

***Examining
the Scriptures
Daily***

2021



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200525

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the Scriptures
Daily***

2021

Yeartext

**“Your strength will be in keeping
calm and showing trust.”**

—Isaiah 30:15.

Name

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Examining the Scriptures Daily—2021

May 2020 Printing

English (es21-E)

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**WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY
OF PENNSYLVANIA**

Publishers

Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.
Wallkill, New York, U.S.A.

Made in the U.S.A.

2021

JANUARY

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OUR CHRISTIAN LIFE AND MINISTRY BIBLE READING SCHEDULE FOR 2021

January

- 4 Leviticus 18-19
- 11 Leviticus 20-21
- 18 Leviticus 22-23
- 25 Leviticus 24-25

February

- 1 Leviticus 26-27
- 8 Numbers 1-2
- 15 Numbers 3-4
- 22 Numbers 5-6

March

- 1 Numbers 7-8
- 8 Numbers 9-10
- 15 Numbers 11-12
- 22 Numbers 13-14
- 29 Numbers 15-16

April

- 5 Numbers 17-19
- 12 Numbers 20-21
- 19 Numbers 22-24
- 26 Numbers 25-26

May

- 3 Numbers 27-29
- 10 Numbers 30-31
- 17 Numbers 32-33
- 24 Numbers 34-36
- 31 Deuteronomy 1-2

June

- 7 Deuteronomy 3-4
- 14 Deuteronomy 5-6
- 21 Deuteronomy 7-8
- 28 Deuteronomy 9-10

July

- 5 Deuteronomy 11-12
- 12 Deuteronomy 13-15
- 19 Deuteronomy 16-18
- 26 Deuteronomy 19-21

August

- 2 Deuteronomy 22-23
- 9 Deuteronomy 24-26
- 16 Deuteronomy 27-28
- 23 Deuteronomy 29-30
- 30 Deuteronomy 31-32

September

- 6 Deuteronomy 33-34
- 13 Joshua 1-2
- 20 Joshua 3-5
- 27 Joshua 6-7

October

- 4 Joshua 8-9
- 11 Joshua 10-11
- 18 Joshua 12-14
- 25 Joshua 15-17

November

- 1 Joshua 18-19
- 8 Joshua 20-22
- 15 Joshua 23-24
- 22 Judges 1-3
- 29 Judges 4-5

December

- 6 Judges 6-7
- 13 Judges 8-9
- 20 Judges 10-12
- 27 Judges 13-14

Friday, January 1

Go, . . . and make disciples of people of all the nations.

—Matt. 28:19.

All of God's faithful servants want to learn how they can "fully accomplish" the ministry that they have been given to do. (2 Tim. 4:5) After all, this work is more important and more urgent than any other occupation in life. However, it can be a challenge to spend as much time in the ministry as we would like. Other important activities demand our time and energy. We may have to work secularly many hours a day to provide the necessities of life for ourselves and our family. We may struggle with other family responsibilities, sickness, depression, or the aches and pains of advancing age. If our circumstances limit the amount of time we can spend in Jehovah's service, we should not feel discouraged. Jesus knew that not every one of us would be able to produce the same amount of Kingdom fruitage. (Matt. 13:23) Jehovah highly values everything we do in his service as long as we are doing our best.—Heb. 6:10-12. *w19.04 2 ¶1-3*

Saturday, January 2

The Devil . . . is a liar and the father of the lie.—John 8:44.

Satan's lies about the dead slander Jehovah. Those lies include the false teaching that the dead suffer fiery torment. Such teachings slander God! How so? In effect, they attribute to him, the God of love, the personality of the Devil. (1 John 4:8) How does that make you feel? More important, how does it make Jehovah feel? After all, he hates all

forms of cruelty. (Jer. 19:5) Satan's lies about death undermine belief in Christ's ransom sacrifice. (Matt. 20:28) Another satanic lie is that humans have an immortal soul. If that were true, everyone would live forever. Christ would not have had to give his life as a ransom for us to gain everlasting life. Keep in mind that Christ's sacrifice is the greatest expression of love ever shown to the human family. (John 3:16; 15:13) Imagine how Jehovah and his Son must feel about teachings that undermine that precious gift! *w19.04 14 ¶1; 16 ¶8-9*

Sunday, January 3

"Who has come to know the mind of Jehovah, so that he may instruct him?" But we do have the mind of Christ.—1 Cor. 2:16.

Where are Jesus' teachings recorded? The four Gospels record many of the things Jesus said and did on earth. The rest of the Christian Greek Scriptures—written by men who were inspired by holy spirit and who had "the mind of Christ"—further help us to understand Jesus' thinking on matters. Jesus' teachings cover all aspects of life. So the "law of the Christ" governs what we do at home, at work or at school, and in the congregation. (Gal. 6:2) We learn this law by reading the Christian Greek Scriptures and meditating on them. We obey this law by bringing our lives into harmony with the instructions, commands, and principles found in that inspired record. When we obey the law of the Christ, we are obeying our loving God, Jehovah, who is the Source of all that Jesus taught.—John 8:28. *w19.05 3 ¶6-7*

Monday, January 4

Wicked men and impostors will advance from bad to worse.

—2 Tim. 3:13.

It is sad when humans act in a way that pleases the Devil. However, Jehovah is never blind to Satan's tactics. He is fully aware of the pain we experience, and he can provide the comfort we need. We are blessed to serve "the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our trials so that we may be able to comfort others in any sort of trial with the comfort that we receive from God." (2 Cor. 1:3, 4) Those who have been abandoned by parents or victimized by people close to them may especially need comfort. The psalmist David knew that Jehovah is the most reliable provider of comfort. (Ps. 27:10) David had faith that Jehovah takes in those who have been rejected by their loved ones. How? By using his faithful human servants. Our fellow worshippers of Jehovah are our spiritual family. For instance, Jesus spoke of those who joined him in worshipping Jehovah as his brothers, sisters, and mother.—Matt. 12:48-50. *w19.05* 15-16 ¶8-9

Tuesday, January 5

Make sure of the more important things.—Phil. 1:10.

What should our priorities include? We should certainly spend time each day studying God's Word. The amount of material now scheduled for the congregation's weekly Bible reading has been reduced in order to give us more time to meditate on what we read and to do extra research. Our goal should be, not merely to cover the assigned material, but to allow the Bible's mes-

sage to touch our hearts and to draw us closer to Jehovah. (Ps. 19:14) The *Watchtower* Study is a study of the Bible. Therefore, pay particular attention to the scriptures, especially those that will be read when the congregation considers the material. Take special note of how the key words or phrases in the scriptures support the point being made in the paragraph. Moreover, take time to meditate on the scriptures that you read, and reflect on how you can personally apply them in your life.—Josh. 1:8. *w19.05* 27 ¶5; 28 ¶9

Wednesday, January 6

My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.—John 4:34.

Jesus set an outstanding example in his attitude toward the ministry. He made talking about God's Kingdom the main focus of his life. He walked hundreds of miles to preach to as many as possible. He seized every opportunity to speak to people in public places and in their homes. Jesus' whole life revolved around the ministry. We can imitate Christ by creating opportunities to talk about the good news whenever and wherever possible. We are willing to sacrifice personal comfort to engage in the evangelizing work. (Mark 6:31-34; 1 Pet. 2:21) Some in the congregation are able to serve as special, regular, or auxiliary pioneers. Others have learned to speak another language or have moved to an area where there is a need for more preachers. However, much of the evangelizing work is done by regular Kingdom publishers, who do the best they can. Whatever the case, Jehovah does not ask more of us than we can give. *w19.04* 4 ¶7-8

Thursday, January 7

*May the words of my mouth and
the meditation of my heart be
pleasing to you, O Jehovah.*

—Ps. 19:14.

Ask yourself: ‘Is there a trace of envy or jealousy in my heart?’ (1 Pet. 2:1) ‘Do I feel a measure of pride because of my background, education, or financial status?’ (Prov. 16:5) ‘Do I look down on others who do not have the same things I have or who are from a different racial background?’ (Jas. 2:2-4) ‘Do I feel attracted to what Satan’s world offers?’ (1 John 2:15-17) ‘Do I feel drawn to immoral and violent entertainment?’ (Ps. 97:10; 101:3; Amos 5:15) The answers to these personal questions may highlight areas that you need to work on. We are strongly influenced by those with whom we associate. (Prov. 13:20) At work or in school, we are likely surrounded by those who will not help us to develop godly thinking. However, we can find the best type of association at our Christian meetings. There is where we can be motivated, or stirred up, to “love and fine works.”—Heb. 10:24, 25, ftn. *w19.06* 12 ¶13-14

Friday, January 8

*It is beauty on his part to
overlook an offense.*

—Prov. 19:11.

Jehovah did not intend for any of us to have the problems and stresses we face today. So it is understandable if a faithful servant of Jehovah speaks thoughtlessly when under great stress. (Job 6:2, 3) Even if he says inaccurate things about Jehovah or about us, we should not quickly become angry at him or judge him for saying such things. At times, a person who is coping with a

stressful problem also needs to receive some form of counsel or helpful discipline. (Gal. 6:1) How can elders handle this challenge? They do well to imitate Elihu, who listened to Job with great empathy. (Job 33:6, 7) Elihu offered his counsel only after he understood Job’s thinking. Elders who follow Elihu’s example will listen carefully and try to understand the person’s situation. Then, when they offer counsel, they are more likely to reach the heart of their listener. *w19.06* 22-23 ¶10-11

Saturday, January 9

*ObeY God as ruler rather
than men.—Acts 5:29.*

How can you continue to worship Jehovah while under ban? The branch office will give the local elders instructions and practical suggestions. If the branch office cannot contact the elders, then the elders will help you and all in the congregation to continue your worship of Jehovah. They will give direction in harmony with the guidance found in the Bible and in our Christian publications. (Matt. 28:19, 20; Heb. 10:24, 25) Jehovah has promised that his servants will be well-fed spiritually. (Isa. 65:13, 14; Luke 12:42-44) So you can be certain that his organization will do everything possible to provide the spiritual encouragement you need. What can you do? When under ban, find a good place to hide your Bible and any other spiritual food you might have. Be careful never to leave such precious material—whether it is in printed or electronic form—in a location where it could easily be discovered. Each of us must take practical steps to remain spiritually strong. *w19.07* 10 ¶10-11

Sunday, January 10

I have become all things to people of all sorts, so that I might by all possible means save some.

—1 Cor. 9:22.

For thousands of years, the majority of people in the world seemed to have some form of religious belief. But in recent decades a remarkable change has taken place. More and more people do not view themselves as religious. In fact, in some countries the majority of the population describe themselves as not being religious. (Matt. 24:12) Why? Some may be distracted by pleasures or anxieties. (Luke 8:14) Some have become atheists. Others believe in God but think that religion is old-fashioned, irrelevant, and incompatible with science and logical thinking. They may hear friends, teachers, or media personalities say that life evolved, but they rarely hear logical reasons for believing in God. Others are repelled by clergy who are greedy for money and power. In some places, governments officially limit religious activity. *w19.07 20 ¶1-2*

Monday, January 11

Be steadfast, immovable, always having plenty to do in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in connection with the Lord.—1 Cor. 15:58.

You do not need to be physically strong in order to continue growing stronger spiritually. In fact, many whose physical strength has declined still maintain a fiery determination to keep progressing spiritually. (2 Cor. 4:16) Perhaps you have served Jehovah for many years and now find that failing health prevents

you from doing as much as you once did. If so, do not despair. Be assured that Jehovah cherishes the faithful service you have accomplished in the past. (Heb. 6:10) And as for the present, remember that whole-souled devotion is not measured by how much we do in Jehovah's service. Rather, we reveal the depth of our devotion by showing a positive spirit and by doing all that we physically can. (Col. 3:23) Jehovah understands our limitations and does not require more than we can give. —Mark 12:43, 44. *w19.08 3 ¶6; 5 ¶11-12*

Tuesday, January 12

Let your light shine before men, so that they may see your fine works.
—Matt. 5:16.

Jehovah draws people to him by means of the "fine works" of the Christian congregation. (Matt. 5:14, 15; 1 Pet. 2:12) If your mate is not one of Jehovah's Witnesses, has he or she met members of your congregation? Invite your mate to attend congregation meetings with you. (1 Cor. 14:24, 25) We hope that all our relatives will join us in serving Jehovah. However, despite all our efforts to help our relatives to become God's servants, they may not come into the truth. If that is the case, we should not blame ourselves for their decision. After all, we cannot force anyone to accept our beliefs. Even so, do not underestimate the influence you can have on your relatives as they see how happy you are serving Jehovah. Pray for them. Tactfully speak to them. Do not hold back! (Acts 20:20) Be confident that Jehovah will bless your efforts. And if your relatives choose to listen to you, they will be saved! *w19.08 18-19 ¶15-17*

Wednesday, January 13

*The lamp of the body is the eye.
If, then, your eye is focused,
your whole body will be
bright.—Matt. 6:22.*

What did Jesus mean? He meant that we need to keep our life simple or focused on a single goal, or purpose, not being distracted or sidetracked from it. Jesus himself set the example by focusing his life on the ministry, and he taught his disciples to keep focused on serving Jehovah and on His Kingdom. We imitate Jesus by living a life that centers on the Christian ministry, “seeking first the Kingdom and [God’s] righteousness.” (Matt. 6:33) One way to focus on our ministry is by simplifying our life so that we can spend more time helping others come to know and love Jehovah. For example, could we adjust our secular working hours so that we can spend more time in the ministry during the week? Could we reduce some recreational activities that may be very time-consuming?
w19.04 5-6 ¶12-13

Thursday, January 14

*I reside in the high and holy place,
but also with those crushed and
lowly in spirit.—Isa. 57:15.*

In recent years, many with decades of experience have received a change of assignment. Such adjustments were not easy for these brothers and sisters to make. Obviously, they felt attached to their former assignment, in many cases one that they had cherished for years. Some went through a “grieving” process as they adjusted to their new circumstances. In time, though, they were able to adjust.

Why? Above all, because of their love for Jehovah. They knew that they were dedicated to God—not to a work, a title, or an assignment. (Col. 3:23) They are glad to continue serving Jehovah humbly in any capacity. They “throw all [their] anxiety on him,” knowing that he cares for them. (1 Pet. 5:6, 7) When we cultivate the endearing quality of humility, we benefit both ourselves and others. We are better able to deal with life’s challenges. Above all, we draw closer to our heavenly Father. *w19.09 6-7 ¶15-17*

Friday, January 15

*The orders from Jehovah are righteous,
causing the heart to rejoice;
. . . in keeping them, there is a
large reward.—Ps. 19:8, 11.*

Jehovah appointed David as head not only of his family but also of the entire nation of Israel. As king, David had a lot of power. At times, he misused that power and made serious mistakes. (2 Sam. 11:14, 15) But he showed his submission to Jehovah by accepting discipline. He poured out his heart to Jehovah in prayer. And he tried his best to obey Jehovah’s counsel. (Ps. 51:1-4) In addition, he was humble enough to accept good advice not only from men but also from women. (1 Sam. 19:11, 12; 25:32, 33) David learned from his mistakes and centered his life on serving Jehovah. He knew the benefits of submitting to Jehovah. Today, we can see the contrast between those who submit to Jehovah and those who reject his loving counsel. Those who do submit to Jehovah “shout joyfully because of the good condition of the heart.”
—Isa. 65:13, 14. *w19.09 17 ¶15; 19 ¶21*

Saturday, January 16

I saw . . . a great crowd . . . standing before the throne and before the Lamb.—Rev. 7:9.

In 1935, Jehovah's Witnesses came to realize that the great crowd do not literally have to be in heaven to stand "before the throne and before the Lamb." Rather, their position is figurative. Even though they would live on earth, the great crowd could stand "before the throne" by recognizing Jehovah's authority and by submitting to his sovereignty. (Isa. 66:1) They could stand "before the Lamb" by exercising faith in Jesus' ransom sacrifice. Similarly, at Matthew 25:31, 32, "all the nations"—including the wicked—are said to be "gathered before" Jesus on his glorious throne. Clearly, all these nations are, not in heaven, but on earth. This adjusted understanding makes sense. It explains why the Bible does not say that the great crowd is raised to heaven. Only one group is promised everlasting life in heaven—the 144,000, who will "rule as kings over the earth" with Jesus.—Rev. 5:10. *w19.09* 28 ¶9

Sunday, January 17

Love Jehovah, all you who are loyal to him!—Ps. 31:23.

Jehovah expects his worshippers to separate themselves from Babylon the Great. However, this requires more than our cutting ties with false religion. We must be determined to uphold true religion—the pure worship of Jehovah. Consider two ways that we can do that. First, we must remain firm for Jehovah's righteous moral standards. We cannot accept the world's val-

ues and standards. For example, we do not approve of sexual immorality of any kind, including marriage between people of the same sex and other homosexual lifestyles. (Matt. 19:4, 5; Rom. 1:26, 27) Second, we must continue worshipping with our fellow Christians. We do this wherever we can, whether in our Kingdom Halls or, when necessary, in private homes or even in secret. No matter what happens, we cannot let up in our routine of meeting together for worship. In fact, we need to meet together "all the more so as [we] see the day drawing near."—Heb. 10:24, 25. *w19.10* 16 ¶6-7

Monday, January 18

[Jehovah] is a God who requires exclusive devotion.—Ex. 34:14.

Jehovah wants us to enjoy life, and entertainment can help us to do that. In fact, God's Word says that "there is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink and find enjoyment in his hard work." (Eccl. 2:24) However, much of the entertainment in the world can have a bad effect on us. It degrades people's moral standards, encouraging them to tolerate—or even to love—things that God's Word condemns. We want to give Jehovah exclusive devotion, so we cannot eat from "the table of Jehovah" and "the table of demons." (1 Cor. 10:21, 22) Eating a meal with someone is often a sign of friendship. If we choose entertainment that promotes violence, spiritism, immorality, or other fleshly desires and attitudes, we are, in effect, sharing a meal prepared by enemies of God. As a result, we not only harm ourselves but also damage our friendship with Jehovah. *w19.10* 26 ¶2; 29-30 ¶11-12

Tuesday, January 19

Men spoke from God as they were moved by holy spirit.—2 Pet. 1:21.

To benefit from the wind, a sailor must do two things. First, he has to put his boat in the path of the wind. After all, his boat will not move forward if the sailor remains in a harbor far away from where the wind is blowing. Second, he needs to raise and unfurl his sails as fully as possible. Obviously, even with the wind blowing, his boat will move forward only if the sails catch the wind. Similarly, we will endure in Jehovah's service only if we have the help of holy spirit. To benefit from that spirit, we must take two steps. First, we must put ourselves squarely in the path of God's spirit by sharing in activities that bring us under its influence. Second, we need to "raise our sails" as fully as possible by being fully engaged in these activities to the best of our ability. (Ps. 119:32) Holy spirit will then push us forward through waves of opposition and trials and will help us to endure faithfully. *w19.11 9 ¶8; 10 ¶11*

Wednesday, January 20

*I give you my peace.
—John 14:27.*

On his final day as a human, Jesus was troubled. Soon he would suffer a cruel death at the hands of lawless men. But it was more than his impending death that was giving Jesus concern. He deeply loved his Father and wanted to please him. Jesus knew that if he proved faithful under the coming difficult test, he would contribute to the vindication of Jehovah's name. Jesus also loved people, and he knew that our future prospects for everlasting life would

depend on his finishing his earthly course successfully. Even though Jesus was under great stress, he was at peace. He had "the peace of God," the calmness and tranquility that result from a person's precious relationship with Jehovah. That peace put Jesus' mind and heart at rest. (Phil. 4:6, 7) None of us will ever face the kind of pressure that Jesus had to endure, but all who follow Jesus will face trials. (Matt. 16:24, 25; John 15:20) And like Jesus, we will feel troubled at times. *w19.04 8 ¶1-3*

Thursday, January 21

Do not put out the fire of the spirit.—1 Thess. 5:19.

We do well to ask ourselves, 'Am I grateful to be associated with the earthly part of Jehovah's organization?' Jehovah has given us convincing evidence that he is blessing his people today. We truly have much to be thankful for. (1 Thess. 5:18) How can we show our support for the organization that Jehovah is using? By following the Bible-based direction we are given in our publications and at our meetings, assemblies, and conventions. In addition, we can show our support by sharing as fully as possible in the preaching and teaching work. (1 Cor. 15:58) May we obtain Jehovah's approval for our sacrifices to be accepted. May we serve Jehovah because we are grateful to him. May we continue to give our best to Jehovah because we love him with all our heart. And may we wholeheartedly support the organization that he is blessing today. In all such ways, we can show Jehovah that we cherish the privilege we have to serve him as his Witnesses! *w19.11 25 ¶17-18*

Friday, January 22

Whoever exercises faith in me . . . will do works greater than these.

—John 14:12.

Jesus did not mean that we would perform miracles as he did. Rather, his followers would preach and teach in a larger territory, to more people, and for a longer period of time than he did. If you have a secular job, ask yourself these questions: 'Am I known at my workplace as a hard worker? Do I complete my work on time and to the best of my ability?' If you can answer yes, then you will likely earn your employer's trust. You will also make the Kingdom message more appealing to those who are observing you. When it comes to the preaching and teaching work, ask yourself these questions: 'Am I known as a hard worker in the ministry? Do I prepare well for initial calls? Do I return promptly to talk with interested people? And do I have a regular share in various aspects of the ministry?' If you can answer yes, you will find joy in your work. *w19.12 5 ¶14-15*

Saturday, January 23

Each one of you must love his wife as he does himself; on the other hand, the wife should have deep respect for her husband.

—Eph. 5:33.

A couple who decide to have children do well to discuss two important questions: First, when do they want to have children? Second, how many children do they want? When is the best time for a couple to have such a discussion? And why are those two subjects so important? In most cases, before they get married, a couple do well to address

the subject of having children. Why then? One good reason is that being of the same mind on this matter is important. Also, they will need to consider whether they are ready for that responsibility. Some couples have decided to wait at least a year or two after their wedding before having children because becoming parents will consume much time and energy. They reason that by waiting for a while, they will give themselves time to adjust to married life and draw closer to each other. *w19.12 23 ¶4-5*

Sunday, January 24

A true friend . . . is a brother who is born for times of distress.

—Prov. 17:17.

Around the world, many servants of Jehovah are facing stressful, even painful, situations. Some Christians are dealing with a serious illness or with the death of a loved one. Others are enduring the intense pain of seeing a family member or close friend leave the truth. Still others are coping with the effects of natural disasters. All such brothers and sisters need comfort. How can we help them? Be a loyal friend. Loyal friends make sacrifices in order to support their brothers and sisters. For example, a brother named Peter was diagnosed with a very aggressive terminal illness. His wife, Kathryn, says: "A couple in our congregation took us to the appointment where we found out about Peter's illness. They decided not to let us go on this painful journey alone, and they have been by our side whenever we have needed them." How comforting it is to have true friends, who can help us to endure our trials! *w20.01 8 ¶1; 9 ¶5; 10 ¶6*

Monday, January 25

They all became filled with holy spirit and started to speak in different languages.—Acts 2:4.

If you were one of the disciples gathered in the upper room at Pentecost 33 C.E., there would be no question in your mind that you were anointed by holy spirit. (Acts 2:5-12) But do all those who are anointed by holy spirit receive their anointing in some spectacular manner and at the same time in their life? No. Consider the matter of timing. That group of about 120 Christians were not the only ones anointed by holy spirit on that day. Later that day, about 3,000 others also received the promised holy spirit. Their anointing occurred when they got baptized. (Acts 2:37, 38, 41) But in the years that followed, not all anointed Christians received their anointing at their baptism. The Samaritans received their anointing sometime after their baptism. (Acts 8:14-17) And in what certainly was an exceptional instance, Cornelius and his household were anointed even before they got baptized. —Acts 10:44-48. *w20.01* 20-21 ¶2-4

Tuesday, January 26

I have made your name known to them.—John 17:26.

In the four Gospels alone, Jesus used the term “Father” some 165 times in reference to Jehovah. Why did Jesus speak so much about Jehovah? One reason is that people might be convinced that Jehovah is a loving Father. (John 17:25) Consider what we learn about Jehovah from the way that he treated his Son, Jesus. Jehovah always heard Jesus’ prayers. He not only heard

Jesus’ prayers but also answered them. (John 11:41, 42) No matter what trials Jesus faced, he sensed his Father’s love and support. (Luke 22:42, 43) As a loving Father, Jehovah made sure that Jesus knew he had his Father’s backing. (Matt. 26:53; John 8:16) While Jehovah did not shield Jesus from all injury, He helped him to endure trials. Jesus was assured that any harm he might suffer would be temporary. (Heb. 12:2) Jehovah proved that he cared for Jesus by listening to him, providing for him, training him, and supporting him.—John 5:20; 8:28. *w20.02* 3 ¶6-7, 9

Wednesday, January 27

Do all things for God’s glory. Keep from becoming causes for stumbling.—1 Cor. 10:31, 32.

When deciding whether to share in a custom or tradition, we should think about how our decision may affect the consciences of others, especially fellow Christians. Never would we want to stumble someone! (Mark 9:42) Also, we want to avoid needlessly offending those who are not Witnesses. Love will move us to speak to them in a respectful way, which glorifies Jehovah. We certainly would not quarrel with people or ridicule their traditions. Remember, love is powerful! When we reflect it in a considerate and respectful manner, we may even soften the hearts of opposers. Make it known in your community that you are one of Jehovah’s Witnesses. (Isa. 43:10) You will likely find it easier to handle emotionally charged situations if your relatives and neighbors know that you worship Jehovah God. May we never be ashamed of the stand that we take in defense of the truth. —Rom. 1:16. *w19.04* 17-18 ¶14-16

Thursday, January 28

I am the least of the apostles, and I am not worthy of being called an apostle.—1 Cor. 15:9.

The 12 apostles followed Jesus during his earthly ministry, but the apostle Paul did not become a Christian until after Jesus' death and resurrection. Although he was eventually appointed to be "an apostle to the nations," Paul did not qualify for the special privilege of becoming one of the 12 apostles. (Rom. 11:13; Acts 1:21-26) Rather than envying those 12 men and the close association they had enjoyed with Jesus, Paul remained content with what he had. If we are content and humble, we will be like Paul and show respect for the authority that Jehovah has given to others. (Acts 21:20-26) He has arranged for appointed men to take the lead in the Christian congregation. Despite their imperfections, Jehovah considers them "gifts in men." (Eph. 4:8, 11) When we respect these appointed men and humbly follow their direction, we stay close to Jehovah and enjoy peace with our fellow Christians. *w20.02 17 ¶13-14*

Friday, January 29

*We love, because he first loved us.
—1 John 4:19.*

Before studying with Jehovah's Witnesses, you may have formed a deep appreciation for the Bible. And you may have developed a love for Jesus. Now that you have come to know Jehovah's Witnesses, you might love to associate with them. But loving those good things will not necessarily make you want to dedicate yourself to Jehovah and get baptized. The primary motiva-

tion that will lead you to baptism is love for Jehovah God himself. When you love Jehovah more than all else, you will not let anything or anyone prevent you from serving him. You could view love for Jehovah as both the gateway to baptism and the guardrail that helps you stay on the path of serving God. Jesus said that we must love Jehovah with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength. (Mark 12:30) How can you learn to love and respect Jehovah that deeply? Reflecting on Jehovah's love for us moves us to love him in return. *w20.03 4 ¶4-5*

Saturday, January 30

*Fully accomplish your ministry.
—2 Tim. 4:5.*

What does it mean to accomplish our ministry fully? Simply put, to accomplish our ministry fully, we must have as full a share as possible in the preaching and teaching work. But more is involved than the amount of time. Our motive is important to Jehovah. Because we love Jehovah and our neighbor, we work whole-souled in our Christian ministry. (Mark 12:30, 31; Col. 3:23) Serving God whole-souled means giving of ourselves, using our strength and energies to the best of our ability in his service. When we appreciate the privilege of doing the preaching work, we try to share the good news with as many people as we can. We may be limited in the amount of time we can devote to the preaching work. Yet, that is what we love to do. We strive to improve our ability to reach people's hearts with the good news. We make the preaching work our priority. *w19.04 2 ¶3; 3 ¶4, 6*

Sunday, January 31

Truth is not in him.

—*John 8:44.*

Satan's lies add grief and suffering to mankind. Parents who are grieving the death of a child may be told that God has taken the child, perhaps to be an angel in heaven. Does this satanic lie lessen their pain or add to it? The false teaching of hellfire has been used to justify torture, including the burning at the stake of those who opposed church teachings. According to a book on the Spanish Inquisition, some of those responsible for this cruelty may have believed that they were only giving heretics "a taste of what perpetual hellfire would be like" so that they would repent before dying and be saved from hellfire. In a number of lands, people feel compelled to pay homage to their dead ancestors, to honor them, or to seek a blessing from them. Others want to appease their ancestors in order to avoid some form of punishment. Sadly, beliefs based on satanic lies do not bring genuine comfort. Instead, they cause needless anxiety or even fear. *w19.04 14 ¶1; 16 ¶10*

Monday, February 1

[Jehovah] loves . . . justice.

—*Ps. 33:5.*

"Justice," as used in the Bible, basically means to do what God considers to be right and to do so without partiality. Consider how Jesus' actions revealed his sense of justice. In his day, the Jewish religious leaders hated non-Jews, despised common Jews, and disrespected women. Jesus, however, was fair and impartial in dealing with all. He accepted non-Jews who approached him in faith. (Matt. 8:5-10, 13) He preached with-

out prejudice to all, rich and poor. (Matt. 11:5; Luke 19:2, 9) He was never harsh or abusive in his treatment of women. On the contrary, he was respectful and kind to women, including those whom others viewed with scorn. (Luke 7:37-39, 44-50) We can imitate Jesus by dealing impartially with others and preaching to all who are willing to listen—regardless of their social or religious background. Christian men follow his example by treating women with respect. *w19.05 2 ¶1; 5 ¶15-17*

Tuesday, February 2

We became gentle in your midst, as when a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children.

—*1 Thess. 2:7.*

Loyal elders today can likewise use tender, gentle words as they offer Scriptural comfort to those in need. Are elders the only ones who can give comfort to victims of abuse? No. All of us have a responsibility to "keep comforting one another." (1 Thess. 4:18) Mature Christian sisters can be especially encouraging to sisters in need of comfort. Fittingly, Jehovah God likened himself to a mother who comforts her son. (Isa. 66:13) The Bible includes examples of women who provided comfort to those in distress. (Job 42:11) How delighted Jehovah is to see Christian women today offering comfort to fellow sisters who struggle with emotional pain! In some cases, an elder or two may discreetly ask a mature sister if she is in a position to help a suffering sister in that way. Of course, we are careful not to pry into matters that a fellow Christian prefers to keep private.—1 Thess. 4:11. *w19.05 16-17 ¶10-12*

Wednesday, February 3

On the testimony of two or three witnesses every matter may be established.—Matt. 18:16.

Before the elders take judicial action, why are at least two witnesses required? This requirement is part of the Bible's high standard of justice. When there is no confession of wrongdoing, two witnesses are required to establish the accusation and authorize the elders to take judicial action. (Deut. 19:15; 1 Tim. 5:19) If the individual denies the accusation, the elders consider the testimony of witnesses. If at least two people—the one making the accusation and someone else—can confirm the charge, a judicial committee is formed. The absence of a second witness does not mean that the one making the accusation is untruthful. Even if a charge of wrongdoing cannot be established by two witnesses, the elders recognize that a serious sin may have been committed. The elders provide ongoing support to any individuals who may have been hurt and remain alert to protect the congregation from potential danger.—Acts 20:28. *w19.05 11 ¶15-16*

Thursday, February 4

Ponder over these things . . . , so that your advancement may be plainly seen by all people.

—1 Tim. 4:15.

It is important for children to be taught how to study. They need to learn how to prepare for congregation meetings, for example, or how to do research on an issue that has arisen at school. (Heb. 5:14) If they spend some time on study projects at home, they will be better equipped to focus on the material presented at congregation meet-

ings, assemblies, and conventions. Of course, the length of each study period will depend on the age and temperament of the children. Our Bible students also need to learn how to study. When they are new, we are happy to see them simply underline the answers in preparation for their Bible study or for congregation meetings. But we do need to teach our Bible students how to do research and how to do meaningful study on their own. In that way, when problems arise, they will know how to get practical advice for themselves by doing research in our publications. *w19.05 26 ¶2; 28 ¶10-11*

Friday, February 5

We are overturning reasonings and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God.

—2 Cor. 10:5.

Satan is determined to change our thinking. He uses every type of reasoning to counteract the influence of the truth of God's Word. Satan continues to ask the same question he asked Eve in the garden of Eden: "Did God really say that . . . ?" (Gen. 3:1) In the world under Satan's control, we often hear challenging questions, such as these: 'Does God really not approve of same-sex marriage? Does God really not want you to celebrate Christmas and birthdays? Does your God really expect you to refuse a blood transfusion? Does a loving God really expect you to avoid association with disfellowshipped loved ones?' 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. *w19.06 12-13 ¶15-17*

Saturday, February 6

All of you have unity of mind, fellow feeling, brotherly affection, tender compassion, and humility.

—1 Pet. 3:8.

Jehovah loves us deeply. (John 3:16) We want to imitate our loving Father. So we try to show “fellow feeling, brotherly affection, [and] tender compassion” to all but especially to those who are “related to us in the faith.” (Gal. 6:10) When members of our spiritual family face stressful challenges, we want to help them. How can we console someone whose marriage mate has died? An important first step is to speak to him or her, even though you may feel awkward or unsure of what to say. Paula, whose husband died suddenly, says: “I understand that death makes people uncomfortable. They worry that what they say might come out wrong. But worse than hearing something awkward is hearing nothing at all.” A grieving person probably does not expect us to say something profound. Paula says: “I appreciated it when friends would simply say, ‘I’m sorry for your loss.’”
w19.06 20 ¶1; 23 ¶14

Sunday, February 7

Jehovah, give attention to their threats, and grant to your slaves to keep speaking your word with all boldness.—Acts 4:29.

If our work is banned, the elders will arrange for you to attend meetings in a way that will not attract unwanted attention. They may direct you to meet in small groups and may change the meeting times and locations frequently. Regarding the preaching work, circumstances will vary from one location to another. But we love Jehovah and en-

joy telling others about his Kingdom, so we will find a way to preach. (Luke 8:1) Commenting on Jehovah’s Witnesses in the former Soviet Union, historian Emily B. Baran said: “When the state told believers that they could not evangelize their faith to others, Witnesses chatted [with] their neighbors, coworkers, and friends. When these actions landed them in labor camps, Witnesses sought out converts among their fellow prisoners.” Despite the ban, our brothers there did not stop preaching. May you have that same determination! w19.07 11 ¶12-13

Monday, February 8

Make disciples of people of all the nations.—Matt. 28:19.

How can we help nonreligious people to learn to love God and become disciples of Christ? We must recognize that a person’s reaction to our message may depend on where he was raised. For example, people with a European background may not respond the same way as may those who come from Asia. Why? In Europe, many know something about the Bible and are familiar with the idea that God created all things. But in Asia, the majority of people know little or nothing about the Bible, and they may not believe in a Creator. So be positive. Every year, there are nonreligious people who become Jehovah’s Witnesses. Many already had high moral standards and felt disgusted by religious hypocrisy. Others had low moral standards and many had bad habits that they needed to abandon. With Jehovah’s help, we can be sure that we will find those who are “rightly disposed for everlasting life.”—Acts 13:48; 1 Tim. 2:3, 4.
w19.07 20-21 ¶3-4

Tuesday, February 9

We do not give up.

—2 Cor. 4:16.

Whether our hope is everlasting life in heaven or on a paradise earth, we must keep pressing on toward that goal. No matter what our circumstances, we must not look at the things behind; nor should we let anything hinder our progress. (Phil. 3:16) The fulfillment of our expectations may seem to be delayed, or our physical strength may be declining. We may have endured hardship and persecution for many years. Whatever the case, “do not be anxious over anything.” Rather, let your petitions and supplications be made known to God, and he will give you a peace that is beyond your imagination. (Phil. 4:6, 7) Like a runner who exerts himself as he races down the homestretch, may we stay fully focused on the goal of finishing the race for life. To the extent that our strength and circumstances allow, may we exert ourselves and progress eagerly toward the wonderful things ahead. *w19.08 7 ¶16-17*

Wednesday, February 10

Weep with those who weep.

—Rom. 12:15.

We may find it hard to know what to say to someone who is overcome by grief. Sometimes our tears say more than our words. When Jesus' friend Lazarus died, Mary, Martha, and others wept for their beloved brother and friend. Four days later when Jesus arrived, he too “gave way to tears,” even though he knew that he was about to resurrect Lazarus. (John 11:17, 33-35) Jesus' tears reflected the feelings of his Father. They also confirmed Jesus' love for the family, which no doubt comfort-

ed Mary and Martha. Similarly, when our brothers sense our love and concern, they know that they are not alone but are surrounded by caring and supportive friends. Sometimes we must simply be a good listener. Allow your brother to pour out his heart, and do not be offended by “wild talk.” (Job 6:2, 3) He may be under added emotional stress because of pressure from relatives who are not Witnesses. So pray with him. Beg the “Hearer of prayer” to give him strength and clarity of mind.—Ps. 65:2. *w19.04 18-19 ¶18-19*

Thursday, February 11

Pour out your hearts before him.

—Ps. 62:8.

Whether we serve in the field or at Bethel, we can develop deep affection for people and even for the place where we serve. If for any reason we have to leave, our heart feels torn. We miss those who stay behind, and we worry about them, especially if we had to leave because of persecution. (Matt. 10:23; 2 Cor. 11:28, 29) Further, taking up a new assignment—or even returning home—often means experiencing culture shock. Some who get a change of assignment may suddenly face unexpected financial challenges. They may feel uncertain, insecure, and discouraged. What can help? Stay close to Jehovah. (Jas. 4:8) How can we do that? By trusting in him as the “Hearer of prayer.” (Ps. 65:2) Jehovah can do “more than superabundantly beyond all the things we ask or conceive.” (Eph. 3:20) He does not limit himself to what we specifically ask for in our prayers. He may do the unexpected, beyond anything that we could ever think of, to solve our problems. *w19.08 21 ¶15-6*

Friday, February 12

They gathered them together to . . . Armageddon.—Rev. 16:16.

Some people apply the word “Armageddon” to a nuclear war or an environmental disaster. In contrast, the Bible says that Armageddon involves good news, a cause for happiness! (Rev. 1:3) The war of Armageddon will not destroy but save mankind! How so? By ending human rule. That war will save mankind by removing the wicked and preserving the righteous. And it will save mankind by protecting our planet from ruin. (Rev. 11:18) The word “Armageddon” appears just once in the Scriptures, and it comes from a Hebrew term that means “Mountain of Megiddo.” (Rev. 16:16; fn.) Megiddo was a city in ancient Israel. (Josh. 17:11) But Armageddon does not refer to any literal place on earth. Strictly speaking, it refers to the situation to which “the kings of the entire inhabited earth” are gathered in opposition to Jehovah. —Rev. 16:14. *w19.09 8 ¶1-3*

Saturday, February 13

She had not been able to get a cure from anyone.—Luke 8:43.

The woman desperately needed help. She had gone to many physicians, hoping to find relief. After 12 years of misery, she still had not been healed. According to the Law, she was unclean. (Lev. 15:25) Then she heard that Jesus could cure those who were suffering, so she went to find him. When she found him, she touched the fringe of his outer garment, and immediately she was cured! But Jesus did more than heal her body—he restored her dignity. For example, when talking with

her, he used the warm yet respectful term “daughter.” How truly refreshed, or energized, that woman must have felt! (Luke 8:44-48) Notice that the woman went to Jesus. She took the initiative. The same is true today—we must make the effort to “come to” Jesus. At present, Jesus will not miraculously cure the physical sicknesses of those who “come to” him. But he still extends the invitation: “Come to me, . . . and I will refresh you.”—Matt. 11:28. *w19.09 20 ¶2-3*

Sunday, February 14

I saw . . . a great crowd . . . out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues.—Rev. 7:9.

The prophet Zechariah had earlier foretold something similar. He wrote: “In those days ten men out of all the languages of the nations will take hold, yes, they will take firm hold of the robe of a Jew, saying: ‘We want to go with you, for we have heard that God is with you people.’” (Zech. 8:23) Jehovah’s Witnesses realize that for people of all languages to be gathered, the good news must be preached in many languages. We are now carrying out the greatest translation effort in history in hundreds of languages. Clearly, Jehovah is performing a modern-day miracle—gathering a great crowd from all nations. Thanks to the availability of spiritual food in more and more languages, this diverse group is united in worship. And the Witnesses are well-known for their zealous preaching and their brotherly love. How faith-strengthening that is! —Matt. 24:14; John 13:35. *w19.09 30-31 ¶16-17*

Monday, February 15

There will be great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world's beginning until now, no, nor will occur again.—Matt. 24:21.

During the great tribulation, people will be shocked as they see everything that they once thought to be so stable in the world begin to fail. They will be in “anguish,” fearing for their very lives as they enter the darkest period of human existence. (Zeph. 1:14, 15) At that time, life will likely get more difficult even for Jehovah’s people. Because we remain no part of the world, we may suffer some hardships. We may have to go without certain necessities. “The faithful and discreet slave” has been preparing us to stay faithful through the great tribulation. (Matt. 24:45) This has been done in many ways, but consider one example: our timely convention programs for the years 2016-2018. Through those programs, we have been encouraged to strengthen the qualities that we need as we near Jehovah’s day. *w19.10* 14 ¶2; 16 ¶10; 17 ¶12

Tuesday, February 16

You cannot be partaking of “the table of Jehovah” and the table of demons.—1 Cor. 10:21.

Once we swallow food, automatic processes take over and the nutrients in the food eventually become part of our bodies. A good diet can make us healthier; a poor diet will make us unhealthy. The results may not become evident overnight, but they will become evident in time. Similarly, when we choose our entertainment, we have control over what we put into our mind. Af-

ter that, automatic processes take over and our mind and heart are affected. Good entertainment can refresh us; unwholesome entertainment will harm us. (Jas. 1:14, 15) The effects of bad entertainment may not be immediately evident, but they will eventually become obvious. That is why the Bible warns us: “Whatever a person is sowing, this he will also reap; because the one sowing with a view to his flesh will reap corruption from his flesh.” (Gal. 6:7, 8) How important it is for us to reject all entertainment that promotes things that Jehovah hates!—Ps. 97:10. *w19.10* 30 ¶12-14

Wednesday, February 17

Become imitators of God, as beloved children, and go on walking in love.—Eph. 5:1, 2.

Jehovah proved his love for us by giving his Son as a ransom in our behalf. (John 3:16) How can we imitate Jehovah’s love? We view each of our brothers and sisters as valuable and precious, and we gladly welcome back “a lost sheep” who returns to Jehovah. (Ps. 119:176; Luke 15:7, 10) We prove that we love our brothers and sisters by giving of ourselves, such as by helping them in times of need. (1 John 3:17) Jesus commanded his followers to show self-sacrificing love. (John 13:34, 35) Jesus’ commandment is new because it calls for a kind of love that was not required under the Law that God gave Israel: Love fellow believers as Jesus loved you. That requires a self-sacrificing love. We are to love our brothers and sisters even more than we love ourselves. We must love them to the point of being willing to give up our life for them, as Jesus did for us. *w19.05* 4 ¶11-13

Thursday, February 18

Keep on asking, and it will be given you; keep on seeking, and you will find; keep on knocking, and it will be opened to you.—Luke 11:9.

To receive the help of holy spirit, we must pray for it with persistence. (Luke 11:13) Jesus' illustration at Luke 11:5-9 helps us to see why Jehovah will give us holy spirit. The man in the illustration wanted to be a good host. He felt compelled to serve food to his late-night visitor but had nothing to offer him. Jesus said that the neighbor responded because of the man's bold persistence in asking for bread. What was Jesus' point? If an imperfect human is willing to help a persistent neighbor, how much more so will our kind heavenly Father help those who persistently ask him for holy spirit! Therefore, we can pray with confidence that Jehovah will respond to our urgent request for holy spirit. (Ps. 10:17; 66:19) We can be sure that in spite of Satan's relentless efforts to defeat us, we will be victorious. *w19.11 13 ¶17-19*

Friday, February 19

Come . . . into an isolated place and rest up a little.—Mark 6:31.

Jesus knew that at times he and the apostles needed some rest. However, many people back then and many today can be likened to the rich man in Jesus' illustration. That man convinced himself: "Take it easy, eat, drink, enjoy yourself." (Luke 12:19; 2 Tim. 3:4) He set his heart on rest and pleasures. In contrast, Jesus and the apostles did not center their lives on pleasing themselves. Today, we try to imitate

Jesus by using the time we have off from work not only to rest but also to do good by witnessing to others and attending Christian meetings. In fact, to us, disciple-making and meeting attendance are so important that we make every effort to engage regularly in those sacred activities. (Heb. 10:24, 25) Even when we are on vacation, we keep to our regular spiritual routine of attending meetings wherever we are, and we look for opportunities to have conversations with those whom we meet.—2 Tim. 4:2. *w19.12 7 ¶16-17*

Saturday, February 20

*Complete what you started to do.
—2 Cor. 8:11.*

Jehovah allows us to choose our course in life. He teaches us how to make good choices, and he helps us to succeed when we make decisions that please him. (Ps. 119:173) The more we apply the wisdom found in God's Word, the better we become at making good decisions. (Heb. 5:14) Even when we make a wise decision, however, we may struggle to complete what we started. Consider some examples: A young brother decides to read the entire Bible. He does well for a few weeks but then stops for some reason. A sister decides to serve as a regular pioneer but keeps pushing back the date when she will begin. A body of elders makes a unanimous decision to be more involved in shepherding those in the congregation but after many months has not acted on it. These situations differ, but they have something in common. Those decisions were not fully implemented. *w19.11 26 ¶1-2*

Sunday, February 21

The plans of the diligent surely lead to success.—Prov. 21:5.

Jesus likened our time to “the days of Noah,” and there is no doubt that we are living in “critical times hard to deal with.” (Matt. 24:37; 2 Tim. 3:1) With that reality in mind, some couples have concluded that they would like to postpone having children so that they can devote more time to sharing in the Christian ministry. When deciding whether to have children and how many children to have, wise couples “calculate the expense.” (Luke 14:28, 29) Experienced parents confirm that raising children not only costs money but also costs time and energy. Thus, it is important for a couple to consider such questions as: ‘Would both of us have to work to supply the family’s basic needs? Do we agree on what our “basic needs” are? If we both would have to work, who would look after our children? Who would influence their thinking and actions?’ Couples who calmly discuss those questions take to heart the words of today’s text. *w19.12 23-24 ¶6-7*

Monday, February 22

These are my fellow workers for the Kingdom of God, and they have become a source of great comfort to me.—Col. 4:11.

The apostle Paul faced one life-threatening situation after another. (2 Cor. 11:23-28) He also had to endure “a thorn in the flesh,” possibly some sort of health problem. (2 Cor. 12:7) And he had to cope with disappointment when Demas, his one-time fellow worker, abandoned him “because [Demas] loved the present system of things.” (2 Tim. 4:10) Paul

was a courageous spirit-anointed Christian who unselfishly helped others, but at times even he felt discouraged. (Rom. 9:1, 2) Paul received the comfort and support he needed. How? Jehovah certainly used His holy spirit to strengthen him. (2 Cor. 4:7; Phil. 4:13) Jehovah also comforted him through fellow Christians. Paul described some of his fellow workers as “a source of great comfort.” (Col. 4:11) Among the ones he mentioned by name were Aristarchus, Tychicus, and Mark. They strengthened Paul, helping him to endure. *w20.01 8 ¶2-3*

Tuesday, February 23

He has enlightened the eyes of your heart.—Eph. 1:18.

Jesus indicated that it is impossible to explain exactly to someone who has not been anointed how it feels to be “born again,” or to be “born from the spirit.” (John 3:3-8) What change in thinking takes place when Christians are anointed? Before Jehovah anointed these Christians, they treasured the hope of living forever on earth. They looked forward with great eagerness to the time when Jehovah would remove all wickedness and make the earth a paradise. Perhaps they imagined themselves welcoming back a family member or a friend who had died. But after they were anointed, they started to think differently. Why is that? They did not become dissatisfied with that earthly hope. They did not change their mind because of emotional stress or turmoil. They did not suddenly feel that they would find living forever on earth to be boring. Instead, Jehovah used his holy spirit to change the way that they think and the hope that they cherish. *w20.01 22 ¶9-11*

Wednesday, February 24

Let every person be in subjection to the superior authorities.

—Rom. 13:1.

Under the Law that God gave Israel, appointed men handled not only spiritual matters but also civil and criminal cases. But under “the law of the Christ,” the elders’ role is to handle the spiritual aspects of the wrongdoing. (Gal. 6:2) They recognize that the secular authorities have the God-given responsibility to handle civil and criminal cases. That includes the authority to impose such penalties as fines or imprisonments. (Rom. 13:2-4) How do elders handle the spiritual aspects of serious wrongdoing? They use the Scriptures to weigh matters and make decisions. They keep in mind that love is the foundation of the law of the Christ. Love moves the elders to consider: What needs to be done to help any in the congregation who have been victims of the wrongdoing? Regarding the wrongdoer, love moves the elders to consider: Is he repentant? Can we help him to regain his spiritual health? *w19.05 7 ¶23-24*

Thursday, February 25

I live because of the Father.

—John 6:57.

Jesus acknowledged that his Father was the Source and Sustainer of his life when he stated the above. Jesus completely trusted in his Father, and Jehovah supplied his physical needs. Most important, Jehovah cared for Jesus spiritually. (Matt. 4:4) Jehovah also provides for our spiritual needs. Through his Word, he has revealed the truth about himself, his purpose, the meaning of life, and the future. He

showed us personal attention when we first learned the truth, using our parents or another teacher to help us come to know him. And we continue to receive kind assistance from loving congregation elders and other mature brothers and sisters. In addition, Jehovah instructs us through our congregation meetings, where we learn alongside our spiritual family. In these and other ways, Jehovah shows his fatherly interest in all of us.—Ps. 32:8. *w20.02 3 ¶8; 5 ¶13*

Friday, February 26

Pursue the things making for peace and the things that build one another up.

—Rom. 14:19.

Peace cannot survive if envy is allowed to thrive. We need to weed out envy from our own heart and avoid planting feelings of envy in others. What specifically can we do to help others fight envy, and how can we promote peace? Our attitude and actions can have a big influence on others. The world wants us to make a “showy display” of the things we own. (1 John 2:16) But that attitude promotes envy. We can avoid nurturing envy in others if we choose not to talk constantly about the things we own or plan to buy. Another way we can avoid promoting envy is by being modest about the privileges we have in the congregation. If we draw attention to the privileges that we have, we create fertile ground in which envy can grow. By contrast, when we show genuine personal interest in others and acknowledge the good that they do, we help them feel content and we promote unity and peace in the congregation. *w20.02 18 ¶15-16*

Saturday, February 27

His invisible qualities are clearly seen from the world's creation onward, because they are perceived by the things made.—Rom. 1:20.

You can learn about Jehovah through his creation. (Rev. 4:11) Meditate on the wisdom evident in the designs of plants and animals. Learn a little about the wonderful way your body is made. (Ps. 139:14) And think about the power that Jehovah packed into our sun, realizing that it is just one of billions of stars. (Isa. 40:26) As you do, your respect for Jehovah will deepen. However, knowing that Jehovah is wise and powerful is only part of the foundation of your relationship with him. To build a strong love for Jehovah, you need to know more about him. You need to be convinced that Jehovah cares for you personally. Remember that “if you search for him, he will let himself be found by you.” (1 Chron. 28:9) Jehovah says, “I have drawn you to me.” (Jer. 31:3) The more you appreciate all that Jehovah has done for you, the deeper your love for him will be. *w20.03 4 ¶6-7*

Sunday, February 28

Since we have this ministry . . . , we do not give up.—2 Cor. 4:1.

The apostle Paul set a good example in making the ministry the most important activity in his life. When he was in Corinth during his second missionary journey, he was low on funds and had to spend some time making tents. He worked at this trade to support himself in the ministry so that he could declare the good news to the Corinthians “without cost” to them. (2 Cor. 11:7) Al-

though Paul had to do some secular work, he continued to give priority to the ministry, and he preached on every Sabbath. After his circumstances improved, Paul was able to give more attention to preaching. He “began to be intensely occupied with the word, witnessing to the Jews to prove that Jesus is the Christ.” (Acts 18:3-5; 2 Cor. 11:9) Later, when he was under house arrest in Rome for two years, Paul witnessed to visitors and wrote letters. (Acts 28:16, 30, 31) Paul was determined not to allow anything to interfere with his ministry. *w19.04 4 ¶9*

Monday, March 1

“Separate yourselves,” says Jehovah, “and quit touching the unclean thing.”—2 Cor. 6:17.

Love for God and his Word strengthens us to obey Jehovah even when well-meaning relatives or friends try to pressure us to share in unscriptural practices regarding the dead. They may try to shame us, perhaps by saying that we did not love or respect the deceased. Or they might say that our behavior will cause the dead person to harm the living in some way. In a Caribbean nation, many believe that after a person dies, his “ghost” may stay around and punish those who mistreated him. The “ghost” may even “wreak havoc on a community,” says one reference. It is a custom in Africa to cover mirrors in the home of the deceased and turn pictures to face the wall. The reason? Some claim that the dead must not see themselves! As Jehovah’s servants, we certainly do not believe any myths or take part in any practices that promote Satan’s lies! —1 Cor. 10:21, 22. *w19.04 16 ¶11-12*

Tuesday, March 2

All things . . . that you want men to do to you, you also must do to them.—Matt. 7:12.

Jesus taught principles that would help his followers to treat others fairly. Think, for example, about the Golden Rule. We all want to be treated fairly. Therefore, we should behave fairly toward others. If we do, they may be moved to treat us with fairness. But what if we have been treated unjustly? Jesus also taught his followers to trust that Jehovah will “cause justice to be done for [those] who cry out to him day and night.” (Luke 18:6, 7) That statement is, in effect, a promise: Our just God is aware of the trials we are facing in these last days, and he will cause justice to be done for us in his due time. (2 Thess. 1:6) When we follow the principles that Jesus taught, we will treat others in a just way. And if we have been a victim of injustice in Satan’s world, we can take comfort in knowing that Jehovah will cause justice to be done for us. *w19.05 5 ¶18-19*

Wednesday, March 3

[Be] always ready to make a defense before everyone who demands of you a reason for the hope you have, but doing so with a mild temper and deep respect.

—1 Pet. 3:15.

Are you a young person in school? Your classmates may all believe in the theory of evolution. You would like to defend the Bible’s teaching, but perhaps you do not feel qualified to do so. That calls for a study project! Your aim could be twofold: (1) to strengthen your own conviction that God created all things and (2) to improve in your ability

to defend the truth. (Rom. 1:20) You might first ask yourself, ‘What arguments have my classmates used in support of evolution?’ Then using our publications, do careful research. Defending your beliefs may not be as hard as you think. Most people believe in evolution simply because someone they respect told them that it is true. If you find just a point or two that you can share, you may provide a satisfactory answer to a sincere inquirer.—Col. 4:6. *w19.05 29 ¶13*

Thursday, March 4

As a mother comforts her son, so I will keep comforting you.

—Isa. 66:13.

When the prophet Elijah was on the run for his life, he was so discouraged that he wished for death. Jehovah sent a mighty angel to visit that discouraged man. The angel provided very practical help. He gave Elijah a hot meal and encouraged him to eat. (1 Ki. 19:5-8) That account illustrates a useful truth: Sometimes a simple act of practical kindness can do a great deal of good. Perhaps a meal, a modest gift, or a thoughtful card would assure a downhearted brother or sister of our love and concern. If we feel uncomfortable discussing very personal or painful subjects, perhaps we can still give such practical help. Jehovah miraculously gave Elijah the help he needed to go all the way to Mount Horeb, far out of the reach of those who sought to do him harm. What lesson may we draw? If we want to offer comfort to victims of abuse, we may need first to help them feel safe, whether at their home or at the Kingdom Hall. *w19.05 16 ¶11; 17 ¶13-14*

Friday, March 5

The land will wail, . . . the family of Nathan's house by itself.

—Zech. 12:12.

Suppose that you are reading the 12th chapter of Zechariah's prophecy, which foretells the death of the Messiah. (Zech. 12:10) When you come to verse 12, you read that "the family of Nathan's house" would grieve bitterly at the Messiah's death. Instead of quickly passing over that detail, you pause and ask yourself: 'What is the connection between the house of Nathan and the Messiah?' You do a little "detective" work. A marginal reference leads you to 2 Samuel 5:13, 14, where you learn that Nathan was one of King David's sons. A second marginal reference, Luke 3:23, 31, reveals that Jesus was a direct descendant of Nathan through Mary. Suddenly, you are intrigued! You knew that Jesus was foretold to be a descendant of David. (Matt. 22:42) But David had more than 20 sons. Is it not amazing that Zechariah pinpoints the household of Nathan in particular as having a reason to mourn the death of Jesus? *w19.05 30 ¶17*

Saturday, March 6

Be transformed by making your mind over, so that you may prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

—Rom. 12:2.

What do we need to do? 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." (Col. 2:6, 7) Remember,

no one else can stabilize your faith for you, so continue to be made new in your dominant mental attitude. Pray constantly; plead for the help of Jehovah's spirit. Meditate deeply; continue to examine your thinking and motives. Seek good associates; surround yourself with individuals who will help you to transform your thinking. By doing so, you will counteract the poisonous effects of Satan's world and successfully overturn "reasonings and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God."—2 Cor. 10:5. *w19.06 13 ¶17-18*

Sunday, March 7

The form of worship that is clean and undefiled from the standpoint of our God and Father is this: to look after orphans and widows in their tribulation.—Jas. 1:27.

Just as Ruth stuck with the widowed Naomi, we need to provide ongoing support for those who lose a loved one in death. (Ruth 1:16, 17) Paula says: "Right after my husband died, I got a lot of support. As time passed, people's lives seemed to go back to normal. However, my life had changed completely. It is a huge help when others realize that a grieving person needs support in the months—even years—following the death." Of course, each person is different. Some seem to adjust to their new circumstances relatively quickly. For others, however, every activity they once shared with their loved one is a painful reminder of their loss. The ways people grieve vary from person to person. Let us remember that Jehovah gives us the honor and responsibility to care for those who have lost their mate in death. *w19.06 24 ¶16*

Monday, March 8

I will guard my mouth with a muzzle as long as anyone wicked is in my presence.—Ps. 39:1.

During a ban, we must recognize when it is “time to be silent.” (Eccl. 3:7) We must safeguard sensitive information, such as the names of our brothers and sisters, the locations where we meet, how we carry out our ministry, and how we receive spiritual food. We would not reveal these facts to the secular authorities; nor would we share them with well-meaning friends or relatives in our country or in other countries. If we did fall into this trap, we would put the safety of our brothers at risk. Do not allow minor issues to divide us. Satan knows that a divided house cannot stand. (Mark 3:24, 25) He will constantly try to cause divisions among us. In that way, he hopes that we will start fighting one another instead of fighting him. Even mature Christians need to be on guard not to fall into this trap. If we work hard to overcome differences with our brothers, we will avoid the trap of disunity.—Col. 3:13, 14. *w19.07* 11-12 ¶14-16

Tuesday, March 9

A slave of the Lord . . . needs to be gentle toward all, qualified to teach.—2 Tim. 2:24.

Often, people respond well to our message, not because of what we say, but because of the way we say it. They appreciate it when we are kind, tactful, and genuinely interested in them. We do not force them to hear our point of view. Instead, we try to discern the reasons for their view of religion and to be sensitive to their feelings. For instance, when

speaking with Jews, Paul reasoned from the Scriptures. However, when he spoke with Greek philosophers at the Areopagus, he made no direct reference to the Bible. (Acts 17: 2, 3, 22-31) How can we follow Paul's example? If you meet a person who does not accept the Bible, it may be best not to make direct references to it when reasoning with him. If you sense that a person might be uncomfortable being seen reading the Bible with you, try showing him scriptures in a less obvious way, such as on an electronic device. *w19.07* 21 ¶5-6

Wednesday, March 10

Be careful not to let your heart be enticed to go astray and worship other gods.—Deut. 11:16.

Satan cleverly tempted the Israelites to commit idolatry by taking advantage of their need to provide food for themselves. When the Israelites entered the Promised Land, they had to change their methods of growing food. While in Egypt, the Israelites irrigated the farmland by using water drawn from the Nile. However, the agricultural system in the Promised Land was based, not on water drawn from a huge river system, but on water gained from seasonal rains, as well as from the dew that watered the vegetation. (Deut. 11:10-15; Isa. 18:4, 5) Therefore, the Israelites had to learn new farming methods. But why did Jehovah warn against worshipping false gods while he was speaking about farming? Jehovah knew that his people would be tempted to learn useful skills from the pagan people around them and that the thinking of those Canaanite farmers was affected by their belief in Baal.—Num. 25:3, 5; Judg. 2:13; 1 Ki. 18:18. *w19.06* 3 ¶4-6

Thursday, March 11

This is what I continue praying, that your love may abound still more and more.—Phil. 1:9.

When the apostle Paul, Silas, Luke, and Timothy arrived in the Roman colony of Philippi, they found many people who were interested in the Kingdom message. These four zealous brothers helped form a congregation, and all the disciples began meeting together, likely at the home of a hospitable believer named Lydia. (Acts 16:40) The young congregation soon faced a challenge. Satan stirred up enemies of the truth who fiercely opposed the preaching activity of these loyal Christians. Paul and Silas were arrested, beaten with rods, and imprisoned. After they were released from prison, they visited the new disciples and encouraged them. Then Paul, Silas, and Timothy left the city while Luke apparently remained there. How did the newly formed congregation fare? With the help of Jehovah's spirit, the new believers forged ahead in Jehovah's service. (Phil. 2:12) Paul had every reason to be proud of them! *w19.08 8 ¶1-2*

Friday, March 12

The borrower is a slave to the lender.—Prov. 22:7.

Have you moved recently? A move can be surprisingly costly, and it is easy to get into debt. To minimize the debt, beware of buying on credit things you do not really need. (Prov. 22:3) When we are under emotional pressure, as when caring for sick loved ones, we may find it difficult to decide how much debt to take on. In such situations, remember that "prayer and supplication"

can help you to make wise decisions. In response to your prayers, Jehovah can grant you the peace that will "guard your hearts and your mental powers," helping you to think things through calmly. (Phil. 4:6, 7; 1 Pet. 5:7) Maintain good relationships. Share your feelings and experiences with good friends, especially those who may have experienced similar joys and challenges. Doing so can promote emotional healing. (Eccl. 4:9, 10) The friends you made before you moved will remain your friends. *w19.08 22 ¶9-10*

Saturday, March 13

They gathered them together to . . . Armageddon.—Rev. 16:16.

Why did Jehovah connect the final great war with Megiddo? Megiddo and the nearby Jezreel Valley were the sites of many battles. On occasion, Jehovah directly intervened in those battles. For example, "by the waters of Megiddo," God helped Israelite Judge Barak defeat a Canaanite army led by a chief named Sisera. Barak and the prophetess Deborah thanked Jehovah for their miraculous victory. They sang: "From heaven the stars fought . . . against Sisera. . . . So let all your enemies perish, O Jehovah, but let those who love you be like the sun rising in its glory." (Judg. 5:19-21, 31) At Armageddon, God's enemies will likewise perish, while those who love God will be saved. But there is one important difference between the two conflicts. At Armageddon, God's people will not fight. They will not even be armed! Their "strength will be in keeping calm and showing trust" in Jehovah and his heavenly armies.—Isa. 30:15; Rev. 19:11-15. *w19.09 9 ¶4-5*

Sunday, March 14

Come to me.
—Matt. 11:28.

One way to “come to” Jesus is by learning as much as we can about the things he said and did. (Luke 1: 1-4) Nobody else can do this for us—we must study these accounts for ourselves. We also “come to” Jesus by making the decision to get baptized and become a disciple of Christ. Another way to “come to” Jesus is by going to the congregation elders if we need help. Jesus uses these “gifts in men” to care for his sheep. (Eph. 4:7, 8, 11; John 21:16; 1 Pet. 5:1-3) We must take the initiative to ask for their help. We cannot expect the elders to read our minds and know what we need. Consider what a brother named Julian says: “I asked for help, and that shepherding visit turned out to be one of the best gifts I have ever received.” Loyal elders, such as the two who visited Julian, can help us to know “the mind of Christ,” that is, to understand and imitate his thinking and attitude. (1 Cor. 2:16; 1 Pet. 2:21) This really is one of the best gifts they can give us. *w19.09 21 ¶4-5*

Monday, March 15

I have other sheep, which are not of this fold.—John 10:16.

Throughout the Scriptures, we read of men and women of faith who were deeply influenced by holy spirit; yet they are not part of the 144,000. John the Baptist is one example. (Matt. 11:11) David is another. (Acts 2:34) They and countless others will be resurrected to life on a paradise earth. All of them—along with the great crowd—will have the opportunity to demon-

strate their loyalty to Jehovah and his sovereignty. Never before in human history has God united millions of people from all nations. Whether our hope is to live in heaven or on earth, we need to help as many as possible to become part of the great crowd of “other sheep.” Soon, Jehovah will bring the foretold great tribulation that will destroy the governments and religions that have afflicted mankind. What an outstanding privilege lies before all members of the great crowd—to serve Jehovah on earth forever!—Rev. 7:14. *w19.09 31 ¶18-19*

Tuesday, March 16

In the last days ridiculers will come with their ridicule.—2 Pet. 3:3.

As Satan’s system nears its end, we can expect to face ever more difficult tests of loyalty to God and his Kingdom. We will likely continue to be the target of ridicule. This may especially happen as our neutrality is tested more and more. We must strengthen our loyalty now so that we will remain loyal during the great tribulation. During the great tribulation, a change will take place regarding the brothers who take the lead on earth. At some point, all anointed ones who are still on earth will be gathered to heaven to share in the war of Armageddon. (Matt. 24:31; Rev. 2:26, 27) This means that the Governing Body will no longer be with us on earth. However, the great crowd will remain organized. Capable brothers from among the other sheep will take the lead. We will need to show our loyalty by supporting these brothers and by following their God-given direction. Our survival will depend on it! *w19.10 17 ¶13-14*

Wednesday, March 17

Where you go I will go . . . Where you die I will die.—Ruth 1:16, 17.

Naomi was a loyal woman who loved Jehovah. But after the death of her husband and two sons, she wanted to change her name from Naomi to “Mara,” meaning “Bitter.” (Ruth 1:3, 5, 20, ftn., 21) Naomi’s daughter-in-law Ruth stuck with her through her trials. Ruth not only provided practical help but also spoke consolingly to Naomi. Ruth expressed her love and support for Naomi in simple, sincere words. When a member of our spiritual family loses a marriage mate in death, he or she needs our support. A married couple can be likened to two trees that have grown up next to each other. Over the years, the roots of the trees intertwine. When one tree is uprooted and dies, the other tree can seriously be affected. Similarly, when someone loses a spouse to the enemy death, he or she may feel strong emotions for a long time. *w19.06 23 ¶12-13*

Thursday, March 18

Each one is tried by being drawn out and enticed by his own desire.—Jas. 1:14.

We must carefully control not only the type of entertainment we enjoy but also the amount of time we spend enjoying it. If we do not, we may spend more time on entertaining ourselves than we do on serving Jehovah. First, find out how much time you are actually spending on it. Why not keep a record for one week? Write on a calendar how many hours you spend watching television, surfing the Internet, and playing games on your mobile device. If you feel that you are spending an excessive

amount of time, try making a schedule. Assign time to the more important things first, and then allot time for entertainment. Next, ask Jehovah to help you stick to your schedule. That way you will have the time and energy you need for personal Bible study, family worship, congregation meetings, and serving Jehovah in the preaching and teaching work. You may also be less likely to feel guilty about the time you spend on entertainment. *w19.10 30 ¶14, 16; 31 ¶17*

Friday, March 19

I have the desire to do what is fine but not the ability to carry it out.—Rom. 7:18.

About 55 C.E., the Corinthians made an important decision. Learning of the needs of their brothers in Jerusalem and Judea, they resolved to donate to a combined effort to help them. (1 Cor. 16:1; 2 Cor. 8:6) A few months later, though, the apostle Paul learned that the Corinthians had not followed through. As a result, their gift would not likely be ready in time for it to be taken to Jerusalem along with the contributions from the other congregations. (2 Cor. 9:4, 5) The Corinthians had made a good decision, and Paul commended them for their outstanding faith and their earnest desire to be generous. But he also had to encourage them to complete what they had started. (2 Cor. 8:7, 10, 11) Their experience teaches us that even faithful Christians may struggle to implement a good decision. Why? Because of imperfection, we may simply procrastinate. Or unforeseen events might make it impossible for us to follow through. —Eccl. 9:11. *w19.11 26-27 ¶3-5*

Saturday, March 20

Take up the large shield of faith.

—Eph. 6:16.

Like a large shield that protects most of the body, your faith protects you from the immoral, violent, and godless influences of this corrupt system of things. As Christians, we wage a spiritual battle and our enemies include wicked spirits. (Eph. 6:10-12) How can you be sure that you are ready to face tests? First, you must pray for God's help. Then, you need to use God's Word to help you see yourself as God sees you. (Heb. 4:12) The Bible states: "Trust in Jehovah with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding." (Prov. 3: 5, 6) With that in mind, why not review some of the decisions you have made recently? For example, have you faced a serious financial problem? Did Jehovah's promise recorded at Hebrews 13:5 come to mind: "I will never leave you, and I will never abandon you"? Did that promise give you confidence that Jehovah would help you? If so, that indicates that you are keeping your shield of faith in good condition. *w19.11 14 ¶1, 4*

Sunday, March 21

Children are an inheritance from Jehovah.—Ps. 127:3, ftn.

A child requires and deserves considerable time and energy from each parent. So if a couple have a number of children who are close in age, the parents may find it challenging to give each child the needed attention. Some couples who had a number of young children confessed that they felt overwhelmed. A mother may struggle with feeling

drained physically and emotionally. Could that have an impact on her being able to study, pray, and share in the ministry regularly? A related challenge is being able to pay attention during Christian meetings and to benefit from them. Of course, a loving husband will do what he can to support his wife when their children need attention, both at meetings and at home. For example, he could help his wife with household chores. He will work hard to ensure that all benefit from a regular Family Worship program. And Christian fathers will regularly accompany the family in field service. *w19.12 24 ¶8*

Monday, March 22

A Jubilee is what that 50th year will become for you.—Lev. 25:11.

How did the Israelites benefit from the Jubilee? Well, suppose an Israelite had fallen into debt and, as a result, had been forced to sell his land to pay off the debt. During the Jubilee year, that land was to be returned to him. Therefore, the man could "return to his property," and the future inheritance of his children would not be lost. In another case, a man who fell on hard times might have had to sell one of his children—or even himself—into slavery in order to pay a debt. During the Jubilee year, the slave was to "return to his family." (Lev. 25:10) So no one would become a slave permanently with no hope! In addition Jehovah said: "No one among you should become poor, for Jehovah will surely bless you in the land that Jehovah your God is giving you to possess as an inheritance." (Deut. 15:4) What a contrast to what is happening in the world today, where the rich often get richer and the poor, poorer! *w19.12 8-9 ¶3-4*

Tuesday, March 23

Be wise, my son, and make my heart rejoice.—Prov. 27:11.

When faced with tests, Jesus prayed “with strong outcries and tears.” (Heb. 5:7) His fervent prayers flowed from a loyal heart and strengthened his desire to remain obedient. To Jehovah, Jesus’ prayers were like the aroma of sweet-smelling incense. Jesus’ entire life course deeply pleased his Father and vindicated His sovereignty. We can imitate Jesus by doing our best to live a life of integrity and of loyalty to Jehovah’s ways and laws. When faced with tests, we pray fervently for Jehovah’s help because we want to please him. We realize that Jehovah will not accept our prayers if we are involved in conduct that he condemns. However, if we live according to Jehovah’s standards, we can be confident that our heartfelt prayers will be like sweet-smelling incense to Jehovah. And we can be sure that our integrity and loyal obedience please our heavenly Father. *w19.11 21-22 ¶7-8*

Memorial Bible reading:
(Daytime events: Nisan 9)
Luke 19:29-44

Wednesday, March 24

Who really is the faithful and discreet slave?—Matt. 24:45.

In 1919, Jesus appointed a small group of anointed brothers as “the faithful and discreet slave.” That slave takes the lead in the preaching work and gives Christ’s followers “food at the proper time.” Satan and his world have done much to make the work of that faithful slave challenging, even impossible, to carry out from a human standpoint. Despite two world wars, relentless persecution, global economic crises,

and unjust treatment, the faithful and discreet slave has continued to provide spiritual food for Christ’s followers on earth. Think of the abundance of spiritual food available today, free of charge, in more than 900 languages! It is undeniable evidence of divine backing. Consider further proof of Jehovah’s blessing: the preaching work. The good news truly is being preached “in all the inhabited earth.”—Matt. 24:14. *w19.11 24 ¶15-16*

Memorial Bible reading:
(Daytime events: Nisan 10)
Luke 19:45-48; Matthew 21:18, 19;
21:12, 13

Thursday, March 25

[Christ] was favorably heard for his godly fear.—Heb. 5:7.

On the yearly Day of Atonement, the high priest had to burn the incense before he could offer up the sacrifices. In that way, he made sure that he would have God’s approval when offering up the sacrifices. While on earth, Jesus had to do something important—something more important than providing salvation for mankind—before he could offer up his life in sacrifice. What was that? By living a life of integrity and loyalty, Jesus had to prepare the way for Jehovah to accept his sacrifice. In that way, Jesus would prove that doing things Jehovah’s way is the right way to live. Jesus would vindicate his Father’s sovereignty, or way of ruling. Throughout his earthly life, Jesus maintained perfect obedience to Jehovah’s righteous standards. No temptation or trial could weaken his desire to defend his Father’s way of ruling. —Phil. 2:8. *w19.11 21 ¶6-7*

Memorial Bible reading:
(Daytime events: Nisan 11)
Luke 20:1-47

Friday, March 26

You are the ones who have stuck with me in my trials.—Luke 22:28.

Throughout Jesus' challenging ministry, the faithful apostles proved to be real friends to Jesus. (Prov. 18:24) Jesus valued such friends. During his ministry, none of his fleshly brothers put faith in him. (John 7:3-5) At one point, his relatives even thought that he had gone mad. (Mark 3:21) By contrast, Jesus could say the words of today's text to the faithful apostles on the night before his death. The apostles occasionally disappointed Jesus, but he looked past their faults and saw that they had faith in him. (Matt. 26:40; Mark 10:13, 14; John 6:66-69) On the last night with them before he was executed, Jesus said to these loyal men: "I have called you friends, because I have made known to you all the things I have heard from my Father." (John 15:15) Without a doubt, Jesus' friends were a great source of encouragement to him. *w19.04 11 ¶11-12*

Memorial Bible reading:
(Daytime events: Nisan 12)
Luke 22:1-6; Mark 14:1, 2, 10, 11

MEMORIAL DATE
After Sundown
Saturday, March 27

The spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are God's children.—Rom. 8:16.

How does a person know that he or she has the heavenly calling? The answer is clearly seen in the apostle Paul's words to those in Rome who were "called to be holy ones." In addition to the words of today's text, he told them: "You did not receive a spirit of slavery causing fear

again, but you received a spirit of adoption as sons, by which spirit we cry out: 'Abba, Father!'" (Rom. 1:7; 8:15) So by means of his holy spirit, God makes it clear to anointed ones that they have this heavenly calling. (1 Thess. 2:12) Jehovah leaves no doubt whatsoever in the minds and hearts of those who receive his invitation to go to heaven. (1 John 2:20, 27) Anointed Christians do not need anyone to confirm that they are anointed. *w20.01 22 ¶7-8*

Memorial Bible reading:
(Daytime events: Nisan 13)
Luke 22:7-13; Mark 14:12-16
(Events after sunset: Nisan 14)
Luke 22:14-65

Sunday, March 28

No one has love greater than this, that someone should surrender his life in behalf of his friends.

—John 15:13.

"The law of the Christ" is built on the best possible foundation—love. (Gal. 6:2) Jesus was motivated by love in everything he did. Pity, or tender compassion, is an expression of love. Moved by such pity, Jesus taught the crowds, healed the sick, fed the hungry, and raised the dead. (Matt. 14:14; 15:32-38; Mark 6:34; Luke 7:11-15) Jesus willingly put the needs of others ahead of his own. Above all, he showed great love by surrendering his life in behalf of others. We can imitate Jesus by putting the needs of others ahead of our own. We can also imitate him by cultivating tender compassion for people in our territory. When such compassion moves us to preach and teach the good news, we are obeying the law of the Christ. *w19.05 4 ¶8-10*

Memorial Bible reading:
(Daytime events: Nisan 14)
Luke 22:66-71

Monday, March 29

[Jehovah] sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives . . . , to send the crushed ones away free.

—Luke 4:18.

Jesus opened the way to liberty from the oppressive doctrines taught by the religious leaders. Many Jews back then were enslaved to traditions and mistaken beliefs. (Matt. 5:31-37; 15:1-11) Those who presumed to be spiritual guides were in a sense blind. In rejecting the Messiah and the spiritual enlightenment he offered, they remained in darkness and in sin. (John 9:1, 14-16, 35-41) By his correct teachings and good example, Jesus made known to meek ones a spiritual liberation. (Mark 1:22; 2:23-3:5) Also, Jesus provided liberation by freeing mankind from enslavement to inherited sin. On the basis of Jesus' sacrifice, God could forgive the sins of those who show faith and who accept the ransom He provided.—Heb. 10:12-18. *w19.12* 10 ¶8; 11 ¶10-11

Memorial Bible reading:
(Daytime events: Nisan 13)
Matthew 27:62-66

Tuesday, March 30

You were sealed by means of him with the promised holy spirit, which is a token in advance of our inheritance.—Eph. 1:13, 14; ftn.

Jehovah uses his holy spirit to make it absolutely clear to all who are anointed Christians that he has chosen them. In this way, the holy spirit is “a token [a pledge or promise]” given to assure them that in the future they will live forever in heaven and not on earth. (2 Cor. 1:21, 22) If a Christian is anointed, will he automatically receive his

heavenly reward? No. He is sure that he has been chosen to go to heaven. However, he must remember this admonition: “Brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and choosing sure for yourselves, for if you keep on doing these things, you will by no means ever fail.” (2 Pet. 1:10) So even though an anointed Christian has been called to go to heaven, he will get his reward only if he remains faithful.—Phil. 3:12-14; Heb. 3:1; Rev. 2:10. *w20.01* 21-22 ¶5-6

Memorial Bible reading:
(Daytime events: Nisan 16)
Luke 24:1-12

Wednesday, March 31

Thoughtless speech is like the stabs of a sword, but the tongue of the wise is a healing.—Prov. 12:18.

One reason why Job's three false comforters lacked compassion for him is that they saw only the outward appearance of his situation. As a result, they jumped to wrong conclusions and judged Job harshly. How can we avoid making a similar mistake? Realize that only Jehovah knows all the facts about a person's situation. Listen carefully to what the suffering person says. Do more than hear his words; try also to feel his pain. Only then will you be able to show genuine fellow feeling for your brother or sister. Compassion will hold us back from spreading harmful gossip about the problems others are facing. A gossip does not build up the congregation; he tears it down. (Prov. 20:19; Rom. 14:19) He can injure a person who is already suffering. (Eph. 4:31, 32) How much better it is when we look for a person's good qualities and think about how we can help him or her deal with trials! *w19.06* 21-22 ¶8-9

Thursday, April 1

A true friend shows love at all times.—Prov. 17:17.

Aristarchus, a Macedonian Christian from Thessalonica, proved to be a loyal friend to the apostle Paul. We first read about Aristarchus when Paul visited Ephesus on his third missionary tour. While accompanying Paul, Aristarchus was captured by a mob. (Acts 19:29) When he was finally set free, he did not seek his own safety but loyally stayed with Paul. Some months later, in Greece, Aristarchus was still at Paul's side even though opposers continued to threaten Paul's life. (Acts 20:2-4) In about 58 C.E. when Paul was sent to Rome as a prisoner, Aristarchus accompanied him on the long journey, and together they endured shipwreck along the way. (Acts 27:1, 2, 41) Once in Rome, he apparently spent some time in prison with Paul. (Col. 4:10) Little wonder that Paul felt encouraged and comforted by such a loyal companion! Like Aristarchus, we can be a loyal friend by sticking to our brothers and sisters not only in good times but also during "times of distress." *w20.01 9 ¶4-5*

Friday, April 2

Happy and holy is anyone having part in the first resurrection.—Rev. 20:6.

Someone who has been anointed may feel unworthy of this precious privilege. But he does not for one minute doubt that Jehovah has chosen him. His heart bursts with joy and appreciation when he thinks of his future prospects. (1 Pet. 1:3, 4) So does this mean that anointed ones want to die? The apostle Paul answers that question. He compared their human body to a tent

and said: "In fact, we who are in this tent groan, being weighed down, because we do not want to put this one off, but we want to put the other on, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life." (2 Cor. 5:4) These Christians have not lost interest in this life, wanting it to end quickly. On the contrary, they enjoy life and want to use each day to serve Jehovah with their family and friends. Yet, no matter what they are doing, they always remember the glorious hope that they have for the future.—1 Cor. 15:53; 2 Pet. 1:4; 1 John 3:2, 3. *w20.01 23 ¶12-13*

Saturday, April 3

Those whom Jehovah loves he disciplines.—Heb. 12:6.

As part of our training, our loving Father disciplines us when necessary. He does so in many ways. For instance, something we read in his Word or hear at our meetings may correct us. Or perhaps the help we need comes from the elders. Regardless of the form it takes, Jehovah's discipline is always motivated by love. (Jer. 30:11) Jehovah supports us through trials. Just as a caring human father supports his children during difficult times, our heavenly Father sustains us through trials. He uses his holy spirit to protect us from spiritual harm. (Luke 11:13) Jehovah also protects us emotionally. For example, he gives us a marvelous hope. That hope for the future helps us to endure difficulties. Consider this: No matter what bad things happen to us, our loving Father will undo any injury we suffer. Whatever trials we are facing, these are only temporary, but the blessings Jehovah gives are everlasting.—2 Cor. 4:16-18. *w20.02 5 ¶14-15*

Sunday, April 4

The spirit that has taken up residence within us keeps enviously longing.—Jas. 4:5.

We can win the battle against envy! Consider the example of Joseph's brothers. Years after they had mistreated Joseph, they met him in Egypt. Before Joseph revealed his real identity to his brothers, he tested them to find out if they had changed. He arranged a meal at which he gave the youngest brother, Benjamin, significantly more attention than he gave the others. (Gen. 43:33, 34) Yet, there is no indication that his brothers became envious of Benjamin. Instead, they showed genuine concern for their brother and for their father, Jacob. (Gen. 44:30-34) Because Joseph's brothers had let go of envy, they were able to help restore peace in their family. (Gen. 45:4, 15) Similarly, if we uproot any feelings of envy, we will help to keep our family and our congregation peaceful. Jehovah wants us to fight envy and to pursue peace. If we cultivate humility, contentment, and appreciation, we will leave no room for envy. *w20.02 19 ¶17-18*

Monday, April 5

*I love Jehovah because he hears my voice, my pleas for help.
—Ps. 116:1.*

One way to respond to Jehovah's love is by talking to him in prayer. Your love for God will grow as you tell him about your concerns and thank him for all that he does for you. And the bond between you and Jehovah will be strengthened as you see how he answers your prayers. You will become convinced that he understands you. But to grow close to Jehovah, you need to understand

his way of thinking. And you need to know what he wants from you. The only way you will gain that knowledge is by studying his Word, the Bible. So learn to appreciate it. Only the Bible contains the truth about Jehovah and his purpose for you. You show that you appreciate the Bible by reading it each day, by preparing for your personal Bible study session, and by applying what you learn. (Ps. 119:97, 99; John 17:17) Do you have a personal Bible reading schedule? Do you follow that schedule, making sure that you read the Bible each day? *w20.03 5 ¶18-9*

Tuesday, April 6

*He began to reason . . . with those who happened to be on hand.
—Acts 17:17.*

If you are unable to do much walking, you might be able to sit in a public area where you can preach to passersby. Or you might be able to witness informally, write letters, or do telephone witnessing. Many publishers with severe limitations experience much joy and satisfaction in these other avenues of the preaching work. Despite health limitations, you can accomplish your ministry fully. Paul said: "For all things I have the strength through the one who gives me power." (Phil. 4:13) Paul needed that power when he got sick on one of his missionary trips. He explained to the Galatians: "It was because of a physical illness that I had my first opportunity to declare the good news to you." (Gal. 4:13) Similarly, your health limitations may give you opportunities to declare the good news to others, such as to doctors, nurses, and health-care providers. Many of these people are at work when publishers may be calling at their homes. *w19.04 4-5 ¶10-11*

Wednesday, April 7

All those desiring to live with godly devotion in association with Christ Jesus will also be persecuted.—2 Tim. 3:12.

In 2018, more than 223,000 publishers of the good news lived in lands where our spiritual activities were banned or severely restricted. This is not surprising. True Christians expect to be persecuted. No matter where we live, secular authorities may suddenly and unexpectedly ban us from worshipping our loving God, Jehovah. If a government bans our worship, we might wrongly conclude that we do not have God's blessing. But remember, persecution does not mean that Jehovah is unhappy with us. Take, for example, the apostle Paul. He certainly had God's approval. He had the privilege of writing 14 letters of the Christian Greek Scriptures, and he was an apostle to the nations. Yet, he faced intense persecution. (2 Cor. 11:23-27) We learn from the apostle Paul's experience that Jehovah allows his faithful servants to be persecuted. *w19.07* 8 ¶1, 3

Thursday, April 8

We have a struggle . . . against the wicked spirit forces in the heavenly places.—Eph. 6:12.

One of the most heartwarming ways in which Jehovah shows his concern for us as his servants is by helping us to resist our enemies. Our main enemies are Satan and the demons. Jehovah warns us about these enemies, and he gives us what we need to resist them. (Eph. 6:10-13) When we accept Je-

hovah's help and rely on him completely, we can succeed in opposing the Devil. We can have the same kind of confidence that the apostle Paul had. He wrote: "If God is for us, who will be against us?" (Rom. 8:31) As true Christians, we are not fascinated with Satan and the demons. We focus most of our attention on learning about Jehovah and serving him. (Ps. 25:5) However, we do need to know the basic ways that Satan operates. Why? So that we can avoid being outwitted by him. —2 Cor. 2:11; *ftn. w19.04* 20 ¶1-2

Friday, April 9

Everyone must be quick to listen, slow to speak.—Jas. 1:19.

When dealing with a distressed person, are we a good listener? It involves more than staying still and saying nothing. We can show sympathy and tender compassion while listening. At times, a few tactful, warm words may show how we feel. You might say: "I am so sorry that happened to you!" Perhaps you could ask a question or two to make sure you understand what the anguished friend is saying. You might ask, "Can you please help me understand what you mean?" or "When you said that, I concluded . . . Did I get it right?" Such loving expressions may assure the person that you are truly listening, trying to make sure that you understand. (1 Cor. 13:4, 7) Be careful, though, to remain "slow to speak." Do not interrupt to give advice or to correct the person's thinking. And be patient! Rather than trying to provide solutions, we offer sympathy and tender compassion.—1 Pet. 3:8. *w19.05* 17-18 ¶15-17

Saturday, April 10

Husbands, continue loving your wives, just as the Christ also loved the congregation and gave himself up for it.—Eph. 5:25.

In the family, a husband is to love his wife “as the Christ does the congregation.” (Eph. 5:28, 29) A husband must imitate the self-sacrificing love of Christ by putting his wife’s needs and interests ahead of his own. Some men may find it difficult to show such love, perhaps because they were not raised in an environment where treating others fairly and lovingly was valued. It may be difficult for them to unlearn bad habits, but they must make these changes in order to obey the law of the Christ. A husband who shows self-sacrificing love gains his wife’s respect. A father who truly loves his children would never abuse them by what he says or does. (Eph. 4:31) Instead, he expresses his love and approval in ways that make his children feel safe and secure. Such a father gains the love and trust of his children. *w19.05 6 ¶21*

Sunday, April 11

Jehovah God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule as King over the house of Jacob forever.—Luke 1:32, 33.

What did those words of Gabriel mean to Mary? Did she take Gabriel’s words to mean that Jesus would replace King Herod—or one of his successors as the ruler in Israel? If Jesus did become king, Mary would be the queen mother, and her family would live in the royal palace. Yet, never do we read that Mary asked for a position of favor in the King-

dom. Mary was an extremely humble woman! Let us remember that our ultimate goal in studying God’s Word and our Christian publications is to draw closer to Jehovah. We also want to see more clearly “what sort of person” we are and what changes we need to make in order to please God. (Jas. 1:22-25; 4:8) At the beginning of each study period, then, we should ask Jehovah for his spirit. We should beg him to help us to benefit fully from the material and to see ourselves as he sees us. *w19.05 31 ¶18-19*

Monday, April 12

*I am . . . under great stress.
—1 Sam. 1:15.*

Sometimes, we must face a number of stressful problems at the same time. Consider the following examples. A Witness named John, who suffers from multiple sclerosis, was devastated when his wife abandoned him after 19 years of marriage. Then his two daughters stopped serving Jehovah. A couple named Bob and Linda faced a different set of challenges. They both lost their jobs, and then they lost their home. In addition to those problems, Linda was diagnosed with a potentially fatal heart-related illness, and another disease began to damage her immune system. We can be sure that our Creator and loving Father, Jehovah, understands how stress affects us. And he wants to help us deal with the challenges we face. (Phil. 4:6, 7) God’s Word contains many accounts that describe the challenges his servants endured. It also records how Jehovah helped them deal with those stressful situations. *w19.06 14 ¶2-3*

Tuesday, April 13

A true friend shows love at all times and is a brother who is born for times of distress.—Prov. 17:17.

When we do small acts of kindness to those who no longer have a marriage mate, we reassure them of our love. More than ever, they need good friends. How can you prove that you are their friend? You could invite them over for a simple meal. And you might offer to spend some time with them in recreation or in the field ministry. Another option would be to ask them occasionally to join you for family worship. If you do, you will make Jehovah happy, for he is “close to the broken-hearted” and is “a protector of widows.” (Ps. 34:18; 68:5) Soon, when God’s Kingdom rules the earth, all “distresses will be forgotten.” How we look forward to the time when “the former things will not be called to mind, nor will they come up into the heart.” (Isa. 65:16, 17) Until that day, let us support one another and prove by both our speech and our actions that we love all in our spiritual family.—1 Pet. 3:8. *w19.06* 25 ¶18-19

Wednesday, April 14

Jehovah is my helper; I will not be afraid.—Heb. 13:6.

Many years ago, *The Watchtower* observed: “The person who knows God best will trust him the most in time of test.” How true! To face persecution successfully, we must love Jehovah and trust in him completely. (Matt. 22:36-38; Jas. 5:11) Read the Bible daily with the goal of drawing closer to Jehovah. (Jas. 4:8) As you read, focus on Jehovah’s tender qualities. Feel his love and affection

expressed in the things he says and does. (Ex. 34:6) Some may struggle to believe that God loves them because they have never been shown love. If you face that challenge, try making a list each day of ways that Jehovah has shown mercy and kindness to you. (Ps. 78:38, 39; Rom. 8:32) As you consider your own experiences and meditate on what you have read in God’s Word, you will likely be able to list many things that Jehovah has done for you. The more you appreciate what Jehovah does, the stronger your bond with him will be.—Ps. 116:1, 2. *w19.07* 2-3 ¶4-5

Thursday, April 15

We are [not] the masters over your faith, but we are fellow workers for your joy, for it is by your faith that you are standing.

—2 Cor. 1:24.

Jehovah has not given us authority to make personal decisions for others. Someone who makes needless rules is not protecting his brother’s safety—he is trying to become the master of his brother’s faith. Satan the Devil will not stop trying to persecute Jehovah’s faithful servants. (1 Pet. 5:8; Rev. 2:10) Satan and his agents will try to ban our worship of Jehovah. However, there is no reason for us to be paralyzed by fear! (Deut. 7:21) Jehovah is on our side, and he will continue to support us even if our work is banned. (2 Chron. 32:7, 8) May we have the same resolve as did our first-century brothers, who told the rulers of their day: “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, judge for yourselves. But as for us, we cannot stop speaking about the things we have seen and heard.” —Acts 4:19, 20. *w19.07* 13 ¶18-20

Friday, April 16

The thoughts of a man's heart are like deep waters, but the discerning man draws them out.

—Prov. 20:5.

When preaching, we must try to understand the factors that have influenced the people we meet. The apostle Paul grew up among Jews. He surely had to adapt his preaching to Gentiles, people who knew little or nothing about Jehovah and the Scriptures. We might have to do some research so that we can empathize with and understand the people in our territory. (1 Cor. 9:20-23) Our goal is to find “deserving” ones. (Matt. 10:11) To be effective, we must invite people to express their opinions and then listen attentively. A brother in England asks people for their opinion about how to have a happy marriage, how to raise children, or how to cope with injustice. After listening to their comments, he says, “What do you think of this advice written nearly 2,000 years ago?” Then, without saying the word “Bible,” he shows them well-chosen scriptures on his phone. *w19.07 21-22 ¶7-8*

Saturday, April 17

God recommends his own love to us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.—Rom. 5:8.

How much should we love God? Jesus told a Pharisee: “You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind.” (Matt. 22: 36, 37) We do not want our love for God to be half-hearted. Rather, we want our love for him to grow stronger each day. We need to know God in order to love him. The Bible says: “Whoever does not love

has not come to know God, because God is love.” (1 John 4:8) The apostle Paul indicated that our love for God would grow stronger as we gain “accurate knowledge and full discernment” of Him. (Phil. 1:9) When we first studied the Bible, we developed love for God based on a limited knowledge of his wonderful qualities. Then the more we learned about Jehovah, the stronger our love for him became. No wonder we view regular Bible study and meditation on God’s Word as being among the most important things in our life!—Phil. 2:16. *w19.08 9 ¶4-5*

Sunday, April 18

Two are better than one.

—Eccl. 4:9.

If you are in a new assignment, you need to make new friends. Remember that to have a friend, you need to be a friend. Share the rich experiences Jehovah has given you, and let others sense your joy in Jehovah’s service. If you had to leave your assignment because of your mate’s health, do not blame him or her. On the other hand, if you yourself had health problems, do not feel guilty, thinking that you let your mate down. Remember, you are “one flesh,” and you promised before Jehovah to care for each other under all circumstances. (Matt. 19:5, 6) If you left an assignment because of an unplanned pregnancy, make sure your child knows that he is more important to you than your assignment was. Reassure your child that you view him as “a reward” from God. (Ps. 127:3-5) Also, tell him about the rewarding experiences you had in your assignment. Doing so can motivate your child to use his life in Jehovah’s joyful service just as you have done. *w19.08 22 ¶10-11*

Monday, April 19

I will show you the judgment on the great prostitute.—Rev. 17:1.

Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion, has brought much reproach on God's name. She has taught lies about God. She has prostituted herself spiritually by forming alliances with earth's rulers. She has used her power and influence to exploit her flocks. And she has spilled much blood, including the blood of God's servants. (Rev. 18:24; 19:2) Jehovah will destroy "the great prostitute" by means of "the ten horns" of "a scarlet-colored wild beast." That figurative wild beast represents the United Nations. The ten horns represent the current political powers supporting that organization. At God's appointed time, those political powers will turn on symbolic Babylon. They "will make her devastated and naked" by plundering her wealth and exposing her wickedness. (Rev. 17:3, 16) That swift destruction—as if in one day—will come as a shock to those who supported her, for she has long boasted: "I will never see mourning."—Rev. 18:7, 8. *w19.09* 10 ¶10-11

Tuesday, April 20

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me.—Matt. 11:29.

That invitation is open to all—Jesus will never reject anyone who sincerely wants to serve God. (John 6:37, 38) All of Christ's followers have been given the privilege of sharing in the work that Jehovah has asked Jesus to do. We can be certain that Jesus will always be there to help us do that work. (Matt. 28:18-20) Humble people were drawn to Jesus. (Matt. 19:13, 14; Luke 7:37, 38) Why? Consider the contrast between Je-

sus and the Pharisees. Those religious leaders were cold and arrogant. (Matt. 12:9-14) Jesus was warm and humble. The Pharisees were ambitious and proud of their high position in society. Jesus discouraged undue ambition, and he taught his disciples to view themselves as lowly servants. (Matt. 23:2, 6-11) The Pharisees dominated others through fear and intimidation. (John 9:13, 22) Jesus refreshed others by loving acts and kind words. Have you learned these lessons from Jesus? *w19.09* 20 ¶1; 21 ¶7-8; 23 ¶9

Wednesday, April 21

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

Meetings help us to draw closer to Jehovah. Our attitude toward attending meetings is a good indicator of how successful we will be at dealing with persecution in the future. (Heb. 10:24, 25) Why so? If we allow small obstacles to keep us from attending meetings now, what will happen in the future if we have to risk our safety to meet with fellow believers? On the other hand, if we develop a firm resolve to attend meetings, we will not give in when opposers try to stop us from gathering together. Now is the time to develop a love for our meetings. When we love to attend meetings, no opposition, not even a government ban, will stop us from obeying God rather than men. (Acts 5:29) Memorize your favorite scriptures. (Matt. 13:52) Your memory may not be perfect, but Jehovah can use his powerful holy spirit to bring those scriptures back to your mind. (John 14:26) Those scriptures will help you to stay close to Jehovah—and to endure faithfully. *w19.07* 3 ¶5; 4 ¶8-9

Thursday, April 22

Know this, that in the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here.—2 Tim. 3:1.

Were you born after the year 1914? If so, you have lived your entire life during “the last days” of the present system of things. All of us have heard about the events that Jesus foretold for this time. These include wars, food shortages, earthquakes, pestilences, an increasing of lawlessness, and the persecution of Jehovah’s people. (Matt. 24:3, 7-9, 12; Luke 21:10-12) We have also seen people behave in the way foretold by the apostle Paul. As worshippers of Jehovah, we are convinced that we are living during “the final part of the days.” (Mic. 4:1) Because so much time has passed since 1914, we must now be living in the last of “the last days.” Since the end is so near, we need to know the answers to some important questions: What events will occur at the end of “the last days”? And what does Jehovah expect us to do while we wait for those events? *w19.10 8 ¶1-2*

Friday, April 23

The one who endures to the end will be saved.—Matt. 24:13, ftn.

Our endurance does not depend on favorable circumstances. We can strengthen our endurance by relying on Jehovah. (Rom. 12:12) Jesus’ promise in today’s text means that we must remain faithful despite any challenges we face. By enduring each trial now, we can become stronger before the outbreak of the great tribulation. As with endurance, true courage comes from relying on Jehovah. How can we strengthen our reliance on him?

By reading his Word every day and meditating on how Jehovah saved his people in the past. (Ps. 68:20; 2 Pet. 2:9) When the nations attack us during the great tribulation, we will need to be courageous and to trust in Jehovah as never before. (Ps. 112:7, 8; Heb. 13:6) If we rely on Jehovah now, we will have the courage we need to face Gog’s attack. We are convinced that we can remain ever safe under Jehovah’s loving protection.—1 Cor. 13:8. *w19.10 18 ¶15-16*

Saturday, April 24

The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one.

—1 John 5:19.

The Devil controls this system of things, and he uses it to appeal to our natural human desires and fleshly weaknesses. (Eph. 2:1-3) His goal is to divide our affections so that we are not exclusively devoted to Jehovah. After writing about the end of Satan’s world and the new world to come, the apostle Peter stated: “Beloved ones, since you are awaiting these things, do your utmost to be found finally by him spotless and unblemished and in peace.” (2 Pet. 3:14) When we obey that counsel and do our best to remain morally and spiritually clean, we prove that we are exclusively devoted to Jehovah. Satan and his system will continue to tempt us to change our priorities. (Luke 4:13) But despite any challenges we face, we will not allow anyone or anything to take Jehovah’s place in our heart. We are determined to give Jehovah what he alone deserves—our exclusive devotion! *w19.10 27 ¶4; 31 ¶18-19*

Sunday, April 25

I was troubled by my sin.

—Ps. 38:18.

Some types of anxiety are good. For example, we are properly concerned about pleasing Jehovah and Jesus. (1 Cor. 7:32) If we commit a serious sin, we are anxious to restore our friendship with God. We are also anxious to please our marriage mate and to care for the welfare of our family members and fellow believers. (1 Cor. 7:33; 2 Cor. 11:28) On the other hand, undue anxiety may cause us to constantly worry about having enough food and clothing. (Matt. 6:31, 32) To ease that worry, we might focus on gaining material possessions. If we allow that to happen, our faith in Jehovah will become weak and we will suffer serious spiritual harm. (Mark 4:19; 1 Tim. 6:10) Or we might fall victim to becoming overly concerned about gaining the approval of others. We may then fear being ridiculed or persecuted by men more than we fear displeasing Jehovah. To protect ourselves from that danger, we must beg Jehovah to give us the faith and courage we need to face the challenge. —Prov. 29:25; Luke 17:5. *w19.11* 15 ¶6-7

Monday, April 26

If any one of you is lacking in wisdom, let him keep asking God, for he gives generously to all.

—Jas. 1:5.

Some important decisions we would never change. For example, we stick to our decision to serve Jehovah, and we are determined to be faithful to our marriage mate. (Matt. 16:24; 19:6) Other decisions, though,

may need to be adjusted. Why? Because circumstances change. What steps can help us to make the best decisions possible? Pray for wisdom. In some respects, we are all “lacking in wisdom.” So rely on Jehovah both when making a decision and when reviewing that decision. Jehovah will then help you to make wise choices. Do thorough research. Consult God’s Word, read the publications of Jehovah’s organization, and talk to people whom you can trust. (Prov. 20:18) Such research is vital before making a decision to change jobs, to move, or to choose appropriate education to help you support your ministry. *w19.11* 27 ¶6-8

Tuesday, April 27

Miserable man that I am! Who will rescue me from the body undergoing this death?—Rom. 7:24.

Happily, God arranged a way for us to be rescued, or freed from sin. Jesus is the key to that liberation. In the eighth century before our Common Era, the prophet Isaiah foretold a future grand liberation. That grand liberation would accomplish far more than did the liberation during Israel’s Jubilee year. He wrote: “The spirit of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah is upon me, because Jehovah anointed me to declare good news to the meek. He sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives.” (Isa. 61:1) To whom does that prophecy apply? That important prophecy about liberation began to be fulfilled after Jesus started his ministry. When he went to the synagogue in his hometown of Nazareth, Jesus read those very words of Isaiah to the Jews assembled there and applied them to himself.—Luke 4:16-19. *w19.12* 9-10 ¶6-8

Wednesday, April 28

We mustered up boldness by means of our God to tell you the good news of God in the face of much opposition.—1 Thess. 2:2.

To face persecution, you need courage. If you feel that you lack that quality, what can you do? Remember that true courage does not depend on your size, strength, or ability. Consider the example of young David when he faced Goliath. Compared with that giant, David was smaller, weaker, and poorly armed. David did not even have a sword. Yet, he was full of courage. David boldly ran to fight that arrogant giant. Why was David so courageous? He firmly believed that Jehovah was with him. (1 Sam. 17:37, 45-47) David did not concentrate on how big Goliath was compared with him. Instead, he focused on how tiny Goliath was compared to Jehovah. What do we learn from this account? We will feel courageous if we are confident that Jehovah is with us and if we are certain that our opposers are tiny in comparison to Almighty God.—2 Chron. 20:15; Ps. 16:8. *w19.075 ¶11-13*

Thursday, April 29

My fellow workers . . . have become a source of great comfort to me.—Col. 4:11.

Tychicus stands out as a loyal Christian companion to the apostle Paul. (Acts 20:4) About 55 C.E., Paul organized the collection of relief funds for Judean Christians, and he may have let Tychicus help with this important assignment. (2 Cor. 8:18-20) Later when Paul was imprisoned in Rome for the first time, Tychicus served as his personal messenger. He delivered Paul's letters and messages of encouragement to the

congregations in Asia. (Col. 4:7-9) Tychicus remained Paul's trustworthy friend. (Titus 3:12) Not all Christians back then were as dependable as Tychicus. About 65 C.E., during his second imprisonment, Paul wrote that many Christian men in the province of Asia avoided associating with him, possibly because they were afraid of opposers. (2 Tim. 1:15) In contrast, Paul could rely on Tychicus and gave him yet another assignment. (2 Tim. 4:12) Paul surely appreciated having a good friend like Tychicus. *w20.01 10 ¶7-8*

Friday, April 30

It is to us God has revealed them.—1 Cor. 2:10.

Perhaps you are wondering if you have been anointed by holy spirit. If so, think about these important questions: Do you have a burning desire to do Jehovah's will? Do you feel that you are especially zealous in the preaching work? Are you a keen student of God's Word who loves to learn about "the deep things of God"? Do you feel that Jehovah has given you wonderful results in the preaching work? Do you have a deep inner feeling of responsibility to help others spiritually? Have you seen proof that Jehovah has helped you in many specific ways in your life? If you answer these questions with a resounding yes, does this prove that you now have the heavenly calling? No, it does not. Why not? Because all of God's servants can feel this way. In fact, if you are wondering whether you have been anointed by holy spirit, such doubt in itself would mean that you have not been. Those called by Jehovah do not wonder whether they have been anointed or not! They know! *w20.01 23 ¶14*

Saturday, May 1

Instruct us about what we should do with the child.—Judg. 13:8.

What can parents do to help their children learn to love Jehovah? Pray for Jehovah's help, as Manoah did. Also, teach by example. What you say is important; however, what you do will likely have a bigger impact on your child. We can be sure that Joseph and Mary set an excellent example for their children, including Jesus. Joseph worked hard to support his family. In addition, Joseph encouraged his household to appreciate spiritual things. (Deut. 4:9, 10) He took his family with him to Jerusalem "from year to year" to celebrate the Passover. (Luke 2:41, 42) Some fathers in his day may have viewed such a family trip as inconvenient, time-consuming, and expensive. Yet, Joseph obviously appreciated spiritual things and taught his children to do the same. Also, Mary knew the Scriptures well. By her words and actions, she no doubt taught her children to love God's Word. *w19.12* 24-25 ¶9-12

Sunday, May 2

*I am fleshly, sold under sin.
—Rom. 7:14.*

We see proof of Jehovah's love for us in the way he responded to the problems that first arose within his earthly family. When Adam disobeyed his heavenly Father, he lost his place in Jehovah's happy family, both for himself and for his descendants. (Rom. 5:12) Jehovah, however, stepped in to help. Jehovah punished Adam, but he did not leave Adam's unborn offspring without hope. He immediately prom-

ised that obedient humans would be brought back into his family. (Gen. 3:15; Rom. 8:20, 21) Jehovah arranged for this on the basis of the ransom sacrifice of his beloved Son, Jesus. By giving his Son in our behalf, Jehovah proved how dearly he loves us. (John 3:16) He is the ideal Father. He hears our prayers and provides what we need, both materially and spiritually. He trains and supports us. He also has wonderful blessings in store for us. It warms our heart to know that our Father loves and cares for us! *w20.02* 6 ¶16-17; 7 ¶20

Monday, May 3

*When anxieties overwhelmed me,
you comforted and soothed me.
—Ps. 94:19.*

Have you ever been plagued by anxiety? Perhaps it was because of what others have said or done or because of what you have said or done. For example, you may have made a mistake, and you worry that Jehovah will never forgive you. To make matters worse, you may believe that because you are overwhelmed by anxiety, you must lack faith—you must be a bad person. Consider, though, a few Scriptural examples. Hannah, the prophet Samuel's mother, was a woman of great faith. Yet, she was overcome by anxiety when a member of her household treated her badly. (1 Sam. 1:7) The apostle Paul had strong faith, but he was overwhelmed with "anxiety for all the congregations." (2 Cor. 11:28) King David had such strong faith that Jehovah developed a special fondness for him. (Acts 13:22) Even so, David made mistakes that caused him to suffer bouts of crushing anxiety. (Ps. 38:4) Jehovah comforted and soothed each one of them. *w20.02* 20 ¶1-2

Tuesday, May 4

If anyone wants to come after me, let him disown himself.

—Matt. 16:24.

When you make a dedication, you approach Jehovah in earnest prayer and tell him that you will use your life to serve him forever. When you dedicate yourself to God, you “disown” yourself. You now belong to Jehovah, which is a great privilege. (Rom. 14:8) You are telling him that from now on, you will be focused on serving him and not on pleasing yourself. Your dedication is a vow—a solemn promise made to God. Jehovah does not force us to make such a vow. But when we do, he expects us to fulfill it. (Ps. 116:12, 14) Your dedication is personal and private; it is between you and Jehovah. Baptism is public; it takes place in front of others, usually at an assembly or a convention. When you get baptized, you show others that you have already dedicated yourself to Jehovah. So your baptism lets others know that you love Jehovah your God with your whole heart, soul, mind, and strength and that you are determined to serve him forever. —Mark 12:30. *w20.03* 9 ¶4-5

Wednesday, May 5

Let no one lead you astray.

—2 Thess. 2:3.

Satan blurs people’s view of Jehovah. After the death of Jesus’ apostles, some who claimed to be Christians began to spread false teachings. (Acts 20:29, 30) These apostates started to blur the identity of the only true God. For example, they stopped using the divine name in their copies of the Bible and preferred such expressions as “Lord.” By removing God’s personal

name and replacing it with “Lord,” they made it difficult for a Bible reader to see how Jehovah is different from the other “lords” mentioned in the Scriptures. (1 Cor. 8:5) They used the same term, “Lord,” for Jehovah and for Jesus, making it difficult to understand that Jehovah and his Son are different individuals with distinct positions. (John 17:3) This confusion contributed to the development of the doctrine of the Trinity—a doctrine not taught in God’s Word. As a result, many see God as mysterious and believe that we cannot know him. What a lie!—Acts 17:27. *w19.06* 5 ¶11

Thursday, May 6

Fully accomplish your ministry.

—2 Tim. 4:5.

One way to accomplish our ministry more fully is by improving our skills in the preaching work. (Prov. 1:5; 1 Tim. 4:13, 15) How privileged we are that Jehovah allows us to be his “fellow workers”! (1 Cor. 3:9) When you “make sure of the more important things” and focus on the Christian ministry, you will “serve Jehovah with rejoicing.” (Phil. 1:10; Ps. 100:2) As one of God’s ministers, you can be confident that he will give you the power you need to accomplish your ministry no matter what challenges or limitations you may face. (2 Cor. 4:1, 7; 6:4) Whether your circumstances allow you to have a small or a great share in witnessing, you can “have cause for rejoicing” when you are whole-souled in your ministry. (Gal. 6:4) When you fully accomplish your ministry, you show your love for Jehovah and for your fellow man. “By doing this you will save both yourself and those who listen to you.” —1 Tim. 4:16. *w19.04* 6 ¶15; 7 ¶17

Friday, May 7

Satan . . . is misleading the entire inhabited earth.—Rev. 12:9.

A major way in which Satan and the demons try to mislead people is through spiritism. Those who practice spiritism claim to know or control things that humans cannot normally know or control. For example, some claim to be able to know the future by using divination or astrology. Others may act as though they were speaking to those who have died. Some practice witchcraft or magic, and they may try to cast a spell on another person. A survey conducted in 18 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean found that about a third of the people surveyed believe in magic, witchcraft, or sorcery, and nearly as many believe that it is possible to communicate with spirits. Another survey was conducted in 18 countries in Africa. There, on average, more than half of the people surveyed say that they believe in witchcraft. Of course, wherever we live, we must be on guard against spiritism. *w19.04 20-21 ¶3-4*

Saturday, May 8

Watch that among you there is no one who is sexually immoral.—Heb. 12:16.

Jehovah God hates all forms of wickedness. (Ps. 5:4-6) How he must hate child sexual abuse—an especially repugnant wicked deed! In imitation of Jehovah, we as his Witnesses abhor child abuse and do not tolerate it in the Christian congregation. (Rom. 12:9) Any act of child abuse is absolutely opposed to “the law of the Christ”! (Gal. 6:2) All that Jesus taught both by word and

by example is built on love and promotes justice. Governed by this law, true Christians treat children in a way that makes them feel safe and genuinely loved. But child abuse is a selfish, unjust act that makes a child feel unsafe and unloved. Sadly, true Christians have been affected by it. Why? “Wicked men and impostors” abound, and some may try to enter the congregation. (2 Tim. 3:13) In addition, some professing to be a part of the congregation have succumbed to perverted fleshly desires and have sexually abused children. *w19.05 8 ¶1-3*

Sunday, May 9

A righteous man's supplication has a powerful effect.—Jas. 5:16.

A person who is very low in spirit may feel unworthy to approach Jehovah in prayer. If we want to comfort such a person, we may offer a prayer with that one, using his or her name. We may express to Jehovah how dear the downhearted one is to us and to the congregation. We may ask Jehovah to soothe and comfort that precious sheep of his. Prayers of that kind can be profoundly comforting. Think before you speak. Thoughtless words can hurt. Kind words can heal. (Prov. 12:18) So pray to Jehovah for help to find kind, comforting, soothing words. Keep in mind that no words are more powerful than Jehovah's own expressions contained in the Bible. (Heb. 4:12) When we comfort others, we remind them of Jehovah's love. And we must never forget that Jehovah is also a God of justice. No wicked act of abuse is really hidden. Jehovah sees all, and he will not let unrepentant wrongdoers go unpunished.—Num. 14:18. *w19.05 18 ¶18; 19 ¶19, 21*

Monday, May 10

Look out that no one takes you captive by means of the philosophy and empty deception according to human tradition.—Col. 2:8.

Satan wants to turn us against Jehovah. To achieve his goal, he tries to influence our thinking, in effect, to bring our mind into captivity and make it obedient to him. He tries to persuade or to deceive us into following him by appealing to our desires. (Col. 2:4) Are we really in serious danger of being misled by Satan? Yes, we are! Remember, Paul did not write the warning recorded at Colossians 2:8 to unbelievers. He wrote it to Christians who had been anointed with holy spirit. (Col. 1:2, 5) Those Christians were in danger back then, and we are in even greater danger today. (1 Cor. 10:12) Why? Satan has been confined to the vicinity of the earth, and he is focused on misleading God's loyal servants. (Rev. 12:9, 12, 17) In addition, we are living during a time when wicked men and impostors are advancing "from bad to worse."—2 Tim. 3:1, 13. *w19.06 2 ¶1-2*

Tuesday, May 11

It is enough! Now, O Jehovah, take my life away.—1 Ki. 19:4.

Elijah became afraid when Queen Jezebel threatened to kill him. So he fled to the area of Beersheba. He became so discouraged that "he asked that he might die." What made him feel that way? Elijah was an imperfect man, "a man with feelings like ours." (Jas. 5:17) Perhaps he felt overwhelmed by stress and physical exhaustion. It seems that Elijah thought that his efforts to promote pure worship had been

futile, that nothing in Israel had improved, and that he was the only one still serving Jehovah. (1 Ki. 18:3, 4, 13; 19:10, 14) Jehovah understood Elijah's feelings and did not scold him for expressing them. Instead, he helped Elijah regain strength. (1 Ki. 19:5-7) Later, Jehovah kindly adjusted Elijah's thinking by demonstrating His awesome power. Jehovah then pointed out that he still had 7,000 in Israel who refused to worship Baal. (1 Ki. 19:11-18) In practical ways, Jehovah showed Elijah that He loved him. *w19.06 15-16 ¶5-6*

Wednesday, May 12

Be in subjection to the older men. . . . Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because God opposes the haughty ones.
—1 Pet. 5:5.

Avoid being presumptuous. If we heed the direction we receive from trusted, responsible brothers, we will avoid problems. For example, in a land where the work is under ban, the responsible brothers had directed that the publishers not leave printed literature in the ministry. Yet, a pioneer brother in that location felt that he knew better and distributed literature. What was the result? Shortly after he and some others finished a period of informal witnessing, they were questioned by the police. Apparently, officials had followed them and were able to retrieve the literature they had distributed. What do we learn from this experience? We need to follow direction even if we feel that we know better. Jehovah always blesses us when we cooperate with the brothers whom he has appointed to take the lead among us.—Heb. 13:7, 17. *w19.07 12 ¶17*

Thursday, May 13

All those desiring to live with godly devotion in association with Christ Jesus will also be persecuted.—2 Tim. 3:12.

On the night before our Lord Jesus was put to death, he said that all who choose to be his disciples will be hated. (John 17:14) Up until now, faithful Christian Witnesses of Jehovah have been persecuted by those who oppose true worship. As the end of this system of things draws closer, we expect our enemies to oppose us even more. (Matt. 24:9) How can we prepare ourselves now to face persecution? We do not need to imagine all the things that could happen to us. If we did, we could be overwhelmed with fear and anxiety. We could allow imagined threats to defeat us even before any real test comes. (Prov. 12:25; 17:22) Fear is a powerful weapon that our “adversary, the Devil,” tries to use against us. (1 Pet. 5:8, 9) It is vital, then, that we strengthen our bond with Jehovah and do it now. *w19.07 2 ¶1-3*

Friday, May 14

Go, therefore, and make disciples of people of all the nations.
—Matt. 28:19.

The apostles must have been full of anticipation as they gathered on a mountainside. Jesus had, after his resurrection, arranged for them to meet him at that location. (Matt. 28:16) That was perhaps the occasion when “he appeared to more than 500 brothers at one time.” (1 Cor. 15:6) Why had Jesus called his disciples to this meeting? To give them an exciting mission: “Go, therefore,

and make disciples of people of all the nations.” (Matt. 28:18-20) The disciples who heard Jesus’ words became part of the first-century Christian congregation. The primary mission of that congregation was to make more disciples of Christ. Today, there are tens of thousands of true Christian congregations throughout the earth, and the primary mission of those congregations remains the same. *w19.07 14 ¶1-2*

Saturday, May 15

The earth remains forever.
—Eccl. 1:4.

A traveling overseer in Norway says that people who are not inclined to talk about God are often willing to talk about world conditions. After greeting people, he says: “What do you think about our prospects for a better future? Does our best hope lie with politicians, scientists, or someone else?” After listening carefully, he reads or quotes a scripture that points to a bright future. Some are intrigued by the Bible’s promise that the earth will last forever and that good people will live on it eternally. (Ps. 37:29) We do well to use a variety of approaches with those we meet. Why? Because what attracts one may repel another. Some do not mind discussing God or the Bible, while others respond better to a more indirect approach. In either case, we should take the opportunity to speak to all sorts of people. (Rom. 1:14-16) Jehovah is the one who makes the truth grow in the hearts of those who are righteously inclined.—1 Cor. 3:6, 7. *w19.07 22-23 ¶10-11*

Sunday, May 16

If this is how God loved us, then we are also under obligation to love one another.—1 John 4:11.

God's great love for us will move us to love our brothers. (1 John 4: 20, 21) We might think that love for our brothers and sisters will come naturally. After all, we worship Jehovah and strive to imitate his fine qualities. We follow the example of Jesus, whose love was so great that he gave his life in our behalf. Yet, we may at times find it difficult to obey the commandment to love one another. Euodia and Syntyche were zealous sisters who had served "side by side" with the apostle Paul. Yet, they had perhaps allowed personal differences to cause a rift between them. In his letter to the congregation where those sisters served, Paul specifically named Euodia and Syntyche and gave them pointed admonition "to be of the same mind." (Phil. 4: 2, 3) Paul felt compelled to instruct the entire congregation: "Keep doing all things free from murmuring and arguments."—Phil. 2:14. *w19.08 9 ¶6-7*

Monday, May 17

Go on carrying the burdens of one another.—Gal. 6:2.

Commendably, many congregations and individuals do what they can to enable those in full-time service to remain in their assignments. They do so by encouraging them to continue their work, by giving them financial or other material support, or by helping them to care for their family members back home. If those in full-time service receive a new assignment to your congregation, do

not view the change of assignment as an indication that they somehow failed or were disciplined. Instead, help them to make the transition easier. Give them a warm welcome and commend them for the work they have done, even if poor health limits what they can do at present. Get to know them. Learn from their wealth of knowledge, training, and experience. Initially, those receiving a new assignment may need your help to obtain housing, transportation, work, and other basic necessities. *w19.08 23-24 ¶12-13*

Tuesday, May 18

*I [will] sanctify myself through you before their eyes, O Gog.
—Ezek. 38:16.*

Gog will trust in his "arm of flesh"—his military might. (2 Chron. 32:8) We will trust in Jehovah our God—a stand that will seem foolish to the nations. After all, the gods of the once powerful Babylon the Great did not save her from "the wild beast" and its "ten horns"! (Rev. 17: 16) So Gog will expect an easy victory. "Like clouds covering the land," he will attack Jehovah's people. But Gog will soon see that he has marched into a trap. Like Pharaoh at the Red Sea, Gog will learn that he is fighting against Jehovah. (Ex. 14:1-4; Ezek. 38:3, 4, 18, 21-23) Christ and his heavenly armies will defend God's people and crush Gog's hordes. (Rev. 19:11, 14, 15) But what about Jehovah's chief enemy, Satan, whose lying propaganda led the nations to Armageddon? Jesus will hurl him and his demons into an abyss, where they will be locked away for a thousand years.—Rev. 20: 1-3. *w19.09 11-12 ¶14-15*

Wednesday, May 19

Keep in expectation of it! For it will without fail come true.

—Hab. 2:3.

We naturally long for the good things that Jehovah has promised. However, when the fulfillment of our expectations appears to be delayed, it may dampen our enthusiasm. We could even lose heart. (Prov. 13:12) This happened at the beginning of the 20th century. At that time, many anointed Christians expected to receive their heavenly reward in 1914. When that did not happen, how did faithful ones deal with their delayed expectations? They did not give up the race for life, because their primary focus was on faithfully doing God's will, not on gaining their reward. They were determined to run the race with endurance. No doubt you long to see Jehovah vindicate his name and sovereignty and fulfill all his promises. Be assured that these things will happen in Jehovah's due time. Until then, may we keep busy serving our God, never allowing postponed expectations to discourage us or slow us down. *w19.08 4-5 ¶9-10*

Thursday, May 20

I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart.—Matt. 11:29.

Ask yourself: 'Do I have a reputation for being mild-tempered and humble? Do I willingly do menial jobs to serve others? Am I kind to others?' Jesus created a peaceful, inviting environment for his fellow workers, and he enjoyed training them. (Luke 10:1, 19-21) He encouraged his disciples to ask questions, and he wanted to hear their opinions. (Matt. 16:13-16) Much like plants in a greenhouse, the dis-

ciples flourished. They absorbed the lessons that Jesus taught and produced fruit in the form of good works. Do you have a position of authority? If so, ask yourself: 'What kind of environment do I create at work or at home? Do I promote peace? Do I encourage others to ask questions? And am I willing to hear their opinions?' Never would we want to be like the Pharisees, who resented those who questioned them and persecuted those who expressed an opinion contrary to their own.—Mark 3:1-6; John 9:29-34. *w19.09 20 ¶1; 23 ¶9-11*

Friday, May 21

Whenever it is that they are saying, "Peace and security!" then sudden destruction is to be instantly on them.—1 Thess. 5:3.

World leaders sometimes use similar expressions when they talk about stabilizing relationships between nations. However, the announcement of "peace and security" that the Bible describes will be different. Why? When this happens, people may think that world leaders have succeeded in making the world a safer, more secure place. But in reality, "sudden destruction" will follow as the "great tribulation" unfolds. (Matt. 24:21) We do not know what will lead up to the declaration or how it will be made. And we do not know whether it will involve just one proclamation or a series of announcements. Whatever happens, we do know this: We should not be fooled into thinking that world leaders can actually achieve world peace. Rather, it is the signal that "Jehovah's day" is about to begin!—1 Thess. 5:2. *w19.10 8-9 ¶3-4*

Saturday, May 22

During that time your people will escape.—Dan. 12:1.

The war of Armageddon will be the grand finale to the conclusion of this system of things. However, we have nothing to fear. Why? Because this will be God's fight. (Prov. 1: 33; Ezek. 38:18-20; Zech. 14:3) At Jehovah's signal, Jesus Christ will lead the charge. He will have alongside him the resurrected anointed ones and myriads of angels. Together, they will war against Satan, his demons, and their earthly forces. (Rev. 6:2; 17:14) Jehovah has guaranteed: "No weapon formed against you will have any success." (Isa. 54: 17) "A great crowd" of Jehovah's faithful worshippers will "come out of the great tribulation" alive! Then they will continue to render him sacred service. (Rev. 7:9, 13-17) How the Bible fills us with confidence about the future! We know that "Jehovah protects the faithful." (Ps. 31: 23) All who love and praise Jehovah will delight to see him vindicate his holy name.—Ezek. 38:23. *w19.10* 18-19 ¶17-18

Sunday, May 23

A true friend shows love at all times.—Prov. 17:17.

As we move deeper into "the last days," we may face severe adversities. (2 Tim. 3:1) For example, after an election campaign, a country in western Africa was torn apart by social unrest and mob violence. For over six months, our brothers and sisters could not move about freely because they were in a combat zone. What helped them to cope with such hardships? Some found refuge in the homes of brothers liv-

ing in a safer area. One brother reported: "In such a situation, I appreciated having friends around me. We were able to encourage one another." When "the great tribulation" strikes, we will appreciate having good friends who love us. (Rev. 7:14) So it is urgent that we build strong bonds of friendship now. (1 Pet. 4: 7, 8) Why? Because our enemies will try to divide us by means of lies and misinformation. They will try to turn us against one another. But their efforts will be wasted. They will be unable to break our bonds of love. *w19.11* 2 ¶1-2; 7 ¶19

Monday, May 24

You will be able to extinguish all the wicked one's burning arrows.—Eph. 6:16.

Satan, "the father of the lie," uses those under his control to spread lies about Jehovah and about our brothers and sisters. (John 8:44) For instance, apostates publish lies and distort facts about Jehovah's organization on websites and through television and other media. Those lies are among Satan's "burning arrows." How should we respond if someone confronts us with such lies? We reject them! Why? Because we have faith in Jehovah and we trust our brothers. In fact, we avoid all contact with apostates. We do not allow anyone or anything, including curiosity, to draw us into arguing with them nor to weaken our faith. Have you resisted the urge to listen to and argue with apostates about the lies they spread? That is commendable. But we must remain on guard because Satan has other weapons that he tries to use against us. *w19.11* 15 ¶8; 16 ¶11

Tuesday, May 25

Jehovah examines the motives.

—Prov. 16:2.

When making decisions, analyze your motives. Jehovah wants us to be honest in all things. So when we make decisions, we too want to be honest with ourselves and with others about our motives. If we were not completely honest, we would likely have difficulty sticking to the decision. For example, a young brother may decide to become a regular pioneer. After some time, however, he struggles to fulfill the hour requirement and he finds little joy in his ministry. He may have thought that his main motive for pioneering was his desire to please Jehovah. Could it be, though, that he was primarily motivated by a desire to please his parents or some person he admired? Consider the situation of a Bible student who decides to give up smoking. At first, he struggles, doing well for a week or two, but then he gives in to the urge to smoke. Finally, though, he is successful! His love for Jehovah and his desire to please Him have helped him to conquer the habit. —Col. 1:10; 3:23. *w19.11 27 ¶9; 29 ¶10*

Wednesday, May 26

Carry on as citizens in a manner worthy of the good news about the Christ.—Phil. 1:27, ftn.

The apostle Paul was confident that he would finish the race and reach his goal. As an anointed Christian, he looked forward to gaining “the prize of the upward call of God.” However, to reach that goal, he realized that he had to keep “pressing on.” (Phil. 3:14) Paul shared with the Philippians an interesting compari-

son to help them keep focused on their goal. Paul reminded the Philippians of their heavenly citizenship. (Phil. 3:20) Why did such citizenship matter? In those days, Roman citizenship was highly prized. However, anointed Christians had a much better citizenship, one that would bring far greater advantages. Roman citizenship paled in comparison! Anointed Christians today set a fine example as they press on toward their goal of everlasting life in heaven. *w19.08 6 ¶14-15*

Thursday, May 27

If the Son sets you free, you will be truly free.

—John 8:36.

That freedom was certainly greater than what could be gained during Israel’s Jubilee year! (Lev. 25: 8-12) For instance, a man set free during the Jubilee might again become a slave, and in any case, he would eventually die. On the day of Pentecost 33 C.E., Jehovah anointed with holy spirit the apostles and other faithful men and women. He adopted them as his sons so that in time they would be resurrected to heaven to reign with Jesus. (Rom. 8: 2, 15-17) These were the first to benefit from the liberty that Jesus announced in the synagogue of Nazareth. (Luke 4:16-19, 21) Those men and women were no longer enslaved to false teachings and unscriptural practices of the Jewish religious leaders. God also considered them liberated from the deadly effects of sin. The symbolic Jubilee that began with the anointing of Christ’s followers in 33 C.E. will end at the conclusion of Jesus’ Thousand Year Reign. *w19.12 11 ¶11-12*

Friday, May 28

Bad associations spoil useful habits.—1 Cor. 15:33.

Parents, help your children to choose good associates. Both mother and father need to know whom their children are associating with and what they are doing. That includes knowing whom their children are communicating with through social media and on their mobile phone. Those associates can impact how the children think and act. Many parents exert themselves to arrange opportunities for their children to associate with those who set a good example in serving God. For instance, N'Déni and Bomine, a couple in Côte d'Ivoire, often invited the circuit overseer to stay in their home. N'Déni relates: "This had a very good effect on our son. He began pioneering and now serves as a substitute circuit overseer." The earlier parents begin training their children, the better. (Prov. 22:6) Consider Timothy. Timothy's mother, Eunice, and his grandmother Lois trained him "from infancy."—2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15. *w19.12 25 ¶14; 26 ¶16-17*

Saturday, May 29

There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.—Prov. 18:24.

Be a trustworthy friend. For example, we not only promise to help our brothers and sisters in need but also do practical things to assist them. (Matt. 5:37; Luke 16:10) When those who need help know that they can depend on us, they are genuinely comforted. One sister explains why. She says, "You do not have the added stress of wondering whether the person who offered to help

will be there on time to do what he promised." Those coping with a trial or disappointment often find comfort by confiding in a trusted friend. But to be a trusted friend and confidant, we need to cultivate patience. When Zhanna's husband left her, she found comfort in sharing her feelings with close friends. "They patiently listened to me," she says, "although I probably said the same things over and over again." You too can prove to be a good friend by being a good listener. *w20.01 10-11 ¶9-11*

Sunday, May 30

He will be filled with holy spirit even from before birth.—Luke 1:15.

Throughout the Bible, there are many examples of men of faith who received holy spirit; yet, they did not have the hope of living in heaven. David was guided by holy spirit. (1 Sam. 16:13) Holy spirit helped him to understand the deep things about Jehovah and also directed him to write parts of the Bible. (Mark 12:36) Even so, the apostle Peter said that David "did not ascend to the heavens." (Acts 2:34) John the Baptist was "filled with holy spirit." (Luke 1:13-16) Jesus said that there was no man greater than John, but then he said that John would not be included in the heavenly Kingdom. (Matt. 11:10, 11) Jehovah used his holy spirit to give these men the power to do amazing things, but he did not use that spirit to choose them to live in heaven. Does this mean that they were less faithful? No. It simply means that Jehovah will bring them back to life in Paradise on earth.—John 5: 28, 29; Acts 24:15. *w20.01 25 ¶15*

Monday, May 31

We love, because he first loved us.

—1 John 4:19.

Jehovah has invited us to join his family of worshippers. Our family is made up of those who have dedicated themselves to God and who exercise faith in the ransom sacrifice of his Son. Ours is a happy family. We enjoy a meaningful life now, and we rejoice in the prospect of life without end—whether in heaven or in Paradise on earth. Moved by love and at great cost to himself, Jehovah opened the way for us to be part of his family. (John 3:16) We were “bought with a price.” (1 Cor. 6:20) By means of the ransom, Jehovah made it possible for us to have a warm relationship with him. We have the honor of addressing the greatest Person in the universe as Father. And Jehovah is the ideal Father. Like one Bible writer, we might ask: “With what will I repay Jehovah for all the good he has done for me?” (Ps. 116:12) The answer is that we can never repay our heavenly Father. Still, we feel moved to love him. *w20.02 8 ¶1-3*

Tuesday, June 1

Her rival wife taunted her relentlessly in order to upset her.

—1 Sam. 1:6.

The prophet Samuel’s mother, Hannah, had to deal with some difficult problems. For many years she was unable to have children. (1 Sam. 1:2) In Israelite culture, a woman who was barren was believed to be cursed. This left her feeling humiliated. (Gen. 30:1, 2) To make matters worse for Hannah, her husband had another wife, Peninnah, who bore him children and taunted Hannah about it. Hannah

did not cope well with these difficult challenges. She was so upset that “she would weep and not eat.” She became “extremely bitter” at heart. (1 Sam. 1:7, 10) How did Hannah find comfort? Hannah poured out her feelings to Jehovah in prayer. After she prayed, she explained her situation to High Priest Eli. He then told her: “Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant your petition.” What was the result? Hannah “went on her way and ate, and her face was no longer downcast.” (1 Sam. 1:17, 18) Prayer helped Hannah to regain peace. *w20.02 21 ¶4-5*

Wednesday, June 2

Let your words always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should answer each person.—Col. 4:6.

Soon, Jehovah will bring this system to an end. Only those who are “rightly disposed for everlasting life” will survive. (Acts 13:48) So it is natural that we would also want our relatives to serve Jehovah with us. Our loving Father, Jehovah, “does not desire anyone to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance.” (2 Pet. 3:9) We need to keep in mind that there is a right way and a wrong way to share the message of salvation. Although we may be tactful when witnessing to a stranger, we may be too blunt when talking with our relatives. Many of us may look back with regret on our initial attempt to witness to our relatives and wish we had dealt with them differently. It is good to remember the apostle Paul’s advice, mentioned in today’s text, when we approach our relatives. Otherwise, we might end up alienating them rather than persuading them. *w19.08 14-15 ¶3-5*

Thursday, June 3

Christ [left] a model for you to follow his steps closely.

—1 Pet. 2:21.

What was your reaction when you learned the following truths about the Son? Jesus is the second most important person in the universe. He is our Ransomer. He willingly gave his life for us. When we show by our actions that we have faith in the ransom, we can have our sins forgiven, develop a friendship with God, and gain everlasting life. (John 3:16) Jesus is our High Priest. He wants to help us to benefit from the ransom and to have a close relationship with God. (Heb. 4:15; 7:24, 25) As King of God's Kingdom, he is the one through whom Jehovah will sanctify His name, end wickedness, and bring eternal blessings in the coming Paradise. (Matt. 6:9, 10; Rev. 11:15) Jesus is our model. He set an example for us in devoting his life to doing God's will. (John 4:34) When you accept what the Bible teaches about Jesus, you come to love God's dear Son. That love moves you to use your life to do God's will, as Jesus did. *w20.03 10 ¶12-13*

Friday, June 4

Pray constantly.

—1 Thess. 5:17.

Jesus prayed often throughout the last day of his life on earth. When he instituted the commemoration of his death, he prayed over the bread and the wine. (1 Cor. 11:23-25) Before leaving the place where they had held the Passover, he prayed with the disciples. (John 17:1-26) When he and the disciples arrived at the Mount of Olives that night, he prayed repeatedly. (Matt. 26:36-39,

42, 44) And the very last words Jesus spoke before dying were uttered in prayer. (Luke 23:46) Through prayer, Jesus included Jehovah in every major event on that momentous day. One reason why Jesus could endure his trial was that he turned to his Father in prayer. The apostles, on the other hand, failed to persevere in prayer that night. As a result, their courage weakened when the hour of test arrived. (Matt. 26:40, 41, 43, 45, 56) When we face trials, we will remain faithful only if we follow Jesus' example and "pray continually." *w19.04 9 ¶4-5*

Saturday, June 5

I am Jehovah; I do not change.

—Mal. 3:6.

Jehovah hates spiritism! He told the Israelites: "There should not be found in you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, anyone who employs divination, anyone practicing magic, anyone who looks for omens, a sorcerer, anyone binding others with a spell, anyone who consults a spirit medium or a fortune-teller, or anyone who inquires of the dead. For whoever does these things is detestable to Jehovah." (Deut. 18:10-12) Christians are not under the Law that Jehovah gave to the Israelites. However, we know that his feelings about spiritism have not changed. Jehovah warns us against spiritism because he knows that Satan uses it to harm people. Satan uses spiritism to promote lies—including the lie that the dead are alive in some other realm. (Eccl. 9:5) Satan also uses spiritism to keep people in fear and to turn them away from Jehovah. His aim is that people who practice spiritism will trust in wicked spirits instead of in Jehovah. *w19.04 21 ¶5-6*

Sunday, June 6

*If you are doing what is bad,
be in fear.—Rom. 13:4.*

Child abuse is a grave sin. The child abuser hurts the child in devastating ways. He betrays the child's trust, robbing the child of his or her security. Children must be protected from such a wicked deed, and those who have been victimized by it need comfort and help. (1 Thess. 5:14) When someone who is a part of the congregation becomes guilty of child abuse, he brings reproach on the congregation. (Matt. 5:16; 1 Pet. 2:12) We do not tolerate in our midst individuals who unrepentantly commit wicked deeds and who bring reproach on the good name of the congregation. If someone in the congregation becomes guilty of violating a criminal law, such as by committing child abuse, he is sinning against the secular authorities. (Compare Acts 25:8.) While the elders are not authorized to enforce the law of the land, they do not shield any perpetrator of child abuse from the legal consequences of his sin. *w19.05 9 ¶4-7*

Monday, June 7

*The wisdom of this world
is foolishness with God.
—1 Cor. 3:19.*

We can face any challenge—all because Jehovah is our Grand Instructor. (Isa. 30:20, 21) His Word gives us everything we need to be “fully competent” and “completely equipped for every good work.” (2 Tim. 3:17) When we live by Bible teachings, we become wiser than those who promote “the wisdom of this world.” (Ps. 119:97-100) Regrettably, the wisdom of the world often appeals to our fleshly desires. So we might find it

difficult to resist thinking and acting like those who are part of the world. For good reason, the Bible says: “Look out that no one takes you captive by means of the philosophy and empty deception according to human tradition.” (Col. 2:8) As the Bible foretold about the last days, people would to a remarkable degree become “lovers of pleasures.” (2 Tim. 3:4) The prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases, such as AIDS, is just one indication that the wisdom of the world is foolishness. —2 Pet. 2:19. *w19.05 21 ¶1-2; 22 ¶4-5*

Tuesday, June 8

*Stand firm against the crafty
acts of the Devil.—Eph. 6:11.*

Satan deceived the Israelites into believing that to prosper, they had to adopt the practices of their pagan neighbors. Those neighbors believed that certain rituals were needed to get their gods to act and bring the needed rain. Those who lacked faith in Jehovah believed that this was the only way to avoid a prolonged drought, so they performed pagan rituals in honor of the false god Baal. Satan also appealed to immoral desires. The pagan nations worshipped their gods by engaging in grossly immoral acts. This perverted form of worship included both female and male temple prostitution. Homosexuality and other forms of sexual immorality not only were tolerated but became normal! (Deut. 23:17, 18; 1 Ki. 14:24) The pagans believed that these rituals encouraged their gods to make the land fertile. Many Israelites were attracted by the pagans' sexually immoral rituals and allowed themselves to be lured into serving false gods. *w19.06 2 ¶3; 4 ¶7-8*

Wednesday, June 9

God is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his name.—Heb. 6:10.

Thousands of Bethel family members and others have received new assignments. These faithful brothers and sisters may find it challenging to leave a cherished assignment. If you are one of them, what can help you to deal with the change? Remain close to Jehovah by reading the Scriptures daily and pondering on them. Also, continue to be fully involved in preaching the good news in your new congregation. Jehovah remembers those who continue to serve him faithfully, even if they cannot do all they did before. Keep your life simple. Do not let the anxieties of Satan's world "choke" your spiritual activity. (Matt. 13:22) Reject pressure from the world or from well-meaning friends or relatives to seek financial security in Satan's system. (1 John 2:15-17) Trust in Jehovah, who promises to provide for all our spiritual, emotional, and material needs "at the right time."—Heb. 4:16; 13:5, 6. *w19.08 20 ¶4; 21-22 ¶7-8*

Thursday, June 10

Throw your burden on Jehovah, and he will sustain you.—Ps. 55:22.

Are you dealing with a stressful situation? How comforting it is for us to know that Jehovah understands our emotional struggles. He knows our limitations, and he even knows what we are thinking and feeling. (Ps. 103:14; 139:3, 4) By relying on Jehovah, we will receive help to deal with problems that cause us stress. Stress can cause you to think negatively, making you feel

discouraged. If that happens, remember that Jehovah will help you deal with stress. How will he help you? He invites you to share your concerns with him. And he will answer your cries for help. (Ps. 5:3; 1 Pet. 5:7) So pray to Jehovah often about your problems. He will not speak directly to you, but he will speak to you through his Word, the Bible, and through his organization. The accounts you read in the Bible can comfort you and give you hope. Also, your brothers and sisters can encourage you.—Rom. 15:4; Heb. 10:24, 25. *w19.06 16 ¶7-8*

Friday, June 11

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

When persecuted, pray to Jehovah, "pour out your heart like water," and tell your loving Father about all your fears and anxieties. (Lam. 2:19) The more you pray this way, the closer you will feel to Jehovah. (Rom. 8:38, 39) Be convinced that the blessings of God's Kingdom will come true. (Num. 23:19) If your faith in such promises is weak, it will be easier for Satan and his agents to terrify you. (Prov. 24:10; Heb. 2:15) Make it a study project to examine God's promises about his Kingdom and the reasons why you can be certain that they will come true. How will that help? Consider the example of Stanley Jones, who was imprisoned for seven years because of his faith. What helped him to endure faithfully? He said: "Being fortified with a knowledge of God's kingdom, being sure of it, never doubting it for a moment, I couldn't be moved." If you have strong faith in God's promises, you will not give in to fear.—Prov. 3:25, 26. *w19.07 2 ¶1; 3 ¶6-7*

Saturday, June 12

Into whatever city or village you enter, search out who in it is deserving, and stay there until you leave.—Matt. 10:11.

Why is the disciple-making work so important? Because only disciples of Christ can be friends of God. In addition, those who follow Christ improve their lives now and have the hope of enjoying endless life in the future. (John 14:6; 17:3) Certainly, Jesus has entrusted us with an important responsibility, but we do not do this work by ourselves. The apostle Paul wrote about himself and certain close associates: “We are God’s fellow workers.” (1 Cor. 3:9) What a privilege Jehovah and Christ have given to imperfect humans! Also, the disciple-making work can bring us much joy. We take the first step in making disciples when we “search out” those with the right heart condition. We prove that we truly are Jehovah’s Witnesses by witnessing to all whom we meet. We prove that we are genuine Christians by following Christ’s command to preach. *w19.07 15 ¶13-5*

Sunday, June 13

Wisdom is a protection just as money is a protection, but the advantage of knowledge is this: Wisdom preserves the life of its owner.—Eccl. 7:12.

Many people are first attracted to the practical wisdom found in the Bible. In New York, a sister who visits Mandarin-speaking people says: “I try to take an interest in people and listen to them. If I learn that they are new immigrants, I might ask: ‘How are you settling in? Have you found work? Are the local peo-

ple treating you well?’” Sometimes this opens the way to introduce a Bible teaching. When appropriate, the sister may add: “What would you say is the key to getting along with people? May I show you a proverb from the Bible? It says: ‘Beginning a fight is like opening a floodgate; before the quarrel breaks out, take your leave.’ Do you think that this advice could help us to get along with others?” (Prov. 17:14) Such conversations can help us to identify people who would welcome further visits. *w19.07 23 ¶13*

Monday, June 14

*What will happen to the one who falls with no one to help him up?
—Eccl. 4:10.*

Those who have moved to a new assignment need, not pity, but understanding. They may be struggling to deal with their own health problems or those of their relative. They may be grieving over the death of a loved one. And they also may grieve, even if in private, over the loss of association with their spiritual family in their former assignment. It takes time to process such deep and often very mixed emotions. In the meantime, your support and example can help them to adjust. “In my previous assignment, I conducted Bible studies every day,” says a sister who served for many years in a foreign land. “In my new one, it was difficult even to get the opportunity to open the Bible or to show a video in the ministry. But local publishers invited me on their calls and studies. This gave me a more positive outlook. I learned to start conversations in the new territory. All of this helped me to regain joy.” *w19.08 22 ¶10; 24 ¶13-14*

Tuesday, June 15

I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord.

—Phil. 4:2.

Like Euodia and Syntyche, we may face a major obstacle to cultivating a close bond of love with others—the tendency to focus on imperfections. All of us make mistakes every day. If we stay focused on the imperfections of others, our love for them will cool. For example, if a brother forgets to help us clean the Kingdom Hall, we may become irritated. If we then begin to list all the other mistakes we know our brother has made, our irritation will grow and our love for him will diminish. If you find yourself in a similar situation, it would be good to reflect on this fact: Jehovah sees our imperfections as well as those of our brother. Yet, in spite of these imperfections, he still loves our brother and he still loves us. For that reason, we need to imitate Jehovah's love and keep a positive view of our brothers. When we work hard to love our brothers, we strengthen our bond of unity with them.—Phil. 2:1, 2. *w19.08* 9-10 ¶7-8

Wednesday, June 16

Jehovah . . . takes note of the humble.—Ps. 138:6.

Jehovah loves humble people. Only those who are truly humble can have a warm, personal relationship with him. On the other hand, “the haughty he knows only from a distance.” All of us want to please Jehovah and experience his warm love, so we have good reasons to learn to cultivate humility. Humility is lowliness of mind and freedom from pride or arrogance. The Bible indicates that a humble person

has a proper view of his relationship with Jehovah God and with his fellow man. The humble person acknowledges that everyone is superior to him in some way. (Phil. 2:3, 4) Some people only appear to be humble. They may have an unassuming personality. Or they may show deference or politeness because of their culture and upbringing. But deep down, they may actually be very prideful. Sooner or later, they will reveal what they truly are at heart.—Luke 6:45. *w19.09* 2 ¶1, 3-4

Thursday, June 17

He brings vengeance on those . . . who do not obey the good news about our Lord Jesus.

—2 Thess. 1:8.

“The good news about our Lord Jesus” includes all the truths that Jesus taught. We obey the good news when we apply it in our lives. That obedience includes keeping Kingdom interests in first place, living by God's righteous standards, and announcing God's Kingdom. (Matt. 6:33; 24:14) It also includes supporting Christ's anointed brothers as they care for their weighty responsibilities. (Matt. 25:31-40) Soon they will be able to return the kindness shown them by those of the “other sheep.” (John 10:16) How so? Before the war of Armageddon begins, all of the 144,000 will have been raised to heaven as immortal spirits. They will then be part of the heavenly armies that will crush Gog and safeguard “a great crowd” of sheeplike ones. (Rev. 2:26, 27; 7:9, 10) Yes, what a privilege the great crowd will have had to support Jehovah's anointed servants while these were still on earth! *w19.09* 12-13 ¶16-18

Friday, June 18

You will find refreshment.

—Matt. 11:29.

Why is it refreshing for us to do the work Jesus has given us? Because we have the best overseers. Jehovah, our Supreme Overseer, is not a thankless or harsh master. He appreciates the work we do. (Heb. 6:10) And he gives us the power that we need to carry our load of responsibility. (2 Cor. 4:7; Gal. 6:5, fn.) Jesus, our King, leads by example. (John 13:15) And the elders who shepherd us try to imitate Jesus, “the great shepherd.” (Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 5:2) They strive to be kind, encouraging, and courageous as they feed and protect us. Also, we have the best companions. No other people have a sense of purpose or a bond of love like ours. Just think: We have the privilege of working with people who have the highest moral standards but who are not self-righteous. They consider others superior to them. They view us not only as fellow workers but also as friends. And that bond is so close that they are willing to give their lives for us! *w19.09 20 ¶1; 23 ¶12-14*

Saturday, June 19

You are not in darkness, so that the day should overtake you as it would thieves.—1 Thess. 5:4.

In his exhortation, the apostle Paul mentions “Jehovah’s day.” (1 Thess. 5:1-6) As used in this context, this refers to the time period that begins with the attack on “Babylon the Great,” the world empire of false religion, and ends with Armageddon. (Rev. 16:14, 16; 17:5) Paul also tells us how we can make sure that we are ready for “Jehovah’s day.” We should “not sleep on as the

rest do.” We must “stay awake” and remain alert to the danger of compromising our neutrality by getting drawn into the world’s political issues. If we were to get involved, we could become “part of the world.” (John 15:19) We know that God’s Kingdom is the only hope for world peace. We also want to help others wake up to what the Bible foretold would happen in the world. Once the great tribulation begins, it will be too late for people to turn to Jehovah. That is why our preaching work is so urgent! *w19.10 8 ¶3; 9 ¶5-6*

Sunday, June 20

Take a scroll and write in it all the words that I have spoken to you against Israel and Judah.

—Jer. 36:2.

When the time came for the contents of the scroll to be revealed, Jeremiah had to rely on his friend Baruch to deliver the message. (Jer. 36:5, 6) Baruch courageously fulfilled his dangerous assignment. Can you imagine how proud Jeremiah must have felt when Baruch went to the temple courtyard and did what he had been asked to do? (Jer. 36:8-10) The princes of Judah heard what Baruch had done, and they commanded him to read the scroll aloud to them! (Jer. 36:14, 15) The princes decided to tell King Jehoiakim what Jeremiah had said. King Jehoiakim got so angry when he heard the words written by Jeremiah that he burned the scroll and ordered the arrest of Jeremiah and Baruch. However, Jeremiah took another scroll, gave it to Baruch, and as Jeremiah dictated Jehovah’s message, Baruch wrote “all the words of the scroll that King Jehoiakim of Judah had burned in the fire.” —Jer. 36:26-28, 32. *w19.11 3-4 ¶4-6*

Monday, June 21

God . . . energizes you, giving you both the desire and the power to act.—Phil. 2:13.

Jehovah can become whatever is necessary in order to accomplish his purpose. For instance, Jehovah has become a Teacher, a Comforter, and an Evangelizer, just to name a few of his many roles. (Isa. 48:17; 2 Cor. 7:6; Gal. 3:8) Still, he often uses humans to carry out his purposes. (Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20; 2 Cor. 1:3, 4) Jehovah can also give any of us the wisdom and strength we need in order to become whatever is necessary to fulfill his will. This is all part of the meaning of Jehovah's name, as it is suggested by a number of scholars. All of us want to be useful to Jehovah, but some may doubt that Jehovah is using them. Why? Because they feel limited by their age, circumstances, or abilities. On the other hand, others may be quite satisfied with what they are already doing and fail to see the need to make further progress. *w19.10 20 ¶1-2*

Tuesday, June 22

*The love of money is a root of all sorts of injurious things.
—1 Tim. 6:10.*

Materialism can cause us to become distracted and neglect our shield of faith. The apostle Paul said: "No man serving as a soldier involves himself in the commercial businesses of life, in order to gain the approval of the one who enrolled him." (2 Tim. 2:4) In fact, Roman soldiers were not allowed to get involved in any trade. Like good soldiers, we do not become distracted from our primary goal—gaining

the approval of our Commanders, Jehovah and Christ. We view that as being more valuable than gaining anything Satan's world has to offer. We make sure that we have the time and energy we need to serve Jehovah and to keep our shield of faith and the rest of our spiritual armor in good condition. We must never let down our guard! Why? The apostle Paul warned that "those who are determined to be rich" will be "led astray from the faith."—1 Tim. 6:9, 10. *w19.11 17 ¶12, 14-15*

Wednesday, June 23

*Then sudden destruction is to be instantly on them.
—1 Thess. 5:3.*

The proclamation of "peace and security" precedes "Jehovah's day." (1 Thess. 5:1-6) At 1 Thessalonians 5:2, "Jehovah's day" refers to "the great tribulation." (Rev. 7:14) How will we know when that tribulation is about to begin? The Bible tells us about a most unusual proclamation. It will serve as a signal announcing the great tribulation. That will be the foretold proclamation of "peace and security." Will religious leaders participate? Possibly. Nevertheless, the proclamation will be just another demon-inspired lie. But this lie will be especially dangerous because it will give people a false sense of security just before the greatest tribulation in human history begins. Yes, "sudden destruction is to be instantly on them, just like birth pains on a pregnant woman." What about Jehovah's loyal servants? They may be surprised by the sudden start of Jehovah's day, but they will not be caught off guard. *w19.09 9 ¶7-8*

Thursday, June 24

There is an appointed time for everything, . . . a time to search and a time to give up as lost.

—Ecc1. 3:1, 6.

When making decisions, be specific. The more specific you are, the more likely you are to complete what you start. For example, you may have decided to read the Bible more often. But if you do not have a specific schedule in mind, you may not achieve your objective. Or the elders in a congregation may decide to shepherd the flock more often, but after some time, they have not followed through on that decision. To be successful, they could ask such questions as these: "Have we identified the brothers and sisters who could especially benefit from more shepherding? Have we set a specific time to visit them?" Also, be realistic. None of us have the time, resources, or energy to do everything that we would like to do. So be realistic and reasonable. When necessary, you may need to change a decision that was beyond your ability to accomplish. *w19.11 29 ¶11-12*

Friday, June 25

These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.—Rev. 7:14.

A prophetic description of life on earth is found at Isaiah 65:21-23. That life will not be a life of idleness. Rather, the Bible indicates that God's people at that time will be doing useful, satisfying work. At the end of that period, we can be sure that "the creation itself will also be set free from enslavement

to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God." (Rom. 8:21) Just as Jehovah arranged for the Israelites to balance work and rest, so it will be for his people in the coming Thousand Year Rule of Christ. There will certainly be time for spiritual activities. Worship of God is essential to happiness today, and it will be so in the new world. Yes, we have good reason to rejoice over the good work and spiritual activity that we can expect when believing mankind enjoys life during Christ's Millennial Reign. *w19.12 12 ¶15; 13 ¶17-18*

Saturday, June 26

These words . . . must be on your heart, and you must inculcate them in your sons.—Deut. 6:6, 7.

"To inculcate" means "to teach and impress by frequent repetitions." To do so, parents need to spend time regularly with their young ones. It could at times seem frustrating to have to repeat instructions to the children. However, parents can strive to see this as a way to help their children understand God's Word and apply it. So be discerning. Psalm 127 compares children to arrows. (Ps. 127:4) Just as arrows can be made from different materials and can vary in size, no two children are precisely alike. So parents need to determine how to train each of their children. A couple in modern-day Israel who successfully raised two children to serve Jehovah tell what they found to be helpful, "We conducted a Bible study with each child separately." Of course, each family head will decide whether studying in that way is necessary or possible. *w19.12 26-27 ¶18-20*

Sunday, June 27

All things . . . that you want men to do to you, you also must do to them.—Matt. 7:12.

When we are going through a hard time, how we appreciate those who offer support in practical ways! “There are so many routine things that seem to be impossible to do when you are suffering,” says Ryan, whose father died unexpectedly in a tragic accident. “Practical assistance—even when it seems very little—goes a long way.” Never underestimate how comforting your practical yet simple acts of kindness can be. The first-century disciple Mark was a busy Christian. Yet, Mark made time to comfort the apostle Paul, and Paul felt free to ask for Mark’s assistance. Angela, who had to cope with the violent death of a family member, appreciated the willingness of those who comforted her. “When friends genuinely want to help, they are approachable,” she says. “They don’t seem reluctant or hesitant.” We can ask ourselves, ‘Am I known for being willing to comfort fellow worshippers in practical ways?’ *w20.01 11-12 ¶14-16*

Monday, June 28

Whoever eats the loaf or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will be guilty.—1 Cor. 11:27.

How might an anointed one partake “unworthily” at the Memorial? He would do so if he ate and drank the emblems but was not living up to Jehovah’s righteous standards. (Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-29) Anointed ones realize that they must stay faithful if they want to receive “the prize of the upward call of God by means of Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 3:13-

16) Jehovah’s holy spirit helps his servants to be humble, not proud. (Eph. 4:1-3; Col. 3:10, 12) So anointed ones do not feel that they are better than others. They know that Jehovah does not necessarily give anointed ones more holy spirit than he gives his other servants. They do not feel that they have a deeper understanding of Bible truths than anyone else. And they would never tell someone else that he too has been anointed and should start partaking at the Memorial. Instead, they humbly acknowledge that only Jehovah invites people to go to heaven. *w20.01 27-28 ¶4-5*

Tuesday, June 29

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

Jehovah wants us to draw close to him and to communicate with him. He urges us to “persevere in prayer,” and he makes himself available at all times. (Rom. 12:12) He is never too busy or too tired to listen to us. In turn, we listen to him by reading his Word, the Bible, along with publications that help us to understand it. We also listen to him by paying close attention at Christian meetings. Regular communication with Jehovah helps us remain close to him. Jehovah wants us to pour out our hearts to him in prayer. (Ps. 62:8) We do well to ask ourselves this question: ‘Do my prayers tend to be like superficial, reprinted messages, or are they like heartfelt, handwritten letters?’ No doubt you love Jehovah deeply, and you want to keep your relationship with him strong. To do that, you must communicate with him regularly. Confide in him. Share your joys and your pains with him. Be confident that you can go to him for help. *w20.02 9 ¶4-5*

Wednesday, June 30

Shepherd the flock of God under your care, serving as overseers.

—1 Pet. 5:2.

Jehovah has entrusted elders with the important responsibility to shepherd his people. Elders can learn much from examining how Nehemiah dealt with Jehovah's people. As governor of Judah, Nehemiah had considerable authority. (Neh. 1:11; 2:7, 8; 5:14) Imagine some of the challenges that Nehemiah faced. He had learned that the people had defiled the temple and were not supporting the Levites financially as the Law directed. The Jews were violating the Sabbath law, and some of the men had married foreign women. Governor Nehemiah would have to handle this difficult situation. (Neh. 13:4-30) Nehemiah did not abuse his authority by imposing his own standards on God's people. Instead, he sought Jehovah's guidance in earnest prayer, and he taught the people Jehovah's Law. (Neh. 1:4-10; 13:1-3) Nehemiah also humbly worked alongside his brothers, even helping them to rebuild Jerusalem's walls. —Neh. 4:15. *w19.09 16 ¶9-10*

Thursday, July 1

Let your petitions be made known to God.—Phil. 4:6.

When others speak harshly or act unkindly, we may feel anxious. That is especially true if the one who hurt us is a close friend or relative. In dealing with anxiety, we can learn much from the Bible example of Hannah, who was severely taunted by her husband's second wife. (1 Sam. 1:12) Like Hannah, we can talk at length to Jehovah about our anxieties and fears. Our prayers do not have to be poet-

ic or perfectly structured. We may even find ourselves expressing bitter words that are interrupted by sobs of grief. Even so, Jehovah will never get tired of listening to us. In addition to praying about our problems, we need to remember the advice recorded at Philippians 4:6, 7. The apostle Paul specifically mentioned that we should offer prayers of thanksgiving, or gratitude. We have so many reasons to thank Jehovah—including the gift of life, his creative works, his loyal love, and the wonderful hope that he has given us. *w20.02 21 ¶3; 22 ¶6*

Friday, July 2

There is . . . a time to speak.

—Eccl. 3:1, 7.

Speech is a gift from Jehovah. (Ex. 4:10, 11; Rev. 4:11) In his Word, he helps us to understand how to use that gift properly. We should always be ready to speak about Jehovah and the Kingdom. (Matt. 24:14; Rom. 10:14) In so doing, we imitate Jesus. One of the main reasons why Jesus came to earth was to tell others the truth about his Father. (John 18:37) But we must remember that how we speak is also important. So when talking to others about Jehovah, we must do so with "a mild temper and deep respect," and we should show consideration for the other person's feelings and beliefs. (1 Pet. 3:15) Then we will do more than just talk; we will teach and possibly reach the person's heart. Elders should not hesitate to speak up if they see that a brother or a sister needs counsel. Of course, they would choose the right time to speak so that they do not needlessly embarrass the person. *w20.03 18-19 ¶2-4*

Saturday, July 3

Pray continually.

—*Matt. 26:41.*

What can we pray for? We can pray for Jehovah to “give us more faith.” (Luke 17:5; John 14:1) We need faith because Satan will test all who follow Jesus. (Luke 22:31) How will faith help us? When we have done all that we reasonably can to deal with a trial, faith will move us to leave the matter with Jehovah. Because we trust that he can handle matters better than we ever could, we have peace of mind and heart. (1 Pet. 5: 6, 7) Prayer helps us to maintain our inner peace no matter what trials we face. Consider the example of Robert, a faithful elder who is now in his 80’s. He says: “The counsel at Philippians 4:6, 7 has helped me to cope with many trials in my life. I have had to deal with financial problems. And I temporarily lost my privilege of serving as an elder.” What has helped Robert to maintain inner peace? “I pray as soon as I start to feel anxious,” he says. “I believe that the more frequently and intensely I pray, the more peaceful I feel.” *w19.04 9-10 ¶5-7*

Sunday, July 4

*Against you—you above all—
I have sinned.—Ps. 51:4.*

Child abuse is a sin against God. When a human sins against another human, he also sins against Jehovah. Consider an example from the Law that God gave Israel. The Law said that a man who robbed or defrauded his neighbor was behaving “unfaithfully toward Jehovah.” (Lev. 6:2-4) Certainly, then, when an individual who is a part of the congregation abuses a child—robbing that child of his or her security—he

is behaving unfaithfully toward God. The abuser brings great reproach on Jehovah’s name. For that reason, abuse must be condemned for what it is—a gross sin against God. Articles in *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* have discussed how those who have been sexually abused can deal with emotional scars, how others can help and encourage them, and how parents can protect their children. Elders have received detailed Scriptural training on how to handle the sin of child abuse. The organization continues to review the way congregations handle the sin of child abuse. *w19.05 9 ¶8-9*

Monday, July 5

*Should they inquire of the dead in
behalf of the living?—Isa. 8:19.*

God’s Word is like a sharp sword that can cut through the lies that Satan promotes. (Eph. 6:17) For example, God’s Word exposes the lie that the dead can communicate with the living. (Ps. 146:4) It also reminds us that only Jehovah can reliably predict the future. (Isa. 45:21; 46:10) If we read God’s Word and meditate on it regularly, we will be equipped to reject and hate the lies that wicked spirits want us to believe. So refuse to do anything connected with spiritism. As true Christians, we never practice spiritism of any kind. For example, we do not visit spirit mediums or try to communicate with the dead in any other way. We avoid funeral customs that are based on the belief that the dead are still alive somewhere. And we do not use astrology or fortune-telling to try to learn about the future. We know that all such practices are very dangerous and that they could put us in direct contact with Satan and the demons. *w19.04 21-22 ¶8-9*

Tuesday, July 6

God, in keeping with the desires of their hearts, gave them up to uncleanness.—Rom. 1:24.

People who adopt the wisdom of this world ridicule the Bible's moral standards, claiming that they are unrealistic. Such people might ask, 'Why would God create us with sexual desires and then tell us not to act on them?' That question is founded on the flawed belief that humans must act on every urge they feel. But the Bible states otherwise. It dignifies us by teaching that we can choose to control improper impulses. (Col. 3:5) In addition, Jehovah has provided the gift of marriage, an arrangement in which proper sexual desires can be honorably satisfied. (1 Cor. 7:8, 9) In contrast with the wisdom of this world, the Bible promotes a healthy view of sexuality. It acknowledges that sex can be a source of pleasure. (Prov. 5:18, 19) However, the Bible says: "Each one of you should know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not with greedy, uncontrolled sexual passion."—1 Thess. 4:4, 5. *w19.05 22-23 ¶7-9*

Wednesday, July 7

You will come against them like a storm, . . . you and all your troops and many peoples with you.
—Ezek. 38:9.

God will not allow the nations to destroy his people. They proudly bear his name, and they have obeyed his command to flee from Babylon the Great. (Acts 15:16, 17; Rev. 18:4) They have also worked hard to help others flee from her. So Jehovah's servants will not "receive part of

her plagues." Still, their faith will be tested. (Ezek. 38:2, 8) After the destruction of all false religious organizations, God's people will stand out like a lone tree that survived a fierce storm. Satan, of course, will be enraged. He will vent that rage by using demonic propaganda—"unclean inspired expressions"—to cause a coalition of nations to turn on Jehovah's servants. (Rev. 16:13, 14) That coalition is called "Gog of the land of Magog." When the nations launch their attack, they will have arrived at the symbolic place called Armageddon.—Rev. 16:16. *w19.09 11 ¶12-13*

Thursday, July 8

The reasonings of the wise men are futile.—1 Cor. 3:20.

In the days of ancient Israel, Satan used false religion to promote immorality. Today, he does the same. False religion tolerates and even promotes immoral conduct. Consequently, many who claim to serve God have abandoned his clear standards of morality. The apostle Paul describes in his letter to the Romans what has been the result. (Rom. 1:28-31) Among "the things not fitting" are all forms of sexual immorality, including homosexuality. (Rom. 1:24-27, 32; Rev. 2:20) How important it is for us to stick to the Bible's clear teachings! Human philosophy ignores or contradicts Jehovah's righteous standards. It does not nurture the fruitage of God's spirit but, rather, "the works of the flesh." (Gal. 5:19-23) It generates pride and arrogance, and the result is that people become "lovers of themselves." (2 Tim. 3:2-4) These qualities are the opposite of the meek, humble spirit that God's servants are encouraged to have.—2 Sam. 22:28. *w19.06 5-6 ¶12-14*

Friday, July 9

A true friend shows love at all times and is a brother who is born for times of distress.—Prov. 17:17.

Elijah served Jehovah during difficult times and faced serious challenges. When Jehovah told Elijah to delegate responsibility to Elisha, He provided Elijah with a much-needed companion, who no doubt helped him bear his emotional burdens. Likewise, when we confide in a trusted friend, he or she can help us carry our emotional burdens. (2 Ki. 2:2) If you feel that you do not have anyone to confide in, pray to Jehovah to help you find a mature Christian who can provide you with emotional support. Jehovah helped Elijah to cope with stress and to serve faithfully for many years. Elijah's experience gives us hope. We may go through periods of severe stress that drain us physically and emotionally. Yet, if we rely on Jehovah, he will give us the power we need to keep serving him.—Isa. 40:28, 29. *w19.06 15 ¶4; 16 ¶9-10*

Saturday, July 10

Trembling at men is a snare, but the one trusting in Jehovah will be protected.—Prov. 29:25.

We can build up our courage now by publicly preaching the good news of God's Kingdom. Why so? Because preaching teaches us to trust in Jehovah and overcome any fear of man. Just as our muscles are strengthened when we exercise, our courage is strengthened when we preach from house to house, in public places, informally, and in business territory. If we develop the courage to preach now, we will

be well-prepared to keep preaching even if our work is banned. (1 Thess. 2:1, 2) We can learn much from the example of a faithful sister who displayed remarkable courage. Nancy Yuen stood no more than five feet (1.5 m) tall, but she was not easily intimidated. She refused to stop preaching the good news of God's Kingdom. As a result, she was imprisoned for some 20 years in Communist China. The officials who interrogated her said that she was "the most stubborn person" in their country! *w19.07 5 ¶13-14*

Sunday, July 11

Go, therefore, and make disciples of people of all the nations.

—*Matt. 28:19.*

Some people are eager to learn Bible truths, but many we meet may seem to be indifferent at first. We may have to stimulate their interest. To be successful in the ministry, we need to have a well-thought-out strategy. Select specific subjects that will likely interest those you will meet. Then plan how you will introduce the topic. For example, you might ask a household-er: "Would you mind if I ask your opinion on something? Many problems facing us today affect people around the world. Do you think that it would take a world government to solve the world's problems?" Then you could discuss Daniel 2:44. Or you might say to a neighbor: "What do you think is the key to raising well-behaved children? I would like to hear your opinion." Then discuss Deuteronomy 6:6, 7. Without a doubt, we feel intense joy when we help people become disciples of Christ. *w19.07 15 ¶4, 6-7*

Monday, July 12

Can a man make gods for himself when they are not really gods?

—Jer. 16:20.

A brother with much experience preaching to nonreligious people in the Far East explains: "Typically, when a person here says, 'I don't believe in God,' he means that he does not believe in worshipping traditional gods. So I usually agree that most gods are man-made and are not real. I often read Jeremiah 16:20 and ask: 'How could we tell a real god from man-made ones?' I listen carefully, and then I read Isaiah 41:23: 'Tell us what will happen in the future, so that we may know that you are gods.' Then I show an example of how Jehovah has foretold the future." Another brother says: "I show them examples of Bible wisdom, fulfilled Bible prophecies, and laws that control the universe. Then I show them how all of it points to a living and wise Creator. When a person accepts the possibility that God exists, I start showing him what the Bible says about Jehovah." w19.07 23-24 ¶14-15

Tuesday, July 13

Make sure of the more important things.—Phil. 1:10.

These important things include the sanctification of Jehovah's name, the fulfillment of his purposes, and the peace and unity of the congregation. (Matt. 6:9, 10; John 13:35) When we build our life around these important things, we prove that we love Jehovah. The apostle Paul also said that we must "be flawless." This does not mean that we must be perfect. Jehovah will view us as flawless if we do our very best to deepen our love and make sure of

the more important things. One way in which we show our love is by doing our utmost to avoid stumbling others. The instruction to avoid stumbling others is really a warning. How might we stumble someone? We could do so by our choice of entertainment, our choice of clothing, or even our choice of employment. What we do may not be wrong in itself. But if the choices we make offend someone else's conscience and he or she is stumbled, that matters. —Matt. 18:6. w19.08 10 ¶9-11

Wednesday, July 14

These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.—Rev. 7:14.

Since 1935, Jehovah's Witnesses have understood that the great crowd of John's vision is made up of a group of faithful Christians who have the prospect of living forever on earth. (Rev. 7:9, 10) In order to survive the great tribulation, the great crowd would have to be educated in Jehovah's ways before the Millennium begins. They would need to show strong faith in order to "succeed in escaping all these things that must occur" before Christ's Thousand Year Reign. (Luke 21:34-36) Those of the great crowd rejoice in their hope. They understand that Jehovah determines where his faithful worshippers will serve him, whether in heaven or on earth. Both the anointed and the great crowd recognize that their reward is possible only because of Jehovah's undeserved kindness as expressed through the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ. —Rom. 3:24. w19.09 28 ¶10; 29 ¶12-13

Thursday, July 15

The joy of Jehovah is your strength.—Neh. 8:10, ftn.

Do you have a new assignment? Make it a success. Do not consider a change to be a failure or a step backward. Look for Jehovah's hand in your life and keep preaching. Imitate the faithful Christians of the first century. Wherever they were, they "went through the land declaring the good news of the word." (Acts 8:1, 4) Your efforts to keep on preaching may yield good results. For example, pioneers who were expelled from one country moved to a neighboring land where there also was a great need in their language. Within months, new rapidly growing groups were formed. We must find our joy primarily in Jehovah. Therefore, keep walking with Jehovah, looking to him for wisdom, guidance, and support. Remember that you came to love your former assignment because you put your heart into helping the people there. Put your heart into your present assignment and see how Jehovah helps you to love it too.—Eccl. 7:10. *w19.08* 24-25 ¶15-16

Friday, July 16

*Should we not more readily submit ourselves to the Father?
—Heb. 12:9.*

We should submit to Jehovah because he is our Creator. As such, he has the right to set standards for his creation. (Rev. 4:11) But we have another compelling reason to obey him—his way of ruling is the best. Throughout history, many human rulers have had a measure of power and authority over others. In comparison to them, Jehovah is the wisest and the most loving, merci-

ful, and compassionate Ruler of all. (Ex. 34:6; Rom. 16:27; 1 John 4:8) We submit to Jehovah by doing our best to obey him in all things and by resisting the urge to rely on our own understanding. (Prov. 3:5) We find it easier to submit to Jehovah as we come to know his beautiful qualities. Why? Because these qualities are reflected in all that he does. (Ps. 145:9) The more we learn about Jehovah, the more we will love him. And when we love Jehovah, we do not need a long list of rules telling us what to do and what not to do. *w19.09* 14 ¶1, 3

Saturday, July 17

My yoke is kindly, and my load is light.—Matt. 11:30.

Satan loads people down with burdens they cannot carry. For example, he wants us to believe that Jehovah will not forgive us for our sins and that we are unlovable. What a crushing burden, and what a terrible lie! (John 8:44) When we "come to" Christ, our sins are forgiven. (Matt. 11:28) And the truth is that Jehovah loves all of us deeply. (Rom. 8:32, 38, 39) The load that Jesus asks us to carry is different from other loads that we must bear. For example, at the end of a day of secular work, many feel not only exhausted but also unfulfilled. By contrast, after spending time serving Jehovah and Christ, we feel a deep sense of satisfaction. We may be exhausted and have to push ourselves to attend a congregation meeting that night. But often we come home from that meeting refreshed and energized. The same is true when we make the effort to preach and to do our personal Bible study. The reward we receive is far greater than the energy we expend! *w19.09* 20 ¶1; 23-24 ¶15-16

Sunday, July 18

Jehovah's day is coming exactly as a thief in the night.—1 Thess. 5:2.

In the short time remaining before his “day” begins, Jehovah expects us to keep busy in the preaching work. We need to make sure that we are “having plenty to do in the work of the Lord.” (1 Cor. 15: 58) When Jesus spoke about all the significant things that would happen during the last days, he added: “Also, in all the nations, the good news has to be preached first.” (Mark 13:4, 8, 10; Matt. 24:14) Just think: Every time you go in the ministry, you are having a share in fulfilling that Bible prophecy! Year by year, the Kingdom-preaching work is moving ahead. For example, think about the increase in the number of Kingdom proclaimers worldwide during the last days. In 1914, there were 5,155 publishers in 43 lands. Today, there are some 8.5 million publishers in 240 lands! Even so, our work is not yet over. We must keep proclaiming God’s Kingdom as the only solution to all mankind’s problems.—Ps. 145:11-13. *w19.10* 8 ¶3; 9-10 ¶7-8

Monday, July 19

In everything you are being enriched for every sort of generosity, which produces through us an expression of thanks to God.

—2 Cor. 9:11.

Jehovah used Barzillai to provide for King David. David and the people were “hungry and tired and thirsty” while fleeing from David’s son, Absalom. Along with others, Barzillai, an old man at this point, risked his life to provide for David and those with him. Barzillai did

not conclude that because of his advanced age, he was no longer useful to Jehovah. Rather, he generously used what he had to help God’s servants in need. (2 Sam. 17:27-29) What is the lesson for us? Regardless of our age, Jehovah can use us to fill the needs of fellow believers, either locally or in another land, who lack basic provisions. (Prov. 3: 27, 28; 19:17) Even if we cannot care for them directly, we may be able to contribute to the worldwide work so that funds are available to offer relief when and where it is needed.—2 Cor. 8:14, 15. *w19.10* 21 ¶6

Tuesday, July 20

There are companions ready to crush one another, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.—Prov. 18:24.

We may find it difficult to open up to others because someone might have hurt us in the past. (Prov. 18: 19) Or we may feel that we lack the time and energy to cultivate close relationships. However, we should not give up. If we want our brothers to stand by us when trials come, we must learn to trust them now with our thoughts and feelings. That is an important step toward becoming true friends. (1 Pet. 1:22) Jesus showed that he trusted his friends by communicating openly with them. (John 15:15) We can imitate him by sharing our joys, concerns, and disappointments with others. Listen carefully as someone talks to you, and you may learn that you have many thoughts, feelings, and goals in common. If you take the initiative to have warm and open conversations with others, your friendships with them are likely to grow.—Prov. 27:9. *w19.11* 4 ¶8-9

Wednesday, July 21

This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says.—Ezek. 2:4.

During the great tribulation, the message that we proclaim will likely change. Currently, we are preaching the good news of the Kingdom and we are endeavoring to make disciples. But at that time, we may well deliver a message as hard-hitting as hailstones. (Rev. 16:21) We may proclaim the impending doom of Satan's world. In time, we will find out exactly what our message will be and how we will deliver it. Will we use the same methods or will we use some other methods? We will have to wait and see. In any case, it seems that we will have the privilege of boldly proclaiming Jehovah's judgment message! (Ezek. 2: 3-5) Quite likely, our message will provoke the nations into trying to silence us once and for all. Just as we rely on Jehovah for support in our ministry now, we will need his support then. We can be sure that our God will fill us with power to accomplish his will.—Mic. 3:8. *w19.10 16 ¶8-9*

Thursday, July 22

Some have been led astray from the faith.—1 Tim. 6:10.

The expression "led astray" indicates that we could become distracted by trying to acquire unnecessary possessions. We could then expose our heart to "many senseless and harmful desires." (1 Tim. 6:9) Rather than allowing those desires into our heart, we must see them for what they are—weapons that can harm us. Suppose we have the financial means to buy many material things. Are we doing something wrong if we

purchase things that we want but do not actually need? Not necessarily. But reflect on these questions: Even if we can afford to buy something, do we really have the time and energy to use and maintain the item? Also, might we become overly attached to our possessions? Could our attachment to material things cause us to act like the young man who turned down Jesus' invitation to expand his service to God? (Mark 10:17-22) How much better it is for us to lead a simple life and spend our precious time and strength in doing God's will! *w19.11 17-18 ¶15-16*

Friday, July 23

The plans of the diligent surely lead to success.—Prov. 21:5.

God can give you "the power to act" and carry out a decision. (Phil. 2:13) So pray for the strength to act. Ask Jehovah for his holy spirit to give you the power you need. Continue praying even if an answer to your request seems to be delayed. As Jesus said: "Keep on asking, and it [holy spirit] will be given you." (Luke 11:9, 13) Also, create a plan. To complete any project you start, you need a plan. Then you need to work according to that plan. Likewise, when you make a decision, list the specific steps you intend to follow to implement that decision. Breaking larger jobs into smaller tasks can help you track your progress more easily. The apostle Paul encouraged the Corinthians to set something aside for their contribution "on the first day of every week" rather than wait and try to collect funds when he arrived. (1 Cor. 16:2) Breaking large jobs into small tasks can also keep you from feeling overwhelmed. *w19.11 29 ¶13-14*

Saturday, July 24

Those knowing your name will trust in you; you will never abandon those seeking you, O Jehovah.

—Ps. 9:10.

We can say that a person knows about Jehovah if he is aware of God's name or is familiar with some of the things that He has said or done. But to know Jehovah well involves more. We need to spend time learning about Jehovah and his wonderful qualities. Only then can we begin to understand what motivates him to speak and to act. That will help us to discern whether he approves of our opinions, decisions, and actions. Once we have discerned Jehovah's will for us, we need to act on what we have learned. Some people may ridicule us for wanting to serve Jehovah, and they may oppose us even more when we start to associate with his people. Yet, if we trust in Jehovah, he will never let us down. We will be laying a foundation for friendship with God that will last a lifetime. Can we really know Jehovah that well? Yes, we can! *w19.12 16-17 ¶3-4*

Sunday, July 25

Children are an inheritance from Jehovah.—Ps. 127:3, ftn.

Parents may at times feel overwhelmed by the challenges they face, but children are a gift from Jehovah. He is always available to help. He willingly listens to the prayers of parents. And he answers those prayers by means of the Bible, our publications, and the example and advice of other mature parents in the congregation. It has been said that raising children is

a 20-year project, but parents never really stop being parents. Among the very best things they can give their children are love, time, and Bible-based training. Each child will respond differently to the training. However, many of them who have been raised by parents who love Jehovah feel as does Joanna Mae, a sister in Asia: "I am so thankful that my parents disciplined me and taught me to love Jehovah. They did not just give me life, they gave me a meaningful life." (Prov. 23:24, 25) Millions of Christians could express similar sentiments. *w19.12 27 ¶21-22*

Monday, July 26

Comfort others in any sort of trial with the comfort that we receive from God.—2 Cor. 1:4.

We do not have to look far to find brothers and sisters who need comfort. We need, though, to take the initiative to act despite our fears. For instance, we may fear not knowing what to say or what to do for someone who is in a distressing situation. Yet we can be effective comforters if we show that we care. As we get closer to the end of this system of things, world conditions will deteriorate and life will become more challenging. (2 Tim. 3:13) And the problems that we bring on ourselves because of inherited sin and imperfection mean that we will continue to need comfort. The apostle Paul was able to endure faithfully to the end of his life, thanks, in part, to the comfort he received from fellow Christians. By following their example, we too can help our brothers and sisters to remain firm in the faith.—1 Thess. 3:2, 3. *w20.01 12-13 ¶17-19*

Tuesday, July 27

You put to the test those who say they are apostles.—Rev. 2:2.

Anointed ones do not expect others to treat them in a special way. (Phil. 2:2, 3) They know that when Jehovah anointed them, he did not let everyone else know about it. So an anointed person is not surprised if some do not believe right away that he has been anointed. He realizes that the Bible tells us not to be quick to believe someone who says that God has given him a special responsibility. Not wanting to draw attention to himself, an anointed Christian would not tell those whom he meets for the first time that he is anointed. And he would certainly not boast about it. (1 Cor. 4:7, 8) Anointed Christians do not search out other anointed ones, hoping to discuss their anointing with them or to form private groups for Bible study. (Gal. 1:15-17) The congregation would not be united if anointed ones did so. They would be working against the holy spirit, which helps God's people to have peace and unity.—Rom. 16:17, 18. *w20.01 28 ¶16-7*

Wednesday, July 28

As these things start to occur, stand up straight and lift up your heads, because your deliverance is getting near.—Luke 21:28.

At some point, the people whose religions were destroyed may resent the fact that Jehovah's Witnesses keep practicing their religion. We can only imagine the uproar that this might create, including on social media. The nations and their ruler, Satan, will hate us for having the only surviving religion. They will not have attained their goal to eliminate all re-

ligion from the face of the earth. So we will become the center of their attention. At this point, the nations will take on the role of Gog of Magog. They will band together to make a vicious, all-out attack on Jehovah's people. (Ezek. 38:2, 14-16) It can be somewhat unsettling to think about those possibilities when we cannot be certain of the exact details. However, one thing is sure: We do not need to fear the great tribulation. Jehovah will give us lifesaving instructions.—Ps. 34:19. *w19.10 16-17 ¶10-11*

Thursday, July 29

How many things you have done, O Jehovah my God, your wonderful works and your thoughts toward us.—Ps. 40:5.

We do more than feel appreciative; we express our appreciation to Jehovah by our words and actions. This makes us stand out as different from many today. We live in a world where people do not appreciate all that God does for them. In fact, one indication that we are living in "the last days" is that people are unthankful. (2 Tim. 3:1, 2) May we never adopt that attitude! Jehovah wants all his children to get along well with one another. In fact, the love we have for one another identifies us as being true Christians. (John 13:35) We agree with the psalmist who wrote: "How good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!" (Ps. 133:1) When we love our brothers and sisters, we prove to Jehovah that we love him. (1 John 4:20) How pleasant it is to be part of a family of brothers and sisters who are "kind to one another, tenderly compassionate"—Eph. 4:32. *w20.02 9 ¶16-7*

Friday, July 30

Jehovah turned his attention to Hannah.—1 Sam. 2:21.

The cause of Hannah's anxiety did not go away immediately. She still had to live in the same household as Peninnah did. And the Bible does not indicate that Peninnah's attitude changed. So Hannah likely had to continue enduring her rival's stinging words. But Hannah was able to regain and maintain her inner peace. After leaving the matter in Jehovah's hands, Hannah was no longer overwhelmed by worry. She allowed Jehovah to comfort and soothe her. Sometime later, Hannah was even blessed with children of her own! (1 Sam. 1:2, 6, 7, 17-20) We can regain our peace even if the cause of our anxiety remains. Even though we pray intensely and attend meetings regularly, some problems may persist. But from Hannah's example, we learn that nothing can stop Jehovah from soothing our troubled heart. Jehovah will never forget us, and sooner or later he will reward our faithfulness.—Heb. 11:6. *w20.02 22 ¶9-10*

Saturday, July 31

Share with a wise person, and he will become wiser.—Prov. 9:9.

Elders do not hold back from sharing Bible principles that can help others to act wisely. Why is it so important that they speak up when necessary? Consider the case of Eli: High Priest Eli had two sons for whom he had deep affection. Those sons, however, had no respect for Jehovah. They held important positions as priests serving at the tabernacle. But they abused their authority, showed gross disrespect for the offerings given to

Jehovah, and brazenly committed sexual immorality. (1 Sam. 2:12-17, 22) According to the Mosaic Law, Eli's sons deserved to die, but permissive Eli merely reproved them mildly and allowed them to continue serving at the tabernacle. (Deut. 21:18-21) How did Jehovah view the way that Eli handled matters? He said to Eli: "Why do you keep honoring your sons more than me?" Jehovah then determined to put those two wicked men to death.—1 Sam. 2:29, 34. *w20.03 19 ¶4-5*

Sunday, August 1

The One who sent me is with me; he did not abandon me.

—John 8:29.

Even while being persecuted, Jesus had inner peace because he knew that he was making his Father happy. He remained obedient when it was difficult for him to do so. He loved his Father and built his whole life around serving Jehovah. Before he came to earth, he was God's "master worker." (Prov. 8:30) And while on earth, he zealously taught others about his Father. (Matt. 6:9; John 5:17) That work brought Jesus great joy. (John 4:34-36) We can imitate Jesus by obeying Jehovah and "always having plenty to do in the work of the Lord." (1 Cor. 15:58) When we are "intensely occupied" in the preaching work, we are better able to put our troubles into perspective. (Acts 18:5) For example, those we meet in our ministry often face worse problems than we do. Yet, when they learn to love Jehovah and apply his counsel, their lives improve and they become happier. Each time we see that happen, we feel more confident that Jehovah will care for us. *w19.04 10-11 ¶8-9*

Monday, August 2

Quite a number of those who practiced magical arts brought their books together and burned them up before everybody.—Acts 19:19.

These individuals were serious about resisting wicked spirits. Their books about magic cost a lot of money. But instead of giving those books away or selling them to others, they destroyed them. They were more concerned about pleasing Jehovah than about how much money the books were worth. How can we imitate the example of those first-century Christians? It would be wise to get rid of anything we may have that is connected with the occult. This includes amulets, charms, or other objects that people wear or own to try to protect themselves from wicked spirits. (1 Cor. 10:21) Examine your entertainment carefully. Ask yourself, 'Does any of my entertainment involve spiritism?' Be determined to make choices that will help you stay far away from anything Jehovah hates. We want to do our best to "maintain a clear conscience" before our God.—Acts 24:16. *w19.04* 22-23 ¶10-12

Tuesday, August 3

*Call the elders.
—Jas. 5:14.*

The elders have a number of concerns when they receive a report of serious wrongdoing. They are primarily concerned with maintaining the sanctity of God's name. (Lev. 22:31, 32; Matt. 6:9) They are also deeply concerned with the spiritual welfare of their brothers and sisters in the congregation and want to help any who have been victims of wrongdoing. In addition, if the wrongdoer is a part of the congrega-

tion, elders are concerned with trying to restore him if that is possible. (Jas. 5:14, 15) A Christian who gives in to wrong desire and commits a serious sin is spiritually sick. This means that he no longer has a healthy relationship with Jehovah. In a sense, the elders are spiritual physicians. They endeavor to make "the sick one [in this instance, the wrongdoer] well." Their Scriptural counsel can help him to restore his relationship with God, but this is only possible if he is genuinely repentant.—Acts 3:19; 2 Cor. 2:5-10. *w19.05* 10 ¶10-11

Wednesday, August 4

God . . . energizes you, giving you both the desire and the power to act.—Phil. 2:13.

Jehovah can give us the desire to act. Perhaps we learn of a particular need inside or outside our congregation. In response, we might ask ourselves, 'How can I help to fill this need?' Or maybe we have been invited to accept a challenging assignment, but we wonder if we can do it justice. Or after reading a portion of God's Word, we may wonder, 'How can I apply this Bible passage to help others?' When Jehovah sees that we are willing to examine ourselves, he can give us the desire to follow through and act. Jehovah can also give us the power to act. (Isa. 40:29) He can enhance our natural abilities with his holy spirit. (Ex. 35:30-35) Through his organization, Jehovah may teach us how to perform certain tasks. If you are ever unsure about how to carry out an assignment, ask for help. Also, feel free to ask our generous heavenly Father for "power beyond what is normal." —2 Cor. 4:7; Luke 11:13. *w19.10* 21 ¶3-4

Thursday, August 5

Men will be lovers of themselves.

—2 Tim. 3:2.

The world has encouraged an inflated view of self. One reference work says that during the 1970's "self-help books proliferated." Some books "urged readers to know and accept themselves and to celebrate who they were." Consider, for example, the statement made in one such book: "Be in love with the most beautiful, exciting, worthy person ever—you." The book advocates a "religion of the self in which an individual determines his own behavior based upon his own conscience and the laws of his culture that work for him." Does that idea sound familiar to you? Satan encouraged Eve to do something similar. He said that she could "be like God, knowing good and bad." (Gen. 3:5) Today, many think so highly of themselves that in their opinion no one—not even God—can tell them what is right and what is wrong. For example, that attitude has become especially evident in the way people view marriage. *w19.05 23 ¶10-11*

Friday, August 6

I am distressed and extremely downcast; I walk around sad all day long.—Ps. 38:6.

At times, King David was overwhelmed by stress. Think of the challenges he faced. He was weighed down with guilt for the many mistakes he had made. (Ps. 40:12) His beloved son Absalom rebelled against him, leading to Absalom's death. (2 Sam. 15:13, 14; 18:33) And one of David's closest friends betrayed him. (2 Sam. 16:23-17:2; Ps. 55:12-14) Many of the psalms Da-

vid wrote convey his feelings of discouragement as well as his unshakable trust in Jehovah. (Ps. 38:5-10; 94:17-19) Later a psalmist began to envy the lifestyle of wicked people. He may have been a descendant of the Levite Asaph, and he served at "the grand sanctuary of God." This psalmist suffered emotional stress, causing him to become unhappy and discontented. He even started to doubt the blessings that come from serving God.—Ps. 73:2-5, 7, 12-14, 16, 17, 21. *w19.06 17 ¶12-13*

Saturday, August 7

We are not ignorant of [Satan's] designs.—2 Cor. 2:11.

Satan appeals to natural desires. We have a natural desire to learn skills that can help us provide for ourselves and our families. (1 Tim. 5:8) Often, we can gain those skills by attending school and being diligent students. But we must be cautious. The educational system in many countries teaches students not only practical skills but also human philosophy. Students are encouraged to question the existence of God and to disregard the Bible. They are told that the theory of evolution is the only intelligent explanation for the origin of life. (Rom. 1:21-23) Such teachings are opposed to "the wisdom of God." (1 Cor. 1:19-21; 3:18-20) Be determined never to be taken captive "by means of the philosophy and empty deception" of Satan's world. (Col. 2:8) Continually guard against Satan's tactics. (1 Cor. 3:18) Never allow him to blur your view of Jehovah. Live by Jehovah's high moral standards. And do not let Satan trick you into ignoring Jehovah's advice. *w19.06 5 ¶13; 7 ¶17*

Sunday, August 8

[Teach] them to observe all the things I have commanded you.

—Matt. 28:20.

Whatever subject you choose to discuss, think about the people who will hear you. Imagine how they will benefit from learning what the Bible really teaches. When talking with them, it is important that you listen to them and respect their viewpoint. That way you will understand them better, and they will be more likely to listen to you. Before a person decides to study the Bible, you may need to invest time and effort in making return visits. Why? Because people may not be available when we call on them again. Also, you may need to return several times before the householder feels comfortable enough with you to accept a Bible study. Remember, a plant is more likely to grow when it is watered regularly. Similarly, an interested person's love for Jehovah and Christ is more likely to grow when we regularly discuss God's Word with that person. *w19.07 14 ¶1; 15-16 ¶7-8*

Monday, August 9

Happy are you whenever men hate you, and when they exclude you and reproach you and denounce your name as wicked for the sake of the Son of man.—Luke 6:22.

What did Jesus mean? Jesus was not saying that Christians would enjoy being hated. Instead, he was being realistic. We are no part of the world. We live according to Jesus' teachings and preach the message that he preached. As a result, the world hates us. (John 15:18-21) We want to please Jehovah. If men

hate us because we love our Father, that is their problem. We must not make the mistake of measuring our worth by how popular we are. We do not know when a wave of persecution or even an outright ban will affect our worship of Jehovah. However, we do know that we can prepare now by strengthening our relationship with Jehovah, by building up our courage, and by learning to cope with hatred from men. The preparations that we make now will help us stand firm in the future. *w19.07 6 ¶17-18; 7 ¶21*

Tuesday, August 10

Whoever approaches God must believe that he is.—Heb. 11:6.

When we conduct Bible studies with people from nonreligious backgrounds, we must continually build up their belief in the existence of God. And we need to help them to build faith in the Bible. This might require that we repeat some points a number of times. During each study session, we may need to discuss evidence that the Bible is God's Word by pointing to fulfilled prophecies, scientific and historical accuracy, or practical wisdom. We help people to become disciples of Christ by displaying love for them, whether they are religious or not. (1 Cor. 13:1) As we teach them, our goal is to show that God loves us and wants us to love him. Every year thousands who previously had little or no interest in religion get baptized because they have grown to love God. So be positive, and take a loving interest in all sorts of people. Listen to them. Try to understand them. By your example, teach them to be disciples of Christ. *w19.07 24 ¶16-17*

Wednesday, August 11

Do not forget to do good and to share what you have with others, for God is well-pleased with such sacrifices.—Heb. 13:16.

The daughters of Shallum were among those whom Jehovah used to share in repairing the walls of Jerusalem. (Neh. 2:20; 3:12) Although their father was a prince, Shallum's daughters were willing to do that difficult and dangerous work. (Neh. 4:15-18) In our day, willing sisters are happy to help perform a special form of sacred service—the construction and maintenance of buildings that are dedicated to Jehovah. Their skill, enthusiasm, and loyalty are vital to the success of this work. Jehovah motivated Tabitha to abound in “good deeds and gifts of mercy,” particularly in behalf of widows. (Acts 9:36) Because of her outstanding generosity and kindness, many mourned when she died. But they were overjoyed when the apostle Peter resurrected her. (Acts 9:39-41) What do we learn from Tabitha? Whether young or old, male or female, we can all do practical things to help our brothers and sisters. *w19.10 23 ¶11-12*

Thursday, August 12

Make sure of the more important things, so that you may be flawless and not stumbling others.

—*Phil. 1:10.*

How could we stumble someone? Consider this scenario. A Bible student is finally able to control his addiction to alcohol. He realizes that he must abstain from it completely, makes progress, and gets baptized. Later, a well-meaning host of a Christian gathering urges the new brother to accept an alcoholic

beverage, saying: “If you exercise self-control, you should be able to make moderate use of alcohol.” We can only imagine what the consequences would be if the new brother were to listen to that misguided advice! Our Christian meetings help us to apply the instructions given in today's text. They remind us of what Jehovah considers to be more important and how to apply what we learn so that we may be flawless. They also encourage us to love God and our brothers. When these two great loves fill our heart, we will do our very best to avoid stumbling our brothers. *w19.08 10 ¶9; 11 ¶13-14*

Friday, August 13

I am the least of the apostles, and I am not worthy of being called an apostle, because I persecuted the congregation of God.—1 Cor. 15:9.

People who appear confident or forthright are not necessarily proud. (John 1:46, 47) Yet, whether we are outgoing or not, all of us must work at developing a humble heart condition. Consider the example of the apostle Paul. He was used mightily by Jehovah to establish new congregations in one city after another. He may even have accomplished more in the ministry than any other apostle of Jesus Christ. Yet, Paul did not elevate himself among his brothers. He correctly attributed his fine standing with Jehovah, not to his own qualities or works, but to God's undeserved kindness. (1 Cor. 15:10) What a fine lesson in humility Paul gave in his letter to the Corinthians—especially when we recall that some men in the congregation were seeking to prove themselves to be superior to Paul! —2 Cor. 10:10. *w19.09 3 ¶5-6*

Saturday, August 14

Should we not more readily submit ourselves to the Father?

—Heb. 12:9.

One reason why we might find it a challenge to submit to Jehovah is that we all inherited sin and are imperfect. So we have rebellious tendencies. After Adam and Eve rebelled against God and ate the forbidden fruit, they set their own standards. (Gen. 3:22) Today, most of mankind still prefer to ignore Jehovah and decide for themselves what is right and what is wrong. Even those who know and love Jehovah may struggle to submit fully to him. The apostle Paul faced this challenge. (Rom. 7:21-23) Like Paul, we want to do what is right in Jehovah's eyes. But we must constantly fight the tendency to do wrong things. Another reason why it can be a challenge to submit to Jehovah is that we are influenced by the culture in which we were raised. Many human ideas are in conflict with Jehovah's will, and it can be a constant struggle to free ourselves from common ways of thinking. *w19.09 15 ¶4-6*

Sunday, August 15

Go, sell what things you have and give to the poor, . . . and come be my follower.—Mark 10:21.

We must be realistic. Each of us has a certain amount of energy. So we must be careful about what we take on. For example, we could waste energy trying to gather material possessions. Note what Jesus said to a rich young man who asked him: "What must I do to inherit everlasting life?" He must have been a decent man because Mark's Gospel

account specifically states that Jesus "felt love for him." Jesus presented the young ruler with the invitation above. The man was torn, but it appears that he could not let go of his "many possessions." (Mark 10:17-22) As a result, he rejected the yoke that Jesus had offered him and continued to slave "for Riches." (Matt. 6:24) What choice would you have made? From time to time, it is good for us to reassess our priorities in life. Why? So that we can make sure that we are using our energy wisely. *w19.09 24 ¶17-18*

Monday, August 16

In all the nations, the good news has to be preached first.

—Mark 13:10.

Our Kingdom-preaching work will not be finished until Jehovah says it is over. How much time is left for people to come to know Jehovah God and Jesus Christ? (John 17:3) We cannot say. We do know that until the great tribulation begins, any who are "rightly disposed for everlasting life" can still respond to the good news. (Acts 13:48) How can we help these people before it is too late? Through his organization, Jehovah is giving us all that we need to teach people the truth. For example, we receive training each week at the midweek meeting. This meeting helps us know what to say on initial calls and return visits. And if after a refreshing conversation with an interested person, you leave him a tract or magazine, he will be able to do further reading until you are able to contact him again. It is our personal responsibility to keep busy every month in the Kingdom-preaching work. *w19.10 9 ¶7; 10 ¶9-10*

Tuesday, August 17

Do not forget to do good and to share what you have with others, for God is well-pleased with such sacrifices.—Heb. 13:16.

Jehovah promised Simeon, a loyal older man in Jerusalem, that he would not see death before he laid eyes on the Messiah. That promise must have encouraged Simeon greatly, since he had been waiting many years for the Messiah. His faith and endurance were rewarded. One day, “under the power of the spirit,” he came into the temple. There he saw the infant Jesus, and Jehovah used Simeon to deliver a prophecy about this child who would become the Christ. (Luke 2: 25-35) Although Simeon likely did not live long enough to see Jesus carry out his earthly ministry, Simeon was grateful for the privilege he had, and the best is yet to come for him! In the new world, that faithful man will see how Jesus’ rulership will be a blessing to all the families of the earth. (Gen. 22:18) We too can be grateful for any privilege Jehovah gives us in his service. *w19.10 22 ¶7; 23 ¶12*

Wednesday, August 18

*Above all the things that you guard, safeguard your heart.
—Prov. 4:23.*

Whether we have little or much materially, we need to guard our heart. How? Do not develop a love for riches. And do not allow your secular work to take priority over your service to Jehovah. How can you know if that is happening to you? Some questions you could ask yourself are: ‘Do I often think about my secular work when I am at meetings

or in the ministry? Do I constantly worry about being financially secure in the future? Are money and material possessions causing problems for me and my mate? Would I be willing to do secular work that others look down on if it allowed me to spend more time serving Jehovah?’ (1 Tim. 6:9-12) When considering those questions, let us remember that Jehovah loves us and makes this promise to those who are devoted to him: “I will never leave you, and I will never abandon you.” That is why the apostle Paul wrote: “Let your way of life be free of the love of money.”—Heb. 13:5, 6. *w19.10 29 ¶10*

Thursday, August 19

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

When we work alongside fellow believers and observe firsthand their endearing qualities, we learn from them and draw closer to them. For example, how do you feel when you are in the ministry and you hear your friend boldly defend his faith or speak with heartfelt conviction about Jehovah and his purposes? Likely you feel drawn to him even more. Adeline, a 23-year-old sister, asked one of her friends, Candice, to go with her to preach in seldom-worked territory. “We wanted to be more motivated and to enjoy the ministry more,” she says. “We both needed a spiritual boost.” How did they benefit from working together? “At the end of each day,” says Adeline, “we discussed how we felt, what touched us about the conversations we had, and how we sensed Jehovah’s direction in our ministry. We both enjoyed these deep discussions and got to know each other even better.” *w19.11 5 ¶10-11*

Friday, August 20

Take up the large shield of faith.

—Eph. 6:16.

In ancient times, a soldier would feel humiliated if he returned home without his shield. The Roman historian Tacitus wrote: “To have abandoned one’s shield is the height of disgrace.” That is one reason why soldiers made sure to keep a firm hold on their shields. We keep a firm hold on our shield of faith by regularly attending Christian meetings and by speaking about Jehovah’s name and his Kingdom to others. (Heb. 10:23-25) In addition, we prayerfully read God’s Word every day and apply its counsel and direction in all that we do. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17) Then, no weapon that Satan uses against us will cause us any lasting harm. (Isa. 54:17) Our “large shield of faith” will protect us. We will stand firm, shoulder to shoulder with our brothers and sisters. And we will do more than win our daily battles—we will have the honor of being on Jesus’ side when he wins the war against Satan and his followers.—Rev. 17:14; 20:10. *w19.11 19 ¶18-19*

Saturday, August 21

The way I am aiming my blows is so as not to be striking the air.

—1 Cor. 9:26.

A clear plan that you put in writing can help you turn your decisions into action. (1 Cor. 14:40) For instance, bodies of elders are directed to assign an elder to record each decision of the body of elders, including who is assigned to follow through and the suggested date for completion. Elders who follow this direction are more likely to carry out their decisions. You could try to do something similar with your per-

sonal affairs. For example, you could prepare a daily to-do list and arrange the items in the order you intend to handle them. This can help you not only to complete what you start but also to get more done in less time. But you will need to exert yourself. It takes effort to follow your plan and complete what you start. (Rom. 12:11) The apostle Paul told Timothy to “continue applying” himself and to “persevere” in becoming a better teacher. That advice applies equally to other spiritual goals.—1 Tim. 4:13, 16. *w19.11 29-30 ¶15-16*

Sunday, August 22

Jehovah spoke to Moses face-to-face, just as one man would speak to another man.—Ex. 33:11.

When Moses was asked to lead the nation of Israel out of captivity, he lacked confidence and repeatedly told Jehovah that he felt unqualified. God responded with real compassion, providing help for Moses. (Ex. 4:10-16) As a result, Moses was able to deliver powerful judgment messages to Pharaoh. Moses then saw Jehovah use His power as He saved the Israelites but destroyed Pharaoh and his forces in the Red Sea. (Ex. 14:26-31; Ps. 136:15) After Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, they constantly found things to complain about. Even so, Moses observed Jehovah’s great patience in dealing with the people He had freed from slavery. (Ps. 78:40-43) Moses also saw Jehovah show remarkable humility when He changed His mind after Moses asked Him to do so. (Ex. 32:9-14) After the Exodus, Moses’ relationship with Jehovah became so close that it was as if he could see his heavenly Father.—Heb. 11:27. *w19.12 17 ¶7-9*

Monday, August 23

He is going ahead of you into Galilee. You will see him there.

—Matt. 28:7.

Most of Jesus' disciples were Galileans. So a mountain in Galilee—rather than a private home in Jerusalem—would be a reasonable place to gather with a large number of people. Also, the resurrected Jesus had already met with his 11 apostles in a private home in Jerusalem. If Jesus wanted to instruct only the apostles to preach and make disciples, he could have done that in Jerusalem instead of asking them and the women and others to meet him in Galilee. (Luke 24:33, 36) Jesus' command to make disciples was not limited to Christians living in the first century. How do we know? Jesus concluded his instructions to his followers with the words: "I am with you all the days until the conclusion of the system of things." (Matt. 28:19, 20) Today the disciple-making work is in full swing. Think of it! Nearly 300,000 people each year get baptized as Jehovah's Witnesses and become disciples of Jesus Christ! *w20.01 2 ¶1; 3 ¶5-6*

Tuesday, August 24

He remembered us when we were low.—Ps. 136:23.

Young, but diagnosed with a debilitating disease. Getting older and unable to find work. Being elderly and becoming increasingly limited in what you can do in Jehovah's service. If you are experiencing something like one of the situations just mentioned, you may feel that you are not useful anymore. Those situations can rob you of joy, destroy your self-respect, and interfere with your relationships with other peo-

ple. This world reflects Satan's view of human life. Satan has always treated humans as if they were of little value. He heartlessly offered Eve a path to freedom, knowing full well that the penalty for disobeying God was death. Satan has always controlled this world. So it is not surprising that many of its leaders reflect his lack of respect for human life and dignity. Jehovah, on the other hand, wants us to feel good about ourselves, and he supports us when we face situations that could make us feel worthless.—Rom. 12:3. *w20.01 14 ¶1-4*

Wednesday, August 25

You must not prophesy in the name of Jehovah, or you will die by our hand.—Jer. 11:21.

For at least 40 years, Jeremiah lived among disloyal people, including neighbors and possibly some relatives from his hometown of Anathoth. (Jer. 12:6) However, he did not isolate himself. In fact, he expressed his feelings to his loyal secretary Baruch and ultimately to us. (Jer. 8:21; 9:1; 20:14-18; 45:1) We can well imagine that as Baruch wrote down Jeremiah's eventful story, the two developed deep affection and respect for each other. (Jer. 20:1, 2; 26:7-11) For many years, Jeremiah had boldly warned the Israelites about what was going to happen to Jerusalem. (Jer. 25:3) In a further attempt to move the people to repentance, Jehovah asked Jeremiah to write His warnings on a scroll. (Jer. 36:1-4) As Jeremiah and Baruch worked closely together on this God-given task, which probably lasted several months, they no doubt had faith-strengthening conversations. *w19.11 2-3 ¶3-4*

Thursday, August 26

Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.—Matt. 23:12.

How should we treat anointed brothers and sisters? It would be wrong to admire a person too much, even if he is an anointed brother of Christ. (Matt. 23:8-11) When the Bible speaks of the elders, it encourages us to “imitate their faith,” but it does not tell us that we can make any human our leader. (Heb. 13:7) It is true that the Bible says that some are “worthy of double honor.” But this is because they “pre- side in a fine way” and “work hard in speaking and teaching,” not because they are anointed. (1 Tim. 5: 17) If we give anointed ones too much praise and attention, we could embarrass them. Or even worse, we could cause them to become proud. (Rom. 12:3) None of us would want to do anything that might cause one of Christ’s anointed brothers to make such a serious mistake!—Luke 17:2. *w20.01* 29 ¶8

Friday, August 27

Besides those things of an external kind, there is . . . the anxiety for all the congregations.
—2 Cor. 11:28.

The apostle Paul had many reasons for feeling anxious. The problems his brothers and sisters faced weighed heavily on his mind. (2 Cor. 2:4) Opposers beat him and threw him in prison. He also had to endure hardships that caused anxiety, such as being “low on provisions.” (Phil. 4:12) And considering that he had been shipwrecked at least three times at that point in his

life, we can only imagine the anxiety he experienced when traveling by boat. (2 Cor. 11:23-27) How did Paul deal with the anxiety? Paul felt anxious for his brothers and sisters when they faced challenges, but he did not try to fix all their problems by himself. Paul was modest. He arranged for others to help in caring for the congregation, trustworthy men such as Timothy and Titus. The work those brothers did no doubt helped to reduce Paul’s anxiety. —Phil. 2:19, 20; Titus 1:1, 4, 5. *w20.02* 23 ¶11-12

Saturday, August 28

Children, be obedient to your parents.—Eph. 6:1.

Jehovah also expects us to obey him. He deserves our obedience because he is our Creator, the Sustainer of our life, and the wisest of all parents. However, the primary reason why we obey Jehovah is that we love him. (1 John 5:3) Although there are many reasons why we should obey Jehovah, he does not force us to do so. Jehovah gave us the gift of free will, so he is happy when we choose to obey him out of love for him. Parents want their children to be safe. That is why they establish standards of behavior. When children obey those guidelines, they show that they put trust in their parents and respect them. How much more important it is, then, that we know our heavenly Father’s standards and live by them. When we do, we show Jehovah that we love and respect him and we also benefit ourselves. (Isa. 48:17, 18) By contrast, those who reject Jehovah and his standards end up hurting themselves.—Gal. 6:7, 8. *w20.02* 9-10 ¶8-9

Sunday, August 29

Let your servant girl speak to you, and listen to the words of your servant girl.—1 Sam. 25:24.

Like Abigail, we need to have the courage to speak up if we see someone heading down a dangerous path. (Ps. 141:5) We must be respectful, but we must also be bold. When we lovingly offer a person necessary counsel, we prove that we are a true friend. (Prov. 27:17) Elders in particular must have the courage to speak to those in the congregation who take a false step. (Gal. 6:1) Elders humbly realize that they too are imperfect and may one day need counsel. But elders do not let that hold them back from reproving those who need discipline. (2 Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:9) When counseling a person, they try to use their gift of speech to teach him skillfully and patiently. They love their brother, and that love moves them to action. (Prov. 13:24) But their primary concern is to honor Jehovah by upholding his standards and protecting the congregation from harm. —Acts 20:28. *w20.03 20 ¶8-9*

Monday, August 30

For all things I have the strength through the one who gives me power.—Phil. 4:13.

Jehovah caused Moses to become a deliverer of the Israelites. But when did Jehovah use him? Was it when Moses felt qualified after being “instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians”? (Acts 7:22-25) No, Jehovah used Moses only after He had shaped him into a humble, mild-tempered man. (Acts 7:30, 34-36) Jehovah gave Moses the courage to stand before the most powerful rul-

er in Egypt. (Ex. 9:13-19) From this we see that Jehovah uses those who display godly qualities and who rely on him for strength. Throughout history, Jehovah has caused his servants to fulfill many different roles. What will he cause you to become? Much depends on how willing you are to exert yourself. (Col. 1:29) If you make yourself available, Jehovah can cause you to become a zealous evangelizer, an effective teacher, a capable comforter, a skilled worker, a supportive friend, or whatever else he needs to accomplish his will. *w19.10 21 ¶5; 25 ¶14*

Tuesday, August 31

*I have called you friends.
—John 15:15.*

Good friends will help us to stay loyal to Jehovah. And the best way to make good friends is to be a good friend. (Matt. 7:12) For example, the Bible encourages us to expend ourselves in behalf of others, especially those who are “in need.” (Eph. 4:28) When we are absorbed in helping others, we are more likely to be happy. (Acts 20:35) The friends we make will support us when we face trials, helping us to maintain our inner peace. Just as Elihu listened when Job spoke about his trials, our friends help us by patiently listening as we put our concerns into words. (Job 32:4) We should not expect our friends to make decisions for us, but we are wise if we listen to their Bible-based advice. (Prov. 15:22) And just as King David humbly accepted the help of his friends, we should not be too proud to accept the help our friends offer when we are in need. (2 Sam. 17:27-29) Really, such good friends are a gift from Jehovah.—Jas. 1:17. *w19.04 11 ¶12; 12 ¶14-15*

Wednesday, September 1

My Father has kept working until now, and I keep working.

—John 5:17.

Do the examples set by Jehovah and Jesus in working hard imply that it is not necessary for us to rest? Not at all. Jehovah never gets tired, so he does not need physical rest. The Bible does say that after Jehovah created the heavens and the earth, “he rested and refreshed himself.” (Ex. 31:17) However, that evidently means that Jehovah paused and found satisfaction in what he had made. And although Jesus worked hard while he lived on earth, he still made time to rest and to enjoy meals with his friends. (Matt. 14:13; Luke 7:34) The Bible encourages God’s people to be workers. His servants are to be industrious rather than lazy. (Prov. 15:19) Perhaps you work secularly to care for your family. And all disciples of Christ have the responsibility to share in the work of preaching the good news. Still, you also need to get sufficient rest. *w19.12 2 ¶2; 3 ¶4-5*

Thursday, September 2

Christ suffered for you, leaving a model for you to follow his steps closely.—1 Pet. 2:21.

Avoid telling stories about the demons. In this regard, we want to imitate the example set by Jesus. Before he came to earth, Jesus lived in heaven, and he knew a lot about Satan and the demons. But he did not relate stories about what those wicked spirits had done. Jesus wanted to be a witness of Jehovah, not a publicity agent for Satan.

We can imitate Jesus by not spreading stories about the demons. Instead, we show by our words that our “heart is stirred by something good,” that is, the truth. (Ps. 45:1) Do not be terrified of wicked spirits. In this imperfect world, bad things may happen to us. Accidents, sickness, or even death may come without warning. But we should not think that invisible spirits are responsible. The Bible explains that “time and unexpected events” can overtake anyone. (Eccl. 9:11) As for the demons, Jehovah has shown that he is far more powerful than they are. *w19.04 23-24 ¶13-14*

Friday, September 3

The existing authorities stand placed in their relative positions by God.—Rom. 13:1.

Do elders comply with secular laws about reporting an allegation of child abuse to the secular authorities? Yes. In places where such laws exist, elders endeavor to comply with secular laws about reporting allegations of abuse. Such laws do not conflict with God’s law. (Acts 5:28, 29) So when they learn of an allegation, elders immediately seek direction on how they can comply with laws about reporting it. Elders assure victims and their parents and others with knowledge of the matter that they are free to report an allegation of abuse to the secular authorities. But what if the report is about someone who is a part of the congregation and the matter then becomes known in the community? Should the Christian who reported it feel that he has brought reproach on God’s name? No. The abuser is the one who brings reproach on God’s name. *w19.05 10 ¶13-14*

Saturday, September 4

*The wisdom of this world
is foolishness with God.*

—1 Cor. 3:19.

The Bible instructs the husband and wife to honor each other and their marriage vows. It encourages marriage mates to have a deep sense of commitment to each other, stating: "A man will leave his father and his mother and he will stick to his wife, and they will become one flesh." (Gen. 2:24) In contrast, those influenced by the wisdom of the world promote a different view, saying that each spouse should focus on his or her own needs. "In some ceremonies," notes one book about divorce, "the traditional pledge to marry for 'as long as we both shall live' was replaced with the more limited promise to marry for 'as long as we both shall love.'" Such a casual view of marriage has led to countless broken families and has caused immeasurable emotional harm. Without a doubt, the world's disrespectful view of marriage is a foolish teaching. *w19.05 23 ¶12*

Sunday, September 5

*Stop being molded by this system
of things.—Rom. 12:2.*

Paul was concerned because some Christians were apparently being influenced by the unwholesome reasonings and philosophies promoted by Satan's world. (Eph. 4:17-19) That can happen to any one of us. In a desperate attempt to turn us away from Jehovah, Satan, the god of this system of things, uses various tactics. One of them is that of exploiting any tendency we may have toward selfish ambition or self-promotion. He may even use certain aspects of our background, our cul-

ture, or our education to bring us over to his way of thinking. Is it possible for us to root out things that are "strongly entrenched" in our minds? (2 Cor. 10:4) Notice how Paul answers: "We are overturning reasonings and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are bringing every thought into captivity to make it obedient to the Christ." (2 Cor. 10:5) Yes, with Jehovah's help we can actually gain control over wrong reasonings. *w19.06 8 ¶1-3*

Monday, September 6

*As for me, drawing near to God
is good for me. I have made the
Sovereign Lord Jehovah my
refuge.—Ps. 73:28.*

Although deeply distressed, Hannah, David, and a psalmist all relied on Jehovah for help. They shared their anxiety with him through fervent prayer. They spoke freely to him about the reasons why they were so stressed. And they continued to go to Jehovah's place of worship. (1 Sam. 1:9, 10; Ps. 55:22; 73:17; 122:1) Jehovah compassionately responded to each one of them. Hannah gained peace of mind. (1 Sam. 1:18) David wrote: "Many are the hardships of the righteous one, but Jehovah rescues him from them all." (Ps. 34:19) And the psalmist later felt that Jehovah had "taken hold of [his] right hand," guiding him with loving advice. (Ps. 73:23, 24) What do we learn from these examples? At times, we will be burdened with problems that cause us stress. But we can cope if we meditate on how Jehovah has helped others, rely on him in prayer, and obey him by doing what he asks us to do.—Ps. 143:1, 4-8. *w19.06 17 ¶14-15*

Tuesday, September 7

Even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are happy.—1 Pet. 3:14.

Never allow anything that mere humans say or do to make you feel ashamed of being one of Jehovah's Witnesses. (Mic. 4:5) Consider the example set by the apostles in Jerusalem just after Jesus was put to death. They knew how much the Jewish religious leaders hated them. (Acts 5:17, 18, 27, 28) Yet, every day they continued to go to the temple and publicly identify themselves as disciples of Jesus. (Acts 5:42) They refused to cower in fear. We too can defeat our own fear of man by regularly and publicly identifying ourselves as Jehovah's Witnesses—at work, at school, and in our neighborhood. (Acts 4:29; Rom. 1:16) Why were the apostles happy? They knew why they were hated, and they considered it an honor to be mistreated for doing Jehovah's will. (Luke 6:23; Acts 5:41; 1 Pet. 2:19-21) When we understand that we are hated for doing what is right, we will never allow the hatred of men to paralyze us with fear. *w19.07 7 ¶19-20*

Wednesday, September 8

It is lawful to do a fine thing on the Sabbath.—Matt. 12:12.

Jesus and his Jewish followers observed the Sabbath because they were under the Mosaic Law. But Jesus showed by word and deed that keeping the Sabbath was to be reasonable and that kind and helpful actions were allowable. (Matt. 12:9-11) He did not view performing kind and helpful actions as a violation of the Sabbath. Jesus' actions highlighted a key feature of the Sabbath. Because God's people rested from their

daily labor, they were able to focus on spiritual things. Jesus grew up in a family that must have used the Sabbath for spiritual benefit. That is reflected in what we read about Jesus when he was in his hometown of Nazareth: "According to [Jesus'] custom on the Sabbath day, he entered the synagogue and stood up to read." (Luke 4:15-19) Also, his disciples had so much respect for the Sabbath law that they stopped preparations for Jesus' burial until the Sabbath day was over.—Luke 23:55, 56. *w19.12 4 ¶10*

Thursday, September 9

You had no hope.—Eph. 2:12.

Every Christian minister is involved in helping to find honest-hearted ones. We could liken this work to finding a lost child. In what way? Consider the real-life example of a three-year-old boy who wandered away from home. About 500 people were involved in searching for him. Finally, some 20 hours after the child went missing, a volunteer discovered the little boy in a cornfield. That volunteer refused to take credit for locating the boy. He said: "It took hundreds of people to find him." Many people are like that child. They feel lost. They have no hope, but they want help. Over eight million of us are involved in trying to find these deserving ones. You may not personally find someone who will study the Bible with you. However, other publishers working the same territory may find someone who wants to learn the truth found in God's Word. When a brother or sister meets someone who becomes a disciple of Christ, everyone who shared in the search has good reason to rejoice. *w19.07 16-17 ¶9-10*

Friday, September 10

I am pressing on toward the goal.—Phil. 3:14.

The apostle Paul reminded the Christians in Philippi of the need to keep running with endurance. The congregation faced hostility from the start. It all began when, in response to the divine invitation to “step over into Macedonia,” Paul and Silas arrived in Philippi about 50 C.E. (Acts 16:9) There they found a woman named Lydia, who “was listening, and Jehovah opened her heart wide” to the good news. (Acts 16:14) She soon got baptized along with her household. However, the Devil was not idle. Men of the city dragged Paul and Silas before the civil magistrates and falsely accused them of causing a disturbance. As a result, Paul and Silas were beaten, imprisoned, and later urged to leave the city. (Acts 16:16-40) Did they give up? Never! And what about the brothers and sisters in the newly formed congregation? Commendably, they too endured! No doubt they were greatly encouraged by the good example that Paul and Silas set for them. *w19.08 2 ¶1-2*

Saturday, September 11

Be filled with righteous fruit.—Phil. 1:11.

No doubt this “righteous fruit” included love for Jehovah and his people. That would also include speaking to others about our faith in Jesus and our wonderful hope. We bear “righteous fruit” when we actively share in the most important work of making disciples. (Matt. 28:18-20) No matter what our

circumstances, we can shine as illuminators. In some cases, what seems to be an obstacle to declaring the good news may turn out to be an opportunity for us to preach. The apostle Paul, for example, was under house arrest in Rome when he wrote his letter to the Philippians. But his chains did not hold him back from preaching to his captors and to visitors. Paul preached zealously under these circumstances, and this gave the brothers confidence and courage “to speak the word of God fearlessly.”—Phil. 1:12-14; 4:22. *w19.08 12 ¶15-16*

Sunday, September 12

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time.—1 Pet. 5:6.

The most important reason for us to cultivate humility is that it pleases Jehovah. The apostle Peter made this clear when he wrote the words of today’s text. Commenting on Peter’s words, the book “*Come Be My Follower*” says in chapter 3, paragraph 23: “Haughtiness is like poison. The effects can be devastating. It is a quality that can render the most gifted human useless to God. Humility, on the other hand, can make even the least one very useful to Jehovah. . . . [He] will . . . delight in rewarding you for your humility.” Really, could we hope for anything better than to bring joy to Jehovah’s heart? (Prov. 23:15) Besides pleasing Jehovah, we receive many benefits when we cultivate humility. Humility draws other people to us. To understand why, put yourself in the shoes of others. —Matt. 7:12. *w19.09 4 ¶8-9*

Monday, September 13

Everyone proud in heart is detestable to Jehovah.

—Prov. 16:5.

Elders work hard for the benefit of their brothers and sisters. And they do not let their authority make them unduly proud. Instead, they treat the congregation tenderly. (1 Thess. 2:7, 8) Their deep love and humble attitude affect how they speak to others. Andrew, an experienced elder, says: "I have found that the brothers and sisters generally respond well to an elder's kindness and genuine warmth. These qualities motivate the congregation to cooperate with the elders." Another longtime elder, named Tony, comments: "I try to apply the counsel found at Philippians 2:3 and constantly work at viewing others as superior to me. This helps me to avoid acting like a dictator." Elders must be humble, just as Jehovah is humble. Although Jehovah is the Sovereign of the universe, he "stoops down" to raise "the lowly from the dust." (Ps. 18:35; 113:6, 7) In fact, Jehovah detests those who are proud and arrogant. *w19.09* 16-17 ¶11-12

Tuesday, September 14

Take my yoke upon you.

—Matt. 11:29.

To find refreshment under Jesus' yoke, we must keep the right perspective. We are doing Jehovah's work, so it must be done Jehovah's way. We are the workers, and Jehovah is the Master. (Luke 17:10) If we try to do his work our way, we will find ourselves fighting against the yoke. On the other hand, we can do extraordinary things and overcome any obstacle if we follow Jehovah's guidance. Remember that nobody

can stop his will from being accomplished! (Rom. 8:31; 1 John 4:4) Our goal is to bring glory to our loving Father, Jehovah. Those in the first century who were motivated by greed or self-interest soon became unhappy and abandoned Jesus' yoke. (John 6:25-27, 51, 60, 66; Phil. 3:18, 19) By contrast, those who were motivated by an unselfish love of God and love of neighbor happily carried that yoke throughout their life on earth, with the prospect of serving with Christ in heaven. Like them, we will remain happy by carrying Jesus' yoke with the right motive. *w19.09* 20 ¶1; 24-25 ¶19-20

Wednesday, September 15

You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.—John 8:32.

Think of the blessings you enjoy because you have been liberated from long-held unscriptural beliefs. What a joy to have such freedom! You can expect greater freedom to come. In the near future, Jesus will act decisively to eliminate false religion and corrupt human rulership. God will protect "a great crowd" who serve him, and then he will allow them to enjoy blessings in an earthly paradise. (Rev. 7:9, 14) A vast number will be resurrected and will have the opportunity to be liberated from all the effects of Adam's sin. (Acts 24:15) During the Thousand Year Reign, Jesus and his corulers will help to raise mankind to perfect physical and spiritual health. This time of restoration and liberation will be like the Jubilee in Israel. The result for all on earth who serve Jehovah loyally will be human perfection, free from sin. *w19.12* 12-13 ¶14-16

Thursday, September 16

Barnabas came to his aid.

—Acts 9:27.

In the first century C.E., a generous man named Joseph (surnamed Barnabas) made himself available to be used by Jehovah. (Acts 4:36, 37) After Saul became a believer, many of the brothers were afraid to approach him because of his reputation as a persecutor of the congregations. However, warmhearted Barnabas came to Saul's aid. (Acts 9:21, 26-28) Later, the elders in Jerusalem saw the need to provide encouragement to the brothers as far as Antioch of Syria. Whom did they send? Barnabas! They chose well. We are told that Barnabas "began to encourage them all to continue in the Lord with heartfelt resolve." (Acts 11:22-24) Likewise today, Jehovah can help us to become a "son of comfort" to fellow Christians. For example, he might use us to comfort those who have lost loved ones in death. Or he may move us to visit or make a phone call to someone who is sick or depressed to share a few kind words. Will you allow Jehovah to use you as he did Barnabas? —1 Thess. 5:14. *w19.10 22 ¶8*

Friday, September 17

Whoever forgives a transgression seeks love, but the one who keeps harping on a matter separates close friends.—Prov. 17:9.

Sometimes when we work closely with our friends, we become aware not only of their strengths but also of their weaknesses. What can help us deal with this challenge? Realistically, we cannot expect perfection from our brothers and sisters. Therefore, once we have formed

close friendships, we need to work hard at keeping those newly formed bonds alive. If our friends make a mistake, we may need to give kind but frank counsel based on God's Word. (Ps. 141:5) And if they hurt us, we need to forgive them. Once we have forgiven them, we must avoid the temptation to bring the offense up again in the future. How vital it is during these critical times to focus on the strengths of our brothers and sisters rather than on their weaknesses! Doing so strengthens the bond we share with them, and we will need close friends during the great tribulation. *w19.11 6 ¶13, 16*

Saturday, September 18

Make disciples of people of all the nations, . . . teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you.—Matt. 28:19, 20.

As we conduct Bible studies, we have to try our best to "make disciples . . . , teaching them to observe all the things [Jesus has] commanded." We need to help people understand how important it is for them to take their stand for Jehovah and his Kingdom. This means trying to motivate people to make the truth their own by applying what they learn, dedicating their life to Jehovah, and getting baptized. Only then will they survive Jehovah's day. (1 Pet. 3:21) There is very little time between now and the end of this system of things. For this reason, we cannot afford to keep studying the Bible with people who have no clear intention of becoming Christ's disciples. (1 Cor. 9:26) Our work is urgent! There are many people who have yet to hear the Kingdom message before it is too late. *w19.10 11-12 ¶14-15*

Sunday, September 19

He will . . . put the incense on the fire before Jehovah.—Lev. 16:13.

On the yearly Day of Atonement, the nation of Israel came together and animal sacrifices were offered up. Those sacrifices helped to remind the Israelites that they needed to be cleansed of sin! First, though, the high priest had the task of pouring holy incense onto fiery coals and filling the room with a sweet-smelling aroma. What can we learn from that? The Bible indicates that the acceptable prayers of Jehovah's faithful worshippers are like incense. (Ps. 141:2; Rev. 5:8) It was with great respect that the high priest brought the incense into the presence of Jehovah. Similarly, when we approach Jehovah in prayer, we do so with deep respect. We are in awe of him. We deeply appreciate that our Creator allows us to approach him and draw close to him, as a child to a father. (Jas. 4:8) He accepts us as his friends! (Ps. 25:14) We appreciate this privilege so much that we would never want to disappoint him. *w19.11 20-21 ¶3-5*

Monday, September 20

How many your works are, O Jehovah! You have made all of them in wisdom. The earth is full of what you have made.—Ps. 104:24.

How do most people where you live view work? In many countries, people are working harder and longer than ever before. Overworked people are often too busy to rest, to spend time with their families, or to satisfy their spiritual need. (Eccl. 2:23) On the other hand, some people do not like to work at all and make excuses for not working. (Prov. 26:

13, 14) In contrast with the world's unbalanced attitudes, consider the way that Jehovah and Jesus view work. There is no question that Jehovah is a worker. Jesus made that clear, saying: "My Father has kept working until now, and I keep working." (John 5:17) Think of all the work God did as he created countless spirit creatures and the vast universe. We also see ample evidence of God's creative works on the beautiful earth where we live. *w19.12 2 ¶1-2*

Tuesday, September 21

I have found David . . . a man agreeable to my heart.

—Acts 13:22.

How did David come to be so close to Jehovah? David learned about Jehovah from creation. When David was young, he spent many hours outdoors, caring for his father's sheep. Perhaps it was then that he began to meditate on the things Jehovah had made. For example, as David gazed up at night, not only would he have seen a canopy of stars but he would also have discerned the qualities of the One who made them. (Ps. 19:1, 2) When David reflected on the way humans were made, he saw Jehovah's wonderful wisdom at work. (Ps. 139:14) As David tried to comprehend Jehovah's works, he felt humbled. (Ps. 139:6) What is the lesson for us? In your daily life, meditate on what the creation around you—the plants, animals, and people—teaches you about Jehovah. Then each new day will be full of lessons about your loving Father. (Rom. 1:20) And each day you will see your love for him grow more intense. *w19.12 19-20 ¶15-17*

Wednesday, September 22

By faith Moses, when grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

—Heb. 11:24.

Moses acted on what he learned. When he was about 40 years old, Moses chose to associate with God's people, the Hebrews, rather than to be known as "the son of Pharaoh's daughter." Moses gave up a prominent position. By siding with the Hebrews, who were slaves in Egypt, he risked the wrath of Pharaoh, a powerful ruler who was viewed as a god. What an outstanding act of faith! Moses trusted in Jehovah. Such trust is a foundation stone of a lasting relationship. (Prov. 3:5) What is the lesson for us? Like Moses, all of us have a decision to make: Will we choose to serve God and associate with his people? We may have to make sacrifices to serve God, and we risk being opposed by those who do not know Jehovah. But if we trust in our heavenly Father, we can count on his support! *w19.12 17 ¶5-6*

Thursday, September 23

Jehovah God went on to form the man out of dust from the ground and to blow into his nostrils the breath of life.—Gen. 2:7.

Even though we are made from the dust of the earth, we are worth far more than a handful of dirt. Consider just some of the reasons why we know that we are valuable to Jehovah. He created humans with the ability to reflect his qualities. (Gen. 1:27) In doing so, he elevated us above the rest of physical creation, putting us in charge of the earth and the animals. (Ps. 8:

4-8) Even after Adam sinned, Jehovah continued to value humans. He values us so highly that he gave his beloved Son, Jesus, as a ransom for our sins. (1 John 4:9, 10) Applying the benefits of the ransom, Jehovah will resurrect those who have died as a result of Adam's sin, "both the righteous and the unrighteous." (Acts 24:15) His Word shows that we are precious to him no matter what our health condition, financial situation, or age may be.—Acts 10:34, 35. *w20.01 15 ¶5-6*

Friday, September 24

Mind your own business.

—1 Thess. 4:11.

A person does not inherit his heavenly hope from his family. He receives it from God. (1 Thess. 2:12) So avoid asking questions that could hurt others. For example, we would not ask the wife of an anointed brother how she feels about the prospect of living forever on earth without her husband. After all, we can be absolutely sure that in the new world, Jehovah will "satisfy the desire of every living thing." (Ps. 145:16) If we do not treat anointed ones as more important than others, we also protect ourselves. How? The Bible tells us that some anointed ones might not remain faithful. (Matt. 25:10-12; 2 Pet. 2:20, 21) But if we avoid "admiring personalities," we will never follow others, even those who are anointed or well-known or those who have served Jehovah for a long time. (Jude 16, ftn.) Then, if they become unfaithful or leave the congregation, we will not lose our faith in Jehovah or stop serving him. *w20.01 29 ¶9-10*

Saturday, September 25

Become imitators of God, as beloved children.—Eph. 5:1.

As Jehovah's "beloved children," we do our best to imitate him. We imitate his qualities by being loving, kind, and forgiving in our dealings with others. When those who do not know God see our fine conduct, they may be motivated to learn more about him. (1 Pet. 2:12) Christian parents have good reason to imitate Jehovah in the way they treat their children. When they do, their children may want to form their own friendship with our loving Father. We are proud of our heavenly Father, Jehovah, and want others to come to know him. In our heart, we all feel as did King David, who wrote: "I will boast in Jehovah." (Ps. 34:2) What, though, if we are timid? How can we become bold? We grow bold when we focus on how happy we can make Jehovah and how much others will benefit from learning about him. Jehovah will give us the courage we need. He helped our first-century brothers to become bold, and he will help us too.—1 Thess. 2:2. *w20.02 11 ¶12-13*

Sunday, September 26

Go, therefore, and make disciples . . . , baptizing them.—Matt. 28:19.

Many who study the Bible progress to baptism. However, some who regularly study the Bible with us seem reluctant to become disciples. They enjoy their studies, but they are not progressing to baptism. If you are conducting a Bible study, we are sure that you want to help your student to apply what he learns and to become a disciple of Christ.

Jehovah wants people to serve him because they love him. So our goal is to help our students to understand that Jehovah cares deeply about them as individuals and that he loves them very much. We want to help them to see Jehovah as "a father of the fatherless and a protector of widows." (Ps. 68:5) As your students come to appreciate God's love for them, their heart will likely be touched and their own love for him will grow. So help your students to understand that our loving God wants them to gain everlasting life, and he is ready to help them to achieve that goal. *w20.01 3 ¶7-8*

Monday, September 27

I received much joy and comfort on hearing of your love.—Philem. 7.

The apostle Paul was humble, so he sought and received encouragement from his friends. He did not worry about being viewed as a weak person if he acknowledged that he had been comforted by others during times of distress. (Col. 4:7-11) When we humbly acknowledge that we need encouragement, our brothers and sisters will gladly give us the support we need. Paul knew that the Scriptures would comfort him. (Rom. 15:4) They would also give him wisdom to face any trial. (2 Tim. 3:15, 16) When imprisoned in Rome for the second time, Paul felt that his death was near. He asked Timothy to come to him quickly and bring "the scrolls." (2 Tim. 4:6, 7, 9, 13) Why? Because those scrolls were likely portions of the Hebrew Scriptures that Paul could use in his personal Bible study. When we imitate Paul by regularly studying God's Word, Jehovah will use the Scriptures to soothe us—no matter what trials we face. *w20.02 23-24 ¶14-15*

Tuesday, September 28

Stop judging that you may not be judged.—Matt. 7:1.

Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar did not spend their time thinking about how they could help Job. Instead, they were thinking about how they could prove that Job had done something wrong. They made some accurate statements, but much of what they said about Job and about Jehovah was either unkind or untrue. They judged Job harshly. (Job 32:1-3) How did Jehovah respond? His anger burned hot against those three men. He called them foolish and made them ask Job to pray for them. (Job 42:7-9) We learn a number of lessons from the bad examples set by Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. First, we should not judge our brothers. (Matt. 7:2-5) Instead, we should listen carefully to them before we speak. Only then will we be able to understand their situation. (1 Pet. 3:8) Second, when we do speak, we must make sure that our words are kind and our statements accurate. (Eph. 4:25) And third, Jehovah takes a keen interest in what we say to one another. *w20.03* 22-23 ¶15-16

Wednesday, September 29

Carry on prayer on every occasion.—Eph. 6:18.

It is often when we are teaching others about Jehovah that we ourselves come to know him better. For example, we see direct evidence of Jehovah's compassion when he guides us to those who have the right heart condition. (John 6:44; Acts 13:48) We see the power of God's Word at work as we watch those with whom we study break free from bad habits and begin to put on the new personality. (Col. 3:9, 10) And we see

proof of God's patience as he gives many in our territory numerous opportunities to learn about him and be saved. (Rom. 10:13-15) However, no matter how long we have been serving Jehovah, we should never take our relationship with him for granted. One of the most obvious ways we can prove that we value our friendship with God is by talking to him in prayer. Good communication is the lifeblood of a strong relationship. So draw close to God by praying often, never being afraid to express your innermost thoughts to him. *w19.12* 19 ¶11, 13-14

Thursday, September 30

*Your sins have been forgiven.
—1 John 2:12.*

What relief that thought brings to us! As King of God's Kingdom, Jesus will undo any damage Satan and his system may inflict on us. (Isa. 65:17; 1 John 3:8; Rev. 21:3, 4) What hope that inspires in us! And even though Jesus has given us a challenging assignment, he is with us, supporting us through the last days of this system. (Matt. 28:19, 20) What courage that builds in us! Relief, hope, and courage—these are some of the solid foundation stones on which our peace of mind is built. How, then, can you retain your peace of mind when you are shaken by severe trials? You can do so by imitating the things Jesus did. First, pray and persist in prayer. Second, obey Jehovah and preach zealously even when it is difficult to do so. And third, look to your friends to help you through trials. Then the peace of God will guard your mind and heart. (Phil. 4:6, 7) And like Jesus, you will conquer any trial.—John 16:33. *w19.04* 13 ¶16-17

Friday, October 3

The eyes of Jehovah are roving about through all the earth to show his strength in behalf of those whose heart is complete toward him.—2 Chron. 16:9.

We see abundant evidence that Jehovah protects his people today. Consider: We are preaching and teaching the truth in all parts of the earth. (Matt. 28:19, 20) As a result, we expose the evil works of the Devil. Surely, if Satan were able to, he would stop all our activity, but he cannot. So we do not need to be terrified of wicked spirits. If we are faithful to Jehovah, the demons cannot cause us lasting harm. However, all of us need to resist wicked spirits and trust in Jehovah. If we do that, we will receive many blessings and we will avoid being misled by Satan's lies. Also, we will not be paralyzed by fear of the demons. Above all, we will strengthen our friendship with Jehovah. "Oppose the Devil," wrote the disciple James, "and he will flee from you. Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you."—Jas. 4:7, 8. *w19.04 24 ¶15; 25 ¶18*

Saturday, October 2

The fruit of the womb is a reward.—Ps. 127:3.

Your children are a sacred trust, "an inheritance from Jehovah." It is your responsibility to safeguard that trust. What can you do to protect your children from abuse? First, educate yourself about abuse. Learn about the kind of individuals who abuse children and the tactics they use to deceive them. Be alert to potential dangers. (Prov. 22:3; 24:3) Remember that in most cases, the

abuser is someone the child already knows and trusts. Second, maintain good communication with your children. (Deut. 6:6, 7; Jas. 1:19) Remember that children are often reluctant to report abuse. They may fear that they will not be believed, or they may have been threatened by the abuser to keep the abuse secret. If you sense that something is wrong, kindly draw them out with questions and then patiently listen to their answers. Third, educate your children. Teach them what to say and do if someone tries to touch them in an inappropriate way. *w19.05 13 ¶19-22*

Sunday, October 3

Everyone proud in heart is detestable to Jehovah.

—*Prov. 16:5.*

Why does Jehovah detest proud people? One reason is that those who develop and promote an inflated love of self reflect Satan's own arrogance. Imagine, Satan believed that Jesus—the one whom God used to create all things—should bow down and worship him! (Matt. 4:8, 9; Col. 1:15, 16) Those with such an inflated view of their own importance confirm that the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God. (1 Cor. 3:19) The Bible, though, helps us to have a balanced view of ourselves. It acknowledges that a degree of self-love is proper. Jesus said: "Love your neighbor as yourself," which indicates that we should give a reasonable amount of attention to our needs. (Matt. 19:19) However, the Bible does not teach that we should elevate ourselves above others. Rather, it states: "Do nothing out of contentiousness or out of egotism, but with humility consider others superior to you."—Phil. 2:3; Rom. 12:3. *w19.05 24 ¶13-14*

Monday, October 4

Stop being molded by this system of things, but be transformed by making your mind over.

—Rom. 12:2.

Think back to the changes you needed to make when you first accepted the truth of God's Word and decided to serve Jehovah. For many of us, this involved giving up some form of wrong conduct. (1 Cor. 6: 9-11) How grateful we are for Jehovah's help in overcoming such sinful practices! However, we must never become complacent. Even though we stopped committing serious sins that we engaged in before baptism, we still need to be diligent about avoiding anything that would tempt us to return to those former deeds. A twofold action is required. First, we need to "stop being molded," or shaped, by this world. Second, we need to "be transformed" by making our mind over. The transformation involves more than a superficial change in appearance. It touches every fiber of our being. We need to make over our mind—our innermost attitudes, feelings, and inclinations. *w19.06 9 ¶4-6*

Tuesday, October 5

You, O Jehovah, are my helper and comforter.—Ps. 86:17.

When stressed, we can regain strength by attending congregation meetings. When we are at the meetings, we give Jehovah additional opportunities to be our "helper and comforter." There he strengthens us by means of his holy spirit, his Word, and his people. Meetings provide us with an opportunity to enjoy "an interchange of encouragement." (Rom. 1:11, 12) A

sister named Sophia said: "Jehovah and our brotherhood kept me going. Most important for me were our congregation meetings. I have found that the more involved I am in the ministry and my congregation, the better I am able to deal with stress and worry." When we feel discouraged, let us remember that Jehovah not only promises permanent relief in the future but also offers to help us deal with stress now. He gives us "the desire and the power" to overcome feelings of discouragement and hopelessness.—Phil. 2:13. *w19.06 19 ¶17-18*

Wednesday, October 6

Go, report to my brothers so that they may go to Galilee, and there they will see me.—Matt. 28:10.

Jesus must have some very important instructions to give his disciples, for this meeting is the first thing he arranges after his resurrection! At the meeting that Jesus organized, he outlined the vital work that his disciples would accomplish throughout the first century—the same work that we are accomplishing today. Jesus said: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of people of all the nations, . . . teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you." (Matt. 28: 19, 20) Jesus wants all his followers to preach. He did not limit this command to the 11 faithful apostles. How can we be so sure? Well, were only the apostles present when the command to make disciples was given on that mountain in Galilee? Recall that the angel said to the women: "You will see him [in Galilee]." (Matt. 28:7) So faithful women must also have been present on that occasion. *w20.01 2-3 ¶1-4*

Thursday, October 7

Because you are no part of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, for this reason the world hates you.—John 15:19.

Jesus explained why we should expect opposition. He said that we would be hated because we are no part of the world. Persecution is not a sign that we lack Jehovah's blessing. Instead, it indicates that we are doing what is right! Mere human opposers cannot stamp out the worship of the almighty God, Jehovah. Many have tried and failed. Consider what happened during World War II. At that time, governments in many countries intensely persecuted God's people. The work of Jehovah's Witnesses was banned not only by the Nazi party in Germany but also by governments in Australia, Canada, and other lands. Yet, note what took place. In 1939 when the war began, there were 72,475 publishers worldwide. Reports showed that by the end of the war in 1945, with Jehovah's blessing, there were 156,299 publishers. The number of publishers had more than doubled! *w19.07 9 ¶4-5*

Friday, October 8

By this all will know that you are my disciples—if you have love among yourselves.—John 13:35.

Even if you are not presently conducting a Bible study, you can assist in making disciples in other ways. For example, you can welcome new ones and befriend them when they come to the Kingdom Hall. In that way, you can help to convince them that love identifies us as true Christians. The answers you give during the meetings, though brief, can

teach newly associated ones to express their convictions in a sincere and respectful manner. You can also accompany a new publisher in the ministry and help him to use the Scriptures to reason with people. By doing that, you will be teaching him to imitate Christ. (Luke 10:25-28) Many Christians are very busy caring for important responsibilities. Still, they make time for conducting Bible studies, and they get much joy from it. *w19.07 17 ¶11, 13*

Saturday, October 9

Forgetting the things behind and stretching forward to the things ahead, I am pressing on toward the goal.—Phil. 3:13, 14.

The apostle Paul did not allow himself to be distracted, either by past accomplishments or by past mistakes. In fact, he said that "forgetting the things behind" was essential to "stretching forward to the things ahead," that is, to completing the race successfully. What were some of the things that could have distracted Paul? First, his accomplishments in Judaism were impressive. Yet, he viewed those things as "a lot of refuse." (Phil. 3:3-8) Second, he did not allow guilt over his earlier persecution of Christians to paralyze him. And third, he did not reason that he had already done enough for Jehovah. Paul had a productive ministry despite being imprisoned, beaten, stoned, and shipwrecked, as well as lacking food and clothing. (2 Cor. 11:23-27) However, regardless of what he had already accomplished and suffered, Paul knew that he must press on. The same is true of us. *w19.08 3 ¶5*

Sunday, October 10

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

Many of our brothers and sisters live in countries where they cannot preach openly or from door to door, so they find other ways to declare the good news. (Matt. 10:17-20) In one such country, a circuit overseer suggested that each publisher cover his own preaching “territory” made up of relatives, neighbors, schoolmates, workmates, and acquaintances. Within two years, the number of congregations in that circuit increased significantly. We may not live in a country where we cannot preach openly. However, we can learn a valuable lesson from the example of our resourceful brothers and sisters: Always look for ways to have a full share in the ministry, confident that Jehovah will give you the power you need to overcome any obstacle. (Phil. 2:13) At this momentous time, may we make sure of the more important things, be flawless, avoid stumbling others, and bear righteous fruit. Then we will abound in love and bring honor to our caring Father, Jehovah. *w19.08 13 ¶17-18*

Monday, October 11

I have seen servants on horseback but princes walking on foot just like servants.—Eccl. 10:7.

Few of us enjoy dealing with people who always insist on their own way and who refuse to accept suggestions from others. By contrast, we find it refreshing to deal with our fellow believers when they show “fellow feeling, brotherly affection, tender compassion, and humility.” (1 Pet. 3:8) If we are drawn to such people, they will likely be drawn to

us—as long as we are humble. Humility also makes our life easier. Realistically, we may observe things in life that do not seem to be right or fair. Those who have great ability do not always receive recognition. And those with less ability sometimes receive more honor. Even so, Solomon acknowledged that it is wise for us to face reality rather than to be obsessed with negative circumstances. (Eccl. 6:9) If we are humble, we will find it easier to accept life as it is—not as we think it should be. *w19.09 4-5 ¶9-10*

Tuesday, October 12

Fathers, . . . go on bringing [your children] up in the discipline and admonition of Jehovah.—Eph. 6:4.

Those who have a measure of authority, such as fathers, have the opportunity to benefit other people. Jehovah has assigned the father as head of the family, and God expects him to train and discipline his children. (1 Cor. 11:3) But a father’s authority is limited—he must answer to Jehovah, the one to whom every family owes its name. (Eph. 3:14, 15) Fathers show their submission to Jehovah by using their authority in a way that pleases God. Do not abuse the authority that Jehovah has given you. Admit your mistakes, and accept Bible-based counsel from others. If you do, your family will respect you for your humility. When praying with your family, pour your heart out to Jehovah—let them hear how much you depend on him. And above all, build your life around your service to Jehovah. (Deut. 6:6-9) Your good example is one of the most valuable gifts that you can give to your family. *w19.09 15 ¶8; 17 ¶14; 18 ¶16*

Wednesday, October 13

*Welcome [Mark] if he comes
to you.—Col. 4:10.*

Mark was happy to serve others. At various times he served alongside both the apostle Paul and the apostle Peter as they fulfilled their responsibilities, with Mark possibly attending to their physical needs. (Acts 13:2-5; 1 Pet. 5:13) Paul described Mark as one of his “fellow workers for the Kingdom of God” and as “a strengthening aid” to him. (Col. 4:11, ftn.) Mark became one of Paul’s close friends. For example, when Paul was imprisoned for the last time in Rome, about 65 C.E., he wrote his second letter to Timothy. In that letter, Paul asked Timothy to come to Rome and to bring Mark along. (2 Tim. 4:11) Paul no doubt appreciated Mark’s past faithful service, so he asked for Mark’s presence at that crucial time. Mark helped Paul in practical ways, perhaps supplying him with food or items for his writing. The support and encouragement that Paul received likely helped him to endure the final days leading up to his execution. *w20.01 11 ¶12-13*

Thursday, October 14

Come to me.—Matt. 11:28.

We have chosen a life of self-sacrifice and hard work. Jesus warned us that we would be persecuted. But we can expect that Jehovah will give us the strength to endure any challenge. The more we endure, the stronger we will become. (Jas. 1:2-4) We can also expect that Jehovah will provide for us, that Jesus will shepherd us, and that our brothers and sisters will encourage us. (Matt. 6:31-33; John 10:14; 1 Thess. 5:11) The woman whom Jesus cured from her “flow of blood”

was refreshed on the very day that she was healed. (Luke 8:43-48) But she would receive lasting refreshment only if she became a loyal disciple of Christ. What do you think she did? If she did choose to come under Jesus’ yoke, imagine the reward—serving with Jesus in heaven! Any sacrifices she had made to follow Christ would pale in comparison with that blessing. No matter what our hope is—living forever in heaven or on earth—how thankful we can be that we have accepted Jesus’ invitation: “Come to me!” *w19.09 25 ¶21-22*

Friday, October 15

*By wisdom a house is built up, and
by discernment it is made secure.
—Prov. 24:3.*

Needing help, David’s men asked a wealthy Israelite named Nabal for a little food. They felt free to ask because they had been protecting Nabal’s flocks in the wilderness. But selfish Nabal refused to give them anything. David became furious and intended to wipe out Nabal and every male of his household. (1 Sam. 25:3-13, 22) However, Nabal’s wife, Abigail, was as discerning as she was beautiful. Showing great courage, she fell at David’s feet and urged him not to incur bloodguilt by taking revenge. She tactfully advised him to leave matters in Jehovah’s hands. Abigail’s humble words and discreet actions touched David’s heart. He rightly concluded that Jehovah had sent her. (1 Sam. 25:23-28, 32-34) Abigail had cultivated qualities that made her useful to Jehovah. Similarly, Christian sisters who develop tact and discernment can be used by Jehovah to build up their families and others in the congregation. —Titus 2:3-5. *w19.10 23 ¶10*

Saturday, October 16

Get out of her, my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins, and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues.

—Rev. 18:4.

All true Christians must maintain a clear distinction between themselves and Babylon the Great. Before learning the truth, a Bible student may have been a member of a false religion. He may have attended its religious services and shared in its activities. Or he may have contributed money to such an organization. Before a Bible student can be approved as an unbaptized publisher, he must break all ties with false religion. He should submit a letter of resignation or otherwise completely sever his membership in his former church and in any other organization that has ties to Babylon the Great. A true Christian must make sure that his secular employment has nothing to do with Babylon the Great. (2 Cor. 6:14-17) Why do we take such a firm stand? Because we do not want to share in the works and sins of religious organizations that are unclean in God's eyes.—Isa. 52:11. *w19.10 12 ¶16-17*

Sunday, October 17

Jehovah is merciful and compassionate . . . He will not always find fault, nor will he stay resentful forever.—Ps. 103:8, 9.

Jeremiah wrote the book named after him, and he likely also wrote the Bible books of 1 and 2 Kings. That assignment no doubt made him especially aware of Jehovah's mercy toward imperfect humans. For example, he knew that when King Ahab repented of his bad deeds, Jehovah spared him from

seeing his entire family destroyed during his lifetime. (1 Ki. 21:27-29) Similarly, Jeremiah knew that Manasseh did even more to offend Jehovah than Ahab did. Even so, Jehovah forgave Manasseh because he repented. (2 Ki. 21:16, 17; 2 Chron. 33:10-13) Those accounts must have helped Jeremiah to imitate God's patience and mercy. Consider how Jeremiah dealt with Baruch when he temporarily became distracted in his assignment. Instead of quickly giving up on his friend, Jeremiah helped Baruch by sharing God's kind but frank message with him.—Jer. 45:1-5. *w19.11 6 ¶14-15*

Monday, October 18

God is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his name.—Heb. 6:10.

In the book of Leviticus, we learn that an Israelite could offer a communion sacrifice "as an expression of thanksgiving." (Lev. 7:11-13, 16-18) He made this offering, not because he had to, but because he wanted to. Like those communion sacrifices, our service to Jehovah is a voluntary expression of how we feel about him. We give Jehovah our best, and we do so because we love him with all our heart. How pleased Jehovah must be to see millions of willing worshippers serve him out of deep love for him and his ways! Jehovah sees and values not only our actions but also our motives. For example, if you are elderly and can no longer do as much as you would like, be assured that Jehovah sees beyond your limitations. You may feel that you have little to offer, but Jehovah sees the love deep within you that motivates you to do what you can do. He is pleased to accept the best that you can give. *w19.11 22 ¶9; 23 ¶11-12*

Tuesday, October 19

Come . . . into an isolated place and rest up a little.

—Mark 6:31.

Regarding work, balance is important. King Solomon was inspired to write: “There is an appointed time for . . . every activity.” He mentioned planting, building, weeping, laughing, dancing, and other activities. (Eccl. 3:1-8) Clearly, two fundamental aspects of life are work and rest. Jesus had a balanced view of work and rest. On one occasion, the apostles returned from a preaching tour. They were so busy that “they had no leisure time even to eat a meal.” Jesus told them the words of today’s text. (Mark 6:30-34) Even though he and his disciples were not always able to get the rest they wanted, Jesus knew that they all needed to rest. At times, some rest or some change truly is needed. We can see that from an arrangement that God made for his ancient people—the weekly Sabbath. We are not under the Mosaic Law, yet we can benefit from considering what it said about the Sabbath. *w19.12 3 ¶6-7*

Wednesday, October 20

Never be anxious.

—Matt. 6:31.

Jehovah has given his word that he will care for his loyal servants, and he feels obligated to fulfill that promise. (Ps. 31:1-3) In addition, Jehovah knows that we would be devastated if he did not care for those who are part of his family. He promises to provide for us both materially and spiritually, and nothing will stop him from fulfilling that promise! (Matt. 6:30-33; 24:45) When we remember why Jehovah keeps his

promises, we can face economic challenges with confidence. Consider the example of the first-century Christians. When great persecution arose against the congregation in Jerusalem, “all except the apostles were scattered.” (Acts 8:1) Think what that would have meant. Economic hardship! Christians likely lost their homes and businesses. Yet, Jehovah did not abandon them; neither did they lose their joy. (Acts 8:4; Heb. 13:5, 6; Jas. 1:2, 3) Jehovah supported those faithful Christians, and he will support us.—Ps. 37:18, 19. *w20.01 17-18 ¶14-15*

Thursday, October 21

Jehovah . . . takes note of the humble.—Ps. 138:6.

When David defended his father’s sheep from a lion and from a bear, he recognized that it was Jehovah who was helping him overcome those powerful predators. When he defeated the giant warrior Goliath, David saw clearly that it was Jehovah who was guiding him. (1 Sam. 17:37) And when he escaped from jealous King Saul, David acknowledged that it was Jehovah who had saved him. (Ps. 18, superscription) A proud man might have taken credit for those accomplishments. But David was humble, so he was able to recognize Jehovah’s hand in his life. What is the lesson for us? We need to do more than just ask for Jehovah’s help. We must also try to recognize when and how he gives us help. If we humbly acknowledge our limitations, we will clearly see that Jehovah makes up for what we lack. And each time we see Jehovah help us, our relationship with him will grow stronger. *w19.12 20 ¶18-19*

Friday, October 22

Those whom Jehovah loves he re-proves, just as a father does a son in whom he delights.—Prov. 3:12.

We have many reasons for believing that Jehovah values us. He has drawn us to him and taken notice of how we responded to the good news. (John 6:44) As we began to draw close to Jehovah, he drew closer to us. (Jas. 4:8) Jehovah also invests time and effort in educating us, showing that we are precious to him. He knows the kind of individuals we are now and the kind we can become. And he disciplines us because he loves us. What powerful evidence that Jehovah values us! Some considered King David to be worthless, but he knew that Jehovah loved and supported him. That thought affected David's view of his situation. (2 Sam. 16:5-7) When we feel low or face challenges, Jehovah can help us see things differently and he can help us climb over any obstacle. (Ps. 18:27-29) When we have Jehovah's backing, nothing can stop us from serving him with joy.—Rom. 8:31. *w20.01 15 ¶7-8*

Saturday, October 23

[Teach] them to observe all the things I have commanded you.

—Matt. 28:20.

When conducting a Bible study, start the session with prayer. Generally speaking, it is best to begin opening and closing the study with prayer as soon as possible, usually within the first few weeks after starting a regular study. We must help the student to realize that we can understand God's Word only with the help of God's spirit. Some Bible teachers raise the subject of prayer by reading James 1:5, which

states: "If any one of you is lacking in wisdom, let him keep asking God." The conductor then asks the student, "How can we ask God for wisdom?" The student will likely agree that we should pray to God. Teach your student how to pray. Reassure him that Jehovah wants to hear his heartfelt prayers. Explain that in our private prayers, we can really open our heart to Jehovah—expressing feelings that we might hesitate to share with any human. After all, Jehovah already knows our innermost thoughts.—Ps. 139:2-4. *w20.01 2 ¶3; 5 ¶11-12*

Sunday, October 24

It depends, not on a person's desire or on his effort, but on God.

—Rom. 9:16.

Jehovah decides when he will choose anointed ones. (Rom. 8:28-30) Jehovah began choosing anointed ones after Jesus was resurrected. It seems that in the first century, all true Christians were anointed. In the centuries that followed, most of those who claimed that they were Christians did not really follow Christ. Even so, during those years, Jehovah anointed the few who were true Christians. They were like the wheat that Jesus said would grow among the weeds. (Matt. 13:24-30) During the last days, Jehovah has continued to choose people who will be part of the 144,000. So if God decides to choose some of these just before the end, surely we should not question his wisdom. (Rom. 9:11) We must be careful not to react like the workers whom Jesus described in one of his illustrations. They complained about the way their master treated those who started working in the last hour.—Matt. 20:8-15. *w20.01 30 ¶14*

Monday, October 25

My servants will shout joyfully.

—Isa. 65:14.

Jehovah wants his family to be happy. There are many reasons why we can be cheerful right now, even though we may be facing difficulties. For example, we are certain that our heavenly Father loves us dearly. We have an accurate knowledge of God's Word, the Bible. (Jer. 15:16) And we are part of a unique family made up of people who love Jehovah, love his high moral standards, and love one another. (Ps. 106:4, 5) We can remain happy because we have the sure hope that life will get even better in the future. We know that soon Jehovah will remove all the wicked and that under the direction of his Kingdom, the earth will be restored to Paradise. We also have the wonderful hope that those who have died will be raised to life and reunited with their loved ones. (John 5:28, 29) What a joy that will be! And most important, we are sure that soon everyone in heaven and on earth will give our loving Father the honor, praise, and devotion that he deserves. *w20.02* 13 ¶15-16

Tuesday, October 26

Against you—you above all—I have sinned.—Ps. 51:4.

If you commit a serious sin, do not try to cover the error. Instead, openly confess your sin to Jehovah in prayer. You will then begin to feel some relief from the anxiety caused by a guilty conscience. But if you want to restore your friendship with Jehovah, you need to do more than pray. You need to accept discipline. When Jehovah sent the prophet Nathan to expose King David's sin with Bath-sheba, David did not jus-

tify himself or try to minimize the sin. He immediately acknowledged that he had sinned not only against Bath-sheba's husband but, above all, against Jehovah. David accepted the discipline from Jehovah, and Jehovah forgave him. (2 Sam. 12:10-14) If we have committed a serious sin, we need to talk to those whom Jehovah has appointed to shepherd us. (Jas. 5:14, 15) And we must avoid the urge to justify ourselves. The sooner we accept and apply whatever discipline we receive, the sooner we will regain our peace and joy. *w20.02* 24-25 ¶17-18

Wednesday, October 27

Ten men out of all the languages of the nations . . . will take firm hold of the robe of a Jew, saying: "We want to go with you, for we have heard that God is with you people."
—Zech. 8:23.

The "ten men" represent those who have the hope of living forever on earth. They know that Jehovah has blessed the group of anointed ones represented by the "Jew" and feel that it is an honor to worship him along with them. Even though it is not possible to know the name of each individual member of the anointed on earth today, those who hope to live on earth can "go with" the anointed. How? Today's text answers. Note that the Bible verse mentions one Jew. But "you" and "you people" refer to more than one person. This means that this Jew is not just one person but represents the whole group of anointed ones. Those who are not anointed serve Jehovah along with the anointed. However, they do not view the anointed as their leaders, realizing that Jesus fills the role of Leader. —Matt. 23:10. *w20.01* 26 ¶1-2

Thursday, October 28

By this all will know that you are my disciples—if you have love among yourselves.—John 13:35.

Jesus said that his true disciples would be clearly identifiable if they showed the same sort of love that he displayed. That statement was true in the first century, and it is true today. How important it is that we overcome any challenges and show love for one another! Ask yourself: 'What can I learn from brothers and sisters who have continued to show love for one another despite challenges?' Human imperfection makes it difficult for us to show intense love for one another. Even so, we must try to imitate Christ. Jesus taught us the importance of making peace with a brother who has something against us. (Matt. 5:23, 24) He emphasized that we need to maintain good relations with others if we are to please God. Jehovah is happy when we do our best to make peace with our brothers. He will not accept our worship if we hang on to resentment and refuse even to try to make peace. —1 John 4:20. *w20.03* 24 ¶1-4

Friday, October 29

We distinguish the inspired statement of truth from the inspired statement of error.—1 John 4:6.

Satan, "the father of the lie," has deceived people since the start of human history. (John 8:44) Some of his lies include false teachings about death and about life after death. Those teachings form the basis for many popular customs and superstitions. Why are so many humans deceived? Satan's lies about death exploit the way we naturally

feel about death. Because we were created to live forever, we do not want to die. (Eccl. 3:11) We consider death an enemy. (1 Cor. 15:26) Despite Satan's efforts, the truth about death has not been kept hidden. In fact, more people than ever now know and proclaim what the Bible teaches about the condition of the dead and the hope for the dead. (Eccl. 9:5, 10; Acts 24:15) These truths comfort us, sparing us needless fear and uncertainty. *w19.04* 14 ¶1; 15 ¶5-6

Saturday, October 30

Go on carrying the burdens of one another, and in this way you will fulfill the law of the Christ.

—Gal. 6:2.

Jehovah God loves his worshippers. He always has, and he always will. He also loves justice. (Ps. 33:5) So we can be sure of two things: (1) It pains Jehovah when his servants are treated unfairly. (2) He will make sure that justice is served. The Law that God gave Israel through Moses was built on love. It promoted justice—justice for all, even vulnerable ones. (Deut. 10:18) That Law reveals how deeply Jehovah cares about his worshippers. The Mosaic Law ended in 33 C.E. when the Christian congregation was established. Would Christians be without the benefits of a law that is built on love and promotes justice? By no means! Christians had a new law—"the law of the Christ." Jesus did not write down a law code for his followers, but he did give them instructions, commands, and principles to live by. "The law of the Christ" includes everything Jesus taught. *w19.05* 2 ¶1-3

Sunday, October 31

*The God of all comfort . . .
comforts us in all our trials.*
—2 Cor. 1:3, 4.

Humans have a natural need for comfort and a remarkable ability to provide it. For instance, when a little child falls and skins his knee while playing, he may run to Mommy or Daddy, crying. The parents cannot heal the wound, but they can comfort the child. They may ask what happened, wipe away his tears, offer soothing words and affection, and perhaps apply some medicine or a bandage. Before long, the child stops crying and may even resume playing. In time, the wound will heal. Sometimes, though, children are hurt in far worse ways. Some are sexually abused. The abuse can be inflicted on a single occasion, or it may go on for years. In either case, the abuse can leave deep emotional scars. In some cases, the offender is caught and punished. In others, the abuser may seem to escape justice. But even if justice is swift, the harmful effects of the abuse may last well into adulthood. *w19.05 14 ¶1-2*

Monday, November 1

Consider others superior to you.
—Phil. 2:3.

Today, many people who are considered wise would ridicule the Bible's counsel about self-importance. They would say that considering others superior to you would make you vulnerable and that others would take advantage of you. But what fruitage has the self-centered attitude promoted by Satan's world produced? Are selfish people happy? Do they have happy families and genuine friends? Do they have a close friendship with God? From

what you have seen, which produces the best results—following the wisdom of this world or the wisdom found in God's Word? (1 Cor. 3:19) People who follow the advice of those whom the world views as wise are like a tourist who asks a fellow tourist for directions when both of them are lost. Jesus said regarding the "wise" men of his day: "Blind guides is what they are. If, then, a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit." (Matt. 15:14) Truly, the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. *w19.05 24-25 ¶14-16*

Tuesday, November 2

*They will gather his chosen ones
together.—Matt. 24:31.*

In recent years, the number of those partaking at the Memorial has been going up. Do we need to worry about this? No. "Jehovah knows those who belong to him." (2 Tim. 2:19) Unlike Jehovah, the brothers who count the number of those partaking at the Memorial do not know who truly is anointed. So the number includes those who think that they are anointed but are not. For example, some who used to partake later stopped. Others may have mental or emotional problems that make them believe that they will rule with Christ in heaven. Clearly, we do not know exactly how many anointed ones are left on earth. There will be anointed ones in many parts of the earth when Jesus comes to take them to heaven. The Bible does say that during the last days, there will be a small number of anointed ones left on earth. (Rev. 12:17) But it does not say how many of them will be left when the great tribulation begins. *w20.01 29-30 ¶11-13*

Wednesday, November 3

God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son.

—John 3:16.

Jesus illustrated the depth of Jehovah's fatherly care with the story of the son who was lost. (Luke 15:11-32) The father in that illustration never stopped hoping that his son would return. When the son made his way home, the father eagerly welcomed him back. If we have strayed from Jehovah but are repentant, we can be sure that our loving Father is ready and willing to welcome us back. Our Father will repair all the damage caused by Adam. After Adam's rebellion, Jehovah purposed to adopt 144,000 individuals from among mankind who will serve as kings and priests in heaven with his Son. Jesus and those associate rulers will help obedient humans to come to perfection in the new world. After they pass a final test of obedience, God will grant them everlasting life. Our Father will then have the satisfaction of seeing the earth filled with his perfect sons and daughters. What a glorious time that will be! *w20.02* 6-7 ¶17-19

Thursday, November 4

Continue to be made new in your dominant mental attitude.

—Eph. 4:23.

All of us need to ask ourselves, 'Are the changes I am making to become a Christian only skin-deep, or am I truly becoming a Christian deep within?' The difference is important. In his words recorded at Matthew 12:43-45, Jesus indicated what needs to be done. The idea behind those words highlights this important truth: It is not enough to get rid of wrong thoughts; we need to

fill the void with godly thinking. Is it possible to change our basic inclinations or who we really are inside? God's Word answers: "Put on the new personality that was created according to God's will in true righteousness and loyalty." (Eph. 4:24) Yes, it is possible to change what we are inside, but it is not easy to do. We need to do more than just suppress wrong desires and actions. We need to change our "dominant mental attitude." That involves changing our desires, our tendencies, and our motivations. This requires continuous action. *w19.06* 9-10 ¶6-7

Friday, November 5

We are going to destroy this place.

—Gen. 19:13.

Jehovah compassionately sent angels to rescue Lot and his family. However, Lot "kept lingering." The angels had to seize hold of his hand and help him and his family flee the city. (Gen. 19:15, 16) The angels then told him to run to the mountainous region. But instead of obeying Jehovah, Lot asked to go to a nearby town. (Gen. 19:17-20) Jehovah patiently listened and allowed Lot to go to that town. Lot later became afraid of living there and moved to the mountainous region, the very area Jehovah had told him to go to in the first place. (Gen. 19:30) What remarkable patience Jehovah showed! Like Lot, a member of our spiritual family may make poor decisions and cause serious problems for himself. If that were to happen, how would we respond? We might be tempted to point out that he is reaping what he has sown, which would be true. (Gal. 6:7) However, we can do better. We can imitate the way that Jehovah helped Lot. *w19.06* 20-21 ¶3-5

Saturday, November 6

Jehovah is my helper; I will not be afraid.—Heb. 13:6.

When our enemies ban our worship, they hope to make us afraid to serve Jehovah. In addition to the ban, they may circulate false stories, send officials to search our homes, drag us to court, or even imprison some of us. They hope that we will be terrified because they managed to put a small number of us in prison. If we were to allow them to instill fear in our heart, we might even begin to “ban” our own worship. We would not want to become like those described at Leviticus 26: 36, 37. We will not allow fear to cause us to reduce or to stop our spiritual activities. We trust completely in Jehovah and refuse to panic. (Isa. 28:16) We prayerfully seek Jehovah’s guidance. We know that with his backing, not even the most powerful human government can prevent us from faithfully worshipping our God. Rather than intimidate us, opposition can motivate us to serve Jehovah more fully. *w19.07 9-10 ¶6-7*

Sunday, November 7

Preach the word.—2 Tim. 4:2.

Even if your ministry seems to be unproductive, do not give up hope of finding potential disciples. Remember that Jesus likened disciple-making to fishing. Fishermen may spend many hours before they catch any fish. Often they work late at night or early in the morning, and sometimes they have to sail long distances. (Luke 5:5) In like manner, some disciple-makers spend many hours patiently “fishing” at different times and in various locations. Why? To improve their chances of meeting people. Those who put in the extra

effort are often rewarded by meeting people who are interested in our message. Could you try preaching at a time of day when you are more likely to meet people or at a location where you are more likely to find them? Why does conducting Bible studies require patience? One reason is that we need to do more than help the student come to know and love the doctrines found in the Bible. We need to help the student come to know and love the Author of the Bible, Jehovah. *w19.07 18-19 ¶14-15*

Monday, November 8

[I am] forgetting the things behind.—Phil. 3:13.

Some of us may need to overcome feelings of guilt because of past sins. If so, why not start a personal study project that focuses on Christ’s ransom sacrifice? If we study, meditate, and pray about that uplifting subject, we may do much to relieve unnecessary guilt. We may even stop punishing ourselves for sins that Jehovah has forgiven. Consider another lesson we can learn from Paul. Some may have given up a potentially lucrative career in order to pursue Kingdom interests. If so, can we forget the things behind by refusing to look back longingly at material opportunities we might have missed? (Num. 11:4-6; Eccl. 7:10) “The things behind” might even include things that we accomplished or trials that we endured in the past. Of course, looking back on the way Jehovah has blessed and supported us over the years can draw us closer to our Father. However, we never want to become self-satisfied, imagining that our work is done.—1 Cor. 15:58. *w19.08 3 ¶5-6*

Tuesday, November 9

Pray constantly.

—1 Thess. 5:17.

We can respectfully approach our God at any time, no matter where we are. He is never too busy to listen to us; he is always available and attentive. When we appreciate that Jehovah listens to our prayers, we are drawn to him. “I love Jehovah,” said the psalmist, “because he hears my voice.” (Ps. 116:1) Our Father not only listens to our prayers but also answers them. The apostle John assures us: “No matter what we ask according to [God’s] will, he hears us.” (1 John 5:14, 15) Of course, Jehovah may not answer our prayers in the way that we expect. He knows what is best for us, so sometimes his answer is no or he wants us to wait. (2 Cor. 12:7-9) Jehovah provides for us. He does what he requires all fathers to do. (1 Tim. 5:8) He cares for the material needs of his children. He does not want us to be anxious about our food, clothing, or shelter. (Matt. 6:32, 33; 7:11) As a loving parent, Jehovah has even arranged to satisfy all our future needs. *w20.02* 5 ¶10-12

Wednesday, November 10

They will become one flock, one shepherd.—John 10:16.

Not all who have the hope of living in heaven are part of “the faithful and discreet slave.” (Matt. 24:45-47) Just as in the first century, Jehovah and Jesus today are using a few brothers to feed, or teach, many. Only a few anointed Christians in the first century were used to write the Christian Greek Scriptures. Today, only a few anointed Christians have the responsibility to give

God’s people “food at the proper time.” Jehovah has decided to give everlasting life on earth to the vast majority of his people and life in heaven to those few who will rule with Jesus. Jehovah rewards all his servants—the “Jew” as well as the “ten men”—and he requires them to obey the same laws and remain faithful. (Zech. 8:23) All must stay humble. All must serve him together and be united. And all must work to keep the peace in the congregation. As we get closer to the end, let us all keep serving Jehovah and following Christ as “one flock.” *w20.01* 31 ¶15-16

Thursday, November 11

If any are not obedient to the word, they may be won without a word . . . because of having been eyewitnesses of your chaste conduct together with deep respect.

—1 Pet. 3:1, 2.

We cannot force our relatives to accept the good news, but we can encourage them to open their minds and hearts to the Bible’s message. (2 Tim. 3:14, 15) Let your conduct speak for you. Often, what we do makes a bigger impression on our relatives than what we say. Persevere in trying to help your relatives. Jehovah sets the example for us. “Again and again” he gives people the opportunity to respond to the good news and gain life. (Jer. 44:4) And the apostle Paul told Timothy to persevere in helping others. Why? Because by doing so, he would save himself and those who listened to him. (1 Tim. 4:16) We love our relatives, so we want them to know the truths found in God’s Word. *w19.08* 14 ¶2; 16-17 ¶8-9

Friday, November 12

*Open reproof is better
than concealed love.*

—Prov. 27:5.

We do well to remember that if someone takes the time to offer us correction, we have likely strayed more than we realize. At such times, we may find that our first inclination is to reject the counsel. We might criticize the person who gave it or the way he said it. But if we are humble, we will strive to regain our balance. A humble person appreciates counsel. To illustrate: Imagine that you are at a Christian meeting. After talking with several fellow believers, you are pulled aside by one of them who discreetly mentions that you have some food on your teeth. No doubt, you would feel embarrassed. But would you not also appreciate that he or she let you know? In fact, you might wish that someone else had told you sooner! Likewise, we should humbly appreciate a fellow believer who has the courage to offer us counsel when we need it. We view that person as our friend, not our enemy.—Prov. 27:6; Gal. 4:16.
w19.09 5 ¶11-12

Saturday, November 13

Observe, my son, the commandment of your father, and do not forsake the instruction of your mother.—Prov. 6:20.

Jehovah has assigned the mother an honorable role in the family, and he has given her a measure of authority over her children. In fact, a mother's influence on her children can be profound and lifelong. (Prov. 22:6) Note what mothers can learn from Mary, the mother of Jesus. Mary knew the Scriptures very well. She had developed

a deep respect for Jehovah and had formed a strong personal friendship with him. She was willing to submit to Jehovah's direction, even though it involved changing her entire life course. (Luke 1:35-38, 46-55) Mothers, you can imitate Mary in a number of ways. How? First, by maintaining your own friendship with Jehovah through personal Bible study and private prayers. Second, by being willing to make changes in your life to please Jehovah.
w19.09 18 ¶17-19

Sunday, November 14

Look! a great crowd.

—Rev. 7:9.

The apostle John received an exciting prophetic vision. In it, angels are told to hold back the destructive winds of the great tribulation until the final sealing of a group of slaves. (Rev. 7:1-3) That group is made up of 144,000 who will rule with Jesus in heaven. (Luke 12:32; Rev. 7:4) Then John mentions another group, so vast that he exclaims: "Look!"—an expression that may indicate his surprise at seeing something unexpected. What does John see? "A great crowd, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb." (Rev. 7:9-14) Imagine how happy John must have been to learn about myriads of people practicing true worship in the future! That vision no doubt strengthened John's faith. How much more should it strengthen our faith, since we live in the time of the fulfillment of the vision! We have seen the gathering of millions whose hope is to survive the great tribulation and live forever on earth. w19.09 26 ¶2-3

Monday, November 15

Sudden destruction is to be instantly on them, . . . and they will by no means escape.—1 Thess. 5:3.

Imagine that the nations have just made their long-awaited proclamation of “peace and security.” They may boast that the world has never been so safe. The nations will want us to think that they have the world situation under control. But they have absolutely no control over what will follow. “Babylon the Great” will be destroyed! (Rev. 17:5, 15-18) “God [will] put it into their hearts to carry out his thought.” What is that thought? To destroy the world empire of false religion, including Christendom. God will put his thought into the hearts of “the ten horns” of the “scarlet-colored wild beast.” The ten horns represent all the political powers that support “the wild beast”—the United Nations. (Rev. 17:3, 11-13; 18:8) When those political powers turn on false religion, that will mark the beginning of the great tribulation. It will be a truly catastrophic world event. *w19.10 14 ¶1, 3*

Tuesday, November 16

Diotrephes, who likes to have the first place among them, does not accept anything from us with respect.—3 John 9.

In the first century, Diotrephes envied those who took the lead in the Christian congregation. He wanted “to have the first place” among congregation members, so he spread malicious talk to discredit the apostle John and other responsible brothers. (3 John 10) Although not going as far as Diotrephes, we too could begin to envy a fellow Chris-

tian who receives an assignment that we had hoped to get—especially if we feel that we are just as qualified as he is to care for that responsibility. Envy is like a poisonous weed. Once the seed of envy takes root in our heart, it can be difficult to destroy. Envy feeds on other negative feelings, such as improper jealousy, pride, and selfishness. Envy can choke the development of good qualities, such as love, compassion, and kindness. As soon as we see envy starting to sprout, we need to uproot it from our heart. *w20.02 15 ¶6-7*

Wednesday, November 17

*I was given a thorn in the flesh.
—2 Cor. 12:7.*

The apostle Paul was saying that he faced a painful personal trial of some sort. He called this trial “an angel of Satan” that kept “slapping” (“beating,” *ftn.*) him. Satan or his demon angels may not directly have caused Paul’s trials, as if driving a thorn into his flesh. But when those wicked spirits noticed the “thorn,” they may have been eager to push it in deeper, so to speak, to increase Paul’s pain. What did Paul do? At first, Paul wanted to be rid of the “thorn.” He admits: “Three times I begged the Lord [Jehovah] . . . that it would depart from me.” Yet, despite Paul’s prayers, the thorn in the flesh remained. Does this mean that Jehovah did not answer Paul’s prayers? Not at all. He did answer them. Jehovah did not remove the problem, but he did give Paul the strength to endure it. Jehovah said: “My power is being made perfect in weakness.” (2 Cor. 12:8, 9) And with God’s help, Paul was able to maintain his joy and inner peace!—Phil. 4:4-7. *w19.11 9 ¶4-5*

Thursday, November 18

Jehovah is a God who requires exclusive devotion.—Nah. 1:2.

Jehovah deserves our exclusive devotion because he is our Creator and Life-Giver. (Rev. 4:11) However, we face a challenge. Even though we love and respect Jehovah, we might be lured away from giving him the exclusive devotion he deserves. In the Bible, being devoted to God implies having a deep love for him. When we are exclusively devoted to Jehovah, we will worship only him. We will not allow anyone or anything to take his place in our heart. (Ex. 34:14) Our devotion to Jehovah is not blind. Why not? Because it is based on the facts we have learned about him. We have come to admire his beautiful qualities. We know and agree with his likes and dislikes. We understand and support his purpose for us. We feel honored that he allows us the opportunity to be his friend. (Ps. 25:14) Every detail we learn about our Creator draws us closer to him.—Jas. 4:8. *w19.10* 26 ¶1-3

Friday, November 19

A true friend shows love at all times and is a brother who is born for times of distress.—Prov. 17:17.

Today, our brothers and sisters face a variety of challenges. For instance, many suffer from natural or man-made disasters. When that happens, some of us may be able to welcome these friends into our home. Others may be able to help financially. But all of us can ask Jehovah to help our brothers and sisters. If we learn that a brother or sister is discouraged, we may not know what to say or how to

react. But all of us have much to offer. For example, we can make time to be with our friend. We can listen sympathetically when he or she speaks. And we can share our favorite comforting scripture. (Isa. 50:4) What matters most is that you are there with your friends when they need you. We must be determined to build and maintain strong relationships with our brothers and sisters now. Those friendships will last not only through the end of this system but for eternity! *w19.11* 7 ¶18-19

Saturday, November 20

This is the law of the communion sacrifice that one may present to Jehovah.—Lev. 7:11.

This was a voluntary offering that the individual made because he loved his God, Jehovah. The person making the offering, his family, and the priests would eat the meat of the sacrificed animal. But certain parts of the animal sacrifice were offered up exclusively to Jehovah. Which parts? Jehovah viewed the fat as the best part of an animal. He also specified that vital organs, including the kidneys, were of special value. (Lev. 3:6, 12, 14-16) So Jehovah was especially pleased when an Israelite voluntarily offered vital organs and the fat to him. The Israelite who made such an offering demonstrated his deep desire to offer the very best to God. In a similar way, Jesus willingly offered up to Jehovah his very best by serving Him whole-souled out of love for Him. (John 14:31) For Jesus, doing God's will was a delight. (Ps. 40:8) How pleasing it must have been for Jehovah to see Jesus serve him so willingly! *w19.11* 22-23 ¶9-10

Sunday, November 21

The seventh day is a sabbath of complete rest. It is something holy to Jehovah.—Ex. 31:15.

God's Word states that after six "days" of creating, God paused from his works as regards the earth. (Gen. 2:2) Yet, Jehovah loves to work, and in other respects he "has kept working." (John 5:17) The provision for the weekly Sabbath follows a pattern similar to that of Jehovah's day of rest described in Genesis. God said that the Sabbath was a sign between him and Israel. (Ex. 31:12-14) The prohibition against work applied to everyone, including children, slaves, and even domestic animals. (Ex. 20:10) It allowed the people to give more attention to spiritual matters. Many religious leaders in Jesus' time took an extreme, rigid view of the Sabbath day. They claimed that it was unlawful on the Sabbath even to pluck some heads of grain or to heal a person who was ill. (Mark 2:23-27; 3:2-5) Such views did not reflect God's thinking, and Jesus made that clear to those who would listen. *w19.12 3-4 ¶8-9*

Monday, November 22

Become imitators of God, as beloved children.—Eph. 5:1.

The more we learn about the qualities that make up Jehovah's personality, the better we will be able to imitate him. David came to know his heavenly Father well, so he was able to imitate Him when dealing with others. Because David had such a good relationship with Jehovah, he became one of Israel's most beloved kings and the standard by which Jehovah measured other

kings of Israel. (1 Ki. 15:11; 2 Ki. 14:1-3) What is the lesson for us? We need to be "imitators of God." When we model our personality after his, we prove that we are his children. (Eph. 4:24) We will never stop learning about Jehovah. (Eccl. 3:11) The important thing is, not how much we know about him, but what we do with what we know. If we apply what we learn and try to imitate our loving Father, he will continue to draw close to us. (Jas. 4:8) Through his Word, he assures us that he will never abandon those seeking him. *w19.12 20 ¶20; 21 ¶21, 23*

Tuesday, November 23

The heart is more treacherous than anything else.—Jer. 17:9.

Jacob loved all his sons, but he had special affection for 17-year-old Joseph. How did Joseph's brothers react? They became envious of him, and that envy made them bitter. So they sold Joseph into slavery and lied to their father, saying that a wild animal had killed his favorite son. Envy caused them to disrupt the peace of the family and to break their father's heart. (Gen. 37:3, 4, 27-34) Envy is listed among the death-dealing "works of the flesh" that can disqualify a person from inheriting God's Kingdom. (Gal. 5:19-21) Envy is often the root cause of such poisonous fruits as hostility, strife, and fits of anger. The example of Joseph's brothers shows how envy can damage relationships and disturb the peace that once existed in a family. Although we would never do what Joseph's brothers did, we all have an imperfect and treacherous heart. Little wonder, then, that we may at times struggle with feelings of envy. *w20.02 14 ¶1-3*

Wednesday, November 24

With humility consider others superior to you.—Phil. 2:3.

On one occasion, Jehovah took away some of his holy spirit from Moses and gave it to a group of Israelite elders who were standing near the tent of meeting. Shortly thereafter, Moses heard that two elders who had not gone out to the tent of meeting had also received holy spirit and had begun to behave as prophets. How did he react when Joshua asked him to restrain the two elders? Moses did not become envious of the attention these two men were getting from Jehovah. Instead, he humbly rejoiced with them in their privilege. (Num. 11:24-29) What lesson can we learn from Moses? If you are an elder, have you ever been asked to train someone else to care for a privilege in the congregation that you have and truly love? If you are humble like Moses, you will not feel threatened if you are asked to train another brother so that, in time, he will be able to handle this privilege. Instead, you will be happy to help your brother. *w20.02* 15 ¶9; 17 ¶10-11

Thursday, November 25

Anxiety in a man's heart weighs it down, but a good word cheers it up.—Prov. 12:25.

Illness can take an emotional toll on us. We may feel embarrassed when people notice our limitations or when we must rely on others for help. Even when others are not aware of our illness, we may fight feelings of shame because of how limited we have become. At such distressing times, Jehovah lifts us up. How? In the Bible, Jehovah has stored up good words that remind us that we matter to him despite our

sickness. (Ps. 31:19; 41:3) Through those inspired words, Jehovah will help us to deal with the negative emotions that our illness brings. Be assured that Jehovah knows what you are going through. Beg him for help so that you can develop a wholesome view of your situation. Then use the Bible to retrieve the good words Jehovah has stored up for you. Focus on passages that show how much Jehovah values his servants. As you do, you will see that Jehovah is good to all those who serve him faithfully.—Ps. 84:11. *w20.01* 15-16 ¶9-10; 17 ¶12

Friday, November 26

*Do not imitate what is bad, but imitate what is good.
—3 John 11.*

Isaac was a wealthy man, and the Philistines envied Isaac's prosperity. (Gen. 26:12-14) They even stopped up the wells that Isaac depended on in order to water his flocks and herds. (Gen. 26:15, 16, 27) Like the Philistines, some people today become envious of those who have more material possessions than they do. They not only want the things others have but also want to deprive them of what they have. The Jewish religious leaders envied Jesus because he was much appreciated by the common people. (Matt. 7:28, 29) Jesus was God's representative, and he was teaching the truth. Even so, these religious leaders spread wicked lies and slander to ruin Jesus' good name. (Mark 15:10; John 11:47, 48; 12:12, 13, 19) What warning lesson can we learn from this account? We must fight any tendency to envy those who have qualities that endear them to the congregation. Instead, we should try to imitate their loving ways.—1 Cor. 11:1. *w20.02* 15 ¶4-5

Saturday, November 27

He is to be put to death.

—*Esther 4:11.*

Imagine that you are living some 2,500 years ago in Persia and want to speak to the king. You would not even think of approaching the monarch without first receiving his permission. To do otherwise could very well cost you your life! How thankful we are that Jehovah is not like that Persian king! He welcomes us at any time. He wants us to feel free to approach him. For example, although Jehovah bears such lofty titles as Grand Creator, Almighty, and Sovereign Lord, we are invited to call on him using the familiar term “Father.” (Matt. 6:9) How touching that Jehovah wants us to view him in such a warm and intimate way! We can rightly call Jehovah “Father”—he is the Source of our life. (Ps. 36:9) Because he is our Father, we have a responsibility to obey him. When we do what he asks of us, we will enjoy marvelous blessings. (Heb. 12:9) Those blessings include everlasting life, whether in heaven or on earth. *w20.02 2 ¶1-3*

Sunday, November 28

Make disciples.—Matt. 28:19.

Our goal is to help our Bible student to grow spiritually. (Eph. 4:13) When someone agrees to a study of the Bible, he may mainly be interested in how the study will benefit him personally. As his love for Jehovah grows, however, he will likely begin to think about how he can help others, including those who are already part of the congregation. (Matt. 22:37-39) When the time is right, do not hold back from mentioning the privilege of supporting the Kingdom work financially. Teach your Bible

student what to do when problems arise. Suppose, for example, that your student, an unbaptized publisher, tells you that he has been offended by someone in the congregation. Rather than take sides, why not explain what his Scriptural options are? He can either forgive the brother or, if he cannot let the matter go, approach the person kindly and lovingly with the goal of ‘gaining the brother.’ (Compare Matthew 18:15.) Help your student to prepare what he is going to say. *w20.01 5-6 ¶14-15*

Monday, November 29

I confessed my sin to you; I did not cover my error. . . . And you pardoned the error of my sins.

—*Ps. 32:5.*

We show that we appreciate Jehovah’s forgiveness when we pray for it, accept discipline, and work hard to avoid repeating our mistakes. When we take these steps, we will regain our inner peace. How encouraging it is to know that “Jehovah is close to the brokenhearted; he saves those who are crushed in spirit!” (Ps. 34:18) As these last days come to a close, the causes of anxiety are likely to increase. When you have anxious thoughts, do not delay in seeking Jehovah’s help. Study the Bible diligently. Learn from the examples set by Hannah, the apostle Paul, and King David. Ask your heavenly Father to help you identify the cause of your anxiety. (Ps. 139:23) Let him carry your burdens, especially those over which you have little or no control. If you do, you can be like the psalmist who sang to Jehovah: “When anxieties overwhelmed me, you comforted and soothed me.”—Ps. 94:19. *w20.02 24 ¶17; 25 ¶20-21*

Tuesday, November 30

All Scripture is inspired of God.

—2 Tim. 3:16.

The Greek word translated “inspired of God” literally means “God-breathed.” God used his spirit to “breathe” his thoughts into the minds of Bible writers. When we read the Bible and meditate on what we read, God’s instructions enter our mind and heart. Those inspired thoughts move us to bring our life in line with God’s will. (Heb. 4:12) But to benefit fully from holy spirit, we must set aside time to study the Bible regularly and to think deeply about what we read. Then God’s Word will influence all that we say and do. Also, we must worship God together. (Ps. 22:22) Jehovah’s spirit is present at meetings. (Rev. 2:29) When we meet for worship with fellow Christians, we pray for holy spirit, we sing Kingdom songs based on God’s Word, and we listen to Bible-based instruction presented by brothers who have been appointed by holy spirit. To benefit fully from holy spirit, however, we need to come prepared to participate in the meetings. *w19.11* ¶13-14

Wednesday, December 1

There is . . . a time to be silent.

—Eccl. 3:1, 7.

If we fail to control our speech, it can cause a lot of damage. For example, if you meet someone who lives in a land where our work is banned, are you tempted to ask him to give details about how our work is carried out in that country? No doubt your motives are good. We love our brothers and are interested in what is happening to them. We also want to be specific when praying for them.

However, this is a time when we should hold back from speaking. If we put pressure on someone who has confidential information, we show a lack of love—both to that person and to the brothers and sisters who are relying on him to keep quiet about their activity. Certainly, none of us would want to add to the difficulties of our brothers and sisters who live in countries where our work is under ban. Similarly, no brother or sister serving in such a land would want to reveal details about how Witnesses living there conduct their ministry or Christian activities. *w20.03* 21 ¶11-12

Thursday, December 2

You certainly will not die.

—Gen. 3:4.

God did not intend for humans to die. But in order to live forever, Adam and Eve had to obey Jehovah, who gave them a simple command: “As for the tree of the knowledge of good and bad, you must not eat from it, for in the day you eat from it you will certainly die.” (Gen. 2:16, 17) Then Satan came on the scene. Speaking through a serpent, he said the words of today’s text to Eve. Sadly, she believed the lie and ate the fruit. Later, her husband too ate the fruit. (Gen. 3:6) In this way, sin and death entered the human family. (Rom. 5:12) Adam and Eve died, just as God had said they would. But Satan did not stop lying about death. At some point in time, he began to introduce other lies. One of those lies is the teaching that the physical body dies but that some part of the person lives on, perhaps in the spirit realm. Variations of that lie have deceived countless humans right down to our day.—1 Tim. 4:1. *w19.04* 14-15 ¶3-4

Friday, December 3

When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, to think as a child, to reason as a child.—1 Cor. 13:11.

Children are not fully developed in their ability to think, to reason, or to recognize and avoid danger. So it is all too easy for devious abusers to deceive children. Abusers teach children dangerous lies, such as the idea that the child is to blame, that the abuse must be kept secret, that no one will listen or care if the child reports the abuse, or that sexual acts between an adult and a child are actually normal expressions of sincere love. Such lies can distort a child's thinking ability and perception of truth for many years. Such a child may grow up thinking of herself or himself as damaged, defiled, and unworthy of love or comfort. It is not surprising, then, that sexual abuse can cause lasting harm. We are living in the last days, a time when many have "no natural affection" and when "wicked men and impostors will advance from bad to worse."—2 Tim. 3:1-5, 13. *w19.05 15 ¶7-8*

Saturday, December 4

In this way you will fulfill the law of the Christ.—Gal. 6:2.

In what ways did Jesus teach? First, he taught people by what he said. His words had power because they conveyed the truth about God, taught the real meaning of life, and pointed to God's Kingdom as the remedy for all human suffering. (Luke 24:19) Jesus also taught by example. By how he lived, he showed his followers how they should live. (John 13:15)

When did Jesus teach? He taught during his ministry on earth. (Matt. 4:23) He also taught his followers shortly after he was resurrected. For example, he appeared to a group of disciples—perhaps numbering over 500—and gave them the command to "make disciples." (Matt. 28:19, 20; 1 Cor. 15:6) As head of the congregation, Jesus continued to instruct his disciples after he returned to heaven. For instance, about 96 C.E., Christ directed the apostle John to give encouragement and counsel to anointed Christians.—Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:1. *w19.05 3 ¶4-5*

Sunday, December 5

Make sure of the more important things.—Phil. 1:10.

It takes a great deal of effort to earn a living these days. Many of our brothers work long hours just to provide the necessities of life for their families. Countless others spend several hours each workday traveling to and from their place of employment. Many support themselves by doing hard physical labor. By the end of the day, these hardworking brothers and sisters are exhausted! The last thing many are inclined to do is study. The fact is, though, that we must find time to study—really study—God's Word and our Christian publications. Our relationship with Jehovah and our everlasting life depend on it! (1 Tim. 4:15) Some rise early every day and study when their home is quiet and their mind is fresh after a night's rest. Others set aside a few tranquil minutes at the end of the day to take in spiritual food and meditate on it. *w19.05 26 ¶1-2*

Monday, December 6

Stop being molded by this system of things, but be transformed by making your mind over.

—Rom. 12:2.

These changes do not take place overnight; nor do they occur automatically. We may need to exert “earnest effort” over a period of years. (2 Pet. 1:5) We must do our utmost to change our inner self. Prayer is the important first step. We need to pray as did the psalmist: “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and put within me a new spirit, a steadfast one.” (Ps. 51:10) We must acknowledge the need to change our dominant mental attitude and ask Jehovah for help. Meditation is the second vital step. As we peer into God’s Word each day, we need to take the time to meditate, or to think deeply, on what thoughts and feelings we need to change. (Ps. 119:59; Heb. 4:12; Jas. 1:25) We must identify any tendencies we may have to be attracted to human philosophies. We need to admit honestly what our weaknesses are and then work hard to get rid of those weaknesses. *w19.06 8 ¶1; 10 ¶10; 12 ¶11-12*

Tuesday, December 7

[Make] the best use of your time.

—Eph. 5:16.

When making decisions, you must choose a time to implement your decision and stick to it. Avoid waiting for the perfect time to act; the perfect time is not likely to come. (Eccl. 11:4) Be careful not to allow less important things to consume your time and rob you of the energy you need for the more important things. (Phil. 1:10) If possible, set aside time

during which you have few interruptions. Let others know that you need time to concentrate. Consider turning off your phone and checking your e-mail or social media at a later time. The result, or outcome, of your decision is like the destination of a journey. If you really want to reach that destination, you will keep going even if a road is closed and you thus must change your route. In the same way, if we focus on the outcome of our decisions, we will not give up easily when we encounter setbacks or detours.—Gal. 6:9. *w19.11 30 ¶17-18*

Wednesday, December 8

The word of God . . . is able to discern thoughts and intentions of the heart.—Heb. 4:12.

What should be the basis for your decision to get baptized? As a result of your careful study of the Bible, you have learned much about Jehovah—his personality and his ways. What you have learned about him has warmed your heart and moved you to love him very much. Your love for Jehovah must be the primary basis for your decision to get baptized. Your decision to get baptized is also based on the Bible truths you have accepted. Consider what Jesus said when he gave the commission to make disciples. (Matt. 28:19, 20) According to Jesus, those who get baptized must do so “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit.” What did this mean? You must believe with all your heart the Bible truths about Jehovah; his Son, Jesus; and the holy spirit. These truths are very powerful and can deeply touch your heart. *w20.03 9 ¶8-9*

Thursday, December 9

Warn the disorderly, . . . support the weak, be patient toward all.

—1 Thess. 5:14.

Jehovah sent angels not only to warn Lot but also to help him escape the disaster brought on Sodom. (Gen. 19:12-14, 17) Likewise, we may need to warn our brother if we see that he is heading for trouble. Even if he is slow to apply the Bible-based counsel he receives, we need to be patient. Be like the two angels. Rather than give up and draw away from our brother, we should look for practical ways to assist him. (1 John 3:18) We may need to offer to take him by the hand, figuratively speaking, and help him apply the good advice he is given. Jehovah could have focused on Lot's imperfections. Instead, he later inspired the apostle Peter to refer to Lot as a righteous man. (Ps. 130:3) Can we imitate the way that Jehovah viewed Lot? If we focus on the good qualities of our brothers and sisters, we will be more patient with them. They, in turn, will be more likely to accept the help we offer. *w19.06 21 ¶6-7*

Friday, December 10

Each one will carry his own load.

—Gal. 6:5.

If the government where you live bans our worship, you may wonder if you should move to a country where you can serve Jehovah freely. This is a personal decision that no one else can make for you. Some might find it helpful to consider what Christians in the first century did when they were persecuted. The disciples in Jerusalem moved throughout Judea and Samaria and even as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch. (Matt. 10:23; Acts 8:1; 11:19) How-

ever, after another wave of persecution afflicted the first-century Christians, the apostle Paul decided not to move away from areas where the preaching work was opposed. (Acts 14:19-23) What do we learn from these accounts? Each family head must make a personal decision about moving. Before deciding, he should prayerfully and carefully consider his family's circumstances and the positive and negative effects a move might have on them. We should not judge others for the decision that they make. *w19.07 10 ¶8-9*

Saturday, December 11

This means everlasting life, their coming to know you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ.—John 17:3.

Jesus told us to "go . . . make disciples of people of all the nations." (Matt. 28:19) And in addition to teaching a student what Jesus requires of his disciples, we need to help the student come to know how to live as a true Christian. We must patiently assist him as he struggles to put Bible principles into practice. Some are able to change their thinking and habits in just a few months; others take longer. A missionary in Peru had an experience that illustrates the benefit of being patient. "I had studied two books with a Bible student named Raúl," says the missionary. "But he still faced serious challenges in his life. He had a stormy marriage, used foul language, and had children who found it difficult to respect him. He came to the meetings regularly, so I continued visiting him to help him and his family. More than three years after I met him, he qualified for baptism." *w19.07 15 ¶3; 19 ¶15-17*

Sunday, December 12

Exert yourselves vigorously.

—Luke 13:24.

Consider how the apostle Paul was exerting himself when he wrote to the Philippians. He was under house arrest in Rome. His freedom to preach was severely limited. Yet, he kept busy by witnessing to visitors and writing letters to distant congregations. Paul knew that, like Christ, he must exert himself to the very end. He thus compared the Christian course to a race. (1 Cor. 9: 24-27) A runner in a race stays focused on the finish line and avoids distractions. For example, runners in an urban race today may follow a course that is lined with businesses and other potential diversions. Can you imagine that a runner would stop to examine the goods displayed in the store windows? Not if he wants to win! In the race for life, we too must avoid distractions. If we stay focused on our goal, exerting ourselves vigorously as Paul did, we will win the prize! *w19.08 3 ¶4; 4 ¶7*

Monday, December 13

Pay constant attention to yourself and to your teaching. . . . By doing this you will save both yourself and those who listen to you.

—1 Tim. 4:16.

When we conform our life to God's standards, our relatives may find it difficult to adjust to our new beliefs and lifestyle. Often, the first thing they notice is that we no longer join with them in celebrating religious festivals and no longer engage in political activities. Some relatives might initially be angry with us. (Matt. 10:35, 36) But we should not

give up on them. If we stop trying to help them understand our beliefs, we have, in effect, judged them as being unworthy of gaining everlasting life. Jehovah has not given us the job of judging—he has assigned that task to Jesus. (John 5:22) If we are patient, our relatives may eventually be willing to listen to our message. We need to be firm but tactful, even if we must endure trials. (1 Cor. 4: 12b) It may take time before our relatives fully understand just how serious we are about serving Jehovah. *w19.08 17 ¶10, 13; 18 ¶14*

Tuesday, December 14

For all things I have the strength through the one who gives me power.—Phil. 4:13.

“When I think about the trial I have gone through, I know that I could not have faced it on my own.” Have you ever said something like that? Many of us have. Perhaps you said it after reflecting on how you were able to cope with a serious illness or the death of a loved one. Looking back, you feel that you were able to go on from day to day only because Jehovah's holy spirit provided you with “power beyond what is normal.” (2 Cor. 4:7-9) We also rely on holy spirit to deal with the influence of this wicked world. (1 John 5: 19) In addition, we have to struggle against “wicked spirit forces.” (Eph. 6:12) Jehovah's holy spirit helps us by giving us the power, or strength, to fulfill our responsibilities despite trials. The apostle Paul felt that he was able to keep working and to accomplish his ministry despite his trials because he relied on “the power of the Christ.”—2 Cor. 12:9. *w19.11 8 ¶1-3*

Wednesday, December 15

Whoever has seen me has seen the Father also.—John 14:9.

The Bible is the only accurate record that explains what Jesus has done for you. Learn to love Jesus, and your love for Jehovah will grow. Why? Because Jesus reflects his Father's qualities perfectly. So the more you learn about Jesus, the better you will understand and appreciate Jehovah. Think of the compassion Jesus showed for those who were looked down on by others—the poor, the sick, and the vulnerable. Think, too, of the practical advice he gives you and how your life improves when you listen to him. (Matt. 5:1-11; 7:24-27) Your affection for Jesus is likely to become stronger as you think deeply about the sacrifice he made so that our sins can be forgiven. (Matt. 20:28) When you understand that Jesus was willing to die for you, you may feel moved to repent and seek Jehovah's forgiveness. (Acts 3:19, 20; 1 John 1:9) And as you come to love Jesus and Jehovah, you will naturally be drawn to others who feel the same way. *w20.03* 5-6 ¶10-12

Thursday, December 16

Though Jehovah is high, he takes note of the humble.—Ps. 138:6.

A Christian man could begin to think that he is the one who is most qualified for a certain assignment. Or a Christian wife might think, 'My husband is much more qualified than so-and-so!' However, if we are truly humble, we will avoid such a prideful spirit. We can learn from the way that Moses reacted when others received privileges. Moses appreciated his assignment of lead-

ing the nation of Israel. How did Moses react when Jehovah permitted others to serve alongside him? He was not jealous. (Num. 11:24-29) As to judging the people, he humbly allowed others to share some of his workload. (Ex. 18:13-24) This meant better service for the Israelites whom he was appointed to judge. In that sense, Moses did not put his privileges ahead of the welfare of others. What a good example for us! We remember that if we are to be truly useful to Jehovah, our humility should exceed our ability. *w19.09* 5-6 ¶13-14

Friday, December 17

*Jehovah protects the faithful.
—Ps. 31:23.*

We do not know what reasons the nations might give to justify their attack on Babylon the Great. They might say that the world's religions are an obstacle to peace and that they constantly meddle in politics. Or they might say that those religious organizations have accumulated too much wealth and property. (Rev. 18:3, 7) It seems reasonable that this attack will not mean that all the members of those religions will be destroyed. Rather, it seems that the nations will get rid of the religious organizations. Once those organizations are gone, the former members will realize that their religious leaders failed them and will likely try to distance themselves from those religions. The destruction of Babylon the Great will take place within a relatively brief time. (Rev. 18:10, 21) Jehovah has promised that he will "cut short the days" of the tribulation so that his "chosen ones" and true religion will survive.—Mark 13:19, 20. *w19.10* 15 ¶4-5

Saturday, December 18

Advise the younger women . . . to love their children.—Titus 2:4.

Mothers, you may have been raised by parents who easily lost their temper and spoke harshly to their children. So you may have grown up thinking that this was a normal way to raise a family. Even after learning Jehovah's standards, you might find it a challenge to remain calm and patient with your children, especially if they misbehave when you are tired. (Eph. 4: 31) At such times, you need more than ever to rely on Jehovah in prayer. (Ps. 37:5) Some mothers find it difficult to express their love for their children. They may have been raised in a household where their parents did not have a warm relationship with their children. If that is how you were raised, you do not have to repeat your parents' mistakes. A mother who submits to Jehovah's will may have to learn how to express love for her children. It may be difficult for her to make the change. But it can be done, and it will benefit both her and her family. *w19.09 18-19 ¶19-20*

Sunday, December 19

*No one can slave for two masters.
—Matt. 6:24.*

A person who worships Jehovah while also spending excessive time and effort trying to gain this world's riches would, in a sense, be trying to serve two masters. He would not be giving Jehovah exclusive devotion. Near the end of the first century C.E., members of the congregation in the city of Laodicea boasted: "I am rich and have acquired riches and do not need anything at

all." But in the eyes of Jehovah and Jesus, they were "miserable and pitiful and poor and blind and naked." Jesus counseled them, not because they were wealthy, but because their love of riches was damaging their relationship with Jehovah. (Rev. 3:14-17) If we detect that a desire to pursue riches is growing in our heart, we must act quickly to correct our thinking. (1 Tim. 6:7, 8) If we do not, our heart will be divided and Jehovah will not accept our worship. He "requires exclusive devotion."—Deut. 4:24. *w19.10 27 ¶5-6*

Monday, December 20

Men spoke from God as they were moved by holy spirit.—2 Pet. 1:21.

The Greek word translated "moved" literally means "carried along; borne along." A similar form of the same Greek word was used by Luke, the writer of Acts, to describe a ship that is "driven along" by the wind. (Acts 27:15) So when the apostle Peter wrote that Bible writers were "borne along," he used "a fascinating maritime metaphor," as one Bible scholar put it. Peter said, in effect, that just as a ship is carried along by the wind to accomplish its journey, so Bible prophets and writers were borne along by holy spirit to accomplish their task. The same scholar said: "The prophets raised their sails, so to speak." Jehovah did his part. He provided "the wind," or holy spirit. The Bible writers did their part. They worked in harmony with the direction of that spirit. And today, like a favorable wind on a stormy sea, holy spirit moves us forward through stormy trials to the haven of God's promised new world. *w19.11 9 ¶7-9*

Tuesday, December 21

If you become discouraged in the day of distress, your strength will be meager.—Prov. 24:10.

At times we may feel discouraged. But we must not allow our problems to dominate our thinking. If we do, we might lose sight of the marvelous hope that Jehovah has given us. (Rev. 21:3, 4) Feelings of discouragement could then drain our strength and cause us to give up. Consider how a sister in the United States is maintaining her faith while caring for her seriously ill husband. She wrote: "Our situation has been stressful and discouraging at times, but our hope is strong. I am so very impressed with the information we have been getting to strengthen our faith and lift our spirits. We really need this counsel and encouragement. It keeps us going and helps us to endure." We learn from this sister's comments that we can overcome discouragement! How? View your trials as being a test from Satan. Recognize Jehovah as being the Source of comfort. And appreciate the spiritual food he provides. *w19.11 16 ¶9-10*

Wednesday, December 22

The trustworthy person keeps a confidence.—Prov. 11:13.

Elders in particular must apply this Bible principle. An elder realizes that he must not reveal the "confidential talk" of those in the congregation. If he did, he would lose their trust and ruin his reputation. Those who are appointed to a position of trust in the congregation cannot be "double-tongued," or deceitful. (1 Tim. 3:8; ftn.) That is, they cannot be devious or inclined

to gossip. If an elder loves his wife, he will not burden her with information that she does not need to know. A wife can help her husband maintain a good reputation by not pressuring him to talk about matters that should be kept confidential. When a wife applies this advice, she not only supports her husband but also shows honor to those who have confided in him. And most important, she makes Jehovah happy because she is contributing to the peace and unity of the congregation.—Rom. 14:19. *w20.03 22 ¶13-14*

Thursday, December 23

*Jehovah will appear to you.
—Lev. 9:4.*

In 1512 B.C.E., when the tabernacle was set up at the foot of Mount Sinai, Moses presided over a ceremony to install Aaron and his sons as priests. (Ex. 40:17; Lev. 9:1-5) How did Jehovah show his approval of the newly installed priesthood? As Aaron and Moses blessed the people, Jehovah caused fire to consume the remainder of the sacrifice on the altar. (Lev. 9:23, 24) What was accomplished by the awesome display at the installation of the high priest? Jehovah thereby showed his full support of the Aaronic priesthood. When the Israelites saw this clear evidence of Jehovah's backing of the priests, they had good reason to give them full support. Is that relevant to us? Yes! The priesthood in Israel was just a shadow of a much greater priesthood—the 144,000, who will serve alongside Christ in heaven. (Heb. 4:14; 8:3-5; 10:1) Without a doubt, Jehovah is guiding and generously blessing his organization today. *w19.11 23 ¶13; 24 ¶14, 16*

Friday, December 24

We were working night and day so as not to impose an expensive burden on any one of you.

—2 Thess. 3:8.

While in Corinth, the apostle Paul stayed with Aquila and Priscilla and “worked with them, for they were tentmakers by trade.” That Paul worked “night and day” did not mean that he worked nonstop. He took breaks from tentmaking, such as on the Sabbath. That day provided him with opportunities to witness to Jews, who also were not working on the Sabbath. (Acts 13:14-16, 42-44; 16:13; 18:1-4) Paul had to do secular work; still, he made sure to share regularly “in the holy work of the good news of God.” (Rom. 15:16; 2 Cor. 11:23) He urged others to do likewise. Consequently, Aquila and Priscilla were his “fellow workers in Christ Jesus.” (Rom. 12:11; 16:3) Paul urged the Corinthians to have “plenty to do in the work of the Lord.” (1 Cor. 15:58; 2 Cor. 9:8) Jehovah even inspired the apostle Paul to write: “If anyone does not want to work, neither let him eat.”—2 Thess. 3:10. *w19.12 5 ¶12-13*

Saturday, December 25

Children are an inheritance from Jehovah.—Ps. 127:3, fn.

Jehovah created the first couple with the desire to have children. But who should decide if and when a married couple will have children? In some cultures, newly married couples are expected to start having children as soon as possible. They may even feel pressure from their family and others to follow that custom. Jethro, a brother in Asia, says, “In the congregation, some who have children pressure the childless

couples to start a family.” Jeffrey, another brother in Asia, observes, “Some tell childless couples that they will have no one to take care of them when they grow old.” However, each couple should decide for themselves whether to have children. That is for them to decide; it is their responsibility. (Gal. 6:5, fn.) Understandably, friends and family want a newly married couple to be happy. But all need to remember that the decision whether to have children or not belongs to the couple.—1 Thess. 4:11. *w19.12 22 ¶1-3*

Sunday, December 26

You must pray, then, this way:

“Our Father.”—Matt. 6:9.

Do you find it difficult to think of God as your Father? Some may feel small and insignificant in comparison to Jehovah. They doubt that Almighty God cares about them as individuals. Yet, our loving Father does not want us to feel that way. He gave us life and wants us to have a relationship with him. After stating this truth, the apostle Paul explained to his listeners in Athens that Jehovah “is not far off from each one of us.” (Acts 17:24-29) God wants each one of us to go to him just as a child naturally goes to a loving and caring parent. Others may find it hard to view Jehovah as their Father because their own human father showed them little or no love and affection. One Christian sister says: “My father was very abusive. When I first began to study the Bible, it was difficult for me to relate to a heavenly Father.” Do you have similar feelings? If so, be assured that you too can come to see Jehovah as the best possible Father. *w20.02 3 ¶4-5*

Monday, December 27

Do not abandon me when my strength fails.—Ps. 71:9.

Jesus taught us that no matter how limited our abilities or how small our efforts seem to us as we get older, Jehovah treasures whatever we can do in his service. (Ps. 92:12-15; Luke 21:2-4) So focus on what you can do. You can, for example, speak about Jehovah, pray for your brothers, and encourage others to stay faithful. Jehovah considers you to be his fellow worker, not because of what you accomplish, but because of your willing obedience to him. (1 Cor. 3:5-9) How grateful we are to worship Jehovah, a God who truly values those who serve him! He created us to do his will, and it is true worship that adds real meaning to our lives. (Rev. 4:11) Though the world may view us as worthless, Jehovah is not ashamed of us. (Heb. 11:16, 38) When we feel weighed down by illness, economic hardship, or old age, let us remember that nothing can separate us from the love of our heavenly Father.—Rom. 8:38, 39. *w20.01 18 ¶16; 19 ¶18-19*

Tuesday, December 28

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and put within me a new spirit, a steadfast one.—Ps. 51:10.

We can fight envy by cultivating humility and contentment. When our heart is full of these good qualities, envy will have no room to grow. Humility will help us not to think too highly of ourselves. A humble person does not feel that he deserves more than everyone else. (Gal. 6:3, 4) Someone who is content is satisfied with what he has

and does not compare himself with others. (1 Tim. 6:7, 8) When a person who is humble and content sees someone receive something good, he is happy for him. We need the help of God's holy spirit if we are to avoid the fleshly trait of envy and instead cultivate humility and contentment. (Gal. 5:16; Phil. 2:3, 4) Jehovah's holy spirit can help us to examine our innermost thoughts and motives. With God's help, we can replace harmful thoughts and feelings with upbuilding ones.—Ps. 26:2. *w20.02 15 ¶8-9*

Wednesday, December 29

Pay constant attention to yourself and to your teaching.—1 Tim. 4:16.

Dedication is a vow that Jehovah expects you to keep. So stay close to your congregation. Your brothers and sisters in the congregation are your spiritual family. By regularly attending the meetings, you will strengthen your bond with them. Read God's Word and meditate on it every day. (Ps. 1:1, 2) Take some time to think deeply about what you have read. Then the words will reach your heart. "Pray continually." (Matt. 26:41) Your sincere prayers will draw you closer to Jehovah. "Keep on . . . seeking first the Kingdom." (Matt. 6:33) You can do that by making the preaching work a priority in your life. By sharing regularly in the ministry, you will keep your faith strong. Any hardships you may face in this old world are "momentary and light." (2 Cor. 4:17) In contrast, your dedication and baptism will open the way to a more satisfying life now and "the real life" to come. Is it worth the expense? Absolutely!—1 Tim. 6:19. *w20.03 13 ¶19-21*

Thursday, December 30

The time left is reduced.

—1 Cor. 7:29.

If your Bible student is not making steady progress, at some point you will have to ask yourself, ‘Should I stop the study?’ In analyzing the situation, ask yourself: ‘Is my student progressing at a reasonable pace for his situation?’ ‘Is he beginning “to observe,” or apply, the things he is learning?’ (Matt. 28:20) Sad to say, some students are like the Israelites of Ezekiel’s day. Of them, Jehovah told Ezekiel: “Look! You are to them like a romantic love song, sung with a beautiful voice and skillfully played on a stringed instrument. They will hear your words, but no one will act on them.” (Ezek. 33:32) We may find it hard to tell a person that we will stop studying with him. However, “the time left is reduced.” Rather than spend more time conducting an unproductive study, we need to find someone who gives evidence that he is “rightly disposed for everlasting life.”—Acts 13:48. *w20.01*
6 ¶17; 7 ¶20

Friday, December 31

Let your Kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also on earth.—Matt. 6:10.

Christendom generally does not teach the Scriptural truth that one day obedient humans will live forever on earth. (2 Cor. 4:3, 4) Today, most religions in Christendom teach that all good people go to heaven when they die. It was different, however, with the small group of Bible Students who were publishing the *Watch Tower* in the late 1800’s. They understood that God would restore Paradise on earth and that millions of obedient humans would live here on earth—not in heaven. However, it took time for them to discern clearly who these obedient humans would be. Of course, the Bible Students also discerned from the Scriptures that some would be “bought from the earth” to rule with Jesus in heaven. (Rev. 14:3) That group would be made up of 144,000 zealous and dedicated Christians who had served God faithfully while on earth. *w19.09*
27 ¶4-5