

Monday, January 24

*I heard the number of those who were sealed, 144,000.—
Revelation 7:4.*

As a reward for their faithfulness, Christ's anointed brothers become kings and priests with him in heaven. (Revelation 20:6) All those who make up the heavenly part of God's family will be eager to see the 144,000 anointed ones receive their heavenly reward. After telling about these 144,000 kings and priests, the apostle John sees something exciting, "a great crowd" who survive Armageddon. Unlike the first group, this second group is much larger and has no fixed number. (Revelation 7:9, 10) They are "dressed in white robes," indicating that they have kept themselves "without spot" from Satan's world and have remained loyal to God and Christ. (James 1:27) They cry out that they have been saved because of what Jehovah and Jesus, the Lamb of God, have done. All the while, they are holding palm branches, which shows that they joyfully acknowledge Jesus as Jehovah's appointed King.—Compare John 12:12, 13.
w21.01 15-16 paragraphs 6-7

Tuesday, January 25

Your humility makes me great.—2 Samuel 22:36.

A man can learn to be a good family head by imitating the way that Jehovah and Jesus exercise their headship. For instance, consider the quality of humility. Jehovah is the wisest Person in existence; yet, he listens to the opinions of his servants. (Genesis 18:23, 24, 32) Jehovah is perfect, but he does not, at present, expect perfection from us. Instead, he helps imperfect humans who serve him to succeed. (Psalm 113:6, 7) In fact, the Bible even describes Jehovah as a “helper.” (Psalm 27:9; Hebrews 13:6) King David acknowledged that he could accomplish the great work he was given to do only because of Jehovah’s humility. Consider Jesus’ example. Although Lord and Master of his disciples, he washed their feet. Jesus himself said: “I set the pattern for you, that just as I did to you, you should also do.” (John 13:12-17) Although he had great authority, Jesus did not expect to be served. Instead, he served others.—Matthew 20:28. w21.02 3-4 paragraphs 8-10

Wednesday, January 26

The glory of young men is their strength.—Proverbs 20:29.

Young brothers, you have a lot to offer. Many of you are strong and full of energy. You are a real asset to your congregation. You may look forward to the time when you are appointed as a ministerial servant. However, you may feel that others view you as being too young or too inexperienced to be entrusted with important work. Even though you may be young, there are things you can do right now to earn the trust and respect of those in your congregation. Do you young men have a skill that could benefit others in the congregation? Many of you do. For example, you may notice that some older ones appreciate being shown how to make the best use of their tablets and other electronic devices for personal study and for meetings. Your knowledge of these devices can be of great benefit to such older ones. In everything you do, make your heavenly Father proud of you. w21.03 2 paragraph 1, 3; 7 paragraph

Thursday, January 27

Each one will carry his own load.—Galatians 6:5.

Even if a wife is better educated than her husband, it is his responsibility to take the lead in family worship and in other theocratic activities. (Ephesians 6:4) A woman must be submissive to her husband, but she is still responsible for her own spiritual health. To that end, she must allocate some time for her own personal study and meditation. That will help her to maintain her love and respect for Jehovah and to find joy in being submissive to her husband. Wives who remain subject to their husband out of love for Jehovah will find more joy and contentment than those who reject Jehovah's headship arrangement. They set a good example for both young men and young women. And they help to create a warm atmosphere not only in the family but also in the congregation. (Titus 2:3-5) Today, women make up a large part of those who are loyally serving Jehovah.—Psalm 68:11. w21.02 13 paragraphs 21-23

Friday, January 28

*Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you.—
James 4:8.*

The apostle Paul set an outstanding example of courage and endurance. At times, he felt weak. But he was able to endure because he relied on Jehovah to give him the strength he needed. (2 Corinthians 12:8-10; Philippians 4:13) We can have that kind of strength and courage if we humbly recognize that we need Jehovah's help. (James 4:10) We can be certain that the trials we face are not punishment from Jehovah. The disciple James assures us: "When under trial, let no one say: 'I am being tried by God.' For with evil things God cannot be tried, nor does he himself try anyone." (James 1:13) When we are convinced of that fact, we are drawn closer to our loving heavenly Father. Jehovah "does not vary or change." (James 1:17) He supported the first-century Christians through their trials, and he will help each of us today too. Earnestly ask Jehovah to help you gain wisdom, faith, and courage. He will answer your prayers. w21.02 31 paragraphs 19-21

Saturday, January 29

*As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens his friend.—
Proverbs 27:17.*

You can encourage a Bible student who attends meetings by showing personal interest in him. (Philippians 2:4) Without being too personal, you could commend him for any positive changes he has made and ask him about his Bible study, his family, and his work. These conversations might draw you closer together. When you befriend the student, you help him to progress to baptism. As the student continues to progress and make changes, help him to feel that he belongs in the congregation. You can do this by being hospitable. (Hebrews 13:2) Once the Bible student qualifies as a publisher, you can also invite him to accompany you in the ministry. Diego, a publisher from Brazil, says: “Many brothers invited me to go out in the ministry. This was the best way to get to know them well. As I did, I learned a lot, and I felt closer to Jehovah and Jesus.”

w21.03 12 paragraphs 15-16

Sunday, January 30

Return evil for evil to no one.—Romans 12:17.

Jesus told his followers to love their enemies. (Matthew 5:44, 45) Is that easy to do? By no means! But it is possible with the help of God's holy spirit. The fruitage of God's spirit includes love as well as patience, kindness, mildness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22, 23) These qualities help us to endure hatred. Many opposers have had a change of heart because a believing husband, wife, child, or neighbor displayed those godly qualities. Many opposers have even become our dear brothers and sisters. So if you find it hard to love those who hate you just because you are serving Jehovah, pray for holy spirit. (Luke 11:13) And be fully convinced that God's way is always best. (Proverbs 3:5-7) Hatred can be powerful and hurtful, but love is much stronger. It wins hearts. And it brings joy to Jehovah's heart. But even if opposers continue to hate us, we can still be happy. w21.03 23 paragraph 13; 24 paragraph 15, 17

Song 108 and Prayer | Opening Comments (1 min.)

 TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

“Pursue Loyal Love”: (10 min.)

Spiritual Gems: (10 min.)

Ru 1:20, 21—Why did Naomi say that Jehovah had made her life bitter? (w05 3/1 27 ¶1)

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

Bible Reading: (4 min.) Ru 1:1-17 (10)

 APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

Initial Call: (3 min.) Use the sample conversation. Overcome a common objection. (12)

Return Visit: (4 min.) Begin with the sample conversation. Introduce (but do not play) the video *Why Study the Bible?* (9)

Talk: (5 min.) *ia* 43-44 ¶5-9—Theme: What Makes a Family? (20)

 LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

Song 54

“Be Assured of Jehovah’s Loyal Love”: (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video *2019 Coordinators’ Committee Report* (video category OUR ACTIVITIES).

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.) *rr* chap. 19 ¶7-15

 Pursue Loyal Love

[Play the video *Introduction to Ruth*.]

Naomi urged Orpah and Ruth to return to Moab (Ru 1:8-13; w16.02 14 ¶5)

Ruth refused to abandon Naomi and Jehovah (Ru 1:16, 17; w16.02 14 ¶6)

Loyal love is motivated by commitment, integrity, loyalty, and deep attachment. Jehovah demonstrates loyal love to his faithful servants. (Ps 63:3) We too should show loyal love to others.—Pr 21:21.



1. Loyal love! God is love.

We can sense his care from above.
 God by means of his precious Son
 Paid the ransom for ev'ryone,
 Giving hope that we might possess
 Life eternal and happiness.

(CHORUS)

*Hey there, all you thirsty ones,
 Come and drink life's water free.
 Yes, come drink, you thirsty ones;
 God's loyal love you'll see.*

2. Loyal love! God is love.

All his works give proof of his love.
 Love Jehovah has further shown,
 Giving Jesus the kingly throne.
 God's own purpose has come to pass.
 See! His Kingdom is here at last!

(Chorus)

3. Loyal love! God is love.

May his spirit move us to love.
 As we loyally help the meek,
 God's commandments they learn to keep.
 We are serving with godly fear,
 Preaching boldly for all to hear.

(Chorus)

RUTH 1-2

¹ Now in the days when the judges administered justice, a famine occurred in the land; and a man went from Beth'le-hem in Judah to reside as a foreigner in the fields of Mo'ab, he along with his wife and his two sons. ² The man's name was E-lim'e-lech, his wife's name was Na-o'mi, and the names of his two sons were Mah'lon and Chil'i-on. They were Eph'rath-ites from Beth'le-hem in Judah. And they came to the fields of Mo'ab and remained there.

³ After some time E-lim'e-lech, Na-o'mi's husband, died, and she was left with her two sons. ⁴ The men later married Mo'ab-ite women; one was named Or'pah, and the other was named Ruth. They remained there for about ten years.

⁵ Then the two sons, Mah'lon and Chil'i-on, also died, and the woman was left without her two children and her husband. ⁶ So she started out with her daughters-in-law to return from the fields of Mo'ab, for she had heard in Mo'ab that Jehovah had turned his attention to his people by giving them food.

⁷ She left the place where she had been living with both of her daughters-in-law. As they were walking on the road to return to the land of Judah, ⁸ Na-o'mi said to both of her daughters-in-law: "Go, return, each of you to your mother's home. May Jehovah show loyal love to you, just as you have shown it to the men who have died and to me. ⁹ May Jehovah grant that each of you finds security in the home of your husband." Then she kissed them, and they wept loudly.

¹⁰ They kept saying to her: "No, but we will go with you to

your people.” ¹¹ But Na-o'mi said: “Return, my daughters. Why should you go with me? Can I still give birth to sons who could become your husbands? ¹² Return, my daughters. Go, for I have grown too old to marry. Even if I could hope to find a husband tonight and could also bear sons, ¹³ would you keep waiting for them until they could grow up? Would you refrain from getting remarried for their sakes? No, my daughters, I feel very bitter for you, because the hand of Jehovah has turned against me.”

¹⁴ Again they wept loudly, after which Or'pah kissed her mother-in-law and departed. But Ruth stuck with her. ¹⁵ So Na-o'mi said: “Look! Your widowed sister-in-law has returned to her people and her gods. Return with your sister-in-law.”

¹⁶ But Ruth said: “Do not plead with me to abandon you, to turn back from accompanying you; for where you go I will go, and where you spend the night, I will spend the night. Your people will be my people, and your God my God. ¹⁷ Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May Jehovah do so to me and add to it if anything but death should separate me from you.”

¹⁸ When Na-o'mi saw that Ruth insisted on going with her, she stopped trying to convince her. ¹⁹ And they both continued on their way until they came to Beth'le-hem. As soon as they arrived in Beth'le-hem, the whole city became stirred up over them, and women were saying: “Is this Na-o'mi?” ²⁰ She would say to the women: “Do not call me Na-o'mi. Call me Ma'ra, for the Almighty has made life very bitter for me. ²¹ I was full when I went, but Jehovah made me

return empty-handed. Why should you call me Na·o'mi, when it is Jehovah who opposed me and the Almighty who caused me calamity?”

²² This is how Na·o'mi returned from the fields of Mo'ab, along with her Mo'ab·ite daughter-in-law Ruth. They came to Beth'le·hem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

2 Now Na·o'mi had a relative on her husband's side who was very wealthy; his name was Bo'az, and he was of the family of E·lim'e·lech.

² Ruth the Mo'ab·i·tess said to Na·o'mi: “Let me go out, please, to the fields and glean among the ears of grain behind whoever looks on me with favor.” So Na·o'mi said to her: “Go, my daughter.” ³ At that she went out and began to glean in the field behind the harvesters. By chance she came upon a plot of land belonging to Bo'az, who was of the family of E·lim'e·lech. ⁴ Just then Bo'az arrived from Beth'le·hem and said to the harvesters: “Jehovah be with you.” And they replied: “Jehovah bless you.”

⁵ Bo'az then asked the young man in charge of the harvesters: “To whom does this young woman belong?”

⁶ The young man in charge of the harvesters answered: “The young woman is a Mo'ab·i·tess who returned with Na·o'mi from the fields of Mo'ab. ⁷ She asked, ‘Please, may I glean and gather among the cut-off ears of grain left behind by the harvesters?’ And she has been on her feet since she came this morning until just now, when she sat in the shelter for a short rest.”

⁸ Then Bo'az said to Ruth: "Listen, my daughter. Do not go away to glean in another field, and do not go anywhere else; stay close by my young women. ⁹ Keep your eyes on the field that they harvest, and go with them. I have commanded the young men not to touch you. When you are thirsty, go to the water jars and drink from what the young men have drawn."

¹⁰ At that she fell facedown and bowed down to the ground and said to him: "How have I found favor in your eyes, and why have you taken notice of me, when I am a foreigner?"

¹¹ Bo'az answered her: "A full report was made to me of all you have done for your mother-in-law after the death of your husband and how you left your father and your mother and the land of your relatives to go to a people whom you had not known before. ¹² May Jehovah reward you for what 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." ¹³ To this she said: "Let me find favor in your eyes, my lord, because you have comforted me and spoken reassuringly to your servant, although I am not even one of your servants."

¹⁴ Bo'az said to her at mealtime: "Come here, eat some of the bread, and dip your piece in the vinegar." So she sat down beside the harvesters. He then handed her some roasted grain, and she ate and was satisfied, and she had something left over. ¹⁵ When she got up to glean, Bo'az commanded his young men: "Let her glean even among the cut-off ears of grain, and do not mistreat her. ¹⁶ You should

also be sure to pull out some ears of grain from the bundles for her and leave them behind for her to glean, and do not say anything to stop her.”

¹⁷ So she continued to glean in the field until evening. When she beat out what she had gleaned, it came to about an e'phah of barley. ¹⁸ Then she took it and went into the city, and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. Ruth also took out and gave to her the food that was left over after she had eaten her fill.

¹⁹ Her mother-in-law then said to her: “Where did you glean today? Where did you work? May the one who took notice of you be blessed.” So she told her mother-in-law about whom she had worked with, saying: “The name of the man I worked with today is Bo'az.” ²⁰ At that Na-o'mi said to her daughter-in-law: “May he be blessed by Jehovah, who has not failed in his loyal love toward the living and the dead.” Na-o'mi continued: “The man is related to us. He is one of our repurchasers.” ²¹ Then Ruth the Mo'ab-i-tess said: “He also told me, ‘Stay close by my young people until they have finished my entire harvest.’” ²² Na-o'mi said to her daughter-in-law Ruth: “It is better, my daughter, for you to go out with his young women than to be harassed in another field.”

²³ So she stayed close to the young women of Bo'az and gleaned until the barley harvest and the wheat harvest came to an end. And she kept dwelling with her mother-in-law.

Song 108 and Prayer | Opening Comments (1 min.)

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“Pursue Loyal Love”: (10 min.)

Spiritual Gems: (10 min.)

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Naomi urged Orpah and Ruth to return to Moab (Ru 1:8-13; w16.02 14 ¶5)

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January 24-30 / Ruth 1-2

Song 108 and Prayer

Opening Comments (1 minute)

Treasures From God's Word

"Pursue Loyal Love": (10 minutes)

[Play the video *Introduction to Ruth.*]

Naomi urged Orpah and Ruth to return to Moab

Ruth 1:8-13: Naomi said to both of her daughters-in-law: "Go, return, each of you to your mother's home. May Jehovah show loyal love to you, just as you have shown it to the men who have died and to me. May Jehovah grant that each of you finds security in the home of your husband." Then she kissed them, and they wept loudly. They kept saying to her: "No, but we will go with you to your people." But Naomi said: "Return, my daughters. Why should you go with me? Can I still give birth to sons who could become your husbands? Return, my daughters. Go, for I have grown too old to marry. Even if I could hope to find a husband tonight and could also bear sons, would you keep waiting for

them until they could grow up? Would you refrain from getting remarried for their sakes? No, my daughters, I feel very bitter for you, because the hand of Jehovah has turned against me.”

w16.02 14 paragraph 5

Ruth could easily have reasoned that she had a family there in Moab—a mother and other relatives who would take a young widow in and help provide for her. Moab was her homeland. Its culture was her culture, its language her language, its people her people. Naomi could promise her no such advantages in Bethlehem. In fact, she advised Ruth to stay in Moab. Naomi feared that she could provide neither a husband nor a home for her daughters-in-law. What would Ruth do? Note the contrast between her and Orpah, who “returned to her people *and her gods*.” (Ruth 1:9-15) Did Ruth want to return to the false gods of her people? No, she did not.

Ruth refused to abandon Naomi and Jehovah

Ruth 1:16, 17: But Ruth said: "Do not plead with me to abandon you, to turn back from accompanying you; for where you go I will go, and where you spend the night, I will spend the night. Your people will be my people, and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May Jehovah do so to me and add to it if anything but death should separate me from you."

w16.02 14 paragraph 6

It seems that Ruth had come to know about Jehovah God, perhaps from her late husband or from Naomi. Jehovah was not like the gods of Moab. Ruth knew that Jehovah deserved her love and worship. Knowledge, though, was not enough. Ruth had to make a decision. Would she choose Jehovah as her God? Ruth made a wise choice. "Your people will be my people," she told Naomi, "and your God my God." (Ruth 1:16) Ruth's love for Naomi is heartwarming to think about, but far more important was her love for Jehovah. The landowner Boaz later praised Ruth for seeking refuge under Jehovah's wings. (Read Ruth 2:12.) That may remind us of a

baby bird taking refuge under the wings of a powerful, protective parent. (Psalm 36:7; 91:1-4) Jehovah became such a parent to Ruth. He rewarded her for her faith, and she never had any reason to regret her decision.

Loyal love is motivated by commitment, integrity, loyalty, and deep attachment. Jehovah demonstrates loyal love to his faithful servants. (Psalm 63:3) We too should show loyal love to others.—Proverbs 21:21.

[Image:] Collage: 1. A mother and her young daughter chat via video with a couple. 2. The couple bring a prepared meal and a basket of food to the mother and her daughter.

Spiritual Gems

Ruth 1:20, 21—Why did Naomi say that Jehovah had made her life bitter?

Ruth 1:20, 21: She would say to the women: “Do not call me Naomi. Call me Mara, for the Almighty has made life very bitter for me. I was full when I went, but Jehovah made me return empty-handed. Why should you call me Naomi, when it is Jehovah who opposed me and the Almighty who caused

me calamity?"

w05 3/1 27 paragraph 1

Ruth 1:13, 21—*Did Jehovah make life bitter for Naomi and cause her calamity?* No, and Naomi did not charge God with any wrongdoing. In view of all that had happened to her, however, she thought that Jehovah was against her. She felt bitter and disillusioned. Moreover, in those days the fruitage of the belly was considered a divine blessing and barrenness, a curse. Lacking grandchildren and with two sons dead, Naomi might have felt justified in thinking that Jehovah had humiliated her.

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) Ruth 1:1-17 (*th* study 10)

An introduction to the book of Ruth

The prophet Samuel is believed to be the writer of this book. The book of Ruth was completed about 1090 B.C.E. The events related cover a period early in the time of the Judges. The book takes its name from one of its principal characters, Ruth the Moabitess. The other main characters are Naomi and Boaz.

In chapter 1, a famine moves a man named Elimelech to take his family from Bethlehem to the land of Moab. In Moab, Elimelech dies. His sons, Mahlon and Chilion, marry the Moabite women Ruth and Orpah. Some ten years later, both sons also die.

Naomi, in deep despair, decides to return to Bethlehem. She urges her daughters-in-law to go back to their families. Orpah returns “to her people.” Ruth, however, sticks loyally to Naomi. When the two widows arrive at Bethlehem, the barley harvest has just begun.

In chapter 2, Ruth, by chance, gleans in a field belonging to Boaz, who is related to Naomi’s late husband. Recognizing Ruth’s fine qualities, Boaz tells her to continue gleaning in his fields. When Ruth later tells Naomi that she had gleaned in the fields of a man named Boaz, Naomi says: “The man is related to us. He is one of our repurchasers.”

In chapter 3, Naomi instructs Ruth to ask Boaz to act as repurchaser. He and Ruth could then raise up offspring for Naomi in order to carry on the family line of Elimelech. Boaz is willing to perform this loving deed. But he tells Ruth that Naomi has a closer male relative who could repurchase her.

In chapter 4, Boaz goes to the Bethlehem city gate where he meets with the other male relative, who is referred to as “So-and-so.” When the relative, in the presence of ten city elders, learns of his obligations, he declines to help. Boaz then publicly accepts the responsibilities of repurchaser. Boaz now marries Ruth, and they have a son, whom the “neighbor women” name Obed.

Did you know? Boaz set a fine example of obedience to Jehovah. He did all in his power to help Naomi and Ruth by applying God’s law on repurchase, taking no shortcuts. The book concludes: “Obed became father to Jesse; and Jesse became father to David,” who became a king of Israel and an ancestor of the Messiah.

As you read the book of Ruth, see how Jehovah turns tragedy into triumph, observe how he rewards those who love and obey him, and note how the book contributes to the history of David’s family line, which produced the King of God’s Kingdom.

Song 108 and Prayer | Opening Comments (1 min.)

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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

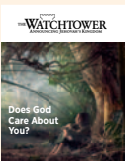
Initial Call*

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:



• Iffi 7

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



Apply Yourself to the Field Ministry

Talk: (5 minutes) *ia* 43-44 paragraphs 5-9—Theme: What Makes a Family? (*th* study 20)

5 By the time Ruth finished beating out the grain and collecting it all together, she found that she had gleaned about an ephah measure, or 20 dry quarts (22 liters), of barley. Her load may have weighed some 30 pounds (14 kilograms)! She hoisted it, perhaps bundling it in a cloth and carrying it on her head, and then made her way to Bethlehem in the gathering darkness.—Ruth 2:17.

6 Naomi was pleased to see her beloved daughter-in-law, and perhaps she gasped in surprise as she saw Ruth's heavy load of barley. Ruth also brought some food left over from the meal that Boaz had provided for the workers, and the two thus shared a simple meal. Naomi asked: "Where did you glean today, and where did you work? May the one who took notice of you become blessed." (Ruth 2:19) Naomi was attentive; she saw proof in Ruth's heavy load of provisions that someone had taken notice of the young widow and had treated her kindly.

7 The two fell to conversing, and Ruth told Naomi about the kindness of Boaz. Moved, Naomi replied: “Blessed be he of Jehovah, who has not left off his loving-kindness toward the living and the dead.” (Ruth 2:20) She saw the kindness of Boaz as coming from Jehovah, who moves his servants to be generous and promises to reward his people for the kindness they show.—Read Proverbs 19:17.

8 Naomi urged Ruth to accept Boaz’ offer to keep gleaning in his fields and to stay near the young women of his own household so that she would escape harassment from the reapers. Ruth took that advice. She also “kept on dwelling with her mother-in-law.” (Ruth 2:22, 23) In those words we see once more her hallmark quality—loyal love. Ruth’s example may move us to ask ourselves whether we honor the bonds of family, loyally supporting our loved ones and offering them help as needed. Jehovah never fails to notice such loyal love.

9 Were Ruth and Naomi somehow less than a family? Some assume that there must be someone to fill each role—husband, wife, son, daughter, grandparent, and so forth—for

a family to be “real.” But the examples of Ruth and Naomi remind us that servants of Jehovah can open their hearts and make even the smallest of families glow with warmth, kindness, and love. Do you appreciate what family you have? Jesus reminded his followers that the Christian congregation can provide family even for those who have none.—Mark 10:29, 30.

“This Is the Way”

(Isaiah 30:20, 21)

1. There is a way of peace,
The way you’ve come to know.
It is the way you learned,
The way of long ago,
The way that Jesus taught you
When his voice you heard.
This is the way of peace,
Found in Jehovah’s Word.

(CHORUS)

*This is the way to life; This is the way.
Don’t look aside; Not for a moment stray!
God’s voice is calling: ‘This is the way;
Do not look back, for yes, this is the way.’*

2. There is a way of love,
No need to look around.
God’s voice has shown the way
He lets himself be found.
His love is full and good;
His love is warm and true.
This is the way of love;
It touches all we do.

(Chorus)

3. There is a way of life,
No need to look behind.
Our God has promised us:
No better way we'll find,
No higher way to peace,
No finer way to love.
This is the way to life,
Thanks to our God above.

(CHORUS)

*This is the way to life; This is the way.
Don't look aside; Not for a moment stray!
God's voice is calling: 'This is the way;
Do not look back, for yes, this is the way.'*

Song 108 and Prayer | Opening Comments (1 min.)

 TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

“Pursue Loyal Love”: (10 min.)

Spiritual Gems: (10 min.)

Ru 1:20, 21—Why did Naomi say that Jehovah had made her life bitter? (w05 3/1 27 ¶1)

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

Bible Reading: (4 min.) Ru 1:1-17 (10)

 APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

Initial Call: (3 min.) Use the sample conversation. Overcome a common objection. (12)

Return Visit: (4 min.) Begin with the sample conversation. Introduce (but do not play) the video *Why Study the Bible?* (9)

Talk: (5 min.) *ia* 43-44 ¶5-9—Theme: What Makes a Family? (20)

 LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

Song 54

“Be Assured of Jehovah’s Loyal Love”: (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video *2019 Coordinators’ Committee Report* (video category OUR ACTIVITIES).

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.) *rr* chap. 19 ¶7-15

 Pursue Loyal Love

[Play the video *Introduction to Ruth*.]

Naomi urged Orpah and Ruth to return to Moab (Ru 1:8-13; w16.02 14 ¶5)

Ruth refused to abandon Naomi and Jehovah (Ru 1:16, 17; w16.02 14 ¶6)

Loyal love is motivated by commitment, integrity, loyalty, and deep attachment. Jehovah demonstrates loyal love to his faithful servants. (Ps 63:3) We too should show loyal love to others.—Pr 21:21.





Be Assured of Jehovah's Loyal Love

Jehovah views you as precious. (Isa 43:4) He has drawn you to him and his organization. As a result of your dedication and baptism, you belong to Jehovah. He will take care of you as his special property, even when times are tough. He will show loyal love to you through his organization.—Ps 25:10.

We can deepen our appreciation for Jehovah's loyal love by reviewing how his organization has responded to natural disasters in recent times.



WATCH THE VIDEO *2019 COORDINATORS' COMMITTEE REPORT*, AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:



- How has the Coordinators' Committee prepared branch offices around the world to respond to disasters?



- How did Jehovah's organization provide direction and disaster relief in Indonesia and Nigeria?



- What have you appreciated about the organization's response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

prophetic picture conveyed a reassuring promise that pure worship would revive the people, causing them to thrive. But a warning note was also sounded: Not all would accept Jehovah's blessings; nor would all be healed.

⁷ *Trees for food and healing.* What of those trees along the riverbanks? They add to the beauty of the picture, do they not? They also add to its meaning. Ezekiel and his countrymen surely enjoyed thinking of the delicious fruit that such trees would provide, a new crop every month! That appealing picture further reassured them that Jehovah would feed them spiritually. And what else? Note that the leaves of those trees "will serve . . . for healing." (Ezek. 47:12) Jehovah knew that, above all, the returning exiles would need spiritual healing, and he promised to provide just that. How he did so was discussed in other restoration prophecies, as we have noted in Chapter 9 of this publication.

⁸ However, as we also discussed in Chapter 9, the returning exiles experienced only a limited fulfillment

7. The presence of the visionary trees along the riverbanks gave the exiled Jews what reassurance?

8. What shows that Ezekiel's vision would have a greater fulfillment?

of such prophecies. It was the people themselves who limited that fulfillment. How could Jehovah bless them fully when backsliding, disobedience, and neglect of pure worship so often prevailed among them? Faithful ones were pained and disappointed by the conduct of their fellow Jews. However, loyal worshippers of Jehovah knew that his promises never fail; they always come true. (**Read Joshua 23:14.**) Hence, one day Ezekiel's vision would have a greater fulfillment. But when?

The River Flows Today!

⁹ As we noted in Chapter 14 of this publication, Ezekiel's temple vision has a greater fulfillment during "the final part of the days," the time when pure worship is exalted as never before. (Isa. 2:2) In what sense is this part of Ezekiel's vision being fulfilled right now?

¹⁰ *A river of blessings.* The water flowing from Jehovah's house reminds us of what blessings today? Really, we are reminded of all that contributes to our

9. When does Ezekiel's temple vision have a greater fulfillment?

10, 11. (a) What blessings flow to us like a river today? (b) How has the flow of blessings from Jehovah expanded to meet growing needs during the last days?

spiritual health and nourishment. Foremost is the cleansing power of Christ's ransom sacrifice, which makes the forgiveness of our sins possible. The pure truths of God's Word are also likened to life-giving, cleansing water. (Eph. 5:25-27) How have such blessings flowed in our time?

¹¹ In 1919 there were only a few thousand servants of Jehovah, and they were thrilled to receive the spiritual food they needed. In the decades that followed, their ranks kept swelling. Today, God's people number well over eight million. Has the flow of the pure waters of truth kept pace? Yes! We have an almost overwhelming supply of spiritual truths. Literally billions of Bibles, books, magazines, brochures, and tracts have flowed out to God's people in the past century. Like the visionary river that Ezekiel saw, the flow of pure truths has expanded rapidly to meet the growing needs of spiritually thirsty people worldwide. Bible-based publications have long been available in printed form. And now, by means of the website jw.org, such material is available electronically in over 900 languages! How do such waters of truth affect righthearted people?

¹² *Life-giving water.* Ezekiel was told: “Everything will live wherever the stream goes.” Think of the way the message of the truth has flowed to all those who have come into our restored spiritual land. Bible truths have brought life and spiritual health to millions of receptive hearts. However, the vision also conveys a timely warning: Not all remain receptive to such truth. Like the marshy and swampy places in the Dead Sea in Ezekiel’s vision, there are hearts that become unreceptive, refusing to accept and apply the truth.*^[3] May that never be true of us!—**Read Deuteronomy 10:16-18.**

¹³ *Trees for food and healing.* Do the visionary trees along the riverbanks convey encouraging lessons to us today? Certainly! Remember, those trees produced a new crop of delicious fruit every month, and their

*[3] In a similar vein, consider Jesus’ illustration of the dragnet. Many fish are caught in the net, but not all prove to be “fine.” The unsuitable ones need to be thrown away. Jesus thus warned that a sizable number of those who come into Jehovah’s organization may, in time, prove to be unfaithful.—Matt. 13:47-50; 2 Tim. 2:20, 21.

12. (a) How have we seen the message of the truth bring spiritual life and health to people? (b) What timely warning does the vision convey to us today? (See also footnote.)

13. What lessons may we today draw from those visionary trees?

leaves provided healing. (Ezek. 47:12) They thus remind us that we serve the God who generously feeds us and heals us in the most important way, spiritually. Today's world is sick and starving in a spiritual sense. By contrast, think of what Jehovah provides. Have you ever come to the end of an article in one of our journals, sung the concluding song at an assembly or a convention, or finished watching a video or broadcast program and felt blessed to have such spiritual food? We are truly well-fed. (Isa. 65:13, 14) Does our spiritual food promote spiritual health? The wholesome counsel we receive, based solidly on God's Word, helps us to fight off such spiritual enemies as immorality, greed, and lack of faith. Jehovah has also put in place an arrangement to help Christians overcome spiritual sickness brought on by serious sin. **(Read James 5:14.)** We are indeed blessed, just as suggested by Ezekiel's vision of the trees.

¹⁴ At the same time, we may take a lesson from those unhealed marshy places. Never would we want **14, 15. (a) What lesson should we take from the unhealed marshy places in Ezekiel's vision? (b) How does Ezekiel's visionary river benefit us today?**

to refuse to let Jehovah's blessings flow into our life. It would be tragic to remain unhealed, like so many in this sick world. (Matt. 13:15) Rather, we are delighted to benefit from the river of blessings. When we eagerly drink in the pure waters of truth from God's Word, when we share such truths with others by means of the preaching work, when we receive loving guidance, comfort, and help from elders who have been trained by the faithful slave, we may think of Ezekiel's visionary river. That river promotes life and healing wherever it goes!

¹⁵ What, though, about a future fulfillment of this visionary river? As we will see, the river will flow in the greatest possible sense in the Paradise to come.

What the Vision Will Mean in Paradise

¹⁶ Do you picture yourself in Paradise, surrounded by friends and family, enjoying life to the full? Studying Ezekiel's visionary river can help you to make that picture more vivid. How so? Consider once more the three clear, loving aspects of the vision.

16, 17. (a) In what way will the water of life be even more expansive in Paradise? (b) How will we benefit from that river of blessings in Paradise?

97 *Life Depends on God's Word*

(Matthew 4:4)

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

(CHORUS)

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

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

(Chorus)

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

(Chorus)

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THE  **WATCHTOWER**
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

LARGE PRINT EDITION



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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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(Hebrews 10:38, 39)

1. On many occasions God spoke to men
By means of his prophets of old.
Today he is saying, 'Let all repent,'
By God's own Son we are told.

(CHORUS)

*Do we have strong faith? Is it real?
We must build such faith to survive.
Is our faith proved true by our works?
By means of faith, we'll be preserved alive.*

2. We gladly obey Christ Jesus' command
To share Kingdom truth far and wide.
We boldly declare God's message of hope;
His promise we'll never hide.

(Chorus)

3. Our faith is an anchor firm and secure;
We never will shrink back in fear.
Our trust in Jehovah helps us endure;
We know salvation is near.

(Chorus)

How Strong Will Your Faith Be?

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Exercise faith.”

—JOHN 14:1.

SONG 119

We Must Have Faith

PREVIEW

We look forward to the end of this system of things. However, at times we may wonder whether our faith will be strong enough to carry us through that period. In this article, we will consider experiences and practical lessons that can help us to strengthen our faith.

DO YOU sometimes feel anxious when you think about the events that lie ahead of us—the destruction of false religion, the attack of Gog of Magog, and the war of Armageddon? Do you ever ask yourself, ‘When the time comes, will I be able to pass through these fear-inspiring events with my integrity intact?’ If such thoughts have crossed your mind, this discussion of Jesus’ words, as recorded in our theme text, should prove to be most helpful. Jesus told his disciples: “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Exercise faith.” (John 14:1) Strong faith will help us to face the future with confidence.

² We can strengthen our faith to endure future trials by considering how we deal with tests of faith now. When we give thought to the way we react when faced with current tests, we can learn of areas where we need to strengthen our faith. With each test we pass, our faith becomes stronger. This will help us to endure future trials. In this article, we will review four situations that Jesus’ disciples faced that revealed the need for them to have more faith. We will then consider how we might face similar challenges today and how these can prepare us for the future.

-
1. What question might we ask ourselves?
 2. How can we strengthen our faith, and what will we consider in this article?

FAITH THAT GOD WILL PROVIDE MATERIALLY

³ It is natural for a family head to want to provide sufficient food, clothing, and shelter for his wife and children. This is not always easy to do in these difficult times. In some cases, our fellow believers have lost their job and, despite diligent efforts, have been unable to find another one. Others have had to turn down employment that is not suitable for Christians. In all such cases, we need strong faith that Jehovah will in some way see to it that we have what we need for our family. Jesus made this clear to his disciples in the Sermon on the Mount. (Read Matthew 6:30, 33.) When we are absolutely convinced that Jehovah will not abandon us, we will be able to focus our attention where it belongs—on Kingdom interests. As we see how Jehovah is helping us with our material needs, he will become more real to us and our faith will be strengthened.

⁴ Consider how a family in Venezuela experienced Jehovah's help when dealing with anxieties about

3. As recorded at Matthew 6:30, 33, what point about faith did Jesus make clear?

4-5. What helped one family deal with anxieties about their material needs?



We may face economic hardship, but our faith will help us to stay focused on Kingdom interests

(See paragraphs 3-6)

their material needs. At one time, the Castro family earned a modest living by working their farm. Then, an armed gang took over their property and forced the family to abandon their land. The father, Miguel, states: “We now largely depend on what we can cultivate on a small piece of borrowed land. I begin every day by asking Jehovah to provide what we need for that day.” Life is difficult for this family, but with full faith in our loving Father’s ability to care for their daily needs, the Castro family regularly attend congregation meetings and share in the field ministry. They put Kingdom interests first in their life, and Jehovah provides what they need.

⁵ Throughout their hardship, Miguel and his wife, Yurai, have focused on how Jehovah has cared for

them. At times, Jehovah has used fellow believers to provide modest material aid or to help Miguel find suitable secular work. At other times, Jehovah has made the basic necessities available through the relief efforts of the branch office. Jehovah has never abandoned them. As a result, they have seen their family's faith grow. After relating a specific instance in which Jehovah helped them, their oldest daughter, Yoselin, says: "It is touching to see Jehovah's hand so clearly. I think of him as a friend whom I can depend on for life." She adds: "The tests we have been through as a family have prepared us for harder tests in the future."

⁶ Are you facing economic hardship? If so, this is a difficult time for you. However, as challenging as your circumstances are, you can use this time to build your faith. Prayerfully read Jesus' words recorded at Matthew 6:25-34 and meditate on them. Consider modern-day experiences that prove that Jehovah provides for those who stay busy in theocratic activities. (1 Cor. 15:58) Doing so will strengthen your confidence that just as your heavenly Father has helped others in similar circumstances, he will help you. He knows what you

6. How can you strengthen your faith when you face economic hardship?

need, and he knows how to provide it. As you experience Jehovah's help in your life, your faith will grow stronger so that you can endure greater trials in the future.—Hab. 3:17, 18.

FAITH TO ENDURE “A GREAT STORM”

⁷ When Jesus and his disciples were caught in a storm at sea, Jesus used the event to help them see areas where they needed greater faith. (Read Matthew 8:23-26.) As the storm raged on and water swept over the boat, Jesus was sleeping peacefully. When the terrified disciples woke him and asked him to save them, the Lord gently reproved them: “Why are you so afraid, you with little faith?” The fearful disciples should have realized that Jehovah was perfectly capable of protecting Jesus and those with him from harm. Do you see how we can apply the lesson? Strong faith can help us to weather any “great storm,” be it literal or figurative.

⁸ Consider how Anel, a single sister from Puerto Rico, came through a difficult test with stronger faith. Her “great storm” was a literal one. The test

7. According to Matthew 8:23-26, how did “a great storm” test the disciples' faith?

8-9. How was Anel's faith tested, and what helped her?



Strong faith can help us to weather
any great storm, literal or figurative
(See paragraphs 7-11)

began in 2017 when Hurricane Maria destroyed Anel’s home. As a result of the storm, she lost her job. “During those difficult days, I felt anxious,” admits Anel, “but I learned to trust in Jehovah through prayer and not let anxiety paralyze me.”

⁹ Anel mentions something else that helped her deal with her trial—obedience. She says: “Following the direction of the organization helped me to remain calm. I saw Jehovah’s hand in the spiritual encouragement I received as well as in the material assistance provided by the brotherhood.” She adds: “Jehovah gave me much more than I could even ask for, and my faith was greatly strengthened.”

¹⁰ Are you facing “a great storm” in your life? It

10. What can you do if you face “a great storm”?

might involve hardship because of a natural disaster. Or it may be a figurative storm, such as a severe health problem that has left you feeling overwhelmed and unsure of what to do. You may be anxious at times, but do not let your anxiety stop you from trusting in Jehovah. Draw close to him in earnest prayer. Strengthen your faith by meditating on the times in the past when Jehovah helped you. (Ps. 77:11, 12) You can be sure that he will never abandon you—not now, not ever.

¹¹ What else can help you to endure trials? As Anel pointed out, obedience. Learn to trust those whom Jehovah and Jesus trust. At times, those appointed to take the lead may give direction that does not make sense to us. However, Jehovah blesses obedience. We know from his Word and from the experiences of faithful servants that obedience saves lives. (Ex. 14:1-4; 2 Chron. 20:17) Meditate on such examples. Doing so will strengthen your resolve to cooperate with organizational arrangements now and in the future. (Heb. 13:17) You will thus have no reason to fear the greater storm that is soon to come.—Prov. 3:25.

11. Why should we be resolved to be obedient to those taking the lead?

FAITH TO COPE WITH INJUSTICE

¹² Jesus knew that injustice would challenge the faith of his disciples. To help them deal with it, he gave an illustration that is recorded in the book of Luke. Jesus told the story of a widow who kept crying out to an unrighteous judge for justice. She was confident that her persistence would pay off. Eventually, the judge responded to her pleas. The application? Jehovah is not unjust. So Jesus said: “Certainly, then, will not God cause justice to be done for his chosen ones who cry out to him day and night?” (Read Luke 18:1-8.) Then Jesus added: “When the Son of man arrives, will he really find *this faith* on the earth?” When we suffer injustice, we need to prove by our patience and perseverance

12. What connection does Luke 18:1-8 make between having faith and enduring injustice?

Our persistent prayers will strengthen our faith
(See paragraph 12)



that we have strong faith like that of the widow. With such faith, we can be confident that sooner or later Jehovah will act in our behalf. We also need to believe in the power of prayer. At times, our prayers may bring unexpected results.

¹³ Consider the experience of a sister named Vero, who lives in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Vero, her unbelieving husband, and their 15-year-old daughter had to flee their village when it was attacked by a militia group. Along the way, the family came to a roadblock where the militia detained them and threatened to execute them. When Vero began to cry, her daughter tried to calm her by praying out loud and by repeatedly using Jehovah's name in her prayer. When she finished, the commander of the militia group asked, "Young girl, who taught you to pray?" She replied, "My mother did, using the pattern that is found at Matthew 6:9-13." The commander said, "Young girl, go with your parents in peace, and may Jehovah your God protect you!"

¹⁴ Such experiences teach us never to underestimate the value of prayer. But what if your prayers are not answered quickly or dramatically? Like the widow in Jesus' illustration, keep praying, confident

13. How did prayer help one family who were unjustly treated?

14. What may test our faith, and what will help us to endure?

that our God will not abandon you and that he will in time and in some way answer your prayer. Continue to beg Jehovah for his holy spirit. (Phil. 4:13) Remember that soon Jehovah will bless you so richly that you will forget any past suffering. As you faithfully endure trials with Jehovah's help, you will be strengthened for the days ahead.—1 Pet. 1:6, 7.

FAITH TO OVERCOME OBSTACLES

¹⁵ Jesus taught his disciples that faith would help them overcome obstacles. (Read Matthew 17:19, 20.) On one occasion, they could not expel a demon, even though they had successfully done so at other times. What was the problem? Jesus explained that they needed more faith. He told them that with sufficient faith they would be able to move mountainlike obstacles! Today, we too may face challenges that seem insurmountable.

¹⁶ Note the example of Geydi, a sister from Guatemala. Her husband, Edi, was murdered as they were returning home from a congregation meeting. How has Geydi's faith helped her to cope with her great sorrow? She states: "Prayer helps me throw

15. As recorded at Matthew 17:19, 20, what challenge did Jesus' disciples face?

16. How has faith helped Geydi deal with tragedy and great sorrow?



We may feel great sorrow, but faith
will help us to stay busy serving Jehovah
(See paragraph 16)

my burden on Jehovah, which makes me feel peace. I see Jehovah’s care for me through my family and my friends in the congregation. Staying busy in Jehovah’s service eases my pain and helps me to take one day at a time without worrying too much about tomorrow. After going through this experience, I have learned that no matter what kind of test may come in the future, I will be able to face it with the help of Jehovah, Jesus, and the organization.”

¹⁷ Are you mourning the death of a loved one? Take time to strengthen your faith in the resurrection hope by reading Bible accounts of those who were raised from the dead. Are you grieving because a family member was disfellowshipped? Study

17. What can we do when confronted by a mountainlike obstacle?

in order to convince yourself that God's way of administering discipline is always best. Whatever problem is confronting you, use it as an opportunity to build your faith. Pour your heart out to Jehovah. Do not isolate yourself, but instead remain close to your brothers and sisters. (Prov. 18:1) Share in activities that will help you to endure, even if you have to do so with tears. (Ps. 126:5, 6) Keep up with your routine of meetings, field service, and Bible reading. And stay focused on the wonderful blessings that Jehovah has in store for you. As you see how Jehovah helps you, your faith in him will grow ever stronger.

“GIVE US MORE FAITH”

¹⁸ If your trials, past or present, have exposed a weakness in your faith, do not be discouraged. See this as an opportunity to strengthen your faith. Make the same request as did Jesus' apostles, who said: "Give us more faith." (Luke 17:5) Also, reflect on the examples that we have discussed in this article. Like Miguel and Yurai, remember all the times when Jehovah provided help. Like Vero's daughter and Anel, pray fervently to Jehovah, especially when facing a crisis. And like Geydi, recognize that

18. If you detect a weakness in your faith, what can you do?

Jehovah may provide the needed help by means of family or friends. When you allow Jehovah to help you get through your present trials, you will become more confident that he will help you endure any trials you may face in the future.

¹⁹ Jesus pointed out areas where his disciples lacked faith, but he never doubted that with Jehovah's help they would pass future tests successfully. (John 14:1; 16:33) He was confident that strong faith would allow a great crowd to survive the coming great tribulation. (Rev. 7:9, 14) Will you be among them? By Jehovah's undeserved kindness, you will be if you take advantage of every opportunity now to develop and strengthen your faith! —Heb. 10:39.

19. What confidence did Jesus have, and of what can you be certain?

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| ■ How can you prepare for future tests of faith? | ■ What four tests might we face now, and how can they help us? | ■ Why can you be confident that you can remain faithful? |
|--|--|--|

“Give Us More Faith”

(Luke 17:5)

1. Because we are imperfect, O Jehovah,
The inclination of our heart is flawed.
There is a sin that easily ensnares us—
A lack of faith in you, the living God.

(CHORUS)

*Give us more faith, we beg of you, Jehovah.
Please help us out according to our need.
Give us more faith, according to your mercy,
That we may honor you in word and deed.*

2. Apart from faith, no one can fully please you.
We must believe our faith will be repaid.
And as a shield, our faith provides a refuge.
We face the future firm and unafraid.

(Chorus)