

My brothers and sisters, don't forget to follow the instructions given to us by the holy spirit to "make sure of the more important things." (Php 1:10)

That responsibility has been put upon your shoulders. You cannot push it off on someone else to decide for you. **You** must "prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Ro 12:2)

If you rely on others to decide for you, then you are a follower of men, not a follower of God and Christ. (Col 3:23)

At Mark 8:30 Jesus "*strictly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.*"

Why did he do that? The book *Is There a Creator Who Cares About You?* answers that question:

[ct p. 151] Why would he say that? (Mr 8:30) Jesus was available in their midst, so he did not want people to reach conclusions based on mere hearsay. That is logical, is it not? (John 10:24-26) The point is, our Creator likewise wants us to find out about him through our own investigation of solid evidence. He expects us to have convictions based on facts.—Acts 17:27.

Yes, having convictions based on what others say means your beliefs are based on "*hearsay*", **even if what they say is true.** Your beliefs should be based on your own thorough investigation of what the Bible says, not the words of others. (Isa 2:22; Jn 4:42)

Does that thinking align with the instructions given to us by the governing body? Yes it does. Here are Watchtower quotes showing their instructions to "*make sure*" and to "*prove to ourselves.*"

[w14 12/15 p. 7 ¶4] ⁴ If we want to understand Jesus' illustrations, we need to follow the example of his faithful disciples. This also involves three steps. First, we need to be willing to take the time to study and meditate on what Jesus said, to do the necessary research, and to ask the appropriate questions. This leads to knowledge. (Prov. 2:4, 5) Next, we need to see how that knowledge fits in with what we already know, discerning its benefit to us personally. That results in *understanding*. (Prov. 2:2, 3) Finally, we should use what we have learned, putting it into action in our lives. This shows *wisdom* on our part.—Prov. 2:6, 7.

[w16.09 p. 25 ¶7] ⁷ Is it wrong to ask sincere questions about the Bible? By no means! Jehovah wants you to use "your power of reason" to prove the truth to yourself. He does not want you to believe just because others do. So use your thinking ability to gain accurate knowledge. That knowledge can then become the firm foundation for genuine faith. (Read Romans 12:1, 2; 1 Timothy 2:4.) One way to gain such knowledge is through the study projects that you choose to pursue.

[w17.06 12 ¶14] We must develop good personal study habits and do careful research in God's Word and in our publications. This will help us to discover truths that may be "new" in the sense that we did not know them before. (Josh. 1:8, 9; Ps. 1:2, 3) The very first issue of this magazine, published in

July 1879, stated: "Truth, like a modest little flower in the wilderness of life, is surrounded and *almost* choked by the luxuriant growth of the weeds of error. If you would find it you must be ever on the lookout. . . . If you would possess it you must stoop to get it. Be not content with *one* flower of truth. . . . Gather ever, seek for more." Yes, we must be eager to enrich our own treasure store of divine truths.

[w18.06 p. 19 ¶14] ¹⁴ All Christians should want to move "beyond the primary doctrine about the Christ" and to "press on to maturity." (Heb. 6:1) This does not happen automatically. We need to "press on," or keep working at it. Growing to maturity involves advancing to an increased level of knowledge and insight. That is why we have repeatedly been encouraged to read a portion of the Bible daily. (Ps. 1:1-3) Have you made that a personal goal? Doing such reading can give you greater insight into Jehovah's laws and principles and a deeper understanding of God's Word.

[w19.06 p. 13] ¹⁷ We need to be convinced of our beliefs. If we leave challenging questions unanswered in our minds, they can become serious doubts. Those doubts could eventually distort our thinking and destroy our faith. What, then, do we need to do? God's Word tells us to transform our minds, so that we may prove to ourselves "the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Rom. 12:2) By regular study, we can prove to ourselves the truths we have learned from the Bible. We can be fully convinced that Jehovah's standards are right. Then, like a tree with solid roots, we will be firmly rooted, "stabilized in the faith."—Read Colossians 2:6, 7.

[w02 12/1 p. 17] ¹⁸ Although the slave class is defined as "faithful and discreet," Jesus did not say that it would be infallible. This group of faithful anointed brothers still consists of imperfect Christians. Even with the best of intentions, they can be mistaken, as such men sometimes were in the first century. (Acts 10:9-15; Galatians 2:8, 11-14)

Who can uncover the deeper things of the Bible? Anyone can. Even the "*uneducated and ordinary.*" (Acts 4:13; Mt 11:25; 1Co 1:27)

[w16.01 p. 20 par. 15] "Jehovah's spirit works with equal force in those who have the hope of living forever on earth"

In recent Watchtower articles we are told things like what is found in the February 2022 Study article entitled *Do You Trust in Jehovah's Way of Doing Things?* Paragraph 15 says this:

[w22 p. 6 ¶15] (Jehovah) will likely provide direction through his appointed representatives. That will hardly be the time to second-guess the direction or to view it with skepticism, wondering, 'Is this really coming from Jehovah, or are the responsible brothers acting on their own?'

That categorically and unequivocally contradicts the directions given to us in the Bible, which tell us to "*make sure*" (Php 1:10) and to "*test the inspired statements to see whether they originate with God.*" (1Jo 4:1; 1Th 5:21)

If that article was entitled *Do You Trust in Jehovah's Directions in the Bible?* then perhaps the advice in that article would not be to accept what you are told without question.

[w05 5/15 p. 17] Though David was well-meaning, his attempt to move the Ark in a wagon was in violation of God's command and resulted in failure. (Exodus 25:13, 14; Numbers 4:15, 19; 7:7-9) Uzzah's grabbing hold of the Ark also shows that good intentions do not change what God requires.

God has commanded **you** to use "**your power of reason**" (Ro 12:1) and not to rely on the reasonings of others.

(1 Timothy 4:15) Ponder over these things; be absorbed in them, so that **your** advancement may be plainly seen by all people.

(1 Corinthians 2:15) the spiritual man examines all things,

Do not give in to Satan's pressures.

[w17 7/15 p. 28 ¶3, 4] Become "thoroughly able to comprehend" the full scope of the truth. (Ephesians 3:18) That will take real effort on your part. But remember this basic fact expressed by author Noam Chomsky: "Nobody is going to pour truth into your brain. It's something you have to find out for yourself." So "find out for yourself" by being diligent in "carefully examining the Scriptures daily."—Acts 17:11.

Keep in mind that Satan does not want you to think clearly or reason things out well. Why? Because propaganda "is likely to be most effective," says one source, "if people . . . are discouraged from thinking critically." So never be content passively or blindly to accept what you hear. (Proverbs 14:15) Use your God-given thinking abilities and power of reason to make the truth your own.

(Isaiah 2:22) For your own sakes, quit trusting in mere man, Who is only the breath in his nostrils. Why should he be taken into account?

Most in Christendom wish to be told what to think so that they aren't bothered by having to think for themselves. They think that if what they were taught is wrong, then at Armageddon when they are confronted about it, they can just blame their preacher for having taught them incorrectly. But we know that won't cut it because God requires **us** not to follow blindly. (Mt 15:14)

(Romans 13:11) And do this because you know the season, that it is already the hour for you to awake from sleep, for now our salvation is nearer than at the time when we became believers.

(1 Thessalonians 5:6) So, then, let us not sleep on as the rest do, but let us stay awake and keep our senses.

(Ephesians 5:14) "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and the Christ will shine upon you."

:^)

Dave da.getmyip@gmail.com

Monday, May 23

Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and . . . he was raised up.—1 Corinthians 15:3, 4.

Why can we be certain that Jehovah brought Jesus back to life? There were many eyewitnesses who testified that Jesus had been raised. (1 Corinthians 15:5-7) The first witness on the apostle Paul's list was the apostle Peter (Cephas). A group of disciples confirmed that Peter saw the resurrected Jesus. (Luke 24:33, 34) In addition, "the Twelve," the apostles, saw Jesus after he was raised. Then Christ "appeared to more than 500 brothers at one time," perhaps at the joyous event in Galilee mentioned at Matthew 28:16-20. Jesus also "appeared to James," likely Jesus' half brother, who previously had not put faith in Jesus as the Messiah. (John 7:5) After seeing the resurrected Jesus, James was convinced. Significantly, about 55 C.E. when Paul wrote this letter, many eyewitnesses of the resurrection were alive, so any doubter could consult with living, credible witnesses. w20.12 3 paragraph 5, 7-8

(1 Corinthians 15:6, 7) After that he appeared to more than 500 brothers at one time, most of whom are still with us, though some have fallen asleep in death. ⁷ After that he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.

=====

Tuesday, May 24

Jehovah will sustain him on his sickbed.—Psalm 41:3.

When we are not feeling well and especially if we are dealing with a chronic illness, we may find it hard to think positively. So turn to Jehovah for support. While he does not cure us miraculously now, he does comfort us and can give us the strength we need so as to endure. (Psalm 94:19) For example, he may move fellow Christians to come to our aid when we need help with chores. He may move our brothers to pray with us. Or he may bring back to our mind comforting thoughts found in his Word, such as the wonderful hope of perfect life without sickness and pain in the coming new world. (Romans 15:4) However, we may feel limited in what we can do in the ministry. A sister named Laurel was confined to an iron lung for 37 years! She endured cancer, major surgeries, and chronic skin disorders. But it did not silence her. She witnessed to

nurses and attendants who came to her home and helped at least 17 people come to an accurate knowledge of the Bible! w20.12 24 paragraph 9; 25 paragraph 12

=====

Wednesday, May 25

Jehovah is on my side; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?—Psalm 118:6.

The apostle Paul needed help. About 56 C.E., a crowd dragged him outside the temple in Jerusalem and tried to kill him. The next day, when Paul was brought before the Sanhedrin, he was almost torn apart by his enemies. (Acts 21:30-32; 22:30; 23:6-10) At that point, Paul may have wondered, ‘How much longer can I endure this treatment?’ What help did Paul receive? The night after Paul was arrested, “the Lord,” Jesus, stood by him and said: “Take courage! For just as you have been giving a thorough witness about me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness in Rome.” (Acts 23:11) What timely encouragement! Jesus commended Paul for the witness he had given in Jerusalem. And he promised that Paul would safely reach Rome, where he would give a further witness. After receiving that assurance, Paul must have felt as secure as a child nestled in his father’s arms. w20.11 12 paragraph 1, 3; 13 paragraph 4

[w12 7/1 p. 21 par. 1] The protection Jehovah now provides is primarily spiritual. In other words, he protects us from spiritual harm by equipping us with what we need in order to avoid danger and to safeguard our friendship with him. One way he provides protection is through Bible-based counsel.

=====

Thursday, May 26

We have this hope . . . , both sure and firm.—Hebrews 6:19.

Our Kingdom hope serves “as an anchor for the soul,” giving us stability despite challenging circumstances or anxious thoughts. Meditate on Jehovah’s promise of a future in which negative thoughts will be gone. (Isaiah 65:17) Picture yourself in the peaceful new world, where distressing situations will no longer exist. (Micah 4:4) You will also strengthen your hope as you share it with others. Do all you can in the

preaching and disciple-making work. If you do, you can “have the full assurance of the hope down to the end.” (Hebrews 6:11) As this system of things comes to its end, we will experience more challenges that could produce anxious thoughts. We will be able to face those challenges and remain calm, not in our own strength, but through our trust in Jehovah. Let us show by our actions that we have faith in Jehovah’s promise: “Your strength will be in keeping calm and showing trust.”—Isaiah 30:15. w21.01 7 paragraphs 17-18

(Ephesians 4:11) And he gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelizers, some as shepherds and teachers,

(1 Corinthians 12:19) If they were all the same member, where would the body be?

(Revelation 12:17) So the dragon became enraged at the woman and went off to wage war with the remaining ones of her offspring, who observe the commandments of God and have the work of bearing witness concerning Jesus.

=====

Friday, May 27

Jehovah is very tender in affection.—James 5:11.

Note that James 5:11 links Jehovah’s tender affection to another quality that draws us to him—his mercy. (Exodus 34:6) One way in which Jehovah shows us mercy is by forgiving us for the mistakes we make. (Psalm 51:1) In the Bible, mercy involves much more than forgiveness. Mercy is an intense feeling that springs from inside a person when he or she sees someone in distress and is moved to try to help the person. Jehovah describes the intense desire he has to help us as being greater than the feelings that a mother has for her child. (Isaiah 49:15) When we are in distress, Jehovah’s mercy moves him to help us. (Psalm 37:39; 1 Corinthians 10:13) We can show mercy to our brothers and sisters by forgiving them and not holding a grudge when they disappoint us. (Ephesians 4:32) But a primary way we can show mercy is by supporting our brothers and sisters through the hardships they face. Thus we imitate Jehovah, the supreme example of tender affection.—Ephesians 5:1. w21.01 21 paragraph 5

=====

Saturday, May 28

Christ . . . [left] a model for you to follow his steps closely.—1 Peter 2:21.

A family head needs to maintain the right balance. He should not become so involved in secular work to support his family that he fails to care properly for his family's spiritual and emotional needs and provide them with training. Jehovah trains and disciplines us with our best interests in mind. (Hebrews 12:7-9) Like his Father, Jesus trains those under his authority in a loving manner. (John 15:14, 15) He is firm but kind. (Matthew 20:24-28) He understands that we are imperfect and prone to make mistakes. (Matthew 26:41) A family head who imitates Jehovah and Jesus makes allowances for the imperfections of family members. He does not become "bitterly angry" with his wife or children. (Colossians 3:19) Instead, he applies the principle recorded at Galatians 6:1 and tries to readjust them "in a spirit of mildness," remembering that he too is imperfect. Like Jesus, he realizes that the best way to teach is by example. w21.02 6-7 paragraphs 16-18



Sunday, May 29

Every breathing thing—let it praise Jah.—Psalm 150:6.

By means of the ransom, Jehovah purchased the lives of each individual in the congregation and, potentially, of all humankind. (Mark 10:45; Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 15:21, 22) So it is fitting that he appointed Jesus, who gave his life as a ransom, as head of the congregation. As our head, Jesus has the authority to make and to enforce rules that govern the conduct of individuals, of families, and of the entire congregation. (Galatians 6:2) But Jesus does more than just make rules. He feeds and cherishes each one of us. (Ephesians 5:29) Sisters show that they respect Christ by following the direction given by the men he has appointed to take care of them. Brothers show that they understand the headship arrangement by respecting and honoring sisters. When all in the congregation understand and respect the principle of headship, the congregation enjoys peace. And more important, we bring praise to our loving heavenly Father, Jehovah. w21.02 18-19 paragraphs 14-17

**TREASURES
FROM GOD'S WORD**

“Maintain a Healthy Fear of Displeasing Jehovah”: (10 min.)

Spiritual Gems: (10 min.)

2Sa 6:8, 9—What do we learn from David’s reaction to Jehovah’s wrath? (w96 4/1 29 ¶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.) 2Sa 4:1-12 (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.) w05 10/1 23-24 ¶14-15
—Theme: “Fear God and Give Him Glory.”
—Re 14:7. (19)

**LIVING
AS CHRISTIANS****Song 143**

“Are You Prepared to Face Civil Unrest?”: (15 min.) Discussion by an elder. Play the video *Are You Prepared for a Disaster?* (video category THE BIBLE). Include reminders from the branch office and the body of elders, if provided.

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.)
lff lesson 05

**Maintain a Healthy Fear of Displeasing Jehovah**

Good intentions do not change what Jehovah requires (2Sa 6:3-5; w05 5/15 17 ¶8)

Uzzah violated God’s Law (2Sa 6:6; w05 2/1 27 ¶20)

Jehovah punished Uzzah for his irreverent act (2Sa 6:7; w05 2/1 27 ¶21)

ASK YOURSELF, ‘How can I show in my personal life that I fear displeasing Jehovah?’—Pr 3:7



135 Jehovah's Warm Appeal: "Be Wise, My Son"

(Proverbs 27:11)

E B/D# E E/G# F#m11 E B/D# Aadd9/C# B/D#

Young man and young wom - an, do give your heart to
Re - joice and take plea - sure in giv - ing me your

E G#m C#m C#m9/B C#m/B B/A A

me. My foe who now taunts me will then be made to
all, And though you may stum - ble, I'll raise you if you

E/G# F#m7 C#m Ama7 B/A

see. Your youth and de - vo - tion to me you free - ly
fall. No mat - ter who fails you or proves to be un -

G#m7 E/G# C#m G#m/B Ama7 E/G#

give; You show all the world that for me you real - ly
true, Take com - fort in know - ing I'll al - ways cher - ish

Jehovah's Warm Appeal: "Be Wise, My Son"

Chorus

live. you. Be - lov - ed son and pre - cious

Chords: F#m7, A/B, B7, E, B/D#

daugh - ter, Be wise and make my heart re - joice,

Chords: A/C#, E/B, A, C#m7/G#, F#m

That out of your own heart you serve me,

Chords: F#m/E, F#m/D#, G#7sus4, G#7, C#m9, C#m

And of - fer praise by your own choice.

Chords: Am6/C, Esus4/B, E/B, B7sus4, B7, Esus4, E

about his house, from start to finish.^a **13** You must tell him that I am bringing a lasting judgment on his house for the error that he has known about,^b for his sons are cursing God,^c but he has not rebuked them.^d **14** That is why I have sworn to the house of E'li that the error of the house of E'li will never be atoned for by sacrifices or by offerings.^e

15 Samuel lay down until the morning; then he opened the doors of Jehovah's house. Samuel was afraid to tell E'li of the vision. **16** But E'li called for Samuel: "Samuel, my son!" At this he said: "Here I am." **17** He asked: "What message did he speak to you? Please, do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and add to it if you hide from me a single word of all that he said to you." **18** So Samuel told him everything, and he did not hide anything from him. Eli said: "It is Jehovah. Let him do what is good in his eyes."

19 Samuel continued growing up, and Jehovah himself was with him^f and did not let any of all his words go unfulfilled.* **20** All Israel from Dan to Be'er-she'ba became aware that Samuel had been confirmed as Jehovah's prophet. **21** And Jehovah continued to appear in Shi'loh, for Jehovah revealed himself to Samuel in Shi'loh by the word of Jehovah.^g

4 And the word of Samuel went out to all Israel.

Then Israel went out to meet the Phi-lis'tines in battle; they camped beside Eb-en-e'zer, and the Phi-lis'tines were encamped at A'phek. **2** The Phi-lis'tines drew up in battle formation to meet Israel, but the battle went badly and Israel was defeated by the Phi-lis'tines, who struck

3:19 *Lit., "fall to the earth."

CHAP. 3

a Nu 23:19
1Sa 2:31-34
Isa 55:10, 11

b 1Sa 2:22, 23
Joh 15:22
Jas 4:17

c Nu 15:30
1Sa 2:12, 17

d Ec 8:11

e 1Sa 4:11
1Sa 22:21
1Ki 2:27

f 1Sa 2:21

g 1Sa 3:1, 4
Ps 99:6

Second Col.

CHAP. 4

a De 28:15, 25
De 32:30
Jg 2:14

b 2Sa 15:25

c Ex 25:18
Nu 7:89
2Ki 19:15
Ps 80:1

d 1Sa 2:12

e Ex 14:25
Ex 15:14

f Ex 7:5
Ps 78:43, 51

g De 28:48
Jg 10:7
Jg 13:1

h Le 26:14, 17
De 28:25
1Sa 4:2

down about 4,000 men from the battle line in the field. **3** When the people returned to the camp, the elders of Israel said: "Why did Jehovah allow us to be defeated* today by the Phi-lis'tines?^a Let us take the ark of Jehovah's covenant with us from Shi'loh,^b so that it may be with us and save us from the hand of our enemies." **4** So the people sent men to Shi'loh, and they carried from there the ark of the covenant of Jehovah of armies, who sits enthroned above* the cherubs.^c The two sons of E'li, Hoph'ni and Phin'e-has,^d were also there with the ark of the covenant of the true God.

5 As soon as the ark of the covenant of Jehovah came into the camp, all the Israelites broke out into loud shouting, so that the earth shook. **6** When the Phi-lis'tines heard the sound of the shouting, they said: "Why is there such loud shouting in the camp of the Hebrews?" Finally they learned that the Ark of Jehovah had come into the camp. **7** The Phi-lis'tines became afraid, for they said: "God has come into the camp!"^e So they said: "Too bad for us, for nothing like this has ever happened before! **8** Too bad for us! Who will save us from the hand of this majestic God? This is the God who struck Egypt with every sort of slaughter in the wilderness.^f **9** Be courageous and act like men, you Phi-lis'tines, so that you may not serve the Hebrews just as they have served you.^g Act like men and fight!" **10** So the Phi-lis'tines fought and Israel was defeated,^h and each one fled to his tent. The slaughter was very great; on Israel's side, 30,000 foot soldiers fell. **11** More-

4:3 *Lit., "Why has Jehovah defeated us?" 4:4 *Or possibly, "between."

over, the Ark of God was captured, and the two sons of E'li, Hoph'ni and Phin'e-has, died.^a

12 A man of Benjamin ran from the battle line and arrived at Shi'loh on that day with his garments ripped apart and dirt on his head.^b **13** When the man arrived, E'li was sitting on the seat by the roadside watching, because his heart was trembling over the Ark of the true God.^c The man went into the city to report the news, and the whole city began crying out. **14** When E'li heard the sound of the outcry, he asked: "What does the sound of this turmoil mean?" The same man hurried in and reported the news to E'li. **15** (Now E'li was 98 years old, and his eyes stared straight ahead, and he could not see.)^d **16** Then the man said to E'li: "I am the one who came from the battle line! Just today I fled from the battle line." At this he asked: "What happened, my son?" **17** So the bearer of the news related: "Israel has fled from the Phi-lis'tines, and there was a great defeat among the people;^e also your own two sons, Hoph'ni and Phin'e-has, have died,^f and the Ark of the true God has been captured."^g

18 At the moment he mentioned the Ark of the true God, E'li fell backward from his seat beside the gate, and his neck was broken and he died, for he was old and heavy. He had judged Israel for 40 years. **19** His daughter-in-law, the wife of Phin'e-has, was pregnant and close to giving birth. When she heard the report that the Ark of the true God had been captured and that her father-in-law and her husband had died, she doubled over and unexpectedly went into labor and gave birth. **20** As she was dying, the women standing by her said: "Do not be

CHAP. 4

a 1Sa 2:31, 34
1Sa 4:3, 17
Ps 78:61, 64

b Jos 7:6

c 1Sa 4:4

d 1Sa 3:2

e 1Sa 3:11

f 1Sa 2:34

g 1Sa 4:10, 11

Second Col.

a 1Sa 14:3

b Ps 78:61

c 1Sa 2:32, 34
1Sa 4:5, 11

d 1Sa 4:11
Jer 7:12

CHAP. 5

e 1Sa 4:11

f Jg 16:23
1Ch 10:8-10

g Ex 12:12
1Ch 16:26
Ps 97:7

h Isa 46:6, 7

i 1Sa 6:5, 6

afraid, for you have given birth to a son." She did not answer and did not pay attention to it.* **21** But she named the boy Ich'a-bod,^{*a} saying: "Glory has gone away from Israel into exile,"^b referring to the capture of the Ark of the true God and what happened to her father-in-law and her husband.^c **22** She said: "Glory has gone away from Israel into exile, because the Ark of the true God has been captured."^d

5 When the Phi-lis'tines captured the Ark^e of the true God, they brought it from Eb-en'e-zer to Ash'dod. **2** The Phi-lis'tines took the Ark of the true God and brought it into the house* of Da'gon and set it beside Da'gon.^f **3** When the Ash'dod-ites got up early the next day, there was Da'gon fallen facedown on the ground before the Ark of Jehovah.^g So they took Da'gon and returned him to his place.^h **4** When they got up early in the morning on the following day, there was Da'gon fallen facedown on the ground before the Ark of Jehovah. The head of Da'gon and the palms of both his hands were cut off and were lying on the threshold. Only the fish part* had been left intact. **5** That is why to this day, the priests of Da'gon and all those who enter the house of Da'gon do not walk on the threshold of Da'gon in Ash'dod.

6 The hand of Jehovah was heavy against the Ash'dod-ites, and he devastated them by striking Ash'dod and its territories with piles.*ⁱ **7** When the men of Ash'dod saw what was happening, they said: "Do not let the

4:20 *Or "and did not set her heart on it." **4:21** *Meaning "Where is the Glory?" **5:2** *Or "temple." **5:4** *Lit., "Only Dagon." **5:6** *Or "hemorrhoids."

Ark of the God of Israel remain with us, for his hand has dealt harshly with us and our god Da'gon." **8** So they sent for and gathered all the lords of the Philis'tines and asked them: "What should we do with the Ark of the God of Israel?" They replied: "Let the Ark of the God of Israel be moved to Gath."^a So they moved the Ark of the God of Israel there.

9 After they moved it there, the hand of Jehovah came against the city, bringing great panic. He struck the men of the city, from small to great, and piles broke out on them.^b **10** So they sent the Ark of the true God to Ek'ron,^c but as soon as the Ark of the true God came to Ek'ron, the Ek'ron-ites began to cry out: "They have brought the Ark of the God of Israel to us to put us and our people to death!"^d **11** Then they sent for and gathered all the lords of the Philis'tines and said: "Send the Ark of the God of Israel away; let it return to its place so that we and our people may not be put to death." For the terror of death had spread through the whole city; the hand of the true God had been very heavy there,^e **12** and the men who did not die had been struck with piles. And the city's cry for help ascended to the heavens.

6 The Ark^f of Jehovah was in Philis'tine territory for seven months. **2** The Philis'tines called the priests and the diviners^g and asked: "What should we do with the Ark of Jehovah? Let us know how we should send it back to its place." **3** They replied: "If you send the ark of the covenant of Jehovah the God of Israel away, do not send it back without an offering. You should by all means return to him a guilt offering.^h Only then will you be healed, and it will

CHAP. 5

a 1Sa 17:4

b 1Sa 5:6

c Jos 15:20, 45
2Ki 1:2
Am 1:8

d 1Sa 5:7

e 1Sa 5:6, 9

CHAP. 6

f 1Sa 4:11
1Sa 5:1
Ps 78:61g De 18:9, 10
Isa 2:6

h 1Sa 6:4, 17

Second Col.

a Jos 13:2, 3
1Sa 6:16

b 1Sa 6:18

c 1Sa 5:6, 11

d Ex 7:13
Ex 8:15
Ex 14:17e Ex 9:14, 16
Ro 9:17, 18f Ex 6:1
Ex 11:1
Ex 12:33

g 1Sa 6:3, 4

h Jos 15:10, 12
Jos 21:8, 16
2Ch 28:18

be made known to you why his hand has not turned away from you." **4** So they asked: "What guilt offering should we send to him?" They said: "According to the number of the lords of the Philis'tines,^a send five golden piles* and five golden mice, for the same scourge has afflicted every one of you and your lords. **5** You should make images of your piles and images of your mice^b that are bringing the land to ruin, and you should honor the God of Israel. Perhaps he will lighten the weight of his hand that is on you and your god and your land.^c **6** Why should you harden your heart as Egypt and Phar'aoh hardened their hearts?^d When He dealt harshly with them,^e they had to send Israel away, and they departed.^f **7** Now prepare a new wagon and two cows that have calves and have never been under a yoke. Then hitch the cows to the wagon, but take their calves back home, away from them. **8** Take the Ark of Jehovah and place it on the wagon, and put the golden articles that you are sending to him as a guilt offering in a box next to it.^g Then send it on its way **9** and watch: If it goes up the road to Beth-she'mesh,^h to its own territory, then it is the one who has done this great evil to us. But if not, we will know that it was not his hand that struck us; it happened to us by coincidence."

10 The men did accordingly. They took two cows that had calves and hitched them to the wagon, and the calves they penned up at home. **11** Then they put the Ark of Jehovah on the wagon, as well as the box containing the golden mice and the images of their piles. **12** And the cows went straight ahead on the road to

*6:4 *Or "hemorrhoids."

Beth-she'mesh.^a They stayed on the one highway, mooring as they went; they did not turn either to the right or to the left. All the while the lords of the Phi-lis'tines were walking behind them as far as the boundary of Beth-she'mesh. **13** The people of Beth-she'mesh were reaping the wheat harvest in the valley plain.* When they raised their eyes and saw the Ark, they were overjoyed at seeing it. **14** The wagon came into the field of Joshua the Beth-she'mite and stopped there near a large stone. So they chopped up the wood of the wagon, and they offered the cows^b as a burnt offering to Jehovah.

15 The Levites^c took down the Ark of Jehovah and the box that was with it, which contained the golden articles, and they put them on the large stone. The men of Beth-she'mesh^d offered up burnt offerings and made sacrifices on that day to Jehovah.

16 When the five lords of the Phi-lis'tines saw it, they returned to Ek'ron on that day. **17** Now these are the golden piles that the Phi-lis'tines sent as a guilt offering to Jehovah:^e one for Ash'-dod,^f one for Gaz'a, one for Ash'-ke-lon, one for Gath,^g one for Ek'ron.^h **18** And the number of the golden mice corresponded to the number of all the cities of the Phi-lis'tines that belonged to the five lords—both the fortified cities and the villages in the open country.

And the large stone upon which they rested the Ark of Jehovah serves as a witness down to this day in the field of Joshua the Beth-she'mite. **19** But God struck down the men of Beth-she'mesh, because they had looked upon the Ark of Jehovah.

6:13 *Or "low plain."

CHAP. 6

- a 1Sa 6:8, 9
- b 1Sa 6:7
- c Nu 3:30, 31
- d Jos 21:8, 16
- e 1Sa 6:4
- f 1Sa 5:1
- g 1Sa 5:8
- h Jg 1:18
- 1Sa 5:10

Second Col.

- a Nu 4:15, 20
- 1Ch 13:10
- b Le 11:45
- c Nu 17:12, 13
- 2Sa 6:8, 9
- Ps 76:7
- d Jos 18:14
- 1Ch 13:5, 6
- e 1Ch 16:1
- 2Ch 1:4

CHAP. 7

- f 2Sa 6:2, 4
- 1Ch 13:5, 7
- g Ne 9:28
- h 1Sa 12:24
- i Jos 24:14, 23
- Jg 3:7
- j Jg 2:13
- Jg 10:6
- 1Kl 11:33
- k De 10:20
- De 13:4
- Lu 4:8
- l De 28:1
- m Jg 10:16
- n Jg 20:1
- 1Sa 10:17
- 2Kl 25:23
- Jer 40:6
- o 1Sa 12:23
- Jas 5:16
- p 2Ch 20:3
- Ne 9:1
- Joe 2:12
- q Jg 10:10
- r Jg 2:18

He struck down 50,070* among the people, and the people began mourning because Jehovah had struck them down with a great slaughter.^a **20** So the men of Beth-she'mesh asked: "Who will be able to stand before Jehovah, this holy God,^b and to whom will he go away from us?"^c **21** So they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kir'i-ath-je'a-rim,^d saying: "The Phi-lis'tines have returned the Ark of Jehovah. Come down and take it up with you."^e

7 So the men of Kir'i-ath-je'a-rim came and took the Ark of Jehovah up into the house of A-bin'a-dab^f on the hill, and they sanctified his son El-e-a'zar to guard the Ark of Jehovah.

2 A long time elapsed, 20 years in all, from the day of the Ark's coming to Kir'i-ath-je'a-rim, and all the house of Israel began to seek* after Jehovah.^g **3** Samuel then said to all the house of Israel: "If you are returning to Jehovah with all your heart,^h put away the foreign godsⁱ and the Ash'to-reth images^j from among you, and direct your heart unswervingly to Jehovah and serve only him,^k and he will rescue you from the hand of the Phi-lis'tines."^l **4** At that the Israelites got rid of the Ba'als and the Ash'to-reth images and served only Jehovah.^m

5 Then Samuel said: "Gather all Israel together at Miz'pah,ⁿ and I will pray to Jehovah in your behalf."^o **6** So they gathered together at Miz'pah, and they drew water and poured it out before Jehovah and kept a fast on that day.^p There they said: "We have sinned against Jehovah."^q And Samuel began serving as judge^r over the Israelites in Miz'pah.

6:19 *Lit., "70 men, 50,000 men." 7:2 *Or "mourn."

**TREASURES
FROM GOD'S WORD**

“Maintain a Healthy Fear of Displeasing Jehovah”: (10 min.)

Spiritual Gems: (10 min.)

2Sa 6:8, 9—What do we learn from David’s reaction to Jehovah’s wrath? (w96 4/1 29 ¶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.) 2Sa 4:1-12 (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.) w05 10/1 23-24 ¶14-15
—Theme: “Fear God and Give Him Glory.”
—Re 14:7. (19)

**LIVING
AS CHRISTIANS****Song 143**

“Are You Prepared to Face Civil Unrest?”: (15 min.) Discussion by an elder. Play the video *Are You Prepared for a Disaster?* (video category THE BIBLE). Include reminders from the branch office and the body of elders, if provided.

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.)
lff lesson 05

**Maintain a Healthy Fear of Displeasing Jehovah**

Good intentions do not change what Jehovah requires (2Sa 6:3-5; w05 5/15 17 ¶8)

Uzzah violated God’s Law (2Sa 6:6; w05 2/1 27 ¶20)

Jehovah punished Uzzah for his irreverent act (2Sa 6:7; w05 2/1 27 ¶21)

ASK YOURSELF, ‘How can I show in my personal life that I fear displeasing Jehovah?’—Pr 3:7



May 23-29 / 2 Samuel 4-6

Song 135 and Prayer

Opening Comments (1 minute)

Treasures From God's Word

"Maintain a Healthy Fear of Displeasing Jehovah": (10 minutes)

Good intentions do not change what Jehovah requires

2 Samuel 6:3-5: However, they placed the Ark of the true God on a new wagon to transport it from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were leading the new wagon. So they transported the Ark of the true God from Abinadab's house on the hill, and Ahio was walking ahead of the Ark. David and all the house of Israel were celebrating before Jehovah with all sorts of juniper-wood instruments, harps, other stringed instruments, tambourines, sistrums, and cymbals.

w05 5/15 17 paragraph 8

2 Samuel 6:1-7. Though David was well-meaning, his attempt to move the Ark in a wagon was in violation of God's command and resulted in failure. (Exodus 25:13, 14; Numbers 4:15, 19; 7:7-9) Uzzah's grabbing hold of the Ark also shows that good intentions do not change what God requires.

Uzzah violated God's Law

2 Samuel 6:6: But when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah thrust his hand out to the Ark of the true God and grabbed hold of it, for the cattle nearly upset it.

w05 2/1 27 paragraph 20

Keep in mind that Uzzah should have known better. The Ark was associated with Jehovah's presence. The Law specified that it was not to be touched by unauthorized individuals, explicitly warning that violators would be punished by death. (Numbers 4:18-20; 7:89) Therefore, the transfer of that sacred chest was not a task to be treated lightly. Uzzah evidently was a Levite (though not a priest), so he should have been familiar with the Law. Besides, years earlier the Ark had been moved to the house of his father for safekeeping. (1 Samuel 6:20-7:1) It had stayed there for some 70 years, until David chose to move it. So from childhood on, Uzzah had likely been aware of the laws regarding the Ark.

[Image:] Uzzah thrusting out his hand to steady the ark of the covenant.

Jehovah punished Uzzah for his irreverent act

2 Samuel 6:7: At that Jehovah's anger blazed against Uzzah, and the true God struck him down there for his irreverent act, and he died there beside the Ark of the true God.

w05 2/1 27 paragraph 21

As mentioned earlier, Jehovah can read hearts. Since his Word calls Uzzah's deed an "irreverent act," Jehovah may have seen some selfish motive that is not expressly revealed in the account. Was Uzzah perhaps a presumptuous man, prone to overstep due bounds? (Proverbs 11:2) Did leading in public the Ark that his family had guarded in private give him an inflated sense of self-importance? (Proverbs 8:13) Was Uzzah so faithless as to think that Jehovah's hand was too short to steady the sacred chest that symbolized His presence? Whatever the case, we can be sure that Jehovah did what was right. He likely saw something in Uzzah's heart that caused Him to render swift judgment.—Proverbs 21:2.

Ask yourself, 'How can I show in my personal life that I fear displeasing Jehovah?'—Proverbs 3:7

Spiritual Gems

2 Samuel 6:8, 9—What do we learn from David's reaction to Jehovah's wrath?

2 Samuel 6:8, 9: But David became angry because Jehovah's wrath had broken through against Uzzah; and that place has been called Perez-uzzah down to this day. So David became fearful of Jehovah on that day and said: "How can the Ark of Jehovah come to me?"

w96 4/1 29 paragraph 1

David as king had to bear some responsibility for this. His reaction shows that even those who have a good relationship with Jehovah can occasionally react badly to trialsome situations. First David became angry. Then he grew afraid. (2 Samuel 6:8, 9) His trusting relationship with Jehovah was severely tested. Here was an occasion when seemingly he failed to throw his burden on Jehovah, when he did not follow his commands. Might that be the situation with us sometimes? Do we ever blame Jehovah for problems that result because we ignore his instructions?—Proverbs 19:3.

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

Bible Reading: (4 minutes) 2 Samuel 4:1-12 (*th study 10*)

**TREASURES
FROM GOD'S WORD**

“Maintain a Healthy Fear of Displeasing Jehovah”: (10 min.)

Spiritual Gems: (10 min.)

2Sa 6:8, 9—What do we learn from David’s reaction to Jehovah’s wrath? (w96 4/1 29 ¶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.) 2Sa 4:1-12 (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.) w05 10/1 23-24 ¶14-15
—Theme: “Fear God and Give Him Glory.”
—Re 14:7. (19)

**LIVING
AS CHRISTIANS****Song 143**

“Are You Prepared to Face Civil Unrest?”: (15 min.) Discussion by an elder. Play the video *Are You Prepared for a Disaster?* (video category THE BIBLE). Include reminders from the branch office and the body of elders, if provided.

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.)
lff lesson 05

**Maintain a Healthy Fear of Displeasing Jehovah**

Good intentions do not change what Jehovah requires (2Sa 6:3-5; w05 5/15 17 ¶8)

Uzzah violated God’s Law (2Sa 6:6; w05 2/1 27 ¶20)

Jehovah punished Uzzah for his irreverent act (2Sa 6:7; w05 2/1 27 ¶21)

ASK YOURSELF, ‘How can I show in my personal life that I fear displeasing Jehovah?’—Pr 3:7

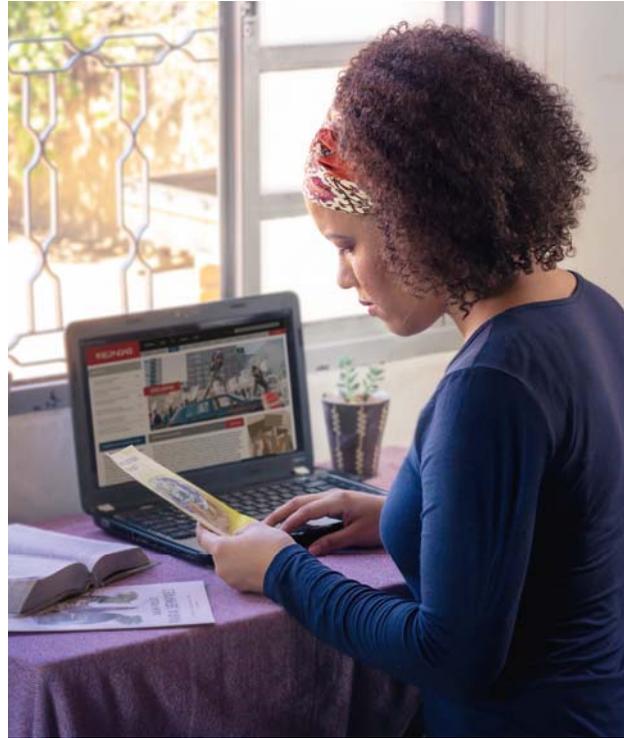




Use Current Events in Your Ministry

In his ministry, Jesus drew lessons from current events. (Lu 13:1-5) You too can use current events to stir people’s interest in the Kingdom message. After mentioning the high cost of living, a natural disaster, civil unrest, drug addiction, or something similar, ask a thought-provoking question. You might ask: “Do you think we’ll ever see an end to . . . ?” or “What do you think is the solution to . . . ?” Then, share a Bible verse related to the topic. If the person shows interest, direct his attention to a video or a publication in our Teaching Toolbox. As we strive to touch the hearts of people in our territory, may we “do all things for the sake of the good news.” —1Co 9:22, 23.

What topics may appeal to people in *your* territory?



SAMPLE CONVERSATIONS

Initial Call*

Question: How do we know that our suffering is not punishment from God?

Scripture: **Jas 1:13**

Link: Why do we suffer?

Return Visit*

Question: Why do we suffer?

Scripture: **1Jo 5:19**

Link: How does God feel about our suffering?

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



Apply Yourself to the Field Ministry

Talk: (5 minutes) w05 10/1 23-24 paragraphs 14-15—Theme: “Fear God and Give Him Glory.”—Revelation 14:7. (*th study 19*)

14 As we keep on the watch, what can we expect? The book of Revelation outlines progressive steps in the fulfillment of God’s purpose. Acting on what it says is vital if we are to prove ourselves ready. The prophecy vividly describes events that would occur in “the Lord’s day,” which began when Christ was enthroned in heaven in 1914. (Revelation 1:10) Revelation alerts us to an angel who has been entrusted with “everlasting good news to declare.” He proclaims in a loud voice: “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of the judgment by him has arrived.” (Revelation 14:6, 7) That “hour” of judgment is a brief period; it includes both the pronouncement and the execution of the judgments that are depicted in that prophecy. We are now living in that period.

15 Now, before the hour of judgment concludes, we are urged: “Fear God and give him glory.” What does this involve? Proper fear of God should cause us to turn away from badness. (Proverbs 8:13) If we honor God, we will listen to him with deep respect. We will not be too busy to read his Word, the Bible, regularly. We will not minimize his counsel to attend Christian meetings. (Hebrews 10:24, 25) We will cherish the privilege of proclaiming the good news of God’s Messianic Kingdom and will do so zealously. We will trust in Jehovah at all times and with our whole heart. (Psalm 62:8) Recognizing that Jehovah is the Universal Sovereign, we honor him by willingly submitting to him as the Sovereign of our life. Do you truly fear God and give him glory in all such ways?

Keep Working, Watching, and Waiting

(Romans 8:20-25)

Cm E°/F Fm

The God of times and of sea - sons, Whose
 The time has long been ap - point - ed; His
 Though all cre - a - tion is groan - ing, In

Fm/D G7b5 G7 F°/C Cm Cm9/Bb

name a - lone is Je - ho - vah— The
 Son is read - y to con - quer, De -
 faith we're ea - ger - ly wait - ing. Je -

Ab Fsus4 Fm

time for his vin - di - ca - tion Is
 feat - ing all who op - pose him. His
 ho - vah's day is ap - proach - ing, The

D7sus4 D7 Dm/G Em/G F/G Em/G Dm/G

near by signs we can see.
 sword will bring vic - to - ry.
 time for set - ting us free.

Keep Working, Watching, and Waiting

Chorus
Cma7 Dm/C Em/C Dm/C C F6 Dm7 G13 G7

Keep on work - ing and watch - ing and

Cma7 Dm/C Em/C Dm/C C Dm/B E7b9 E+5 E7b9

wait - ing, Joy - ful - ly an - tic - i -

Am Am/G Fma7 Cadd9/E Dm7 G7

pat - ing, Life as God meant it to

C Cma7 Dm/C C

be.

**TREASURES
FROM GOD'S WORD**

“Maintain a Healthy Fear of Displeasing Jehovah”: (10 min.)

Spiritual Gems: (10 min.)

2Sa 6:8, 9—What do we learn from David’s reaction to Jehovah’s wrath? (w96 4/1 29 ¶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.) 2Sa 4:1-12 (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.) w05 10/1 23-24 ¶14-15
—Theme: “Fear God and Give Him Glory.”
—Re 14:7. (19)

**LIVING
AS CHRISTIANS****Song 143**

“Are You Prepared to Face Civil Unrest?”: (15 min.) Discussion by an elder. Play the video *Are You Prepared for a Disaster?* (video category THE BIBLE). Include reminders from the branch office and the body of elders, if provided.

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.)
lff lesson 05

**Maintain a Healthy Fear of Displeasing Jehovah**

Good intentions do not change what Jehovah requires (2Sa 6:3-5; w05 5/15 17 ¶8)

Uzzah violated God’s Law (2Sa 6:6; w05 2/1 27 ¶20)

Jehovah punished Uzzah for his irreverent act (2Sa 6:7; w05 2/1 27 ¶21)

ASK YOURSELF, ‘How can I show in my personal life that I fear displeasing Jehovah?’—Pr 3:7





Are You Prepared to Face Civil Unrest?

As the end of this system approaches, we expect civil unrest, terrorism, and war to increase. (Re 6:4) How can we prepare for future challenges?

- **Prepare spiritually:** Identify Bible principles and accounts that strengthen your trust in Jehovah and in his organization and that help you to remain neutral. (Pr 12:5; jr 125-126 ¶23-24) Now is the time to build strong friendships within the congregation.—1Pe 4:7, 8
- **Prepare physically:** Have a plan for sheltering in place and a reasonable reserve of supplies. Also, prepare an evacuation plan. Review the contents of your go bag, and include personal protective equipment and money. Know how to contact the elders, and be sure they know how to contact you.—Isa 32:2; g17.5 3-7

During unrest, maintain your spiritual routine. (Php 1:10) Avoid moving from place to place unless you are evacuating. (Mt 10:16) Share food and other supplies.—Ro 12:13.



WATCH THE VIDEO *ARE YOU PREPARED FOR A DISASTER?* AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- How can Jehovah help us during times of disaster?

- What practical steps can we take to prepare?

- How can we help others who are affected by disasters?

Are You Prepared for a Disaster?

Jehovah warned that “in the last days,” there would be “critical times hard to deal with.” There would be “food shortages,” “pestilences,” “earthquakes in one place after another,” and other “fearful sights.” We also contend with wildfires, volcanic eruptions, destructive storms, and man-made disasters, as well as an increase of lawlessness, civil unrest, and war. No matter where we live, we will likely be affected by some form of disaster, whether natural or man-made. How can we be prepared?

First, we can prepare spiritually. Isaiah 30:15 says: “Your strength will be in keeping calm and showing trust.” So we need to build and maintain a close relationship with Jehovah and learn to trust in him now. We do not expect divine intervention. But when we pray during times of distress, his powerful holy spirit can bring Bible passages back to mind to keep us calm and give us wisdom to make good decisions.

Second, we can prepare physically by maintaining a go bag. Our go bag could include items such as first-aid supplies, bottled water, nonperishable food, a Bible, and other necessary items. If possible, each household should also have a reasonable reserve of basic supplies at home in case it is necessary to shelter in place for an extended period of time. Check what government authorities recommend for your community.

Also, we shouldn't forget to update the elders with our latest contact information. If we don't do so, valuable time could be lost in a disaster.

Additionally, during family worship, our family could review the types of disasters that could happen. Remember, emergencies like terrorist attacks and unrest can occur anywhere and without warning. So consider what could be done in each situation, such as where to meet and how to contact the elders.

And third, we can prepare to help others when they're experiencing a disaster. So, what can we expect if a disaster occurs locally? If advance warning of a disaster is given, field service group overseers will make sure that everyone in their group is in a safe location. Immediately after a disaster occurs, each field service group overseer will contact everyone in his group to learn of their needs. It could take time to organize relief assistance, especially if supplies are limited. So it's vital that each of us takes steps to prepare, follows government warnings, and keeps the elders informed of our circumstances. Philippians 2:4 states: “Look out . . . for the interests of others.”

When we are prepared, more attention can be given to those with the most critical needs and we may be able to help others in our own congregation and nearby, even if we're affected. For example, in some circumstances, brothers may need a place to stay temporarily. Perhaps we could open our home and help them. Or they might need food or basic supplies. We could share what we have. In other situations, our brothers may need help cleaning or repairing their home when it's safe to do so.

But what if a disaster occurs in another area? Should we travel there to help? If help is needed, the branch office will assign brothers to coordinate and assist with relief efforts. So the best time to make yourself available is now, before a disaster occurs. Ask your local elders for an application. Then when there is a need, the branch office will know you're willing to assist. And do not forget the power of prayer. By offering prayers in their behalf, by volunteering to assist with disaster relief efforts, and by contributing donations to the worldwide work, we can assist our brothers.

No, we can't avoid all disasters, whether natural or man-made. But when we follow the direction from Jehovah's Word and organization, our obedience glorifies Jehovah. If we prepare spiritually and physically and prepare to help others, we can take comfort in knowing that Jehovah will bless our efforts to be prepared for a disaster.

The Bible Is God’s Message to Us

Jehovah has given us a wonderful gift—66 books collected into one volume, the Bible. But you may wonder: ‘Where did the Bible come from? Who is its author?’ To answer these questions, let us discuss how God’s message in the Bible has come to us.

1. If men wrote the Bible, how is God its Author?

The Bible was written by some 40 writers over a span of about 1,600 years, from 1513 B.C.E. to about 98 C.E. And the writers came from many backgrounds. Still, all parts of the Bible agree. How is this possible? Because God is the Author of the Bible. (Read 1 Thessalonians 2:13.) The writers did not record their own thoughts. Rather, they **“spoke from God as they were moved by holy spirit.”*** (2 Peter 1:21) God used his holy spirit to inspire, or motivate, men to record his thoughts.—2 Timothy 3:16.

2. Who has access to the Bible?

“Every nation and tribe and tongue and people” can benefit from the good news found in the Bible. (Read Revelation 14:6.) God made sure that the Bible would be available in more languages than any other book in history. Almost everyone has access to the Bible. This is true no matter where people live or what language they speak.

3. How has Jehovah preserved the Bible?

The Bible was written on materials that do not last long, such as leather and papyrus. But men who loved the Bible carefully copied and recopied it by hand. Even though powerful people tried to eliminate the Bible, others were willing to risk their lives to safeguard it. Jehovah has not let anyone or anything stop him from communicating with us. The Bible says: **“The word of our God endures forever.”**—Isaiah 40:8.

* As will be explained in Lesson 07, the holy spirit is God’s active force.

DIG DEEPER

Learn more about how God inspired men to write the Bible, how he preserved it, and how he made it available to humankind.



A secretary may write the letter, but its message came from the person who dictated it. Likewise, humans wrote the Bible, but its message came from God

4. The Bible reveals its Author

Play the VIDEO. Then read **2 Timothy 3:16**, and discuss the questions that follow.



VIDEO: Who Is the Author of the Bible?—Excerpt (2:48)

- If men wrote the Bible, why is it called the Word of God?
- Do you think it is reasonable to believe that God could transmit his thoughts to human writers?



VIDEO: They Valued the Bible —Excerpt (William Tyndale) (6:17)

5. The Bible survived attacks

If the Bible is from God, we would expect him to preserve it. Throughout history, powerful men have tried to destroy the Bible. Religious leaders have tried to hide it. But despite opposition and the threat of death, many people have risked their lives to protect the Bible. To learn about one such man, **play the VIDEO**, and then discuss the questions that follow.

- Does knowing that so much was done to preserve the Bible make you want to read it? Why?

Read Psalm 119:97, and then discuss this question:

- What has motivated many people to risk their lives to translate and distribute the Bible?

6. A book for *all* people

The Bible is the most widely translated and distributed book in history.

Read Acts 10:34, 35, and then discuss these questions:

- Why does God want his Word to be so widely translated and distributed?
- What appeals to you about the Bible?

Nearly

100%

of the world's
population

have access to the
Bible in a language they
understand



Available
in over

3,000

languages

in whole or in part

5,000,000,000

The estimated number of copies produced,

far more than any other book

SOME PEOPLE SAY: “The Bible is just an old book written by humans.”

- What do you think?
- What evidence suggests that the Bible is God's Word?

SUMMARY

The Bible is God’s Word, and he has made sure that it has become available to all humankind.

Review

- What does it mean when we say that God inspired men to write the Bible?
- What impresses you about the Bible’s survival, translation, and distribution?
- How does knowing that God has made such an effort to communicate with you make you feel?

Lesson completed on

Goal

- Begin reading the Bible regularly, using the chart “Get Started Reading the Bible.”
- Other:

E X P L O R E



Read about the Bible’s history—from the original manuscripts to modern translations.

“How the Bible Came to Us”
(*Awake!*, November 2007)



Learn how the Bible has survived three major threats to its existence.

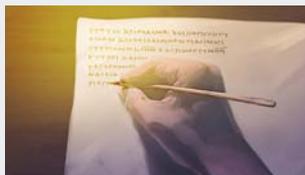
“The Bible—A Story of Survival” (*The Watchtower* No. 4 2016)



▶ 14:26

See the risks that people took to translate the Bible.

They Valued the Bible



The Bible has been copied and translated many times. How can you be sure its message has been accurately preserved?

“Has the Bible Been Changed or Tamped With?”
(Web article)



To find all media for LESSON 05,
scan code or go to the publication
Enjoy Life Forever! on jw.org

God's Own Book—A Treasure

(Proverbs 2:1)

Ab Gb/Bb Ab7/C Db Ab/C Bbm Bbm/Ab Ab/Gb Gb

There is a book that by its man - y pag - es,
They wrote a rec - ord true of God's cre - a - tions,
The time has come with rea - son for re - joic - ing:

Bb Ab/C Bb7/D Ebm9 Ebm Ebm/Db Ebm/C

Brings peace and joy and hope to hu - man - kind.
How by his might this u - ni - verse ap - peared.
Je - ho - vah rules by his a - noint - ed King.

Ebm/F F7 Bbm9 Bbm Bbm/Ab Gbma7 Ebm/Gb

Its won - drous thoughts are charged with such great pow - er;
They al - so told how man at first was sin - less
So now we preach the good news of the King - dom

Db/F Bbm7 Eb7 Ebm11

It brings life to the "dead," sight to the "blind."
But how his Par - a - dise then dis - ap - peared.
And share the hope of bless - ings it will bring.

God's Own Book—A Treasure

Ab7 Gb/Bb Ab7/C Db Ab/C Bbm Bbm/Ab Ab/Gb Gb

That pre - cious book is God's own Ho - ly Bi - ble.
 They fur - ther told a - bout a cer - tain an - gel
 With - in his book are found these cheer - ful tid - ings;

Bb Ab/C Bb7/D Ebm9 Ebm EbmDb Ebm/C

Its words were penned by men whom God in - spired,
 Who chal - langed God and spurned his sov - 'reign - ty.
 A sa - cred ban - quet feast on which to feed.

F7 Eb/G F7/A Bbm Fm/Ab Gb Db/F Ebm9 Ebm

By men who tru - ly loved their God Je - ho - vah,
 That chal - lenge led to sin and man's great sor - row,
 It of - fers peace be - yond all hu - man think - ing;

Gbm Gbm(ma7) Gbm6 Db/F Ab/Eb D° Gb/Db Ab7/C Gb/Bb Ab7/C Db

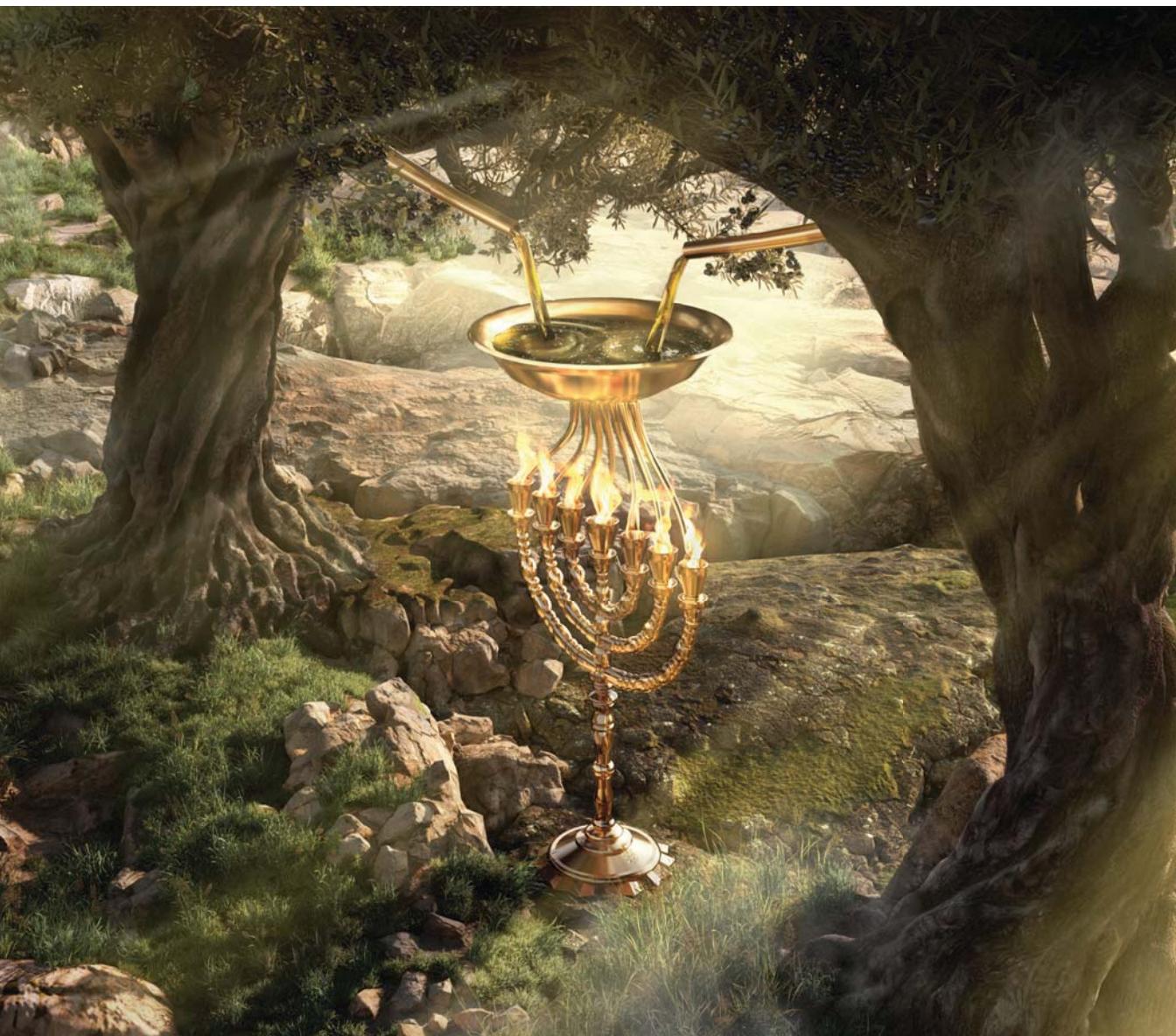
And by his ho - ly spir - it they were fired.
 But soon will come Je - ho - vah's vic - to - ry.
 This Liv - ing Trea - sure beck - ons all to read.

(See also 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21.)

MARCH 2022

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
MAY 2–JUNE 5, 2022

IN THIS ISSUE

Study Article 10: May 2-8 2

You Can “Strip Off the Old Personality”

Study Article 11: May 9-15 8

Continue Putting On “the New Personality”
After Baptism

QUESTIONS FROM READERS 13

Study Article 12: May 16-22 14

Do You See What Zechariah Saw?

Study Article 13: May 23-29 20

True Worship Will Add to Your Happiness

Study Article 14: May 30–June 5 26

Elders—Continue to Imitate the Apostle Paul

This publication is not for sale. It is provided as part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations. To make a donation, please visit donate.jw.org.

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*.

The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) March 2022 is published by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; Harold L. Corkern, President; Mark L. Questell, Secretary-Treasurer; 1000 Red Mills Road, Wallkill, NY 12589-3299, and by Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Canada, PO Box 4100, Georgetown, ON L7G 4Y4. © 2021 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. Printed in Canada.

FEATURED CONTENT IN JW LIBRARY AND ON JW.ORG

HOW YOUR DONATIONS ARE USED

Providing Relief to Victims of Disasters

During the 2020 service year, millions of our brothers were affected by the pandemic and natural disasters. What did we do to help them?

In *JW Library*, go to PUBLICATIONS > ARTICLE SERIES > HOW YOUR DONATIONS ARE USED.

On jw.org, go to LIBRARY > ARTICLE SERIES > HOW YOUR DONATIONS ARE USED.

HELP FOR THE FAMILY

Spend Quality Time Together

Communication can suffer even when a husband and a wife are in the same room. How can couples make the most of their time together?

In *JW Library*, go to PUBLICATIONS > ARTICLE SERIES > HELP FOR THE FAMILY.

On jw.org, go to LIBRARY > ARTICLE SERIES > HELP FOR THE FAMILY.

COVER PICTURE:

Zechariah saw a vision of two olive trees supplying oil to a lampstand that had seven lamps (See study article 12, paragraph 6)

Visit the jw.org website, or scan code



w22.03-E
211103

Oh, Walk With God!

(Micah 6:8)

C C° C C6 C#° G7/D Dm7 G7

Oh, walk with God in mod - es - ty;
 Oh, walk with God in ho - li - ness;
 Oh, walk with God in hap - pi - ness;

Dm7 G7 C/G G7 C

Show loy - al love, and be true.
 Con - sid - er things that are pure.
 Re - joice that he is your Friend.

F C/E G7/D C

Stay close to Je - ho - vah, lean - ing on him,
 No mat - ter how great temp - ta - tions may be,
 Be thank - ful for all the gifts that he gives

D7/A Bm/D D7 C/G G7

And let his strength sus - tain you.
 He'll help you to en - dure them.
 And bless - ings that are end - less.

Oh, Walk With God!

G7+5 C G7/D C#° G7/D C/E Eb°

Keep hold - ing tight to his faith - ful Word;
 What - ev - er praise - wor - thy things there are,
 Oh, walk with God, let your heart be glad;

C/E D7 Bm/D D7 G G7/F

You'll nev - er drift a - way,
 What - ev - er things are true,
 Ex - press your joy in song.

C/E C G7/B C Fm7/A Dm/F F#° //

So let God lead you by the hand
 Con - tin - ue to show, you con - sid - er them,
 Your joy will show, and all will know, //

C/G G7 C

As you lis - ten and o - bey.
 And our God will be with you.
 To Je - ho - vah you be - long.

SONG 31

Oh, Walk With God!

PREVIEW

As the Creator of all things, Jehovah deserves to be worshipped. Our formal acts of worship are acceptable to him when we are obeying his commands and living in harmony with his principles. In this article, we will discuss eight different aspects of our worship. As you consider your share in these aspects, see how they will add to your happiness.

True Worship Will Add to Your Happiness

“You are worthy, Jehovah our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power.”—REV. 4:11.

WHAT do you think of when you hear the word “worship”? Perhaps you picture a humble brother kneeling at his bedside as he pours his heart out in earnest prayer. Or maybe you think of a happy family thoroughly absorbed in Bible study.

² In both cases, those involved are engaged in acts of worship. Will Jehovah accept their worship? He will if it is in harmony with his purpose and is being offered with love and respect. We love Jehovah very much. We know that he deserves to be worshipped, and we want our gift of worship to be of the best possible quality.

³ In this article, we will review the kind of worship that Jehovah accepted in ancient times and we will consider eight aspects of acceptable worship today. As we do so, we can think about how we personally can improve the quality of our worship. We will also review reasons why true worship makes us happy.

WORSHIP THAT JEHOVAH ACCEPTED IN ANCIENT TIMES

⁴ In pre-Christian times, such faithful men as Abel, Noah, Abraham, and Job demonstrated their respect

1-2. What will make our worship acceptable to God?

3. What will we consider in this article?

4. How did worshippers of Jehovah in pre-Christian times demonstrate their respect and love for Jehovah?

and love for Jehovah. How? By means of their obedience, faith, and sacrifices. The Bible does not provide specifics about what form their worship should have taken. But they clearly did their best to honor Jehovah, and their worship was acceptable to him. Jehovah then gave the Mosaic Law to Abraham's descendants. This series of laws included specific instructions about how to worship Jehovah in a way that he approved.

⁵ After Jesus' death and resurrection, Jehovah no longer required obedience to the Mosaic Law. (Rom. 10:4) Christians were to follow a new law, "the law of the Christ." (Gal. 6:2) They could obey this "law," not by memorizing it and adhering to a long list of dos and don'ts, but by imitating Jesus' example and following his teachings. Today, too, Christians do their best to follow the Christ in order to please Jehovah and "find refreshment" for themselves.—Matt. 11:29.

⁶ As we consider each aspect of our worship, ask yourself, 'What progress have I made in this regard?' You might also ask, 'Can I improve the quality of my worship?' You should feel good about the progress you have made, but you will want to give prayerful thought to any improvements you need to make.

WHAT DOES OUR WORSHIP INCLUDE?

⁷ *We worship Jehovah when we pray to him.* The Scriptures compare our

5. What change was made as to true worship after Jesus' death and resurrection?

6. How can we benefit from this article?

7. How does Jehovah view our heartfelt prayers?

prayers to the carefully prepared incense that was offered at the tabernacle and later at the temple. (Ps. 141:2) That incense produced an aroma that was pleasing to God. Similarly, our heartfelt prayers are "a pleasure" to him, even if we use very simple words. (Prov. 15:8; Deut. 33:10) We have good reason to believe that it warms Jehovah's heart to hear us express our love and gratitude to him. He wants us to share with him our concerns, our hopes, and our desires. Before approaching Jehovah in prayer, why not give careful thought to what you are going to say? In doing so, you will offer the best possible "incense" to your heavenly Father.

⁸ *We worship Jehovah when we praise him.* (Ps. 34:1) We praise Jehovah by speaking appreciatively of his marvelous qualities and his works. Praise springs from a grateful heart. By taking the time to meditate on Jehovah's goodness—on all the things he has done for us—we will never run out of reasons to praise him. The preaching work gives us an especially fine opportunity to "offer to God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of our lips." (Heb. 13:15) Just as we should give careful thought to what we are going to say before approaching Jehovah in prayer, we do well to think carefully about what we will say to those we come in contact with in our ministry. We want our "sacrifice of praise" to be our very best. We speak from our heart when we share the truth with others.

8. What fine opportunity do we have to praise God?

⁹ ***We worship Jehovah when we attend meetings.*** The ancient Israelites were told: “Three times a year, all your males should appear before Jehovah your God in the place that he chooses.” (Deut. 16:16) They had to leave their home and their crops unguarded. But Jehovah promised them: “Nobody will desire your land while you are going up to see the face of Jehovah your God.” (Ex. 34:24) With full faith in Jehovah, those God-fearing Israelites attended the yearly festivals. They could thus reap rich rewards; they broadened their understanding of God’s Law, meditated on his goodness, and enjoyed encouraging association with fellow believers. (Deut. 16:15) We receive similar benefits when we make sacrifices to attend Christian meetings. And think of how pleased Jehovah is when we come prepared to offer brief, meaningful comments.

¹⁰ ***We worship Jehovah when we join in song.*** (Ps. 28:7) The Israelites considered singing to be an important part of their worship. King David assigned 288 Levites to be singers at the temple. (1 Chron. 25:1, 6-8) Today, we can express our love for God when we sing songs of praise. The quality of our voice is not the most important thing. Consider this comparison: When we speak, “we all stumble many times,” but that does not prevent us from speaking in the congregation and in the ministry. (Jas. 3:2) Similarly, we should not allow concerns

about the imperfections of our singing voice to prevent us from singing praises to Jehovah.

¹¹ ***We worship Jehovah when we study his Word and teach our children about him.*** The Sabbath gave the Israelites the opportunity to set aside their day-to-day activities and concentrate on their relationship with Jehovah. (Ex. 31:16, 17) Faithful ones among them taught their children about Jehovah and his goodness. We personally ought to schedule time to read and study God’s Word. This is part of our worship to Jehovah, and it helps us draw closer to him. (Ps. 73:28) And when we study together as a family, we can help a new generation—our children—to develop a warm, personal relationship with our loving heavenly Father.—**Read Psalm 48:13.**

¹² ***We worship Jehovah as we build and maintain places of worship.*** The Bible says that the work of making the tabernacle and its furnishings was “holy work.” (Ex. 36:1, 4) Today, too, Jehovah views the work of constructing Kingdom Halls and other theocratic facilities as sacred service. Some brothers and sisters spend much time engaging in these activities. Do we not appreciate this vital contribution to the Kingdom work? Of course, they also engage in the preaching work. Some of them may even want to be pioneers. Congregation elders can show their support for the construction activities by not hesitating

9. Like the ancient Israelites, how do we benefit by meeting together? Give a personal example.

10. How is singing an important part of our worship?

11. As described at Psalm 48:13, why should we schedule time for family Bible study?

12. What do we learn from how Jehovah viewed the work of those who made the furnishings of the tabernacle?



Add to Your Happiness

There are various aspects of true worship in our time. Individually and in combination, they can add to your happiness—now and forever.



to appoint these hardworking men and women as pioneers when they qualify. Whether we are skilled in construction work or not, all of us can share in keeping the buildings clean and in good repair.

¹³ *We worship Jehovah when we support the Kingdom work with our donations.* The Israelites were not to appear before Jehovah empty-handed. (Deut. 16:16) They were to bring a material gift according to their circumstances. Thus they expressed their appreciation for all the arrangements that had been made to benefit them spiritually. How can we express our love for Jehovah and our appreciation for the spiritual provisions we receive? One way is by giving financial support to the local congregation and to the worldwide work as our circumstances allow. The apostle Paul put it this way: “If the readiness is there first, it is especially acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what a person does not have.” (2 Cor. 8:4, 12) Jehovah values any heartfelt donation we make, no matter how modest the amount.—Mark 12:42-44; 2 Cor. 9:7.

¹⁴ *We worship Jehovah when we help fellow Christians who are in need.* Jehovah promised to repay Israelites who showed favor to the poor. (Deut. 15:7, 10) Yes, each time we help a fellow worshipper who is in need, Jehovah views it as a gift to Him. **(Read Prov-**

erbs 19:17.) For example, when Christians from Philippi sent a gift to the prisoner Paul, he called it “an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.” (Phil. 4:18) Look around the congregation and ask yourself, ‘Is there someone I can help?’ Jehovah is pleased when he sees us use our time, energy, skills, and material things to help those in need. He considers that to be part of our worship.—Jas. 1:27.

TRUE WORSHIP MAKES US HAPPY

¹⁵ True worship requires time and effort. But it is not burdensome. (1 John 5:3) Why not? Because we worship Jehovah out of love for him. Imagine a young child who wants to give something to his father. He might spend hours drawing a picture for him. The son does not begrudge the time he spent on it. He loves his father, and he is happy to give him that gift. Similarly, because of our love for Jehovah, we are happy to put forth time and effort in order to share in true worship.

¹⁶ Loving parents do not expect to receive the same gift from each of their children. They realize that each child is different and has different circumstances. Similarly, our heavenly Father understands our individual circumstances. Maybe you can do more than many whom you know and love. Or you may not be able to do as much as others do, perhaps because of your age, health, or

13. How should we view the donations we make to support the Kingdom work?

14. According to Proverbs 19:17, how does Jehovah view the help we give to our brothers in need?

15. True worship requires time and effort, but why is it not burdensome?

16. According to Hebrews 6:10, how does Jehovah view our personal efforts to please him?

family responsibilities. Do not be discouraged. (Gal. 6:4) Jehovah will not forget **your** work. As long as you are giving your best and with the right motive, he will be pleased. **(Read Hebrews 6:10.)** Jehovah sees even the intentions of your heart. He wants you to be happy and satisfied with the worship you are able to give him.

¹⁷ What if we find it hard to engage in some aspect of our worship, such as personal study or the public ministry? We will likely find that the more often we engage in these activities, the more we will enjoy them and benefit from them. We might compare our worship to some activity, such as doing a type of exercise or practicing a musical instrument. If we do so only occasionally, we might not make much progress. But suppose

17. (a) If we find some aspects of our worship to be difficult, what steps can we take? (b) How have you been helped by one aspect shown in the box “Add to Your Happiness”?

we decide to make it part of our daily routine. We might start with brief periods and gradually lengthen them. As we see the good results of our efforts, we will likely look forward to these periods and really enjoy them. Can you see how we can apply this approach to our worship?

¹⁸ We fulfill the very purpose of our existence by worshipping Jehovah wholeheartedly. As a result, we enjoy a happy and meaningful life and we have the hope of worshipping Jehovah forever. (Prov. 10:22) We already have peace of mind because we know that Jehovah helps his worshippers when they experience problems. (Isa. 41:9, 10) We certainly have good reasons to be happy as we worship our loving Father, who is worthy “to receive the glory and the honor” from all his creation!—Rev. 4:11.

18. How do we fulfill the purpose of our existence, and with what results?

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- What kind of worship did Jehovah accept in ancient times?
- What does our worship include today?
- Why does worshipping Jehovah make us happy?

Come to Jehovah's Mountain

(Isaiah 2:2-4)

B \flat Gm Cm/E \flat F B \flat /D F7/C B \flat F/A Gm C F F/E \flat

Raise your eyes up and see, Far a - bove the high - est hill.
Je - sus gave the com - mand To go forth and preach the word.

B \flat /D Cm11 B \flat Fm/A \flat G7 G+5/F Cm/E \flat E \flat m6 B \flat /D Gm7 Cm7 F

There stands Je - ho - vah's moun - tain Lift - ed up in this day.
Good news a - bout the King - dom Reach - es all men to - day.

B \flat Gm Cm/E \flat F B \flat /D F7/C B \flat F/A Gm C F F/E \flat

Peo - ple come from a - far, Ev - 'ry - where from sea to sea,
Christ now rules from a - bove, Urg - ing all to take his side.

B \flat /D Cm11 B \flat Fm/A \flat G7 G+5/F Cm/E \flat E \flat m6 B \flat /D Gm7 Cm7 F7 B \flat

Call - ing to one an - oth - er, 'Come serve God and o - bey.' Now the
Meek ones who hear his voice Let God's Word show them the way. It brings

Come to Jehovah's Mountain

Eb/Bb
Bbma7
Eb/Bb
Bbma7

time has ar-rived For the small, a great na-tion to be. As we
 joy to the heart, As the great crowd con-tin-ues to grow. And we

Eb/Bb
Dsus4
D
Gm
Gb7
F

grow and we thrive, God's di-rec-tion and bless-ing we see.
 all have a part, As we strive to let ev-ry-one know.

Bb
Gm
Cm/Eb
F
Bb/D F7/C
Bb
F/A
Gm
C
F
F/Eb

Mil-lions now come to God And ac-cept his sov-'reign-ty.
 Let us lift up the voice, Call-ing out for all to hear,

Bb/D Cm11
Bb
Fm/Ab
G7
G+5/F
Cm/Eb
Eb6
Bb/D
Gm7
Cm7
F7
Bb

Loy-al they vow to be And from his side nev-er stray.
 'Come to Je-ho-vah's moun-tain, Here for-ev-er to stay.'

(See also Ps. 43:3; 99:9; Isa. 60:22; Acts 16:5.)