

Monday, January 10

You have conquered the wicked one.—1 John 2:14.

Each time you resist temptation, it will get easier for you to do what is right. Remember, too, that this world's twisted view of sex originates with Satan. So when you refuse to compromise, you 'conquer the wicked one.' We acknowledge that Jehovah has the right to define what is sinful conduct. And we do our best not to commit a sin. But when we do sin, we confess our wrongdoing to Jehovah in prayer. (1 John 1:9) And if we commit a serious sin, we seek the help of the elders, whom Jehovah has appointed to care for us. (James 5:14-16) However, we should not be consumed by feelings of guilt over past mistakes. Why not? Because our loving Father provided the ransom sacrifice of his Son so that our sins can be forgiven. When Jehovah says that he will forgive repentant sinners, he means what he says. So there is nothing to stop us from serving Jehovah with a clean conscience.—1 John 2:1, 2, 12; 3:19, 20.

w20.07 22-23 paragraphs 9-10

Tuesday, January 11

With you is the source of life.—Psalm 36:9.

There was a time when Jehovah was alone. But he was not lonely. He was complete in every way. Nevertheless, God wanted others to enjoy life. Motivated by love, Jehovah began creating. (1 John 4:19) First, Jehovah created a fellow worker. Then, by means of this first Son, “all other things were created,” including millions of intelligent spirit creatures. (Colossians 1:16) Jesus rejoiced at the opportunity to work with his Father. (Proverbs 8:30) And the angelic sons of God also had reason to rejoice. They had front-row seats, as it were, when Jehovah and his Master Worker, Jesus, made the heavens and the earth. How did the angels respond? They “began shouting in applause” when the earth was formed, and they no doubt continued to applaud each of Jehovah’s creative works, including his final masterpiece, humans. (Job 38:7; Proverbs 8:31, footnote.) Each of these creations revealed Jehovah’s love and wisdom.—Psalm 104:24; Romans 1:20. w20.08 14 paragraphs 1-2

Wednesday, January 12

You will be hated by all the nations on account of my name.—Matthew 24:9.

Jehovah created us to love and to be loved. So when someone hates us, we feel hurt and perhaps even afraid. A brother writes: “When soldiers hit me, insulted me, and threatened me because I was one of Jehovah’s Witnesses, I felt frightened and humiliated.” Such hatred hurts, but it does not surprise us. Jesus foretold that we would be hated. Why does the world hate Jesus’ followers? Because like Jesus, we are “no part of the world.” (John 15:17-19) As a result, while we respect human governments, we refuse to worship them or the emblems that represent them. We give Jehovah our exclusive devotion. We uphold God’s right to rule mankind—a right that Satan and his “offspring” vigorously challenge. (Genesis 3:1-5, 15) We preach that God’s Kingdom is mankind’s only hope and that the Kingdom will soon crush all those who oppose it. (Daniel 2:44; Revelation 19:19-21) That message is good news to the meek but bad news to the wicked. w21.03 20 paragraphs 1-2

Thursday, January 13

We know that we originate with God.—1 John 5:19.

Jehovah gives Christian sisters a dignified place in the congregation. They are fine examples of wisdom, faith, zeal, courage, generosity, and good works. (Luke 8:2, 3; Acts 16:14, 15; Romans 16:3, 6; Philippians 4:3; Hebrews 11:11, 31,35) We are also blessed to have many elderly ones. They may struggle with various health problems associated with advanced age. Yet, these older ones do what they can in the field ministry, and they use all the energy they have to encourage and train others! And we benefit from their experience. They are truly beautiful to Jehovah and to us. (Proverbs 16:31) Think, too, about our young ones. They face many challenges as they grow up in this world dominated by Satan the Devil and his wicked philosophies. Yet, we all feel encouraged when we see our young ones comment at meetings, share in the ministry, and courageously defend their beliefs. Yes, you young ones have an important place in Jehovah's congregation!—Psalm 8:2. w20.08 21-22 paragraphs 9-11

Friday, January 14

I am sending you out as sheep among wolves.—Matthew 10:16.

When we start to preach and identify ourselves as Jehovah's Witnesses, we may face "storms" of family opposition, ridicule from acquaintances, and resistance to our message. How can you build your courage? First, be convinced that Jesus continues to direct this work from heaven. (John 16:33; Revelation 14:14-16) Next, strengthen your faith in Jehovah's promise to care for you. (Matthew 6:32-34) The stronger your faith becomes, the more courageous you will be. You showed great faith when you informed acquaintances and members of your family that you had begun to study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses and to attend their meetings! No doubt you have made significant changes in your conduct and lifestyle in order to live by Jehovah's righteous standards. That too took faith and courage. As you continue to build courage, you can be confident that "Jehovah your God is with you wherever you go."—Joshua 1:7-9. *w20.09* 5 paragraphs 11-12

Saturday, January 15

Jehovah gave him rest.—2 Chronicles 14:6.

King Asa is an excellent example of a man who acted wisely by relying completely on Jehovah. He served Jehovah not only in bad times but also during times of peace. From early on, “Asa’s heart was completely devoted to Jehovah.” (1 Kings 15:14, footnote.) One way Asa demonstrated his devotion was by clearing out false worship from Judah. The Bible says that “he removed the foreign altars and the high places, smashed the sacred pillars, and cut down the sacred poles.” (2 Chronicles 14:3, 5) He even removed Maacah, his grandmother, from being a sort of first lady in the kingdom. Why? Because she promoted false worship of an idol. (1 Kings 15:11-13) Asa did more than clear away false worship. He promoted pure worship, helping the kingdom of Judah return to Jehovah. Jehovah blessed Asa and the Israelites with a time of peace. For a period of ten years during Asa’s rulership, “the land had no disturbance.”—2 Chronicles 14:1, 4, 6. w20.09 14 paragraphs 2-3

Sunday, January 16

Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you.—1 Timothy 6:20.

We often place our valuable things in the care of others. For instance, we may deposit our money in a bank. When we do, we expect that our funds will be kept secure and not be lost or stolen. The apostle Paul reminded Timothy that he had received something precious—accurate knowledge of God’s purpose for humankind. Timothy was also entrusted with the privilege to “preach the word” and to “do the work of an evangelizer.” (2 Timothy 4:2, 5) Paul urged Timothy to guard what had been entrusted to him. Like Timothy, we have been entrusted with valuable things. Jehovah has favored us with an accurate knowledge of the precious truths found in his Word, the Bible. These truths are precious because they teach us how to have a good relationship with Jehovah and they explain what brings real happiness in life. When we accept those truths and live by them, we are freed from enslavement to false teachings and immoral practices.—1 Corinthians 6:9-11. w20.09 26 paragraphs 1-3

Song 88 and Prayer | Opening Comments (1 min.)

 TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

“Disobeying God’s Law Leads to Problems”: (10 min.)

Spiritual Gems: (10 min.)

Jg 19:18—Why was the name Jehovah included here in the 2013 revision of the *New World Translation*? (w15 12/15 10 ¶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 17:1-13 (2)

 APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

Return Visit Video: (5 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Return Visit: God Cares—Jer 29:11* (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. (6)

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 LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

Song 89

Become Jehovah’s Friend—Obey Your Parents: (10 min.) Discussion. Play the video (video category CHILDREN). Then, if possible, ask selected young children: How did Caleb disobey his mom? How did he help to fix his mistake? Why should you obey your parents?

Local Needs: (5 min.)

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.) *rr* chap. 18 ¶16-25



Disobeying God’s Law Leads to Problems

Micah stole money from his mother (Jg 17:1, 2)

Micah practiced idolatry and bypassed Jehovah’s tabernacle and priesthood (Jg 17:4, 5, 12; *it-2* 390-391)

Micah eventually was left with nothing (Jg 18:24-26; *it-2* 391 ¶2)

ASK YOURSELF, ‘How have I experienced the benefits of obeying Jehovah?’



Make Me Know Your Ways

(Psalm 25:4)

1. We're gathered together, Jehovah our God,
Accepting your warm invitation.
Your Word is a lamp that lights up our pathway,
The source of divine education.

(CHORUS)

*Teach me your ways, and make me understand;
Incline my ear to hear your wise command.
Cause me to walk in ways of truth and right,
And make your law my principal delight.*

2. Unreachably high is your wisdom, O God;
Your judgments we find reassuring.
Your Word is a source of unending wonder;
Your sayings of truth are enduring.

(Chorus)

JUDGES 17-19

17 There was a man of the mountainous region of E'phra-im 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 from my hand for my son to use in making a carved image and a metal statue. 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'od and teraphim statues and installed one of his sons to serve as priest for him. ⁶ In those days, there was no king in Israel. Each one was doing what was right in his own eyes.

⁷ Now there was a young man of Beth'le-hem in Judah who was of the family of Judah. He was a Levite who had been living there for a time. ⁸ The man left the city of Beth'le-hem in Judah to find a place to live. While on his journey, he came to the mountainous region of E'phra-im, to the house of Mi'cah. ⁹ Then Mi'cah said to him: "Where do you come from?" He replied: "I am a Levite from Beth'le-hem in Judah, and I am on my way to find a place to live." ¹⁰ So Mi'cah said to him: "Stay with me and serve as a father and

a priest for me. I will give you ten silver pieces a year and a set of garments and your food.” So the Levite went in.

¹¹ Thus the Levite agreed to stay with the man, and the young man became like one of his sons. ¹² Furthermore, Mi'cah installed the Levite to serve as a priest for him, and he lived in the house of Mi'cah. ¹³ Then Mi'cah said: “Now I know that Jehovah will be good to me, for the Levite has become my priest.”

18 In those days there was no king in Israel. And in those days the tribe of the Dan'ites was looking for an inheritance to dwell in, because until then they had not received an inheritance among the tribes of Israel.

² The Dan'ites sent five men from among their family, capable men from Zo'rah and Esh'ta-ol, to spy out the land and to explore it. They said to them: “Go, explore the land.” When they came to the mountainous region of E'phra-im, to the house of Mi'cah, they spent the night there. ³ While they were near the house of Mi'cah, they recognized the voice of the young Levite man, so they went over to him and asked: “Who brought you here? What are you doing in this place? What is keeping you here?” ⁴ He replied to them: “Thus and so Mi'cah did for me, and he hired me to serve as priest for him.” ⁵ Then they said to him: “Please ask God whether our journey will be successful.” ⁶ The priest said to them: “Go in peace. Jehovah is with you on your journey.”

⁷ So the five men went on and came to La'ish. They saw how the people in it were dwelling in self-reliance in the manner of the Si-do'ni-ans. They were quiet and

unsuspecting, and no oppressive conqueror was in the land to disturb them. They were far away from the Si-do'ni-ans, and they had no dealings with anyone else.

⁸ When they returned to their brothers at Zo'rah and Esh'ta-ol, their brothers said to them: “How did it go?” ⁹ They replied: “Let us go up against them, for we have seen that the land is very good. Why are you hesitant? Do not delay to go in to take possession of the land. ¹⁰ When you arrive, you will find an unsuspecting people, and the land is spacious. God has given it into your hand, a place where there is no lack of anything on the earth.”

¹¹ Then 600 men armed for battle from the family of the Dan'ites departed from Zo'rah and Esh'ta-ol. ¹² They went up and camped at Kir'i-ath-je'a-rim in Judah. That is why that place, which is west of Kir'i-ath-je'a-rim, is called Ma'ha-neh-dan to this day. ¹³ They went from there to the mountainous region of E'phra-im and came to the house of Mi'cah.

¹⁴ Then the five men who had gone to spy out the land of La'ish said to their brothers: “Did you know that there are in these houses an eph'od, teraphim statues, a carved image, and a metal statue? Think about what you should do.” ¹⁵ So they stopped there and came to the house of the young Levite man at the house of Mi'cah and asked how he was. ¹⁶ All the while the 600 men of Dan, armed for battle, stood at the entrance of the gate. ¹⁷ The five men who had gone to spy out the land went inside to take the carved image, the eph'od, the teraphim statues, and the metal image. (The priest was standing at the entrance of the gate with the 600

men armed for battle.)¹⁸ They went into the house of Mi'cah and took the carved image, the eph'od, the teraphim statues, and the metal image. The priest said to them: "What are you doing?"¹⁹ But they said to him: "Be quiet. Put your hand over your mouth, and come with us to be a father and a priest for us. Which is better—for you to be a priest to the house of one man or to become a priest to a tribe and family in Israel?"²⁰ So the priest was satisfied, and he took the eph'od, the teraphim statues, and the carved image and went off with the people.

²¹ Then they turned to go on their way, putting the children, the livestock, and the valuable things ahead of them.²² They had gone some distance away from the house of Mi'cah when the men who lived in the houses near the house of Mi'cah gathered together and caught up with the Dan'ites.²³ When they cried out to the Dan'ites, they turned to face them and said to Mi'cah: "What is the matter? Why have you been gathered together?"²⁴ So he said: "You have taken my gods that I made, and you have gone off with the priest too. What do I have left? How, then, can you ask me, 'What is the matter with you?'"²⁵ The Dan'ites replied: "Do not raise your voice against us; otherwise, angry men may assault you, and that would cost you your life and the lives of your household."²⁶ So the Dan'ites went on their way; and Mi'cah, seeing that they were stronger than he was, turned and went back to his house.

²⁷ After they took what Mi'cah had made, as well as his priest, they went to La'ish, to a people quiet and

unsuspecting. They struck them down with the sword and burned the city with fire.²⁸ There was no one to rescue it, for it was far from Si'don and they had no dealings with anyone else and it was in the valley plain that belonged to Beth-re'hob. Then they rebuilt the city and settled in it.

²⁹ Furthermore, they named the city Dan after the name of their father, Dan, who was born to Israel. But La'ish was the city's former name.³⁰ After that the Dan'ites set up the carved image for themselves, and Jon'a-than the son of Ger'shom, the son of Moses, and his sons became priests to the tribe of the Dan'ites until the day that the inhabitants of the land went into exile.³¹ And they set up the carved image that Mi'cah had made, and it remained there all the days that the house of the true God was in Shi'loh.

19 In those days, when there was no king in Israel, a Levite who was then living in a remote part of the mountainous region of E'phra-im took a concubine from Beth'le-hem in Judah as his wife.² But his concubine was unfaithful to him, and she left him to go to her father's house at Beth'le-hem in Judah. She remained there for four months.³ Then her husband went after her to persuade her to come back; he had his male attendant and a couple of donkeys with him. So she brought him into her father's house. When her father saw him, he was glad to meet him.⁴ So his father-in-law, the young woman's father, convinced him to stay with him three days; and they would eat and drink, and he would spend the night there.

⁵ On the fourth day, when they got up early in the morning to go, the father of the young woman said to his son-in-law: “Eat something to give you strength, and then you may go.”

⁶ So they sat down, and they both ate and drank together; after that the father of the young woman said to the man: “Please, stay overnight and enjoy yourself.” ⁷ When the man rose to go, his father-in-law kept begging him, so he stayed overnight again.

⁸ When he got up early in the morning on the fifth day to go, the father of the young woman said: “Please, eat something to give you strength.” And they lingered until it was late in the day, and they both kept eating. ⁹ When the man rose to go with his concubine and his attendant, his father-in-law, the young woman’s father, said to him: “Look, now! It is almost evening. Please, stay overnight. Here the day is coming to an end. Stay here overnight and enjoy yourself. Tomorrow you can get up early for your journey and go to your home.” ¹⁰ However, the man did not want to stay another night, so he got up and traveled as far as Je'bus, that is, Jerusalem. He had with him the two saddled donkeys, his concubine, and his attendant.

¹¹ When they were close to Je'bus, the daylight was nearly gone. So the attendant said to his master: “Should we stop at this city of the Jeb'u-sites and stay overnight here?” ¹² But his master said to him: “We should not stop at a city of foreigners who are not Israelites. We will go on as far as Gib'e-ah.” ¹³ Then he said to his attendant: “Come and let us try to reach one of those places; we will stay overnight either

in Gib'e-ah or in Ra'mah.” ¹⁴ So they went on their way, and the sun began to set when they were near Gib'e-ah, which belongs to Benjamin.

¹⁵ So they stopped there and went in to stay overnight in Gib'e-ah. Once inside, they sat down in the public square of the city, but nobody took them into his house to stay overnight. ¹⁶ Eventually that evening, an old man came in from his work in the field. He was from the mountainous region of E'phra-im, and he was living for a time in Gib'e-ah; but the residents of the city were Ben'ja-min-ites. ¹⁷ When he looked up and saw the traveler in the public square of the city, the old man said: “Where are you going, and where do you come from?” ¹⁸ He replied: “We are traveling from Beth'le-hem in Judah to a remote area of the mountainous region of E'phra-im, where I am from. I went to Beth'le-hem in Judah, and I am going to the house of Jehovah, but nobody is taking me into his house. ¹⁹ We have enough straw and fodder for our donkeys, and bread and wine for me, the woman, and our attendant. There is nothing lacking.” ²⁰ However, the old man said: “May you have peace! Let me take care of anything you need. Just do not stay overnight in the public square.” ²¹ So he brought him into his house and gave feed to the donkeys. Then they washed their feet and ate and drank.

²² While they were enjoying themselves, some worthless men of the city surrounded the house and were pounding on the door, and they kept saying to the old man who owned the house: “Bring out the man who came into your house, so

that we may have sex with him.”²³ At that the owner of the house went out and said to them: “No, my brothers, do not act wickedly. Please, this man is a guest in my house. Do not commit this disgraceful act.”²⁴ Here are my virgin daughter and this man’s concubine. Let me bring them out, and you can humiliate them if you must. But you must not commit this disgraceful act toward this man.”

²⁵ But the men refused to listen to him, so the man grabbed hold of his concubine and brought her outside to them. They raped her and abused her all night long until the morning. Then they sent her away at the break of dawn.

²⁶ Early in the morning, the woman came and fell down at the entrance of the man’s house where her master was and lay there until it was light.²⁷ When her master got up in the morning and opened the doors of the house to go out to resume his journey, he saw the woman, his concubine, lying at the entrance of the house with her hands on the threshold.

²⁸ So he said to her: “Get up; let us go.” But there was no answer. The man then put her on the donkey and set out for his home.

²⁹ When he reached his house, he took the slaughtering knife and took hold of his concubine and cut her up limb by limb into 12 pieces and sent one piece into each territory of Israel.³⁰ All who saw it said: “Such a thing has never happened or been seen from the day that the Israelites went up out of the land of Egypt down to this day. Consider it, take counsel, and tell us what to do.”

Song 88 and Prayer | Opening Comments (1 min.)

 TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

“Disobeying God’s Law Leads to Problems”: (10 min.)

Spiritual Gems: (10 min.)

Jg 19:18—Why was the name Jehovah included here in the 2013 revision of the *New World Translation*? (w15 12/15 10 ¶6)

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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Become Jehovah’s Friend—Obey Your Parents: (10 min.) Discussion. Play the video (video category CHILDREN). Then, if possible, ask selected young children: How did Caleb disobey his mom? How did he help to fix his mistake? Why should you obey your parents?

Local Needs: (5 min.)

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.) *rr* chap. 18 ¶16-25



Disobeying God’s Law Leads to Problems

Micah stole money from his mother (Jg 17:1, 2)

Micah practiced idolatry and bypassed Jehovah’s tabernacle and priesthood (Jg 17:4, 5, 12; *it-2* 390-391)

Micah eventually was left with nothing (Jg 18:24-26; *it-2* 391 ¶2)

ASK YOURSELF, ‘How have I experienced the benefits of obeying Jehovah?’



January 10-16 / Judges 17-19

Song 88 and Prayer

Opening Comments (1 minute)

Treasures From God's Word

"Disobeying God's Law Leads to Problems": (10 minutes)

Micah stole money from his mother

Judges 17:1, 2: There was a man of the mountainous region of Ephraim named Micah. 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."

Micah practiced idolatry and bypassed Jehovah's tabernacle and priesthood

Judges 17:4, 5: 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 Micah's house. This man Micah had a house of gods, and he made an ephod and teraphim statues and installed one of his sons to serve as priest for him.

Judges 17:12: Furthermore, Micah installed the Levite to serve as a priest for him, and he lived in the house of Micah.

it-2 390-391

A man of Ephraim. In violation of the eighth of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:15), Micah took 1,100 silver pieces from his mother. When he confessed and returned them, she said: "I must without fail sanctify the silver to Jehovah from my hand for my son, so as to make a carved image and a molten statue; and now I shall give it back to you." She then took 200 silver pieces to a silversmith, who made "a carved image and a molten statue" that afterward came to be in Micah's house. Micah, who had "a house of gods," made an ephod and teraphim and empowered one of his sons to act as priest for him. Although this arrangement was ostensibly to honor Jehovah, it was grossly improper, for it violated the commandment forbidding idolatry (Exodus 20:4-6) and bypassed Jehovah's tabernacle and his priesthood. (Judges 17:1-6; Deuteronomy 12:1-14) Later,

Micah took Jonathan, a descendant of Moses' son Gershom, into his home, hiring this young Levite as his priest. (Judges 18:4, 30) Mistakenly feeling satisfied with this, Micah said: "Now I do know that Jehovah will do me good." (Judges 17:7-13) But Jonathan was not of Aaron's lineage and thus was not even qualified for priestly service, which only added to Micah's error.—Numbers 3:10.

Micah eventually was left with nothing

Judges 18:24-26: So he said: "You have taken my gods that I made, and you have gone off with the priest too. What do I have left? How, then, can you ask me, 'What is the matter with you?'" The Danites replied: "Do not raise your voice against us; otherwise, angry men may assault you, and that would cost you your life and the lives of your household." So the Danites went on their way; and Micah, seeing that they were stronger than he was, turned and went back to his house.

it-2 391 paragraph 2

Shortly thereafter, Micah and a company of men pursued the Danites. Upon catching up with them and being asked what was the matter, Micah said: "My gods that I made you have taken, the priest too, and you go your way, and what do I have anymore?" At that, the sons of Dan warned of possible assault if Micah continued following them and voicing protest. Seeing that the Danites were much stronger than his band, Micah returned home. (Judges 18:22-26) The Danites thereafter struck down and burned Laish, building the city of Dan on its site. Jonathan and his sons became priests to the Danites, who "kept the carved image of Micah, which he had made, set up for themselves all the days that the house of the true God [the tabernacle] continued in Shiloh."—Judges 18:27-31.

Ask yourself, 'How have I experienced the benefits of obeying Jehovah?'

[Image:] A former Witness, now with a baby, reflecting longingly on her life when she served Jehovah. On the table in front of her, there is an ashtray with cigarette butts. A drunk man is sleeping on a sofa.

Spiritual Gems

Judges 19:18—Why was the name Jehovah included here in the 2013 revision of the *New World Translation*?

Judges 19:18: He replied: “We are traveling from Bethlehem in Judah to a remote area of the mountainous region of Ephraim, where I am from. I went to Bethlehem in Judah, and I am going to the house of Jehovah, but nobody is taking me into his house.

w15 12/15 10 paragraph 6

The evidence for retaining God’s name in the Bible has not diminished but grown. The 2013 revision of the *New World Translation* includes the name 7,216 times, which is 6 more than the 1984 edition. Five of the additional instances are found at 1 Samuel 2:25; 6:3; 10:26; 23:14, 16. These were restored primarily because the Dead Sea Scrolls, which predate the Hebrew Masoretic text by over 1,000 years, contain the name in these verses. Also, one occurrence at Judges 19:18 was restored as a result of further study of ancient manuscripts.

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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Disobeying God’s Law Leads to Problems

Micah stole money from his mother (Jg 17:1, 2)

Micah practiced idolatry and bypassed Jehovah’s tabernacle and priesthood (Jg 17:4, 5, 12; *it-2* 390-391)

Micah eventually was left with nothing (Jg 18:24-26; *it-2* 391 ¶2)

ASK YOURSELF, ‘How have I experienced the benefits of obeying Jehovah?’



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

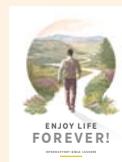
Return Visit*

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.



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)

Song 88 and Prayer | Opening Comments (1 min.)

 TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

“Disobeying God’s Law Leads to Problems”: (10 min.)

Spiritual Gems: (10 min.)

Jg 19:18—Why was the name Jehovah included here in the 2013 revision of the *New World Translation*? (w15 12/15 10 ¶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 17:1-13 (2)

 APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

Return Visit Video: (5 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Return Visit: God Cares—Jer 29:11* (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. (6)

Return Visit: (5 min.) Begin with the sample conversation. Then offer the *Enjoy Life Forever!* brochure, and start a Bible study in lesson 01. (13)

 LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

Song 89

Become Jehovah’s Friend—Obey Your Parents: (10 min.) Discussion. Play the video (video category CHILDREN). Then, if possible, ask selected young children: How did Caleb disobey his mom? How did he help to fix his mistake? Why should you obey your parents?

Local Needs: (5 min.)

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.) *rr* chap. 18 ¶16-25



Disobeying God’s Law Leads to Problems

Micah stole money from his mother (Jg 17:1, 2)

Micah practiced idolatry and bypassed Jehovah’s tabernacle and priesthood (Jg 17:4, 5, 12; *it-2* 390-391)

Micah eventually was left with nothing (Jg 18:24-26; *it-2* 391 ¶2)

ASK YOURSELF, ‘How have I experienced the benefits of obeying Jehovah?’



Become Jehovah's Friend Obey Your Parents

Caleb! Time for dinner! I just cleaned the house. So remember, take your shoes off!

OK, Mom!

We're clear for landing!

Caleb! Did Mommy tell you to take off your shoes?

Yes.

Mmmmmm. Mom worked very hard to clean the house today. How will she feel when she sees this?

I'm sorry, Daddy.

I know, I know. Let's clean this up together. So that was a lot of work, right?

Yeah.

You know, if you had listened to Mommy, you wouldn't have had to do all that work. My son, when we tell you to do something, it's because we love you. We want the best for you. Remember what we learned in family worship? It is here in Ephesians. What chapter is that?

Six?

Right! Very good. This is what Jehovah wants you to do. “Children,” that’s you, Caleb, “be obedient to your parents . . . that it may go well with you.” That’s why you should always listen to Mommy and Daddy.

Dinner’s ready! Come and eat! Come on, let’s go get some food!

OK, Dad!

Move it over here! OK! Beep, beep, beep. OK, stop! What? Beep, beep, beep. Hey, you almost hit me! Sorry! Release the marbles!

What a mess! Caleb, it is time for family worship. Get your book. And pick up all these marbles. Someone could get hurt.

“Always listen to Mommy and Daddy.”

Thank you! I’m so proud of you for obeying. Now, let’s hurry up, your sister and Dad are waiting for us.

Sophia, what do you see in this picture? Oh good, now everybody’s here! Let’s say a prayer to begin family worship.

lications 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?

¹⁷ As we saw in the preceding chapter of this publication, Jehovah tells Gog: “I will . . . put hooks in your jaws.” He will lead the nations into a decisive conflict. (Ezek. 38:4) This does not mean that Jehovah is the aggressor in this fight; nor does it mean that he takes away the free will of those who oppose him. Rather, it indicates that Jehovah can read hearts

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

and knows how his enemies will respond to a given set of circumstances.—Ps. 94:11; Isa. 46:9, 10; Jer. 17:10.

¹⁸ If Jehovah does not start the conflict or force his opponents into battle, why will mere humans put themselves in a position where they will be fighting against the Almighty himself? One reason is that by this time in history, they will likely have convinced themselves either that God does not exist or that he will not intervene in human affairs. Perhaps they will think this way because they will have just wiped out all false religious organizations on earth. So they might reason that if God existed, surely he would defend the institutions that claim to represent him. They will not realize that it was actually God who put the thought into their hearts to get rid of religions that have so grossly misrepresented him.—Rev. 17:16, 17.

¹⁹ Sometime after false religion is devastated, Jehovah may well have his people deliver a hard-hitting message, one that the book of Revelation likens to

18. Why will humans pick a fight with the Almighty?

19. What may well happen after false religion is devastated?

a hailstorm in which each hailstone weighs about 45 pounds. (Rev. 16:21, ftn.) This message, possibly a declaration that the political and commercial system is about to end, torments the hearers to such a degree that they blaspheme God. Likely it is this message that provokes the nations into making an all-out assault on God's people, to silence us once and for all. They will think that we are defenseless, an easy target to destroy. What a mistake that will be!

How Will Jehovah Express His Rage?

²⁰ As we saw in Chapter 17 of this publication, Ezekiel uses a prophetic title, "Gog of the land of Magog," to identify the coalition of nations that attack us. (Ezek. 38:2) But the members of this coalition will be tethered to one another only by a thread. Beneath a veneer of cooperation, the spirit of rivalry, pride, and nationalistic ambition will continue to exist. It will be an easy thing for Jehovah to turn the sword of each one "against his own brother." (Ezek. 38:21) But the nations' destruction will not be a man-made calamity.

²¹ Before they are destroyed, our enemies will see

20, 21. Who is Gog, and what will happen to him?

the sign of the Son of man, likely a supernatural manifestation of the power of Jehovah and Jesus. The opposers will see things that cause them extreme anxiety. As Jesus foretold, “people will become faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the inhabited earth.” (Luke 21:25-27) To their horror, they will realize that they miscalculated when they attacked Jehovah’s people. They will be forced to know the Creator in his role as military commander, Jehovah of armies. (Ps. 46:6-11; Ezek. 38:23) Jehovah will no doubt unleash heavenly armies and natural forces in such a way that he protects his loyal servants but eliminates his enemies.—**Read 2 Peter 2:9.**

²² Think of how keen Jesus will be to lead the charge against God’s enemies and to protect those who love and serve his Father. Think, too, of the emotions that the anointed will then feel. At some point before Armageddon begins, the last of them remaining on earth will be raised to heavenly life so that all of the 144,000 can accompany Jesus into battle. (Rev. 17:12-14) Many of the anointed will no doubt have de-

22, 23. Who will protect God’s people, and how will they no doubt feel about their task?

veloped close personal friendships with members of the other sheep as they worked together during the last days. Now the anointed will have both the authority and the power to defend those who supported them so loyally during their trials.—Matt. 25:31-40.

²³ Angels will also be part of Jesus' heavenly army. (2 Thess. 1:7; Rev. 19:14) They already helped him remove Satan and the demons from heaven. (Rev. 12:7-9) And they have been involved in gathering those on earth who want to worship Jehovah. (Rev. 14:6, 7) How appropriate it is that Jehovah will allow the angels to protect these loyal ones! Most important, all in Jehovah's army will feel honored to sanctify and vindicate his name, or reputation, by helping to destroy his enemies.—Matt. 6:9, 10.

²⁴ With such a powerful, highly motivated army protecting them, those of the great crowd of other sheep will have no reason to cringe in fear. In fact, they will “stand up straight and lift up [their] heads, because [their] deliverance is getting near.” (Luke 21:28) How important that before Jehovah's day comes, we help as many as possible to come to know and

24. How will the great crowd of other sheep react?

love our merciful, protective Father!—**Read Zephaniah 2:2, 3.**

²⁵ The aftermath of human wars is chaos and misery. By contrast, the outcome of Armageddon will be order and happiness. What will it be like when Jehovah's rage is spent, his warriors' swords are sheathed, and the last echoes of the great battle fade? In the next chapter, we will consider that wonderful future.

25. What will we consider next?

YOUR PLACE IN PURE WORSHIP

- 1** What provokes Jehovah's anger?
- 2** How will Jehovah express his rage?
- 3** Why should we courageously promote pure worship now?

150 *Seek God for Your Deliverance*

(Zephaniah 2:3)

1. Nations align as one,
 Opposing Jehovah's Son.
Their time of human rulership
 By God's decree now is done.
Rulers have had their day;
 God's Kingdom is here to stay.
Soon Christ will crush earthly enemies.
 No more will there be delay.

(CHORUS)

*Seek God for your deliverance,
 Yes, look to him with confidence.
Seek his righteousness,
 Show your faithfulness,
For his sov'reignty, take your stand.
 Then see our God deliver you
By his mighty hand.*

2. People on earth now choose,
 Responding to this good news.
We offer to all men the choice
 To hear or proudly refuse.
Trials, although severe,
 Need not fill our hearts with fear.
Jehovah cares for his loyal ones;
 Our cries for help he will hear.

(Chorus)

(See also 1 Sam. 2:9; Ps. 2:2, 3, 9; Prov. 2:8; Matt. 6:33.)

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THE  **WATCHTOWER**
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

LARGE PRINT EDITION



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
JANUARY 3-30, 2022

Study Article 44: January 3-9	2
What Does Jehovah's Loyal Love Mean to You?	
<hr/>	
Study Article 45: January 10-16	14
Continue Showing Loyal Love to One Another	
<hr/>	
Study Article 46: January 17-23	26
Newly Married Couples—Build Your Life Around Serving Jehovah	
<hr/>	
Study Article 47: January 24-30	39
How Strong Will Your Faith Be?	
<hr/>	
LIFE STORY	53
My Search for a Life Rich in Purpose	

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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107 *The Divine Pattern of Love*

(1 John 4:19)

1. The pattern of love, we learn from Jehovah
Shows the way, guides our way.
In all he has done, his dealings have shown us
How to display his loving way.
He gave us his Son, his dearest possession
To cover our sin, forgiving transgression.
What proof of his love—its greatest expression!
His way is love, Yes, God's way is love.
2. When we walk his way, our love for each other
Will be true, warm and true,
Will move us to care for all of our brothers,
Old ones and new, not just a few.
True love for our God and love for our brother,
We can't have the one and not have the other.
The faults of our friends, we readily cover,
Proving our love, Our brotherly love.
3. The pattern of love, the bond that unites us
Lets us be family.
Our Father above now warmly invites us:
"Come taste and see real unity."
Come share in the love and joy that define us;
God's spirit and Word, he gives to refine us.
Our brothers and friends are here to remind us,
God's way is love. Jehovah is love.

(See also Rom. 12:10; Eph. 4:3; 2 Pet. 1:7.)

Continue Showing Loyal Love to One Another

“Deal with one another in loyal love and mercy.”—ZECH. 7:9.

SONG 107

The Divine Pattern of Love

PREVIEW

Jehovah wants us to show loyal love to our brothers and sisters in the congregation. We can deepen our understanding of what loyal love is by examining how some of God’s servants in the past showed this quality. In this article, we will consider what we can learn from the examples of Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz.

WE HAVE good reasons to show loyal love to one another. What are some of them? Note how the following inspired proverbs answer that question: “Do not let loyal love and faithfulness leave you. . . . Then you will find favor and good insight in the eyes of God and man.” “A man of loyal love benefits himself.” “Whoever pursues righteousness and loyal love will find life.”—Prov. 3:3, 4; 11:17, ftn.; 21:21.

² These proverbs mention three reasons why we should show loyal love. First, showing loyal love makes us precious in God’s eyes. Second, by showing loyal love, we benefit ourselves. For instance, we forge lasting friendships with others. Third, pursuing loyal love leads to future blessings, including everlasting life. Indeed, we have good reasons for heeding Jehovah’s reminder: “Deal with one another in loyal love and mercy.”—Zech. 7:9.

³ In this article, we will consider the answers to four questions. To whom should we show loyal love? What can we learn from the book of Ruth about showing loyal love? How can we show loyal love today? What benefits come to those who show loyal love?

1-2. What good reasons do we have to show loyal love to one another?

3. What questions will we consider in this article?

TO WHOM SHOULD WE SHOW LOYAL LOVE?

⁴ As we learned in the preceding article, Jehovah reserves his loyal love—his enduring feelings of loving attachment—for those who love him and serve him. (Dan. 9:4) We want to be “imitators of God, as beloved children.” (Eph. 5:1) Therefore, we desire to develop warm feelings—a deep and enduring attachment—for our spiritual brothers and sisters.—**Read Mark 10: 29, 30.**

⁵ You will surely agree that the better we understand the meaning of loyal love, the better we will be able to show it to our fellow worshippers. To deepen our understanding of loyal love, let us see how it compares with loyalty, as that term is commonly used. Consider an example.

⁶ Today we might describe someone who has worked for the same company for many years as a loyal employee. Yet, in all his years with the company, he may never have met any of the directors. He may not always agree with the policies of that company. He does not love the company, but he is happy to have a job that provides a paycheck. He will continue to work there until he retires, unless he is offered a better position elsewhere.

4. How can we imitate Jehovah in showing loyal love? (Mark 10: 29, 30)

5-6. The word “loyalty” may refer to what kind of relationship?

⁷ The difference between loyalty as discussed in paragraph 6 and loyal love is a person's motive. In the Bible, what motive stands out in the acts of loyal love shown among God's people? Those who showed loyal love did so, not because they had to, but because their hearts impelled them. Consider the example of David. His heart moved him to show loyal love to his dear friend Jonathan even though Jonathan's father wanted to kill David. Years after Jonathan's death, David still continued to show loyal love to Jonathan's son Mephibosheth.—1 Sam. 20:9, 14, 15; 2 Sam. 4:4; 8:15; 9:1, 6, 7.

⁸ We can learn much about loyal love by considering some passages from the Bible book of Ruth. What lessons about loyal love can we learn from the individuals featured in that book? How can we apply these lessons in our congregation?*

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE BOOK OF RUTH ABOUT SHOWING LOYAL LOVE?

⁹ In the book of Ruth, we read the story of Naomi, her daughter-in-law Ruth, and a God-fearing man named

* To benefit fully from this article, we encourage you to read for yourself Ruth chapters 1 and 2.

7-8. (a) What motivates someone to show loyal love? (b) Why will we consider some passages from the book of Ruth?

9. Why did Naomi conclude that Jehovah was opposing her?

Boaz, who was a relative of Naomi's husband. Because of a famine in Israel, Naomi, her husband, and two sons moved to Moab. While there, Naomi's husband died. Her two sons got married, but sadly, they too died. (Ruth 1:3-5; 2:1) Those blows caused Naomi to sink deeper and deeper into despair. She became so overwhelmed by anguish that she concluded that Jehovah was opposing her. Note how she expressed her feelings about God: "The hand of Jehovah has turned against me." "The Almighty has made life very bitter for me." She also said: "It is Jehovah who opposed me and the Almighty who caused me calamity."—Ruth 1:13, 20, 21.

¹⁰ How did Jehovah react to Naomi's bitter words? He did not turn against his distraught servant. On the contrary, he showed empathy for her. Jehovah understands that "oppression can drive the wise one into madness." (Eccl. 7:7) Still, Naomi needed help in order to see that Jehovah was on her side. What help did God provide? (1 Sam. 2:8) He moved Ruth to reach out and show loyal love to Naomi. Willingly and gently, Ruth helped her mother-in-law to regain her emotional and spiritual balance. What do we learn from Ruth's example?

¹¹ *Loyal love moves us to reach out to those in distress.* Just as Ruth stuck with Naomi, kindhearted brothers

10. How did Jehovah react to Naomi's bitter words?

11. Why do kindhearted brothers and sisters reach out to those who are distressed?

and sisters today willingly stick with those in the congregation who are despondent or depressed. They love their brothers and sisters, and they are eager to do whatever they can to help them. (Prov. 12:25, ftn.; 24:10) This is in line with the apostle Paul’s admonition: “Speak consolingly to those who are depressed, support the weak, be patient toward all.”—1 Thess. 5:14.

¹² Often the most effective way you can help a discouraged brother or sister is by lending a listening ear and by reassuring him or her of your love. Your kind attention to one of Jehovah’s precious sheep does not go unnoticed by our God. (Ps. 41:1) Proverbs 19:17 states: “The one showing favor to the lowly is lending to Jehovah, and He will repay him for what he does.”

¹³ We gain further insight into loyal love by considering what happened to Naomi after the death of her

12. What is often the most effective way to help a discouraged brother or sister?

13. How did Ruth differ from Orpah, and why was Ruth’s decision an act of loyal love? (See cover picture.)



By listening, we can help a discouraged brother or sister
(See paragraph 12)

husband and two sons. When Naomi learned that “Jehovah had turned his attention to his people by giving them food,” she decided to return to her home. (Ruth 1:6) Both daughters-in-law started out with her. Along the way, however, three times Naomi urged the women to return to Moab. What happened? We read: “Orpah kissed her mother-in-law and departed. But Ruth stuck with her.” (Ruth 1:7-14) By choosing to return, Orpah was following Naomi’s instructions, doing what was expected. Ruth, however, went beyond that. She too was free to leave, but out of loyal love, she decided to stay to help her needy relative. (Ruth 1:16, 17) Ruth chose to stick with Naomi, not because she had to, but because she wanted to. Ruth’s decision was an act of true loyal love. What lesson does this account contain?

¹⁴ *Loyal love goes beyond what is expected.* Today, as in the past, many of our brothers and sisters have chosen to show loyal love for fellow believers, even to those whom they do not know personally. For example, when they learn that a natural disaster has occurred, they immediately want to know how they can help. When someone in the congregation falls on hard times, they do not hesitate to reach out to that person and help in practical ways. Like the first-century Macedo-

14. (a) Today, what choice do loving brothers and sisters make?
(b) According to Hebrews 13:16, what sacrifices are pleasing to God?

nians, they do more than what is expected. They make personal sacrifices, giving “even beyond their means” in order to help their less fortunate brothers. (2 Cor. 8:3) How pleased Jehovah must be with such a loving spirit!—Read Hebrews 13:16.

HOW CAN WE SHOW LOYAL LOVE TODAY?

¹⁵ We can learn a number of fine lessons by examining how Ruth helped Naomi. Let us consider a few.

¹⁶ *Be persistent.* When Ruth offered to accompany her mother-in-law to Judah, Naomi at first objected. But Ruth did not give up. What was the result? “When Naomi saw that Ruth insisted on going with her, she stopped trying to convince her.”—Ruth 1:15-18.

¹⁷ *Application:* It takes patience to help those who are depressed, but we should not give up on them. A sister in need of assistance may at first refuse our help.* Still, loyal love will move us to do our best to stick with her. (Gal. 6:2) We hope that she will eventually accept our hand of friendship and allow us to help lift her out of despair.

* Because we are considering the example of Naomi, we refer to sisters in need. But the points in this article apply equally to brothers.

15-16. How did Ruth show her persistence?

17. What will help us not to give up easily?

¹⁸ ***Do not take it personally.*** When Naomi and Ruth arrived in Bethlehem, Naomi met her former neighbors. She told them: “I was full when I went, but Jehovah made me return empty-handed.” (Ruth 1:21) Imagine how Ruth must have felt on hearing those words from Naomi! Ruth had gone out of her way to help Naomi. Ruth had wept with her, comforted her, and walked with her for days on end. Despite all of this, Naomi said: “Jehovah made me return empty-handed.” With those words, Naomi did not even acknowledge the support of Ruth, who was standing next to her. How painful that must have been for Ruth! Yet, she stuck with Naomi.

¹⁹ ***Application:*** Today, a sister in distress may initially speak to us in a hurtful way—despite all our efforts to help her. But we try not to take it personally. We stick with our sister who is in need, and we ask Jehovah to help us find a way to bring her comfort.—Prov. 17:17.

²⁰ ***Give timely encouragement.*** Ruth had shown loyal love to Naomi, but now Ruth herself needed encouragement. And Jehovah moved Boaz to encourage her. Boaz said to Ruth: “May Jehovah reward you for what

18. What must have been painful for Ruth?

19. What will help us to stick with someone who is distressed?

20. What gave Ruth the strength she needed to carry on?

you have done, and may there be a perfect wage for you from Jehovah the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to seek refuge.” Those heart-warming words touched Ruth deeply. In response, Ruth said to Boaz: “You have comforted me and spoken reassuringly to your servant.” (Ruth 2:12, 13) The timely words of Boaz gave Ruth the strength she needed to carry on.

²¹ *Application:* Those who show loyal love to others sometimes need encouragement themselves. Just as Boaz reassured Ruth that her kindness had not gone unnoticed, observant elders today gratefully acknowledge the help that loving brothers and sisters provide. Such timely and warm commendation will give the

21. As described at Isaiah 32:1, 2, what will caring elders provide?

How can Christian elders today imitate Boaz?

(See paragraphs 20-21)



brothers and sisters the strength they need to carry on.—Read Isaiah 32:1, 2.

WHAT BENEFITS COME TO THOSE WHO SHOW LOYAL LOVE?

²² After some time had passed, Boaz provided a generous gift of food for Ruth and Naomi. (Ruth 2:14-18) What was Naomi's reaction to Boaz' generosity? She said: "May he be blessed by Jehovah, who has not failed in his loyal love toward the living and the dead." (Ruth 2:20a) What a turning point this was for Naomi! Earlier, she had cried out in pain: "Jehovah . . . opposed me," but now she exclaimed with joy: "Jehovah . . . has not failed in his loyal love." What might have contributed to Naomi's changed attitude?

²³ Naomi finally began to see Jehovah's hand in her life. Jehovah had used Ruth to give needed support on the journey to Judah. (Ruth 1:16) Naomi also saw Jehovah's hand when Boaz, one of their "repurchasers," lovingly made generous provisions for the two women.* (Ruth 2:19, 20b) 'Now I understand,' she must have thought, 'Jehovah never left me. He has been with

* For more information on the role of Boaz as repurchaser, see the article "Imitate Their Faith—'An Excellent Woman,'" in *The Watchtower* of October 1, 2012, p. 20.

22-23. How did Naomi's attitude change, and why? (Psalm 136: 23, 26)

me this whole time!’ (Read Psalm 136:23, 26.) How grateful Naomi must have been that Ruth and Boaz did not give up on her! We can imagine that all three rejoiced over that wonderful outcome.

²⁴ What have we learned from the book of Ruth about loyal love? Loyal love moves us not to give up easily on brothers and sisters who are in distress. It also moves us to make sacrifices in order to help them. Elders need to give timely and warm encouragement to those who extend loyal love to others. When we observe how those in need regain their spiritual strength, we feel deep joy. (Acts 20:35) What, though, is the foremost reason why we continue to show loyal love? Because we want to imitate and please Jehovah, who is “abundant in loyal love.”—Ex. 34:6; Ps. 33:22.

24. Why do we want to keep on showing loyal love to our fellow believers?

DO YOU REMEMBER?

- How does loyal love compare with loyalty?
- How can we imitate the examples of Boaz and Ruth in showing loyal love to others?
- How do we benefit from showing loyal love?

1. Lovingly Jehovah

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

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

2. We receive such mercy

When we act like God above
And forgive each other freely,
Showing empathy and love.
Putting up with one another,
Putting hurtfulness away;
Showing honor to our brother,
Showing love's surpassing way.

3. Mercy is a virtue

That we all should cultivate.
It will keep us from resentment,
From the bitterness of hate.
When we imitate Jehovah,
Who is unsurpassed in love,
We will truly be forgiving;
We will be like God above.