you. So how detailed is God's knowledge of us?

Householder: He numbers the hairs of our head?

Publisher: Yes. Impressive, right?

Householder: Yeah.

Publisher: So if God numbers even the hairs of our head, would it make sense that he cares about us and knows when we're going through a hard time?

Householder: It seems logical.

Publisher: But now the question is, How does God help us to cope with present problems? I'd like to discuss that the next time we talk.



INCREASE YOUR JOY IN THE MINISTRY

Help Bible Students to Avoid Bad Associations

To gain Jehovah’s friendship, Bible students must select good associates. (Ps 15:1, 4) Good associates will influence them to do what is right.—Pr 13:20; *Iff* lesson 48.

When helping your Bible students to avoid bad associations, be empathetic. They may struggle to give up friends in the world. Therefore, show genuine personal interest in them between Bible studies. This may involve a text message, a phone call, or a short visit. As your students progress, you can include them in association with God’s people. Then they will clearly see that they are gaining far more than they are losing. (Mr 10:29, 30) You too will find joy as you see Jehovah’s family increase.

WATCH THE VIDEO DRAMATIZATION *HELP YOUR BIBLE STUDENTS TO AVOID BAD ASSOCIATIONS*, AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- What are bad associations?—1Co 15:33

- How did Jade imagine what a Christian gathering would be like?

- How did Neeta help Jade to replace bad associations?



SAMPLE CONVERSATIONS

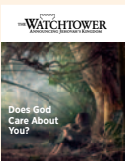
Initial Call*

Question: How do we know that God cares about us as individuals?

Scripture: Mt 10:29-31

Link: How does God help us to cope with present problems?

▶ FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:



• wp18.3 4

Return Visit*

Question: How does God help us to cope with present problems?

Scripture: Jer 29:11

Link: How can the Bible guide us?

▶ FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:



• lffi 7

* You may adjust the question and link according to local circumstances.



“What God Has Yoked Together”

(Matthew 19:5, 6)

C F/C Cma7 C F F/E Dm7 Fma7/C G/B

With dig - ni - ty and joy, A three - fold cord is bound.
They both have searched God's Word To learn to do his will,

G E/G# G#+5 E7/G# Am G/B Bb/C C7

With God and men to wit - ness, These sa - cred vows re - sound.
And now they seek his bless - ing, Their prom - ise to ful - fill.

Chorus
C7/E F G/F C/E C Am7 Dm7 G Am

He vowed be - fore Je - ho - vah To love her from the heart.
She vowed be - fore Je - ho - vah To love him from the heart.

R.H.

C/G F G/F C/E Am7 Dm7 Dm/G F/G C

“What God has yoked to - geth - er, Let no man put a - part.”

R.H.

Song 124 and Prayer | Opening Comments (1 min.)

 TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

“Betrayal—How Contemptible!”: (10 min.)

Spiritual Gems: (10 min.)

Jg 16:1-3—How are we to understand these verses? (w05 3/15 27 ¶6)

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Song 131

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Jehovah rewards those who remain loyal. —Ps 18:25, 26.



The Bible Saved Our Marriage

Raw transcript

Can the Bible save a marriage that's in danger? The following interviews, while very frank, will show the exceeding value of God's own Word, the Bible, to preserve that divine union. Almost from the start of the marriage, it was not running smoothly, to say the least. We were fighting constantly. Even the smallest things we would argue over, and it would just get blown out of proportion. We couldn't communicate without it being an argument. Steadily the arguments increased in frequency and intensity. And you think, 'Well, I'm not happy here,' and that's when I threatened to leave. Sometimes I felt like completely giving up on the marriage. There would be arguments where you'd be packing the bags and saying you'd wished you'd never done it. And ultimately it would end in insults. Jehovah was missing in our marriage, and that was the essential part of making our marriage work. A brother and sister that we'd known for a long time initially offered us a Bible study. They invited us to their Family Worship evening to have dinner and to do The Watchtower with them, which we accepted. The Family Worship arrangement helped because it wasn't just Bible principles that you read about, but we saw them being applied in this couple's life. And so all of a sudden, I could see the cause and effect of a Bible principle. But the impact that it was having was tremendous because we could see how to apply a Bible principle and make it work. I think it took a long time before things got better, honestly, but the turning point was coming back to Jehovah. There were many principles that all of a sudden were like little light bulbs going off, such as Jesus at John 13:34 when he recommended his example. Ephesians 5:33 eventually had an impact on me, because there were articles that pointed out how important it is for a husband to feel respected by his wife, and I don't think I'd ever really appreciated that before. I just viewed it as a mechanical process: He's the head; he needs to have respect from his wife. I didn't recognize that it's important for a husband to feel respected to be able to take on his role as head. We're so thankful to Jehovah for his patience. The Bible principles were always there; we just weren't making application of them. As soon as we started to make application, our marriage did a complete turnaround. Where we are now is totally different. The relationship that we have is what we wanted at the start but didn't know how to get. It's just that application of Bible principles that has made it possible. We were 17, actually, when we met and 20 when we got married. Life was good for Tony and me; we were happy. But then I got into another business that became the main focus in my life. It had quite a dramatic effect on our spirituality. We went through a time when we hardly saw each other, so there was a great deal of time that we spent apart. Bible principles were ones that weren't brought into our life. At that time, Bible reading was out of the picture. I started delving into viewing things that were really, really inappropriate. And then it eventually happened where I didn't really care what I viewed, and I didn't think about the consequences and of the unhappiness that it would cause. It made me feel very, extremely, unloved. I felt very angry about his behavior. I felt a lot of resentment towards him, a lot of bitterness. We ended up in separation, to begin with. I left Tony; I walked away from him. I walked away from the marriage, walked away from the business and, eventually, ended up unscripturally divorcing Tony. The elders who were assisting me helped me to see exactly how Jehovah felt about what I'd been doing and where my relationship was with him, and it was quite poor. I felt that because of the

betrayal that I had experienced, I did not have a problem with my conscience at all in going through the divorce. It seemed the logical and best way for me to go. With my Bible reading, I got to see Amos 5:15. It really had an effect on me because I needed to “hate what is bad, and love what is good.” One scripture that affected me was from Malachi about how Jehovah felt about divorce. Altogether, it took us 15 years before we got together again. I was just enjoying a day out in the field midweek, and I got home in mid-afternoon. And all of a sudden, my mobile phone rang, and I heard Rhonda’s voice. What a delight it was that she was inviting me to accompany her for a cup of coffee somewhere to talk about things! If I hadn’t started having a Scriptural intake and learning to love God’s Word, my life wouldn’t have changed. Without the Bible, Tony and I would not be together. The marriage would never ever have reconciled. We have become best friends, so we really enjoy being in each other’s company and serving Jehovah together. Our married life now has certainly benefited by both of us seeing how beneficial the Scriptures are. Tony and I are now very much a couple, and so no matter what we deal with, it’s us together. When situations like these arise, it’s not just our marriage that’s affected. Our relationship with Jehovah is on the line! Our dear sister, for example, reached an emotional point where she felt the only solution was an unscriptural divorce. As we make our decisions in marriage, Jehovah’s feelings on the subject, found at Malachi 2:16, should be carefully considered: “‘For I hate divorce,’ says Jehovah the God of Israel.” If you find your marital peace is threatened, review articles like the one in the May 15, 2012, study edition of The Watchtower entitled “Take a Positive View of a Strained Marriage.” It provides powerful counsel that can help to save and strengthen your marriage bond.

source: https://www.jw.org/en/library/videos/#en/mediaitems/VODBiblePrinciples/pub-jwb_201804_6_VIDEO

Witnesses. (Isa. 43:10) Our speech and actions reflect directly on the God we represent. Never would we want to become brazen in doing wrong and bring reproach on Jehovah's name. Such a hypocritical course *will* spark Jehovah's anger, and sooner or later, he *will* act to protect his reputation.—Heb. 3:13, 15; 2 Pet. 2:1, 2.

⁸ Should the warning that Jehovah is capable of “great rage” prevent us from drawing close to him? No. We know that Jehovah is patient and forgiving. (Isa. 55:7; Rom. 2:4) But we also recognize that he is not weakly sentimental. In fact, we develop a healthy respect for him, knowing that his anger will blaze against those who become hardened in a course of sin and that he will not allow them to remain among his people. (1 Cor. 5:11-13) Jehovah has clearly told us what makes him angry. It is up to us to avoid the attitudes and actions that provoke him.—John 3:36; Rom. 1:26-32; Jas. 4:8.

⁹ *Reason: Jehovah's faithful people are threatened.* Jehovah is provoked to anger when enemies attack those who loyally seek shelter under his protective care. For example, after the Israelites left Egypt, Pharaoh and his mighty army descended on the seemingly helpless people huddled on the shore of the Red Sea. But when that powerful military force chased the Israelites across the dry seabed, Jehovah took the wheels off the war chariots and shook the Egyptians off into the sea. “Not so much as one among them was allowed to survive.” (Ex. 14:25-28) Jehovah's anger blazed against the Egyptians because of his “loyal love” for his people.—**Read Exodus 15:9-13.**

¹⁰ Likewise, Jehovah's love for his people prompted him to act in the days of King Hezekiah. The Assyrians, the most powerful and brutal military force of the day, had marched on the city of Jerusalem. Jehovah's loyal servants were threatened with a siege that would lead to a slow, horrible death. (2 Ki. 18:27) In response, Jehovah sent just one angel; he killed 185,000 enemy soldiers in a single night! (2 Ki. 19:34, 35) Imagine the scene in the Assyrian camp the following morning. Spears, shields, and swords lie untouched. No trumpets wake the men. No orders rally the troops. An eerie silence hangs over still tents and an encampment strewn with corpses.

¹¹ *Lessons:* Those examples of how Jehovah reacts when his people are threatened provide a graphic warning to our

9, 10. How does Jehovah respond when his faithful people are threatened? Give examples.

11. What comfort and courage do we gain from Scriptural examples of how Jehovah reacts when his people are threatened?



Just as an angel in the days of Hezekiah protected God's people from the Assyrians, angels will protect us
SEE PARAGRAPHS 10, 23

12. During the great tribulation, what will cause Jehovah's rage to flare up?

enemies: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" when his wrath is provoked. (Heb. 10:31) For us, those same examples bring comfort and foster courage. We gain comfort from knowing that our main enemy, Satan, will not succeed. Soon his "short period" of dominance will end! (Rev. 12:12) Until then, we can serve Jehovah with courage, confident that no individual, organization, or government can prevent us from doing God's will. (Read Psalm 118: 6-9.) The apostle Paul expressed our conviction with these inspired words: "If God is for us, who will be against us?" —Rom. 8:31.

¹² During the coming great tribulation, Jehovah will act to protect us, just as he did the Israelites trapped by the Egyptians and the Jews in Jerusalem besieged by the Assyrians. When our enemies try to destroy us, Jehovah's deep love for us will cause his rage to flare up. Those who are foolish



enough to attack us will, in effect, be touching the pupil of Jehovah's eye. His response will be swift and decisive. (Zech. 2: 8, 9) The resulting carnage will be unprecedented. But God's enemies will have no valid cause to be surprised when Jehovah unleashes his wrath on them. Why not?

What Warnings Has Jehovah Given?

¹³ Jehovah is "slow to anger" and has given ample warnings that he will destroy those who oppose him and threaten his people. (Ex. 34:6, 7) Jehovah used such prophets as Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Christ Jesus, and the apostles Peter, Paul, and John to warn of a great climactic battle.—See the box "Jehovah Warns of the Coming Great Battle."

¹⁴ Jehovah had these warnings recorded in his Word. He also ensured that the Bible would become the most widely translated and distributed book in history. Throughout the

13. What warnings has Jehovah given?

14, 15. What work has Jehovah done, and why?



When his people are threatened, Jehovah will use heavenly armies to unleash his wrath

SEE PARAGRAPH 21

JEHOVAH WARNS OF THE COMING GREAT BATTLE

SEE PARAGRAPHS 13, 14

The Bible contains numerous prophecies that warn of a climactic battle in which Jehovah will wipe out all who oppose him and his people. Listed here are just some of those prophecies. Notice the similarities in these warnings, and note that Jehovah has ensured that all mankind has the opportunity to hear them and to act.

EZEKIEL:

“I will call for a sword against [Gog] on all my mountains,’ declares the Sovereign Lord Jehovah.”
—Ezek. 38:18-23.

DANIEL:

“The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will . . . crush and put an end to all these kingdoms.”
—Dan. 2:44.

JEREMIAH:

“[Jehovah] will personally pass judgment on all humans. And he will put the wicked to the sword.”—Jer. 25:31-33.

DAYS OF ANCIENT ISRAEL

16, 17. Has Jehovah set a day for the final war? Explain.

earth, he has raised an army of volunteers who help others learn how to make peace with God and who warn of the coming “great day of Jehovah.” (Zeph. 1:14; Ps. 2:10-12; 110:3) He has motivated his people to translate Bible study publications into hundreds of languages and to spend hundreds of millions of hours each year talking about the promises and the warnings found in his Word.

¹⁵ Jehovah has had all this work done “because he does not desire anyone to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance.” (2 Pet. 3:9) What a privilege we have to represent our loving, patient God and to play a small part in spreading his message! Soon, however, time will run out for those who do not pay attention to the warnings.

When Will Jehovah’s Anger “Flare Up”?

¹⁶ Jehovah has set a day for the final war. He knows in advance when the attack on his people will take place. (Matt. 24:36) How does Jehovah know when his enemies will attack?

A Victory Song

(Exodus 15:1)

Em Bm Em Am/C B+5 B

Sing to Je - ho - vah. His great name is high - ly ex -
See now all na - tions Op - pos - ing the Sov - 'reign, Je -

Em Em/G B7/F# Em C Esus4/B Em/B

alt - ed. His proud E - gyp - tian foes, He has
ho - vah. Though might - i - er than Phar - aoh, They

Am C7/Bb B Em Bm Em

cast in - to the sea. Praise Jah Al - might - y; Be -
too will suf - fer shame. Judg - ment a - waits them; They

Am/C B+5 B Em Em/G B7/F# Em

sides him there can be no oth - er. Je - ho - vah is his
can - not es - cape Ar - ma - ged - don. Soon ev - 'ry - one will

A Victory Song

Chorus

C D/C C7 B Em/C# B7/D# E Dadd9/F# E/G#

name; He has gained the vic - to - ry. Je -
 know That Je - ho - vah is God's name.

Am D D7 G C Am B7

ho - vah God, Most High o - ver all, The one who is for -

Em/G B/F# Em B7/D# Em Em/G Am D D7

ev - er - more the same, You soon will cause your

G Em C Em/B Am Em/G B7/F# Em Bsus4 B E

en - e - mies to fall And sanc - ti - fy your ho - ly name.

NOVEMBER 2021

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



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JANUARY 3-30, 2022

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COVER PICTURE:

Ruth clings to Naomi, her mother-in-law, while Orpah returns to Moab. Ruth tells Naomi: “Where you go I will go” (See study article 45, paragraph 13)

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God's Loyal Love

(Isaiah 55:1-3)

D G/B A7 D Bm

Loy - al love! God is love. We can sense his
 Loy - al love! God is love. All his works give
 Loy - al love! God is love. May his spir - it

Gma7 G/A A7 D A D/A A7 D/A A

care from a - bove. God by means of his
 proof of his love. Love Je - ho - vah has
 move us to love. As we loy - al - ly

D A7/E D/F# Bb7

pre - cious Son Paid the ran - som for
 fur - ther shown, Giv - ing Je - sus the
 help the meek, God's com - mand - ments they

D/A A7sus4 D/A A7 D/A A7

ev - 'ry - one, Giv - ing hope that we
 king - ly throne. God's own pur - pose has
 learn to keep. We are serv - ing with

God's Loyal Love

D A7/E D/F# E7 D/F# E7/G# D/F# E7

might pos - sess Life e - ter - nal and
 come to pass. See! His King - dom is
 god - ly fear, Preach - ing bold - ly for

Chorus
 A/E E7 A A7 D D° D A/G G

hap - pi - ness.
 here at last! Hey there, all you thirst - y ones,
 all to hear.

A7 A° A7 A7/E F° D/F# Gm/E Em Em7 Gma7

Come and drink life's wa - ter free. Yes, come drink, you

Gma7/B G6/B Gm/E D/A Em7 D/A A7 D

thirst - y ones; God's loy - al love you'll see.

SONG 108

God's Loyal Love

PREVIEW

What is loyal love? To whom does Jehovah show loyal love, and how do those who receive it benefit from it? The answers to these questions will be considered in the first of two articles that discuss this outstanding quality.

What Does Jehovah's Loyal Love Mean to You?

"[Jehovah's] loyal love endures forever."—PS. 136:1.

JEHOVAH takes delight in loyal love. (Hos. 6:6) He warmly encourages his servants to do the same. By means of the prophet Micah, our God urges us "to love loyal love." (Mic. 6:8, fn.) Obviously, before we can do that, we need to know what loyal love is.

² What is loyal love? The expression "loyal love" occurs some 230 times in the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*. What is it? According to the "Glossary of Bible Terms" found in that translation, it refers to "love motivated by commitment, integrity, loyalty, and deep attachment. It is often used in connection with God's love for humans, but it is also love shown between humans." Jehovah is the supreme example of loyal love. In this article, we will discuss how Jehovah shows loyal love to humans. In the following article, we will discuss how we as God's servants can imitate Jehovah by showing loyal love to one another.

JEHOVAH IS "ABUNDANT IN LOYAL LOVE"

³ Not long after Israel's Exodus from Egypt, Jehovah revealed himself to Moses by declaring His name and qualities. He said: "Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and compassionate, slow to anger and abundant in loyal love and truth, showing loyal love to thousands, pardoning error and transgression and sin." (Ex. 34:6, 7) With this heartwarming statement about His qualities, Jeho-

1. What encouragement does Jehovah give us?
2. What are some characteristics of loyal love?
3. How did Jehovah reveal himself to Moses?

vah revealed to Moses a unique characteristic of His loyal love. What is it?

⁴ Jehovah described himself not merely as having loyal love but as being “abundant in loyal love.” That description is mentioned six more times in the Bible. (Num. 14:18; Neh. 9:17; Ps. 86:15; 103:8; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2) In all instances, that description refers only to Jehovah, never to humans. Is it not remarkable that Jehovah himself so strongly emphasized his quality of loyal love? No doubt, loyal love is important to him.* No wonder King David was moved to exclaim: “O Jehovah, your loyal love reaches to the heavens . . . How precious your loyal love is, O God! In the shadow of your wings, the sons of men take refuge.” (Ps. 36:5, 7) Like David, do we deeply appreciate God’s loyal love?

⁵ To deepen our understanding of loyal love, let us consider two questions: To whom does Jehovah show loyal love?

* The concept of God’s abundant loyal love is also mentioned in other Bible verses.—See Nehemiah 13:22; Psalm 69:13; 106:7; and Lamentations 3:32.

4-5. (a) How did Jehovah describe himself?
(b) What questions will we consider?

And how can we benefit from Jehovah’s acts of loyal love?

TO WHOM DOES JEHOVAH SHOW LOYAL LOVE?

⁶ To whom does Jehovah show loyal love? The Bible mentions that we can love many things, such as “agriculture,” “wine and oil,” “discipline,” “knowledge,” “wisdom”—to name a few. (2 Chron. 26:10; Prov. 12:1; 21:17; 29:3) Loyal love, however, is never extended to things or concepts; it is shown only to people. But Jehovah does not show loyal love to just anyone. He shows it *to those who are in a special relationship with him*. Our God is loyal to his friends. He has a wonderful purpose for them, and he will not give up on them.

⁷ Jehovah has shown *love* to mankind in general. Jesus told a man named Nicodemus: “God loved the world [of mankind] so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, so that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life.”—John 3:1, 16; Matt. 5:44, 45.

6. Jehovah shows loyal love to whom?

7. How has Jehovah shown love to mankind in general?



According to statements made by King David and by the prophet Daniel, Jehovah shows loyal love to those who know him, fear him, love him, and keep his commandments
(See paragraphs 8-9)



JEHOVAH'S LOVE

Jehovah provides many good things for the entire human family, even for those who do not worship him
(See paragraph 7)

Sunshine and rain



Flowers, plants, and trees



The opportunity to benefit from the ransom



⁸ As mentioned earlier, Jehovah shows his **loyal love** only to those who have an approved relationship with him—his servants. This is evident from statements made by King David and by the prophet Daniel. For example, David said: “Continue showing your loyal love to those who **know** you.” “The loyal love of Jehovah is for all eternity toward those who **fear** him.” And Daniel declared: “O Jehovah the true God, [who] shows loyal love to those who **love him** and **keep his commandments**.” (Ps. 36:10; 103:17; Dan. 9:4) According to these inspired expressions, Jehovah shows loyal love to his servants because they know him, fear him, love him, and keep his commandments. Jehovah reserves his loyal love for his people, his true worshippers.

⁹ Before we began serving Jehovah, we received the love that God shows to mankind in general. (Ps. 104:14) However, as his worshippers, we also benefit

from his loyal love. In fact, Jehovah assures his servants: “My loyal love will not be removed from you.” (Isa. 54:10) Indeed, as David himself experienced, “Jehovah will treat his loyal one in a special way.” (Ps. 4:3) How should we react to Jehovah’s special care for us? The psalmist noted: “Whoever is wise will observe these things and will carefully consider Jehovah’s acts of loyal love.” (Ps. 107:43) With that inspired advice in mind, let us consider three ways in which servants of Jehovah benefit from his acts of loyal love.

HOW CAN WE BENEFIT FROM JEHOVAH’S ACTS OF LOYAL LOVE?

¹⁰ **God’s loyal love is enduring.** This important aspect of loyal love is mentioned 26 times in Psalm 136. In the opening verse, we read: “Give thanks to Jehovah, for he is good; his loyal love endures forever.” (Ps. 136:1) In verses 2

8-9. (a) Why does Jehovah show loyal love to his servants? (b) What will we consider next?

10. How are we helped by God’s enduring loyal love? (Psalm 31:7)

JEHOVAH'S LOYAL LOVE

Jehovah gives additional blessings to those who worship him

(See paragraphs 10-16)



to 26, we find the refrain “for his loyal love endures forever.” As we read the remaining verses of this psalm, we cannot help but be impressed by the many ways in which Jehovah shows his loyal love without letup. The refrain “for his loyal love endures forever” assures us that God’s love for his people is not fickle. How heartening it is to know that Jehovah does not quickly give up on his servants! Instead, he attaches himself to those who serve him and he sticks with them, especially in times of distress. **How we benefit:** Knowing that Jehovah sticks with us gives us the joy and the strength we need to cope with our distresses and to keep walking on the path to life.—**Read Psalm 31:7.**

¹¹ **God’s loyal love moves him to be forgiving.** When Jehovah observes a sinner who is repentant and who rejects his sinful course, loyal love moves Him to be forgiving. The psalmist David stat-

11. According to Psalm 86:5, what moves Jehovah to be forgiving?

ed about Jehovah: “He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor has he repaid us what our errors deserve.” (Ps. 103:8-11) David himself knew from painful experience how heavy the burden of a guilty conscience can be. But he also learned that Jehovah is “ready to forgive.” What moves Jehovah to be forgiving? The answer is recorded at **Psalm 86:5. (Read.)** Yes, as David said in prayer, Jehovah forgives because he abounds in loyal love for all those who call on him.

¹² When we sin, it is appropriate—even healthy—to feel remorse. It can move us to repent and take steps to correct our mistakes. Some servants of God, though, have become overwhelmed by guilt because of past mistakes. Their self-condemning heart convinces them that Jehovah could never forgive them—no matter how repentant they are. If you deal with such feelings, learning

12-13. If we are weighed down with guilt over past mistakes, what will help us?

about God's willingness to extend loyal love to his servants will help you.

¹³ **How we benefit:** In spite of our imperfections, we can joyfully serve Jehovah with a clean conscience. This is possible because "the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin." (1 John 1:7) When you are discouraged about some imperfection, call to mind that Jehovah is willing, yes, eager to forgive a repentant sinner. Note the connection that David made between loyal love and forgiveness. He wrote: "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so great is his loyal love toward those who fear him. As far off as the sunrise is from the sunset, so far off from us he has put our transgressions." (Ps. 103:11, 12) Indeed, Jehovah is willing to "forgive in a large way."—Isa. 55:7.

¹⁴ **God's loyal love provides spiritual protection.** In prayer to Jehovah, David stated: "You are a hiding place for me; you will safeguard me from distress. You will surround me with joyful shouts of deliverance. . . . The one trusting in Jehovah is surrounded by His loyal love." (Ps. 32:7, 10) Just as the walls surrounding an ancient city protected its citizens, so Jehovah's acts of loyal love surround us, providing spiritual protection from dangers that could test our integrity. Further, Jehovah's loyal love moves him to draw us to him.—Jer. 31:3.

¹⁵ David used another word picture to describe the protection that God's peo-

14. How did David describe the way God's loyal love protects us?

15. What connection is there between Jehovah's loyal love and a refuge and a stronghold?

ple enjoy. He wrote: "God is my secure refuge, the God who shows loyal love to me." David also stated about Jehovah: "He is my loyal love and my stronghold, my secure refuge and my rescuer, my shield and the One in whom I have taken shelter." (Ps. 59:17; 144:2) Why did David connect Jehovah's loyal love with a refuge and a stronghold? No matter where we live on earth, as long as we are his servants, Jehovah will provide us with all the protection we need to safeguard our precious relationship with him. That same assurance is found in Psalm 91. The writer of that psalm declared: "I will say to Jehovah: 'You are my refuge and my stronghold.'" (Ps. 91:1-3, 9, 14) Moses used a similar word picture about a refuge. (Ps. 90:1, fn.) Moreover, toward the end of his life, Moses called attention to a heartwarming detail. He wrote: "God is a refuge from ancient times, his everlasting arms are beneath you." (Deut. 33:27) What does the phrase "his everlasting arms are beneath you" tell us about Jehovah?

¹⁶ When Jehovah is our Refuge, we feel secure. Still, there may be days when we are down and struggle to get up. At such times, what will Jehovah do for us? (**Read Psalm 136:23.**) He will put his arms beneath us, gently lift us up, and help us to get back on our feet. (Ps. 28:9; 94:18) **How we benefit:** Knowing that we can always count on God's support helps us to remember that we are blessed in two ways. First, we have a secure place of refuge no matter where we

16. In what two ways are we blessed? (Psalm 136:23)

live. Second, our loving heavenly Father deeply cares for us.

WHY GOD'S LOYAL LOVE GIVES US CONFIDENCE

¹⁷ As we have considered, when facing a trial, we can be sure that Jehovah will act in our behalf by giving us the support we need to keep our integrity. (2 Cor. 4:7-9) The prophet Jeremiah stated: "It is because of Jehovah's loyal love that we have not come to our finish, for his mercies never end." (Lam. 3:22) We can have confidence that Jehovah's loyal love will indeed rest on us because, as the psalmist assured us, "the eye of Jehovah watches over those fearing him, those waiting for his loyal love." —**Read Psalm 33:18-22.**

¹⁸ What do we want to keep in mind? Before we began serving Jehovah, we received the love that God shows to mankind in general. As his worshippers,

17. Because of God's loyal love, what confidence can we have? (Psalm 33:18-22)

18-19. (a) What do we want to keep in mind?
(b) What will we consider in the next article?

however, we also benefit from his loyal love. Moved by that love, Jehovah embraces us with his protective arms. He will always keep us close to him and will fulfill his purpose regarding us. He wants us to succeed! (Ps. 46:1, 2, 7) Therefore, no matter what trial we may face, Jehovah will give us the strength we need in order to keep our integrity.

¹⁹ We have seen how Jehovah shows loyal love to his servants. In turn, he expects us to show loyal love to one another. How can we do that? The next article will consider this important subject.

PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS **Page 4:** Jehovah demonstrates his love to mankind as a whole, including his servants. The icons depicted above the group of people show some expressions of God's love. Foremost is the opportunity to benefit from the ransom arrangement. **Page 5:** Those who become servants of Jehovah and put faith in the ransom arrangement are treated by Jehovah in a special way. In addition to receiving the love that God shows to mankind in general, Jehovah's servants receive expressions of God's loyal love. Several of these are depicted by the icons.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- What is loyal love?
- To whom does Jehovah show loyal love?
- Why are you grateful for Jehovah's loyal love?

"A Perfect Wage" From Jehovah

(Ruth 2:12)

G C/G Gma7 Cadd9/G D7 G C/G D7/G

Je - ho - vah is faith - ful and ful - ly a - ware Of all those who serve him whole -
At times we may feel that our lot in this life Has bur - dened us more than our

G Bm Cadd9 Bm Cadd9

souled. He knows there are times their de - vo - tion and zeal Re -
share. And some - times it seems that the cares of the day Are

G/D Cm/D# B7/D# Em G/D Cma7 D/C Bm7 G6/B

sult in their loss as fore - told. If you have left hous - es or
more than we're a - ble to bear. The God of all com - fort takes

Am7 D7/A G Dm/F E7sus4 E7 Am

fam - 'ly or friends, Be sure that our God knows the sum. He
note of your need; You know he's the Hear - er of prayer. His

"A Perfect Wage" From Jehovah

Em/C# F#7+5 F#7 Bm D#° Em G/A A9

makes it up now with our dear broth-er - hood And life in the new world to
Word and his spir - it and true, lov-ing friends Will bring to you com - fort and

Chorus
Am C/D D G Am11 D7/A Gadd9/B C Bm Am7

come. care. May Je - ho - vah re - ward what you have done. May he pro -

G/D Cm/D# B7/D# Em D/F# Em/G Am7 Gma7/B

vide a per - fect wage for you. May you find ref - uge be - neath his

C Cm/Eb G/D C/D D7 G

wings. Je - ho - vah is faith - ful; Je - ho - vah is true.