

Monday, February 28

Close friendship with Jehovah belongs to those who fear him.—Psalm 25:14.

David proved to be responsible and reliable. For example, as a young man, he diligently looked after his father's sheep. That turned out to be a dangerous assignment. David later explained to King Saul: "Your servant became a shepherd of his father's flock, and a lion came, also a bear, and each carried off a sheep from the flock. I went out after it and struck it down and rescued it from its mouth." (1 Samuel 17:34, 35) David felt responsible for the welfare of the sheep. Young brothers can imitate David by diligently fulfilling any assignment they are given. Young David developed a close, personal relationship with Jehovah. That relationship was more important than David's courage or his skill with a stringed instrument. Jehovah was not only David's God but also his Friend—his close Friend. Young brothers, the most important thing that you can do is to strengthen your relationship with your heavenly Father.

w21.03 3 paragraphs 4-5

Tuesday, March 1

Happy are you whenever men hate you.—Luke 6:22.

We do not choose to be hated. We are not trying to be martyrs. So why can we be happy when hated? Consider three reasons. First, when we endure, we gain God's approval. (1 Peter 4:13, 14) Second, our faith is refined and becomes stronger. (1 Peter 1:7) And third, we will receive a priceless reward—everlasting life. (Romans 2:6, 7) Soon after Jesus' resurrection, the apostles experienced the happiness he spoke about. After being flogged and ordered to stop preaching, they rejoiced. Why? "Because they had been counted worthy to be dishonored in behalf of [Jesus'] name." (Acts 5:40-42) They loved their Master more than they feared the hatred of their enemies. And they showed their love by proclaiming the good news "without letup." Many of our brothers today continue to serve faithfully despite difficulties. They know that Jehovah will not forget their work and their love for his name. w21.03 25 paragraphs 18-19

Wednesday, March 2

He has even put eternity in their heart.—Ecclesiastes 3:11.

Anointed Christians are not born with the heavenly hope. It has to be implanted in their heart by God. They think about their hope, pray about it, and are eager to receive their reward in heaven. They cannot even imagine what their spiritual body will be like. (Philippians 3:20, 21; 1 John 3:2) Even so, they long to take their place in the heavenly Kingdom. The other sheep cherish a hope that comes naturally to humans, the prospect of living forever on earth. They look forward to the day when they can help turn the entire planet into a paradise. They yearn for the day when they can build their houses, plant their gardens, and raise their children in perfect health. (Isaiah 65:21-23) They look forward to exploring the earth—its mountains, forests, and seas—and to studying Jehovah's abundant creation. Above all, they are thrilled to know that their bond with Jehovah will grow ever stronger and closer. w21.01 18-19 paragraphs 17-18

Thursday, March 3

He burned down the house of the true God . . . and destroyed everything of value.—2 Chronicles 36:19.

When the Babylonians were finished with the land, onlookers could only say: “It is a wasteland without man and beast, and it has been handed over to the Chaldeans.” (Jeremiah 32:43) Some 200 years after Joel’s prophecy, Jehovah used Jeremiah to foretell something else about this attack. He said that a thorough search would be made for those Israelites who engaged in wicked practices—a search that would lead to their capture. “‘Here I am sending for many fishermen,’ declares Jehovah, ‘and they will fish for them. After that I will send for many hunters, and they will hunt them down on every mountain and every hill and out of the clefts of the crags.... I will repay the full amount due for their error and their sin.’” Neither the oceans nor the forests would be able to conceal the unrepentant Israelites from the Babylonian invaders.—Jeremiah 16:16, 18. *w20.04* 5 paragraphs 12-13

Friday, March 4

[Lot] kept lingering.—Genesis 19:16.

At a critical time in his life, Lot was slow to obey Jehovah's instructions. We may judge Lot as being apathetic, even disobedient. However, Jehovah did not give up on him. "Because of Jehovah's compassion for him," the angels took the family by the hand and led them outside the city. (Genesis 19:15, 16) Jehovah might have felt compassion for Lot for a number of reasons. Lot may have been reluctant to leave his home because he feared the people outside the city. There were other dangers too. Lot likely knew of the two kings who had fallen into pits of bitumen, or asphalt, in a nearby valley. (Genesis 14:8-12) As a husband and father, Lot must have worried about his family. In addition, Lot was wealthy, so he may have owned a fine house in Sodom. (Genesis 13:5, 6) Of course, none of those factors excused Lot for failing to obey Jehovah immediately. However, Jehovah looked beyond Lot's mistake and viewed him as a "righteous man."—2 Peter 2:7, 8. *w20.04* 18 paragraphs 13-14

Saturday, March 5

You have your company of young men just like dewdrops.—Psalm 110:3.

Young men, it may take time for those who have known you as a child to start viewing you as a young adult. You can be sure, however, that Jehovah sees beyond your outward appearance. He knows who you are and what you are capable of doing. (1 Samuel 16:7) Strengthen your relationship with God. David did that by looking closely at Jehovah's creative works. David considered what such works reveal about the Creator. (Psalm 8:3, 4; 139:14; Romans 1:20) Another thing you can do is to look to Jehovah for strength. For example, do some of your schoolmates make fun of you because you are one of Jehovah's Witnesses? If so, pray for Jehovah to help you deal with this challenge. And apply the practical advice you find in his Word and in our Bible-based publications and videos. Each time you see Jehovah help you deal with a challenge, your confidence in him will grow. Furthermore, as others see that you rely on Jehovah, you will gain their trust.

w21.03 4 paragraph 7

Sunday, March 6

*The prayer of the upright is a pleasure to [Jehovah].—
Proverbs 15:8.*

Close friends enjoy sharing thoughts and feelings with each other. Is that true of our friendship with Jehovah? Yes! Jehovah speaks to us through his Word, and in it he reveals to us his thoughts and feelings. We communicate with him in prayer, and we can share with him our deepest thoughts and innermost feelings. As a loving Friend, Jehovah not only listens to our prayers but also answers them. Sometimes the answer comes quickly. At other times we may have to keep praying about a matter. Still, we can be confident that the answer will come at the right time and in the best way. Of course, God's answer may be different from what we expect. For example, rather than remove a trial, he might give us the wisdom and strength "to endure it." (1 Corinthians 10:13) How can we show our appreciation for this priceless gift of prayer? One way is by heeding the divine counsel to "pray constantly."—1 Thessalonians 5:17. w20.05 27-28 paragraphs 7-8

Song 121 and Prayer

Opening Comments (1 min.)



**TREASURES
FROM GOD'S WORD**

“Saul Started Out Humble and Modest”:
(10 min.)

Spiritual Gems: (10 min.)

1Sa 9:9—What might these words have signified? (w05 3/15 22 ¶8)

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.) 1Sa 9:1-10 (5)



**APPLY YOURSELF
TO THE FIELD MINISTRY**

“Increase Your Joy in the Ministry—Help Bible Students to Avoid Bad Associations”: (10 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Help Your Bible Students to Avoid Bad Associations*.

Talk: (5 min.) w15 4/15 6-7 ¶16-20—Theme: Keys to Training Others With Success. (19)



**LIVING
AS CHRISTIANS**

Song 37

Annual Service Report: (15 min.) Talk by an elder. After reading the announcement from the branch office regarding the annual service report, interview publishers, selected in advance, who had encouraging experiences in the ministry during the past year.

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.)
rr chap. 21 ¶7-12



Saul Started Out Humble and Modest

Saul was modest and hesitated to accept the kingship (1Sa 9:21; 10:20-22; w20.08 10 ¶11)

Saul did not act rashly when others spoke negatively of him (1Sa 10:27; 11:12, 13; w14 3/15 9 ¶8)

Saul responded to the leadings of Jehovah's holy spirit (1Sa 11:5-7; w95 12/15 10 ¶1)

Humility will help us to view our privileges and abilities as gifts from Jehovah. (Ro 12:3, 16; 1Co 4:7) Also, if we are humble, we will continue to rely on Jehovah for guidance.



Concluding Comments (3 min.)

Song 123 and Prayer

We Need Self-Control

(Romans 7:14-25)

1. We love Jehovah with heart, mind, and soul;
But since we are sinful, we need self-control.
Fleshly desires bring trouble and strife;
Living by spirit brings peace and life.
2. Satan's temptations confront us each day,
And sin's law within us can lead us astray.
Power of truth is greater than sin.
Thanks to Jehovah, our minds can win.
3. Each word and action reflects on God's name,
So we must endeavor to keep free from blame.
In all we do, we make this our goal:
Always maintaining our self-control.

1 SAMUEL 9-11

9 There was a man of Benjamin named Kish, the son of A·bi'el, the son of Ze'ror son of Be·co'rath son of A·phi'ah, a Ben'ja·min·ite and a very wealthy man. ² He had a son named Saul, who was young and handsome—there was no man among the Israelites more handsome than he—and he stood head and shoulders taller than all the people.

³ When the donkeys belonging to Saul's father Kish got lost, Kish said to his son Saul: "Please take with you one of the attendants and go look for the donkeys." ⁴ They passed through the mountainous region of E'phra·im and through the land of Shal'i·shah, and they did not find them. They traveled through the land of Sha'a·lim, but the donkeys were not there. They passed through the entire land of the Ben'ja·min·ites, and they did not find them.

⁵ They came into the land of Zuph, and Saul said to his attendant who was with him: "Come, let us return, so that my father does not start worrying about us rather than the donkeys." ⁶ But the attendant replied: "Look, there is a man of God in this city, a man who is held in honor. All that he says is sure to come true. Let us go there now. Perhaps he can tell us which way to go." ⁷ At this Saul said to his attendant: "If we go, what can we take to the man? There is no bread in our bags; there is nothing to take as a gift to the man of the true God. What do we have?" ⁸ So the attendant answered Saul again: "Look! There is a quarter of a shekel of silver in my hand. I will give it to the man of the true God, and he will tell us which way to go." ⁹ (In former times in

Israel, this was what a man would say when going to seek God: “Come, and let us go to the seer.” For the prophet of today used to be called a seer in former times.)¹⁰ Then Saul said to his attendant: “What you said is good. Let us go.” So they went to the city where the man of the true God was.

¹¹ While they were going up the ascent to the city, they met girls going out to draw water. So they said to them: “Is the seer in this place?”¹² They answered: “He is. Look, he is just ahead of you. Hurry now, for today he has come to the city, because the people are making a sacrifice today on the high place.”¹³ As soon as you come into the city, you will find him before he goes up to the high place to eat. The people will not eat until he comes, for he is the one who blesses the sacrifice. Once that is done, those who are invited may eat. So now go up right away, and you will find him.”¹⁴ So they went up to the city. As they were coming into the middle of the city, there was Samuel coming out to meet them to go up to the high place.

¹⁵ The day before Saul came, Jehovah had told Samuel:
¹⁶ “Tomorrow about this time, I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin. You must anoint him as leader over my people Israel, and he will save my people from the hand of the Phi-lis'tines. For I have seen the affliction of my people, and their outcry has reached me.”¹⁷ When Samuel saw Saul, Jehovah told him: “Here is the man of whom I said to you, ‘This is the one who will govern my people.’”

¹⁸ Then Saul approached Samuel in the middle of the gate and said: “Tell me, please, where is the house of the seer?”

¹⁹ Samuel answered Saul: "I am the seer. Go up ahead of me to the high place, and you will eat with me today. I will send you away in the morning, and I will tell you all that you want to know. ²⁰ As for the donkeys that were lost three days ago, do not worry about them, for they have been found. And to whom does all that is desirable of Israel belong? Is it not to you and to the whole house of your father?" ²¹ At this Saul answered: "Am I not a Ben'ja-min-ite of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the most insignificant of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? So why have you spoken to me in this way?"

²² Then Samuel took Saul and his attendant and brought them to the dining hall and gave them a place at the head of those invited; there were about 30 men. ²³ Samuel said to the cook: "Bring the portion that I gave you and told you, 'Set it aside.'" ²⁴ At that the cook lifted up the leg and what was on it, and set it before Saul. And Samuel said: "What has been reserved has been set before you. Eat, because they have reserved it for you for this occasion. For I told them, 'I invited guests.'" So Saul ate with Samuel on that day.

²⁵ Then they went down from the high place to the city, and he continued to speak with Saul on the housetop. ²⁶ They rose early, and at daybreak Samuel called to Saul on the housetop, saying: "Get ready, so that I may send you away." So Saul got ready and both he and Samuel went outside.

²⁷ While they were descending toward the outskirts of the city, Samuel said to Saul: "Tell the attendant to go on ahead of us," so he went on ahead. "But you, stand still now, so that I may let you hear the word of God."

10 Samuel then took the flask of oil and poured it out on Saul's head. He kissed him and said: "Has not Jehovah anointed you as a leader over his inheritance? ² When you leave me today, you will find two men near the tomb of Rachel in the territory of Benjamin at Zel'zah, and they will say to you, 'The donkeys that you went to look for have been found, but now your father has forgotten about the donkeys and is worried about you. He is saying: "What should I do about my son?"' ³ Go on from there until you come to the big tree of Ta'bor, where you will meet three men going up to the true God at Beth'el, one carrying three young goats, one carrying three loaves of bread, and one carrying a large jar of wine. ⁴ They will ask about your welfare and give you two loaves, and you must accept the loaves from them. ⁵ After that you will come to the hill of the true God, where there is a garrison of the Phi-lis'tines. When you come to the city, you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place, and a stringed instrument and tambourine and flute and harp will be played ahead of them while they are prophesying. ⁶ The spirit of Jehovah will empower you, and you will prophesy along with them and be changed into a different person. ⁷ When these signs have taken place, do whatever your hand finds possible, because the true God is with you. ⁸ Then go down ahead of me to Gil'gal, and I will go down to you there to offer up burnt sacrifices and communion sacrifices. You should wait for seven days until I come to you. Then I will let you know what you should do."

⁹ As soon as Saul turned around to leave Samuel, God began changing his heart to be like that of someone else,

and all these signs came true on that day. ¹⁰ So they went from there to the hill, and a group of prophets met him. At once the spirit of God empowered him, and he began to prophesy among them. ¹¹ When all those who previously knew him saw him prophesying with the prophets, they said to one another: “What has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?” ¹² Then a man from there said: “But who is their father?” So it became a saying: “Is Saul also among the prophets?”

¹³ When he finished prophesying, he came to the high place. ¹⁴ The brother of Saul’s father later said to him and to his attendant: “Where did you go?” At that he said: “To look for the donkeys, but we saw that they were not there, so we went to Samuel.” ¹⁵ Saul’s uncle asked: “Please tell me, what did Samuel say to you?” ¹⁶ Saul replied to his uncle: “He told us that the donkeys had already been found.” But Saul did not tell him what Samuel said about the matter of the kingship.

¹⁷ Samuel then called the people together to Jehovah at Miz'pah ¹⁸ and said to the Israelites: “This is what Jehovah the God of Israel says: ‘It was I who brought Israel up out of Egypt and who rescued you from the hand of Egypt and from the hand of all the kingdoms that were oppressing you. ¹⁹ But today you have rejected your God who was your Savior out of all your evils and distresses, and you said: “No, you should appoint a king over us.” Now take your stand before Jehovah by your tribes and by your thousands.’”

²⁰ So Samuel had all the tribes of Israel draw near, and the tribe of Benjamin was selected. ²¹ Then he had the tribe of Benjamin draw near by its families, and the family of the Mat'rites was selected. Finally Saul the son of Kish was selected. But when they went to look for him, he was nowhere to be found. ²² So they inquired of Jehovah: "Has the man come here yet?" Jehovah answered: "There he is hiding himself among the luggage." ²³ So they ran and brought him from there. When he stood in the middle of the people, he was head and shoulders taller than all the other people. ²⁴ Samuel said to all the people: "Do you see the one whom Jehovah has chosen, that there is none like him among all the people?" And all the people began to shout: "Long live the king!"

²⁵ Samuel spoke to the people about the rightful due of kings and wrote it in a book and deposited it before Jehovah. Then Samuel sent all the people away, everyone to his house. ²⁶ Saul also went to his home in Gib'e-ah, accompanied by the warriors whose hearts Jehovah had touched. ²⁷ But some worthless men said: "How will this one save us?" So they despised him, and they did not bring any gift to him. But he said nothing about it.

11 Then Na'hash the Am'mon-ite came up and camped against Ja'bish in Gil'e-ad. All the men of Ja'bish said to Na'hash: "Make a covenant with us, and we will serve you." ² Na'hash the Am'mon-ite said to them: "I will make it with you on this condition: that all your right eyes be bored out. I will do this to humiliate all Israel." ³ The elders of Ja'bish

replied to him: "Give us seven days' time so that we can send messengers into all the territory of Israel. Then, if there is no one to rescue us, we will surrender to you." ⁴ In time the messengers came to Gib'e-ah of Saul and spoke these words in the hearing of the people, and all the people wept at the top of their voice.

⁵ But Saul was coming from the field behind the herd, and Saul said: "What is the matter with the people? Why are they weeping?" So they related to him the words of the men of Ja'bish. ⁶ The spirit of God empowered Saul when he heard these words, and he burned with anger. ⁷ So he took a pair of bulls and cut them into pieces, and he sent these into all the territory of Israel by the hand of the messengers, who said: "Whoever does not follow Saul and Samuel should expect this to be done to his cattle!" And the fear of Jehovah fell upon the people, so that they came out with one accord. ⁸ Then he counted them in Be'zek, and there were 300,000 Israelites and 30,000 men of Judah. ⁹ They now said to the messengers who had come: "This is what you should say to the men of Ja'bish in Gil'e-ad, 'Tomorrow when the sun gets hot, you will be saved.'" With that the messengers came and told the men of Ja'bish, and they were overjoyed. ¹⁰ So the men of Ja'bish said: "Tomorrow we will surrender to you, and you may do to us whatever seems good to you."

¹¹ On the next day, Saul divided the people into three bands, and they made their way into the middle of the camp during the morning watch and struck down the Am'mon-ites until the day grew hot. Those who survived were scattered,

so that no two of them were left together. ¹² Then the people said to Samuel: “Who was saying, ‘Is Saul to be king over us?’ Hand the men over, and we will put them to death.”

¹³ However, Saul said: “Not a man should be put to death on this day, for today Jehovah has rescued Israel.”

¹⁴ Samuel later said to the people: “Come and let us go to Gil'gal to reconfirm the kingship.” ¹⁵ So all the people went to Gil'gal, and in Gil'gal they made Saul king before Jehovah. Then they offered communion sacrifices there before Jehovah, and Saul and all the men of Israel celebrated with great joy.

Song 121 and Prayer | Opening Comments (1 min.)

 TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

“Saul Started Out Humble and Modest”: (10 min.)

Spiritual Gems: (10 min.)

1Sa 9:9—What might these words have signified? (w05 3/15 22 ¶8)

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.) 1Sa 9:1-10 (5)

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“Increase Your Joy in the Ministry—Help Bible Students to Avoid Bad Associations”: (10 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Help Your Bible Students to Avoid Bad Associations*.

Talk: (5 min.) w15 4/15 6-7 ¶16-20—Theme: Keys to Training Others With Success. (19)

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Song 37

Annual Service Report: (15 min.) Talk by an elder. After reading the announcement from the branch office regarding the annual service report, interview publishers, selected in advance, who had encouraging experiences in the ministry during the past year.

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.) rr chap. 21 ¶7-12



Saul Started Out Humble and Modest

Saul was modest and hesitated to accept the kingship (1Sa 9:21; 10:20-22; w20.08 10 ¶11)

Saul did not act rashly when others spoke negatively of him (1Sa 10:27; 11:12, 13; w14 3/15 9 ¶8)

Saul responded to the leadings of Jehovah’s holy spirit (1Sa 11:5-7; w95 12/15 10 ¶1)

Humility will help us to view our privileges and abilities as gifts from Jehovah. (Ro 12:3, 16; 1Co 4:7) Also, if we are humble, we will continue to rely on Jehovah for guidance.



February 28–March 6 / 1 Samuel 9-11

Song 121 and Prayer

Opening Comments (1 minute)

Treasures From God's Word

"Saul Started Out Humble and Modest": (10 minutes)

Saul was modest and hesitated to accept the kingship

1 Samuel 9:21: At this Saul answered: "Am I not a Benjaminite of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the most insignificant of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? So why have you spoken to me in this way?"

1 Samuel 10:20-22: So Samuel had all the tribes of Israel draw near, and the tribe of Benjamin was selected. Then he had the tribe of Benjamin draw near by its families, and the family of the Matrites was selected. Finally Saul the son of Kish was selected. But when they went to look for him, he was nowhere to be found. So they inquired of Jehovah: "Has the man come here yet?" Jehovah answered: "There he is hiding himself among the luggage."

w20.08 10 paragraph 11

Reflect on what happened to *King Saul*. He started out as a modest young man. He was aware of his limitations and even hesitated to take on more responsibility. (1 Samuel 9:21; 10:20-22) Yet, in time Saul became presumptuous. He revealed this bad trait soon after he became king. On one occasion, he lost patience while waiting for the prophet Samuel. Instead of modestly trusting in Jehovah to act in behalf of the people, Saul offered up a burnt sacrifice even though he was not authorized to do so. As a result, Saul lost Jehovah's favor and eventually the kingship. (1 Samuel 13:8-14) We are wise if we learn from this warning example and avoid acting presumptuously.

Saul did not act rashly when others spoke negatively of him

1 Samuel 10:27: But some worthless men said: "How will this one save us?" So they despised him, and they did not bring any gift to him. But he said nothing about it.

1 Samuel 11:12, 13: Then the people said to Samuel: "Who was saying, 'Is Saul to be king over us?' Hand the men over, and we will put them to death." However, Saul said: "Not a man should be put to death on this day, for today Jehovah has rescued Israel."

w14 3/15 9 paragraph 8

King Saul of Israel serves as a warning for us about how selfishness can eat away at our spirit of self-sacrifice. Saul began his kingship with a modest and humble view of himself. (1 Samuel 9:21) He refused to punish Israelites who spoke out against his kingship, even though he could have felt justified in defending his God-given position. (1 Samuel 10:27) King Saul accepted the guidance of God's spirit by leading Israel in a successful battle against the Ammonites. Afterward, he humbly gave Jehovah the credit for the victory.—1 Samuel 11:6, 11-13.

Saul responded to the leadings of Jehovah's holy spirit

1 Samuel 11:5-7: But Saul was coming from the field behind the herd, and Saul said: "What is the matter with the people? Why are they weeping?" So they related to him the words of the men of Jabesh. The spirit of God empowered Saul when he heard these words, and he burned with anger. So he took a pair of bulls and cut them into pieces, and he sent these into all the territory of Israel by the hand of the messengers, who said: "Whoever does not follow Saul and Samuel should expect this to be done to his cattle!" And the fear of Jehovah fell upon the people, so that they came out with one accord.

w95 12/15 10 paragraph 1

Again the Ammonites had repaid Jehovah's kindness with hostility. Jehovah did not ignore this vicious threat. "The spirit of God became operative upon Saul on his hearing these words [of Nahash], and his anger got very hot." Under the direction of God's spirit, Saul mustered a force of 330,000 fighting men that so thoroughly routed the Ammonites that "there were not left over among them two together."—1 Samuel 11:6, 11.

Humility will help us to view our privileges and abilities as gifts from Jehovah. (Romans 12:3, 16; 1 Corinthians 4:7) Also, if we are humble, we will continue to rely on Jehovah for guidance.

[Image:] An elder pointing out a scripture in the Bible to a sister holding a wedding invitation.

Spiritual Gems

1 Samuel 9:9—What might these words have signified?

1 Samuel 9:9: (In former times in Israel, this was what a man would say when going to seek God: "Come, and let us go to the seer." For the prophet of today used to be called a seer in former times.)

w05 3/15 22 paragraph 8

What is significant about the expression "the prophet of today used to be called a seer in former times"? These words may indicate that as the prophets became more prominent in the days of Samuel and during the era of the kings in Israel, the word "seer" came to be replaced by the term "prophet." Samuel is considered the first of the line of the prophets.— Acts 3:24.

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) 1 Samuel 9:1-10 (*th* study 5)

Song 121 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

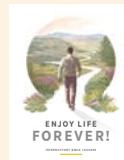
Return Visit*

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:



• lffi 7

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



Apply Yourself to the Field Ministry

Talk: (5 minutes)—Theme: Keys to Training Others With Success. (*th* study 19)

(w15 4/15 6-7 paragraphs 16-20)

16 *Be willing, not reluctant.* When Samuel first heard that the Israelites wanted a human king, he felt disappointed and rejected by his people. (1 Samuel 8:4-8) In fact, he was so reluctant to do what the people demanded that Jehovah three times saw the need to tell him to listen to them. (1 Samuel 8:7, 9, 22) Even so, Samuel did not allow bitterness or resentment against the man who would replace him to take root in his heart. When Jehovah told him to anoint Saul, the prophet obeyed, not reluctantly out of mere duty, but willingly out of love.

17 Like Samuel, experienced elders today show a kind disposition toward those whom they train. (1 Peter 5:2) Such elders do not hold back from training others for fear of having to relinquish certain congregation privileges to the learners. Bighearted teachers view willing learners, not as competitors, but as “fellow workers”—as precious gifts to the

congregation. (2 Corinthians 1:24; Hebrews 13:16) And what satisfaction such unselfish teachers experience as they observe how the learners use their abilities to benefit the congregation!—Acts 20:35.

18 *Be a friend, not just a teacher.* The day Samuel met Saul, the prophet could have pulled out a flask of oil, hurriedly poured it on Saul's head, and sent the new king on his way—fully anointed but totally unprepared. Instead, Samuel kindly took the time to prepare Saul's heart step-by-step. Only after they had a fine meal, a pleasant stroll, a long talk, and a good rest did the prophet feel that the right moment had arrived to anoint Saul.

19 Likewise, a teacher today should start his training by taking time to develop a relaxed atmosphere and a bond of friendship with the learner. The specific steps an elder takes to create such a warm relationship will differ somewhat from land to land, depending on local circumstances and customs. Yet, no matter where you live, if you as a busy elder set aside time to spend with a learner, you are telling him, in effect, "You are important to me." (Read Romans 12:10.) That unspoken message will be clearly understood and deeply

valued by willing learners everywhere.

20 Elders, remember: A successful teacher is someone who not only loves to train another person but also loves the person he is training. (Compare John 5:20.) That crucial aspect of a teacher's disposition is quickly discerned by a learner and greatly affects the way he responds to the training he receives. Therefore, dear elders, as you give training, be more than a teacher—be a friend.—Proverbs 17:17; John 15:15.

37 *Serving Jehovah Whole-Souled* (Matthew 22:37)

1. O Jehovah, Sov'reign Ruler,
You are the one I love and obey.
You deserve my full devotion;
You are my God; I'll serve you each day.
Your commands I loyally follow;
How I love reminders from you!

(CHORUS)

*O Jehovah, you are worthy;
Whole-souled devotion I give to you.*

2. Father, all your works exalt you.
Earth, moon, and stars your glory proclaim.
May I also be as faithful,
Using my strength to make known your name.
May I use my whole life to serve you,
Proving to be loyal and true.

(Chorus)

Song 121 and Prayer | Opening Comments (1 min.)

 TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

“Saul Started Out Humble and Modest”: (10 min.)

Spiritual Gems: (10 min.)

1Sa 9:9—What might these words have signified? (w05 3/15 22 ¶8)

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.) 1Sa 9:1-10 (5)

 APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

“Increase Your Joy in the Ministry—Help Bible Students to Avoid Bad Associations”: (10 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Help Your Bible Students to Avoid Bad Associations*.

Talk: (5 min.) w15 4/15 6-7 ¶16-20—Theme: Keys to Training Others With Success. (19)

 LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

Song 37

Annual Service Report: (15 min.) Talk by an elder. After reading the announcement from the branch office regarding the annual service report, interview publishers, selected in advance, who had encouraging experiences in the ministry during the past year.

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.) rr chap. 21 ¶7-12



Saul Started Out Humble and Modest

Saul was modest and hesitated to accept the kingship (1Sa 9:21; 10:20-22; w20.08 10 ¶11)

Saul did not act rashly when others spoke negatively of him (1Sa 10:27; 11:12, 13; w14 3/15 9 ¶8)

Saul responded to the leadings of Jehovah's holy spirit (1Sa 11:5-7; w95 12/15 10 ¶1)

Humility will help us to view our privileges and abilities as gifts from Jehovah. (Ro 12:3, 16; 1Co 4:7) Also, if we are humble, we will continue to rely on Jehovah for guidance.



seen by Ezekiel would have no temple within it. Also, the city did *not* refer to any other city in the restored land of Israel. Why not? Because no city with the features described in this vision was ever built by the returned exiles or their descendants. Further, the city could *not* refer to a heavenly city. Why not? Because it was built on land destined “for common [or, non-sacred] use” as distinct from structures built on land exclusively set aside for sacred worship.—Ezek. 42:20.

⁷ What, then, is the city that Ezekiel saw? Remember that he saw the city in the same vision in which he saw the land. (Ezek. 40:2; 45:1, 6) God’s Word indicates that the land refers to a spiritual land, so the city must refer to a spiritual city. In general, what is conveyed by the word “city”? The word conveys the idea of people living together as a group and forming something structured and organized. Thus, the well-ordered city that Ezekiel saw—which was laid out as a perfect square—seems to represent a well-organized seat of administration.

⁸ What is the realm, or sphere of influence, of this

7. What is the city that Ezekiel saw, and what does it seem to represent?

8. What is the realm, or sphere of influence, of this administration, and why so?

administration? Ezekiel's vision reveals that this city functions *within* the spiritual land. Thus, this administration functions today *within* the realm of activity of God's people. And what is indicated by the fact that the city stands on common, or nonsacred, land? It reminds us that the city refers, not to a heavenly, but to an earthly administration, which has been functioning for the benefit of all who inhabit the spiritual paradise.

9 Who make up this earthly administration? In Ezekiel's vision, the one taking the lead in the city government was referred to as "the chieftain." (Ezek. 45:7) He was an overseer among the people, but he was neither a priest nor a Levite. This chieftain makes us think particularly of congregation overseers today who are not spirit-anointed. These caring spiritual shepherds from among the "other sheep" are humble earthly servants of Christ's heavenly government. (John 10:16) During the coming Millennium, Jesus will select and appoint "in all the earth" qualified elders, or "princes." (Ps. 45:16) Under the direction of

9. (a) Who make up this earthly administration today? (b) What will Jesus do during the Millennium?

the heavenly Kingdom, they will care for the interests of God's people during the Millennium.

“Jehovah Is There”

¹⁰ **Read Ezekiel 48:35.** The name of the city is “Jehovah Is There.” This name provides assurance that this is a city where the presence of Jehovah is felt. By showing Ezekiel this centrally located city, Jehovah, in effect, told the exiles: ‘I will be with you *again!*’ What an uplifting assurance!

¹¹ What lessons can we draw from this part of Ezekiel's prophecy? The name of this citylike administration assures us as God's servants today that Jehovah does dwell with his faithful servants on earth now and *always* will. This meaningful name also stresses a vital truth: The city exists, not to give power to any men, but to implement Jehovah's loving and reasonable ways. For instance, Jehovah has not given the administration the authority to divide the land, so to speak, as mere humans may see fit. Instead, Jehovah expects the administrators to honor the allotments, or

10. What is the name of the city, and what assurance does that provide?

11. What lessons can we draw from Ezekiel's vision about the city and its meaningful name?

privileges, that he himself has given to his servants, including the “lowly” ones.—Prov. 19:17; Ezek. 46:18; 48:29.

¹² What is yet another remarkable feature of the city “Jehovah Is There”? While ancient cities had walls for protection with as few gates as possible, this city has 12 gates! (Ezek. 48:30-34) This large number of gates (three on each side of the square city) illustrates that the administrators of this city are approachable and available to all of God’s servants. Further, the city’s having 12 gates emphasizes that it is open to everyone, “*all* the house of Israel.” (Ezek. 45:6) The open character of the city serves as an important reminder to Christian overseers. Jehovah wants them to be approachable and to be readily available to all those living in the spiritual paradise.

God’s People “Come in to Worship” and “Are Serving the City”

¹³ Let us go back to the time of Ezekiel and find

12. (a) What is a remarkable feature of this city, and what does this illustrate? (b) This aspect of the vision provides Christian overseers with what important reminder?

13. What did Jehovah mention about the various services people would perform?

*Loyally Submitting
to Theocratic Order*
(1 Corinthians 14:33)

1. As Jehovah's people sound throughout the earth
Truths about the Kingdom and its priceless worth,
Theocratic order they must all obey
And remain united, loyalty display.

(CHORUS)

*Loyal submission in recognition,
This to our God we owe.
He gives protection, tender affection,
Loyalty to him we show.*

2. God provides his steward and his active force.
These will ever guide us in our Christian course.
So may we be steadfast, seeking God to please,
Loyally proclaiming all his wise decrees!

(Chorus)

JANUARY 2022

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

LARGE PRINT EDITION



OUR YEARTEXT FOR 2022:

“Those seeking Jehovah will
lack nothing good.”—PS. 34:10



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Lessons We Can Learn From Jesus’ Tears	
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Study Article 5: March 28–April 3	51
Make “the Best Use of Your Time”	

COVER PICTURE:

During the great tribulation, Gog of Magog’s forces may try to assault us in our homes. But we can take comfort in knowing that Jesus and his angels are aware of what is happening and will defend us (See study article 1, paragraph 13)

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4 “Jehovah Is My Shepherd”

(Psalm 23)

1. Jehovah God is my Shepherd;
I'll follow where he will lead.
He knows my hopes and my heart's desire;
He knows what I truly need.
To watered pastures he leads me,
To places secure and blessed.
And he guides me always with loyal love
To where I find peace and rest.
He guides me always with loyal love
To where I find peace and rest.
2. Refreshing are all your pathways,
The ways of your righteousness.
For your name's sake never let me stray
From walking in faithfulness.
In valleys deep in the shadows,
Assured by your staff and rod,
I will fear no danger of lasting harm,
For you are my Friend and God.
I fear no danger of lasting harm,
For you are my Friend and God.
3. Jehovah, you are my Shepherd;
I follow where you will lead.
You strengthen me, and you give me rest;
You give all I truly need.
As you most surely are living,
So sure is my hope in you.
May your loyal love and your care for me
Pursue me my whole life through.
Your loyal love and your care for me
Pursue me my whole life through.

“Those Seeking Jehovah Will Lack Nothing Good”

OUR YEARTEXT FOR 2022:

“Those seeking Jehovah will lack nothing good.”—PS. 34:10.

SONG 4

“Jehovah Is My Shepherd”

PREVIEW

Our yeartext for 2022 is taken from Psalm 34:10: “Those seeking Jehovah will lack nothing good.” Many of Jehovah’s faithful servants have very little materially. How can it be said that they “lack nothing good”? And how can understanding the meaning of this verse help us to prepare for the difficult times to come?

DAVID was running for his life. Saul, the powerful king of Israel, was determined to put him to death. When David needed provisions, he stopped at the city of Nob, where he made a modest request for five loaves of bread. (1 Sam. 21:1, 3) Later, he and his men found refuge in a cave. (1 Sam. 22:1) How did David come to be in this situation?

² Saul was insanely jealous of David's popularity and military victories. Saul also knew that his own disobedience had led to Jehovah's rejecting him as king of Israel and that Jehovah had selected David for the throne. (Read 1 Samuel 23:16, 17.) Still, as king of Israel, Saul had a large army and many supporters, so David had to flee for his life. Did Saul really think that he could fight against God's expressed purpose for David? (Isa. 55:11) The Bible does not say, but we can be sure of one thing: Saul was putting himself in a dangerous position. Those who fight against God always lose!

³ David was not an ambitious man. He did not choose to become the king of Israel. Jehovah assigned that role to him. (1 Sam. 16:1, 12, 13) Saul came to view David as a mortal enemy. But David did

-
1. What difficult situation did David find himself in?
 2. How did Saul put himself in a dangerous position? (1 Samuel 23: 16, 17)
 3. How did David feel despite his circumstances?

not blame Jehovah for the danger he was in; nor did he complain about having a limited food supply and a cave for shelter. On the contrary, it might have been while he was hiding in that very cave that he composed the beautiful song of praise that includes the words of our theme text: “Those seeking Jehovah will lack nothing good.”—Ps. 34:10.

⁴ Today many of Jehovah’s servants have experienced a shortage of food and other necessities of life.* This has been especially true during the recent pandemic. And with the “great tribulation” looming, we can expect to face even more difficult times.

* See “Questions From Readers” in the September 15, 2014, issue of *The Watchtower*.

4. What questions will we consider, and why are they important?



David felt that he ‘lacked nothing good’ even during difficult times
(See paragraphs 1-3)

(Matt. 24:21) With those facts in mind, let us answer four questions: In what way did David “lack nothing good”? Why must we learn to be content? Why can we be confident that Jehovah will care for us? And how can we prepare now for the future?

“I WILL LACK NOTHING”

⁵ What did David mean when he said that Jehovah’s servants would “lack nothing good”? We can get an idea by considering the similar wording found in the 23rd Psalm. (Read Psalm 23:1-6.) David introduces that psalm with the words: “Jehovah is my Shepherd. *I will lack nothing.*” In the rest of the psalm, David mentions things that are truly of lasting value—the abundant spiritual blessings he enjoys by accepting Jehovah as his Shepherd. Jehovah leads him “in the paths of righteousness,” and He loyally supports David in good times and in bad times. David acknowledges that his life in Jehovah’s “grassy pastures” will not be trouble free. At times, he may get discouraged, as if walking “in the valley of deep shadow,” and he will have enemies. But with Jehovah as his Shepherd, David will “fear no harm.”

⁶ So here we have the answer to our question: In

5-6. How does Psalm 23:1-6 help us understand what David meant when he said that God’s servants would “lack nothing good”?

what way did David “lack nothing good”? Spiritually speaking, he had everything he needed. His happiness was not dependent on material things. David was satisfied with what Jehovah provided. What mattered most to him was the blessing and the protection of his God.

⁷ From David’s words we can see how important it is for us to have a proper view of material things. We can certainly enjoy whatever material possessions we have, but we should not make them the focus of our life. That was a vital truth that first-century Christians living in Judea came to understand. (Read Luke 21:20-24.) Jesus had warned them that the time would come when the city of Jerusalem would be “surrounded by encamped armies.” When that occurred, they needed to “begin fleeing to the mountains.” Their flight would lead to their salvation, but it would come at a high cost. Some years ago, *The Watchtower* put it this way: “They left fields and homes, not even gathering their possessions from their houses. Confident of the protection and support of Jehovah, they put his worship ahead of everything else that might seem important.”

7. According to Luke 21:20-24, what challenging situation did the first-century Judean Christians face?

8 What sobering lesson can we learn from what happened to the first-century Christians living in Judea? *The Watchtower* just mentioned said: “There may be tests ahead as to how we view material things; are they the most important thing, or is the salvation that will come for all on God’s side more important? Yes, our fleeing may involve some hardships and deprivations. We will have to be ready to do whatever it takes, as did our first-century counterparts who fled from Judea.”*

9 Can you imagine how difficult it was for those Christians to leave almost everything they had and start over? It took faith on their part to rely on Jehovah for their basic needs. But they were not without help. Five years before the Romans surrounded Jerusalem, the apostle Paul gave the Hebrews some valuable advice: “Let your way of life be free of the love of money, *while you are content* with the present things. For he has said: ‘I will never leave you, and I will never abandon you.’ So that we may be of good courage and say: ‘Jehovah is my helper; I will not be

* See the May 1, 1999, issue of *The Watchtower*, p. 19.

8. What sobering lesson can we learn from what happened to the first-century Christians living in Judea?

9. What encouragement do you derive from the apostle Paul’s counsel to the Hebrews?

afraid. What can man do to me?’” (Heb. 13:5, 6) No doubt those who took to heart Paul’s advice before the Roman invasion found it easier to adapt to what might have been a modest lifestyle in their new home. They were certain that Jehovah would care for their basic needs. Paul’s words assure us that we can have the same confidence.

“WE WILL BE CONTENT WITH THESE THINGS”

¹⁰ Paul gave similar counsel to Timothy and, by extension, to us. He wrote: “So, having food and clothing, we will be content with these things.” (1 Tim. 6:8) Does this mean that we cannot enjoy a fine meal, have a decent place to live, or purchase new clothing from time to time? That is not the point Paul is making. Paul is saying that *we should be content* with whatever we have materially. (Phil. 4:12) That was Paul’s “secret.” Our most precious possession is our relationship with our God, not any material thing that we own.—Hab. 3:17, 18.

¹¹ There may be a difference between our view and Jehovah’s view of what we need. Consider what Moses told the Israelites after they had spent 40 years in the wilderness: “Jehovah your *God has blessed*

10. What “secret” does Paul share with us?

11. What lesson about contentment do we learn from Moses’ words to the Israelites?



The Israelites “lacked nothing” during their 40 years in the wilderness.
Can we be content with what we have now?

(See paragraph 11)

you in all that you have done. He is fully aware of your walking through this great wilderness. These 40 years Jehovah your *God has been with you, and you have lacked nothing.*” (Deut. 2:7) During those 40 years, Jehovah provided the Israelites with manna to eat. Their clothes—the very clothes with which they had left Egypt—never wore out. (Deut. 8:3, 4) Although some might have viewed these as modest provisions, Moses reminded the Israelites that they had everything they needed. Jehovah will be pleased if we can learn to be content—to appreciate even the

simple provisions he makes available, viewing them as a blessing and giving thanks for them.

BE CONFIDENT THAT JEHOVAH WILL CARE FOR YOU

¹² David knew that Jehovah is loyal and cares deeply for those who love Him. Even though his life was in danger when he composed the 34th Psalm, with eyes of faith, David saw “the angel of Jehovah” camping “all around” him. (Ps. 34:7) Perhaps David was comparing Jehovah’s angel to a soldier camping in the field, always on the alert for the enemy. Although he himself was a mighty man of war and Jehovah had promised him the kingship, David did not rely on his ability to sling a stone or to wield a sword to defeat the enemy. (1 Sam. 16:13; 24:12) David put his trust in God, confident that Jehovah’s angel ‘rescues those fearing Him.’ Of course, we do not expect to receive miraculous protection today. But we know that no one who puts his trust in Jehovah will suffer everlasting harm.

¹³ In the near future, our trust in Jehovah’s ability

12. What shows that David’s confidence was in Jehovah, not in himself?

13. When Gog of Magog attacks, why will we appear to be vulnerable, but what reason for confidence will we have? (See cover picture.)

to protect us will be put to the test. When Gog of Magog, a coalition of nations, attacks God's people, our lives will appear to be in danger. We will need to be convinced that Jehovah can and will deliver us. To the nations, we will seem like defenseless sheep with no one to protect us. (Ezek. 38:10-12) We will be unarmed, untrained in warfare. The nations will see us as easy targets. They will not see what we see with our eyes of faith—a host of angels camped all around God's people, ready to defend us. How could the nations see them? They have no spiritual vision. What a surprise is in store for them when the heavenly armies come to our aid!—Rev. 19:11, 14, 15.

PREPARE NOW FOR THE FUTURE

¹⁴ What can we do now to prepare for the future? First of all, we need to have a proper view of material things, realizing that one day we will have to part with what we have. We also need to be content and to find our greatest joy in our relationship with Jehovah. The better we get to know our God, the more convinced we will be of his ability to protect us when Gog of Magog attacks.

¹⁵ Consider what else helped David and can help us

14. What steps can we take now to prepare for the future?

15. What early experiences taught David that Jehovah would never disappoint him?

to prepare for trials. David said: “Taste and see that Jehovah is good; happy is the man who takes refuge in him.” (Ps. 34:8) Those words explain why David knew that he could count on Jehovah’s support. David often relied on Jehovah, and his God never disappointed him. When young, David faced the Philistine giant Goliath and told that formidable warrior: “This very day Jehovah will surrender you into my hand.” (1 Sam. 17:46) Later, David was in the service of a king, Saul, who tried a number of times to murder him. But “Jehovah was with” David. (1 Sam. 18:12) Because David had experienced Jehovah’s help in the past, David knew he could count on Him during his present trials.

¹⁶ The more we look to Jehovah for guidance now, the more confident we will be in his ability to deliver us in the future. It takes faith and a willingness to rely on Jehovah to ask our employer for time off so that we can attend an assembly or a convention or to ask for an adjusted work schedule so that we can attend all our meetings and spend more time in the ministry. Suppose our employer refuses our request and we lose our job. Do we have faith that Jehovah will never leave us or abandon us and that he will always supply our basic needs? (Heb. 13:5) Many who are in

16. In what practical ways can we “taste” Jehovah’s goodness?

full-time service can relate experiences that show how Jehovah came to their aid when they needed him most. Jehovah is faithful.

¹⁷ With Jehovah on our side, we have no reason to fear the days ahead. Our God will never forsake us as long as we put his interests first in our lives. To remind us of the need to prepare now for the difficult days ahead and to trust that Jehovah will never forsake us, the Governing Body has chosen Psalm 34:10 as our yeartext for 2022: *“Those seeking Jehovah will lack nothing good.”*

17. What is the yeartext for 2022, and why is it appropriate?

PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS Page 4: Even while hiding in a cave to escape from King Saul, David was appreciative of Jehovah’s provisions. **Page 9:** After the Israelites left Egypt, Jehovah provided them with manna to eat and kept their clothes from wearing out.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- In what sense can it be said that we “lack nothing good”?
- What “secret” does Paul share with us?
- What steps can we take now to prepare for the future?

SONG 38

He Will Make You Strong

He Will Make You Strong

(1 Peter 5:10)

1. There was a reason why God brought the truth to you
And called you from the darkness to the light.
Within your heart, he saw the longing that you had
To search for him and practice what is right.
You promised him in prayer to do his will;
He helped you then, and he will help you still.

(CHORUS)

*With Jesus' blood He bought you,
to God you now belong.*

*So he will make you firm,
and he will make you strong.*

*He'll guide you and protect you,
as he has all along.*

*Yes, he will make you firm,
and he will make you strong.*

2. God gave his own beloved Son in your behalf;
On this account, He wants you to succeed.
If He did not withhold the gift of His dear Son,
Then never doubt He'll give the strength you need.
He won't forget the faith and love you've shown;
He will not fail to care for all His own.

(Chorus)