

***Examining
the Scriptures
Daily***

2023

Large-Print Edition



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the Scriptures
Daily***

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**“The very essence of your
word is truth.”**

—Psalm 119:160.

Name

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2023

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OUR CHRISTIAN LIFE AND MINISTRY BIBLE READING SCHEDULE FOR 2023

January

- 2 2 Kings 22-23
- 9 2 Kings 24-25
- 16 1 Chronicles 1-3
- 23 1 Chronicles 4-6
- 30 1 Chronicles 7-9

February

- 6 1 Chronicles 10-12
- 13 1 Chronicles 13-16
- 20 1 Chronicles 17-19
- 27 1 Chronicles 20-22

March

- 6 1 Chronicles 23-26
- 13 1 Chronicles 27-29
- 20 2 Chronicles 1-4
- 27 2 Chronicles 5-7

April

- 3 Week of Memorial
- 10 2 Chronicles 8-9
- 17 2 Chronicles 10-12
- 24 2 Chronicles 13-16

May

- 1 2 Chronicles 17-19
- 8 2 Chronicles 20-21
- 15 2 Chronicles 22-24
- 22 2 Chronicles 25-27
- 29 2 Chronicles 28-29

June

- 5 2 Chronicles 30-31
- 12 2 Chronicles 32-33
- 19 2 Chronicles 34-36
- 26 Ezra 1-3

July

- 3 Ezra 4-6
- 10 Ezra 7-8
- 17 Ezra 9-10
- 24 Nehemiah 1-2
- 31 Nehemiah 3-4

August

- 7 Nehemiah 5-7
- 14 Nehemiah 8-9
- 21 Nehemiah 10-11
- 28 Nehemiah 12-13

September

- 4 Esther 1-2
- 11 Esther 3-5
- 18 Esther 6-8
- 25 Esther 9-10

October

- 2 Job 1-3
- 9 Job 4-5
- 16 Job 6-7
- 23 Job 8-10
- 30 Job 11-12

November

- 6 Job 13-14
- 13 Job 15-17
- 20 Job 18-19
- 27 Job 20-21

December

- 4 Job 22-24
- 11 Job 25-27
- 18 Job 28-29
- 25 Job 30-31

Sunday, January 1

Blind guides is what they are.

—Matt. 15:14.

Jesus courageously denounced the hypocritical religious practices of his day. For example, he exposed the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, who were more concerned with how they washed their hands than with how they cared for their parents. (Matt. 15:1-11) Jesus did not allow the negative reaction of the religious leaders to stop him from speaking the truth. Jesus also exposed false religious teachings. He did not say that all religious beliefs are acceptable to God. Rather, he spoke of many who would be on the spacious road that leads to destruction, whereas only a few would be on the cramped road to life. (Matt. 7:13, 14) He made it clear that some would appear to serve God, but in reality they were not serving him. He warned: “Be on the watch for the false prophets who come to you in sheep’s covering, but inside they are ravenous wolves. By their fruits you will recognize them.”—Matt. 7:15-20. *w21.05* 9 ¶7-8

Monday, January 2

Her face was no longer downcast.—1 Sam. 1:18.

Hannah was married to a Levite named Elkanah, who loved her very much. But Elkanah had another wife, Peninnah. Elkanah loved Hannah more than he loved Peninnah; however, “Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.” Because of this, Peninnah taunted Hannah “relentlessly in order to upset her.” Hannah became very upset! “She would weep and not eat.” Yet, there is no record that Han-

nah tried to take revenge. Instead, she poured out her heart to Jehovah and trusted that he would make matters right. (1 Sam. 1:2, 6, 7, 10) What can we learn from Hannah’s example? If someone tries to compete with you in some way, remember that you are in control of the situation. You do not have to allow yourself to be drawn into the competition. Instead of repaying evil for evil, try to make peace with the person. (Rom. 12:17-21) Even if he does not respond, you will maintain your inner peace. *w21.07* 17 ¶13-14

Tuesday, January 3

Keep your eyes open and guard against every sort of greed.

—Luke 12:15.

Greed led Judas Iscariot to become a despicable traitor. He did not start out that way though. (Luke 6:13, 16) Judas was evidently capable and dependable, for he was in charge of the money box. But at some point, Judas began to steal, despite having heard Jesus’ repeated warnings about greed. (Mark 7:22, 23; Luke 11:39) Judas’ greed became evident during an incident that happened not long before Jesus was put to death. Jesus and his disciples, including Mary and her sister, Martha, were guests of Simon the leper. During the meal, Mary got up and poured on Jesus’ head perfumed oil that cost a lot of money. Judas and the other disciples got very upset. The other disciples may have felt that the money could be better used in the ministry. But Judas’ motive was different. He “was a thief,” and he wanted to steal money from the box.—John 12:2-6; Matt. 26:6-16; Luke 22:3-6. *w21.06* 18 ¶12-13

Wednesday, January 4

Miserable man that I am!

Who will rescue me?

—Rom. 7:24.

Do you sometimes feel weighed down by many responsibilities, unable to cope with them all? If so, you would understand Paul. He felt anxiety, not just for one congregation but “for all the congregations.” (2 Cor. 11:23-28) Do chronic health problems often rob you of your joy? Paul was afflicted by a persistent “thorn in the flesh,” which may have been a physical ailment, and he was desperate to be rid of it. (2 Cor. 12:7-10) Are you discouraged by your own imperfections? So was Paul at times. He called himself a “miserable man” because of his relentless battle with his own imperfections. (Rom. 7:21-24) Despite facing various tests and discouraging circumstances, Paul kept on serving Jehovah. What gave him the strength to do so? Although he was keenly aware of his imperfections, he had unwavering faith in the ransom. *w21.04 22 ¶7-8*

Thursday, January 5

The Son of man came . . . to give his life as a ransom in exchange for many.—Mark 10:45.

When the perfect man Adam sinned, he lost the opportunity for everlasting life not only for himself but also for his future children. There was no excuse for what Adam did. His sin was deliberate. But what about his children? They had played no role in Adam’s sin. (Rom. 5:12, 14) Could anything be done to rescue them from the death sentence that their forefather so richly deserved? Yes!

Soon after Adam sinned, Jehovah progressively revealed how he would rescue millions of Adam’s offspring from the curse of sin and death. (Gen. 3:15) Because of the ransom, we can have a close friendship with Jehovah even though we are imperfect. Because of the ransom, the works of the Devil will be completely broken up. (1 John 3:8) Because of the ransom, Jehovah’s original purpose for the earth will be fulfilled. The entire planet will become a paradise. *w21.04 14 ¶1; 19 ¶17*

Friday, January 6

Let each one of you be baptized.—Acts 2:38.

A large crowd made up of men and women from many countries and speaking a number of languages had gathered. Something remarkable happened that day. A group of ordinary Jews could speak in the visitors’ native languages! As surprising as that was, what those Jews were saying to them and what the apostle Peter said to all was more remarkable. It included the message that they could be saved by exercising faith in Jesus Christ. The crowd was deeply affected by that message. The people were so moved, in fact, that they asked: “What should we do?” In reply, Peter said: “Let each one of you be baptized.” (Acts 2:37, 38) What happened next was exceptional. Some 3,000 individuals got baptized on that day, becoming disciples of Christ. This was the beginning of the great disciple-making work that Jesus commanded his followers to do. That work has extended to the 21st century. *w21.06 2 ¶1-2*

Saturday, January 7

I planted, Apollos watered, but God kept making it grow, so that neither is the one who plants anything nor is the one who waters, but God who makes it grow.

—1 Cor. 3:6, 7.

We may live in a territory where it is difficult to start Bible studies. People may seem to be indifferent to our message or even opposed to it. What can help us remain positive in such territory? Remember that people's circumstances can change quickly in this turbulent world, and those who were once not interested may become conscious of their spiritual need. (Matt. 5:3) Some who always in the past refused our literature later accepted a Bible study. We also know that Jehovah is the Master of the harvest. (Matt. 9:38) He wants us to keep planting and watering, but he is the One responsible for the growth. And how encouraging it is to be reminded that even if we are not able to conduct a Bible study at present, Jehovah rewards us based on our efforts, not on our results! *w21.07 6 ¶14*

Sunday, January 8

Sons are an inheritance from Jehovah.

—Ps. 127:3.

Jehovah has given humans the ability to have children, as well as the responsibility to teach them to love and to serve him. Although the angels are highly blessed by Jehovah, they have not been granted this privilege. With that in mind, those who are raising children should treasure their opportunity to do so. Parents have been given a trust, a sacred duty to

raise their children in “the discipline and admonition of Jehovah.” (Eph. 6:4; Deut. 6:5-7) In order to help parents, God's organization provides many Bible-based tools, such as publications, videos, music, and online resources. Clearly, both our heavenly Father and his Son cherish our young ones. (Luke 18:15-17) When parents rely on Jehovah and do their very best to care for their precious children, Jehovah is pleased. And such parents give their children the prospect of becoming part of Jehovah's family forever! *w21.08 5 ¶9*

Monday, January 9

Faith is . . . the evident demonstration of realities that are not seen.

—Heb. 11:1.

Some people think that having faith means believing in something without proof. But according to the Bible, that is not real faith. Notice that faith in invisible realities, such as Jehovah, Jesus, and the heavenly Kingdom, is based on convincing evidence. (Heb. 11:3) One Witness who is a biochemist put it this way: “Our faith is not blind faith that ignores the facts of science.” We might ask, ‘If convincing evidence of a Creator exists, why do many people believe that God had nothing to do with the origin of life?’ Some have simply never examined the evidence for themselves. Robert, who is now one of Jehovah's Witnesses, says: “Since creation was never mentioned in school, I assumed that it was not true. It was not until I was in my 20's that I heard the logical and convincing arguments from the Bible in favor of creation.” *w21.08 15 ¶4-5*

Tuesday, January 10

*Taste and see that Jehovah
is good.—Ps. 34:8.*

We can learn something about Jehovah's goodness by reading the Bible as well as by hearing others talk about the blessings they have received. But we will gain a real understanding of how good Jehovah is when we "taste" his goodness for ourselves. To illustrate, suppose we want to engage in some form of the full-time ministry, but in order to reach that goal, we will need to simplify our life. We know Jesus' promise that if we put Kingdom interests first, Jehovah will provide the things we really need, but we personally have never experienced the fulfillment of that promise. (Matt. 6:33) Nevertheless, with faith in Jesus' promise, we reduce our expenses, cut down on our secular work, and focus on our ministry. As we do so, we learn through our own experience that Jehovah really does care for our needs. We "taste" Jehovah's goodness personally. *w21.08 26 ¶2*

Wednesday, January 11

*They will not put up with the
wholesome teaching.
—2 Tim. 4:3.*

Do we see the same problem today? Yes. Many clergymen are eager to accept as members of their congregations individuals who are prominent, wealthy, and viewed as wise by the world. Such clergy do this even though the morals and lifestyle of those new members often are out of harmony with God's standards. The same clergymen look with disdain on Jehovah's zealous, morally clean servants be-

cause they are not prominent by this world's standards. As Paul said, God chose those who are "looked down on." (1 Cor. 1:26-29) However, to Jehovah, all his faithful servants are precious. How can we avoid being misled by the world's thinking? (Matt. 11:25, 26) Do not be influenced by its view of God's people. Recognize that Jehovah uses only humble people to do his will. (Ps. 138:6) And reflect on how much he has accomplished by using those whom the world does not consider to be wise or intellectual. *w21.05 8 ¶1; 9 ¶5-6*

Thursday, January 12

*You sent something to me
for my need.—Phil. 4:16.*

The apostle Paul was grateful for the help he received. He was not too proud to accept support from his brothers and sisters. (Phil. 2:19-22) Older ones, you can show your gratitude for the younger ones in your congregation in a number of ways. If they want to help you with transportation, shopping, or other physical needs, gratefully accept their assistance. View such help as an expression of Jehovah's love. You may be surprised at the bonds of friendship that might develop. Always show interest in the spiritual growth of your young companions, and tell them how happy you are to see young ones reaching out to be of greater service in the congregation. And be willing to spend time sharing your life's experiences with them. When you do, you will "show yourselves thankful" to Jehovah for the younger ones whom he has drawn to the congregation. —Col. 3:15; John 6:44; 1 Thess. 5:18. *w21.09 11-12 ¶12-13*

Friday, January 13

*With this compassion a daybreak
will visit us from on high.*

—*Luke 1:78.*

Jehovah loves our brothers and sisters. But we may not always find it easy to feel and express love for members of our spiritual family. After all, we come from many different cultures and backgrounds. And we all make mistakes that can frustrate and disappoint others. Still, we can contribute to the love of our spiritual family. How? By imitating our Father in showing love to our brothers and sisters. (Eph. 5:1, 2; 1 John 4:19) A compassionate person looks for ways to provide help and comfort. By the way he treated people, Jesus reflected Jehovah's concern for them. (John 5:19) When seeing a crowd on one occasion, Jesus "felt pity for them, because they were skinned and thrown about like sheep without a shepherd." (Matt. 9:36) Jesus' compassion went beyond warm feelings. He cured the sick and offered refreshment to those who were "toiling and loaded down."—Matt. 11:28-30; 14:14. *w21.09* 22 ¶10-11

Saturday, January 14

[God] was merciful; he would forgive their error and not bring them to ruin.—Ps. 78:38.

Jehovah loves to be merciful. The apostle Paul was inspired to write that God is "rich in mercy." In this context, Paul was referring to God's mercy in offering the hope of heavenly life to his imperfect, anointed servants. (Eph. 2:4-7) But Jehovah's mercy is even more extensive than that. The psalmist Da-

vid wrote: "Jehovah is good to all, and his mercy is evident in all his works." (Ps. 145:9) Because Jehovah loves people, he extends mercy whenever he sees a basis for doing so. More than anyone else, Jesus knows how much Jehovah loves to show mercy. This Father and Son were together in heaven during the course of thousands of years of human history. (Prov. 8:30, 31) On many occasions, Jesus saw how his Father showed mercy to sinful humans. (Ps. 78:37-42) In his teaching, Jesus often highlighted this endearing quality of his Father. *w21.10* 8-9 ¶4-5

Sunday, January 15

Father, glorify your name.

—*John 12:28.*

Jehovah himself answered that prayer with a thunderous voice from heaven, promising that he would glorify his name. Throughout his ministry, Jesus glorified his Father's name. (John 17:26) So it is reasonable to expect that true Christians would be proud to use God's name and to make it known to others. In the first century C.E., shortly after the Christian congregation was established, Jehovah "turned his attention to the nations to take out of them a people for his name." (Acts 15:14) Those first-century Christians were proud to use God's name and to make it known to others. They used the divine name prominently in their ministry and in their writings. They proved themselves to be a people for God's name. (Acts 2:14, 21) Similarly today, Jehovah's Witnesses are a people for Jehovah's name. *w21.10* 20-21 ¶8-10

Monday, January 16

Consider Jehovah's acts of loyal love.—Ps. 107:43.

God's loyal love is enduring. This important aspect of loyal love is mentioned 26 times in Psalm 136. In the opening verse, we read: "Give thanks to Jehovah, for he is good; his loyal love endures forever." (Ps. 136:1) In verses 2 to 26, we find the refrain "for his loyal love endures forever." As we read the remaining verses of this psalm, we cannot help but be impressed by the many ways in which Jehovah shows his loyal love without letup. The refrain "for his loyal love endures forever" assures us that God's love for his people is not fickle. How heartening it is to know that Jehovah does not quickly give up on his servants! Instead, he attaches himself to those who serve him and he sticks with them, especially in times of distress. Knowing that Jehovah sticks with us gives us the joy and the strength we need to cope with our distresses and to keep walking on the path to life.—Ps. 31:7. *w21.11 4 ¶9-10*

Tuesday, January 17

*Do not let your hearts be troubled. Exercise faith.
—John 14:1.*

Do you sometimes feel anxious when you think about the events that lie ahead of us—the destruction of false religion, the attack of Gog of Magog, and the war of Armageddon? Do you ever ask yourself, 'When the time comes, will I be able to pass through these fear-inspiring events with my integrity intact?' If such thoughts have

crossed your mind, Jesus' words, as recorded in today's text, should prove to be most helpful. Jesus told his disciples: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Exercise faith." Strong faith will help us to face the future with confidence. We can strengthen our faith to endure future trials by considering how we deal with tests of faith now. Then we can learn of areas where we need to strengthen our faith. With each test we pass, our faith becomes stronger. This will help us to endure future trials. *w21.11 20 ¶1-2*

Wednesday, January 18

When I am weak, then I am powerful.—2 Cor. 12:10.

The apostle Paul encouraged Timothy and by extension all Christians to accomplish their ministry fully. (2 Tim. 4:5) Yet, there are challenges. Think, for example, of our brothers who live in lands where our work is restricted or even banned. Jehovah's people must deal with a variety of problems that could dishearten them. For instance, many have to work long hours just to provide the basic necessities for their family. They would like to do more in the ministry, but they have little energy at the end of the week. Others are severely limited in what they can do because of chronic illness or advancing age; they may even be confined to their home. Still others are constantly plagued by feelings of worthlessness. Regardless of our circumstances, Jehovah can empower us to cope with personal challenges and still serve him to the extent that our circumstances allow. *w21.05 20 ¶1-3*

Thursday, January 19

*You must not . . . profane
the name of your God.*

—*Lev. 19:12.*

Sometimes others may pressure us to get involved in activities that would interfere with our worship. When they do, we have an important decision to make. Consider an interesting principle found at Leviticus 19:19, which says in part: “You must not wear a garment made with two sorts of thread mixed together.” That law helped to distinguish Israel from the surrounding nations. Today, we do not object to garments of mixed materials, such as cotton and polyester or wool and rayon. But we do object to being like people whose beliefs and practices conflict with Bible teachings. Of course, we have natural affection for our relatives, and we show love for our neighbors. Yet, when it comes to important aspects of life, we are willing to be separate as Jehovah’s people. That is vital if we are striving to become holy.—2 Cor. 6:14-16; 1 Pet. 4:3, 4. *w21.12* 5 ¶14; 6 ¶16

Friday, January 20

*Narrow is the gate and cramped
the road leading off into life.*

—*Matt. 7:14.*

The road to life can be found. Jesus said: “If you remain in my word, you are really my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:31, 32) Commendably, you did not follow the crowd; rather, you searched for the truth. You began an intensive study of God’s Word to learn what he requires of us, and you

listened to Jesus’ teachings. You learned that Jehovah expects us to reject the teachings of false religion and to stop celebrating holidays that have pagan origins or practices. You also learned that doing what Jehovah requires and breaking free from practices that do not meet with his approval may be challenging. (Matt. 10:34-36) It may not have been easy for you to make the needed adjustments. However, you persevered because you love your heavenly Father. How pleased he must be with you!—Prov. 27:11. *w21.12* 22 ¶3; 23 ¶5

Saturday, January 21

*Listen, my son, and accept
my sayings.—Prov. 4:10.*

Moses is a good example of someone who accepted correction after he had made a serious mistake. On one occasion, he lost his temper and did not honor Jehovah. Because of this, Moses lost out on the privilege of entering the Promised Land. (Num. 20:1-13) When Moses expressed his disappointment over this decision, Jehovah told him: “Never speak to me again about this matter.” (Deut. 3:23-27) Moses did not become bitter. Rather, he accepted Jehovah’s decision, and Jehovah continued to use him to lead Israel. (Deut. 4:1) Moses is a good example for us to imitate when it comes to accepting counsel. Moses proved that he accepted Jehovah’s counsel by remaining faithful even after he lost a privilege that was precious to him. We benefit when we imitate the example set by such faithful men as Moses. (Prov. 4:11-13) Many of our brothers and sisters have done just that. *w22.02* 11 ¶9-10

Sunday, January 22

Jesus gave way to tears.

—*John 11:35.*

In the winter of 32 C.E., Jesus' good friend Lazarus got sick and died. (John 11:3, 14) The man had two sisters, Mary and Martha, and Jesus loved this family very much. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she rushed out to meet him. Imagine the surge of emotions as she said: "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." (John 11:21, 32, 33) Jesus was surely moved to tears on seeing how Mary and Martha were affected by the death of their brother. If you have lost a loved one, Jehovah understands how you feel. Jesus is "the exact representation" of his Father. (Heb. 1:3) When Jesus wept, he reflected his Father's emotions. (John 14:9) If you are enduring the loss of a loved one, you can be sure that Jehovah not only notices your grief but also feels deeply for you. He wants to heal your broken heart.—Ps. 34:18; 147:3. *w22.01 15 ¶5-7*

Monday, January 23

Faith follows the thing heard.

—*Rom. 10:17.*

If you take time to talk to, listen to, and think about Jehovah, you will benefit greatly. First, you will make better decisions. The Bible assures us that "the one walking with the wise will become wise." (Prov. 13:20) Second, you will become a better teacher. When we are studying the Bible with someone, one of our most important goals is to help our student draw close to Jehovah. The more we commu-

nicate with our heavenly Father, the more our own love for him will grow and the better equipped we will be to teach our student to love him. This was true of Jesus. He described his Father in such warm, loving terms that his faithful followers could not help but love Jehovah as well. (John 17:25, 26) Third, your faith will grow stronger. Consider what happens when you ask God for guidance, comfort, or support. Each time Jehovah answers those prayers, your faith in him grows.—1 John 5:15. *w22.01 30 ¶15-17*

Tuesday, January 24

*Strip off the old personality
with its practices.*

—*Col. 3:9.*

Jehovah urges us to get rid of wrong thinking and bad habits because he loves us very much and wants us to enjoy life. (Isa. 48:17, 18) He knows that those who give in to wrong desires hurt themselves and those around them. It pains him to see us hurt ourselves and others. Some of our friends and family may at first ridicule us for trying to make changes to our personality. (1 Pet. 4:3, 4) They may say that we have the right to do whatever we want and that we should not allow others to tell us what to do. But those who reject Jehovah's standards are not actually being independent. In reality, they are allowing the world dominated by Satan to mold them. (Rom. 12:1, 2) We all face a choice: Either we keep our old personality, which is shaped by sin and Satan's world, or we allow Jehovah to transform us into the best person we can be at present.—Isa. 64:8. *w22.03 3 ¶6-7*

Wednesday, January 25

The word of God is alive and exerts power and is sharper than any two-edged sword . . . and is able to discern thoughts and intentions of the heart.—Heb. 4:12.

We can develop the right attitude about our circumstances by meditating on God's Word. Consider how the Bible benefited a grieving widow. An elder suggested that she could learn helpful lessons from reading the book of Job. As she did, she was at first quick to criticize Job for his wrong thinking. In her imagination she warned him: "Job! Don't be so negative!" But then she realized that her attitude had been very similar to that of Job. This helped her to readjust her viewpoint and strengthened her to cope with the pain of losing her husband. Another way that Jehovah strengthens Christians is by means of fellow worshippers. Paul wrote that he was longing to have "an interchange of encouragement" with his spiritual brothers and sisters.—Rom. 1:11, 12. *w21.05 22 ¶10-11; 24 ¶12*

Thursday, January 26

Seven days you will celebrate the festival to Jehovah your God in the place that Jehovah chooses.—Deut. 16:15.

The ancient Israelites were told: "Three times a year, all your males should appear before Jehovah your God in the place that he chooses." (Deut. 16:16) They had to leave their home and their crops unguarded. But Jehovah promised them: "Nobody will desire your land while you are going up to see the face of Je-

hovah your God." (Ex. 34:24) With full faith in Jehovah, those God-fearing Israelites attended the yearly festivals. They could thus reap rich rewards; they broadened their understanding of God's Law, meditated on his goodness, and enjoyed encouraging association with fellow believers. We receive similar benefits when we make sacrifices to attend Christian meetings. And think of how pleased Jehovah is when we come prepared to offer brief, meaningful comments. *w22.03 22 ¶9*

Friday, January 27

He is able to come to the aid of those who are being put to the test.—Heb. 2:18.

Jehovah was training Jesus for his future role as our High Priest. Jesus experienced how difficult it is to obey God when under extreme test. He felt so much pressure that he prayed for help "with strong outcries and tears." Certainly, having gone through wrenching emotional distress, Jesus himself understands our needs and "is able to come to [our] aid" when we "are being put to the test." How grateful we are to Jehovah for appointing over us a merciful High Priest who can "sympathize with our weaknesses"! (Heb. 2:17; 4:14-16; 5:7-10) Jehovah allowed Jesus to suffer so severely in order to answer an important question: Can humans demonstrate godly devotion even when severely tested? Satan says no! He claims that humans serve God for selfish reasons and that they are not devoted to Jehovah. (Job 1:9-11; 2:4, 5) Jesus maintained his integrity and proved Satan a liar. *w21.04 16-17 ¶7-8*

Saturday, January 28

Go, therefore, and make disciples . . . , teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded.

—Matt. 28:19, 20.

Before getting baptized, a Bible student must put into practice what the Bible teaches. When a student applies what he learns, he becomes like the “discreet man” in Jesus’ illustration who dug down deep to build his house on solid rock. (Matt. 7:24, 25; Luke 6:47, 48) Help your student to make lifestyle changes. (Mark 10:17-22) Jesus knew that it would be difficult for a rich man to sell all his belongings. (Mark 10:23) Yet, Jesus told the man to make this big change in his lifestyle. Why? Because Jesus felt love for him. At times, we may hold back from encouraging a student to apply what he is learning because we feel that he is not ready to make a needed change. (Col. 3:9, 10) But the sooner you openly discuss the issue, the sooner the student can begin to change. By having that discussion, you show that you care about him.—Ps. 141:5; Prov. 27:17. *w21.06* 3 ¶3, 5

Sunday, January 29

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

—1 Pet. 2:21.

The apostle Peter is specifically commenting on the fine example Jesus set in the endurance of suffering; however, there are many other ways in which we can imitate Jesus. (1 Pet. 2:18-25) Really, Jesus’ entire life course—everything he said and did—is an example for us to follow. As imperfect humans, can we really follow Jesus’ example? Yes, we can. Recall that Peter urges us “to follow [Jesus’] steps closely”

—not perfectly. If we follow his footsteps carefully, doing the best we can as imperfect humans, we will be heeding the apostle John’s words: “Go on walking just as that one [Jesus] walked.” (1 John 2:6) Following Jesus’ footsteps will draw us closer to Jehovah. Why can we say that? Jesus set an outstanding example of how to live in a way that pleases God. (John 8:29) So by following Jesus’ footsteps, we will please Jehovah. And we can be sure that our heavenly Father will draw close to those who try hard to be his friends. —Jas. 4:8. *w21.04* 3 ¶4-6

Monday, January 30

Jehovah takes pleasure in his people.—Ps. 149:4.

Jehovah notices our good qualities; he sees our potential and draws us to himself. If we remain faithful to him, he will remain close to us forever! (John 6:44) If we are convinced of Jehovah’s love and support, we will be impelled to serve him wholeheartedly in spite of life’s challenges. On the other hand, if we doubt that God cares for us, our “strength will be meager.” (Prov. 24:10) And when we become discouraged and lose faith in God’s love, we will be vulnerable to Satan’s attacks. (Eph. 6:16) Some faithful Christians in our time have been weakened spiritually by doubts. What should we do when doubts about God’s love find their way into our mind? We must immediately reject them! Ask Jehovah to help you replace those “disquieting thoughts” with ‘the peace of God that will guard your heart and your mental powers.’ (Ps. 139:23; ftn.; Phil. 4:6, 7) And remember, you are not alone. *w21.04* 20 ¶1; 21 ¶4-6

Tuesday, January 31

God is . . . giving you both the desire and the power to act.

—*Phil. 2:13.*

How did you become one of Jehovah's Witnesses? First, you heard "the good news"—maybe from your parents, from a workmate or a schoolmate, or by means of the door-to-door preaching work. (Mark 13:10) Then, someone spent a lot of time and effort conducting a Bible study with you. During that study, you came to love Jehovah and you learned that he loves you. Jehovah drew you to the truth, and now, as a disciple of Jesus Christ, you have the prospect of living forever. (John 6:44) You are no doubt grateful to Jehovah that He motivated someone to teach you the truth and that He accepted you as one of His servants. Now that we know the truth, we have the privilege of helping others join us on the road to life. We may be comfortable preaching from door to door, but we may find it challenging to offer and conduct Bible studies. *w21.07 2 ¶1-2*

Wednesday, February 1

Jehovah is near to all those calling on him.—Ps. 145:18.

Jehovah is keenly interested in the welfare of all his worshippers. He is near to each one of us, and he notices when we feel overwhelmed by discouraging feelings. (Ps. 145:18, 19) Consider how attentive Jehovah was to his prophet Elijah. That faithful man lived during a difficult time in Israel's history. Worshipers of Jehovah were being severely persecuted, and Elijah was a special target of powerful enemies who opposed God. (1 Ki. 19:1, 2) What may

also have troubled Elijah was the feeling that he was the only prophet left serving Jehovah. (1 Ki. 19:10) God quickly took note of Elijah. Jehovah sent an angel to reassure His prophet that he was not alone—that there were still many other God-fearing Israelites! (1 Ki. 19:5, 18) Jesus warmly reassured his disciples that they would gain a vast spiritual family. (Mark 10:29, 30) And Jehovah, the Head of our spiritual family, promises that he will support those who want to serve him. —Ps. 9:10. *w21.06 8-9 ¶3-4*

Thursday, February 2

The one who is from God listens to the sayings of God.—John 8:47.

Many are stumbled because our Bible-based teachings expose false religious ideas. Clergymen teach their flocks that God punishes the wicked in hell. They use that false teaching to maintain control over the people. As Jehovah's servants, who worship a God of love, we expose that false teaching. The clergy also teach that the soul is immortal. We expose the pagan origin of that doctrine, which—if true—would make the resurrection irrelevant. And contrary to the belief in predestination that many religions embrace, we teach that man has free will and can choose to serve God. How do religious leaders respond? Often, they are furious! If we love the truth, we must accept the sayings of God. (John 8:45, 46) Unlike Satan the Devil, we stand fast in the truth. We never compromise our beliefs. (John 8:44) God requires that his people "abhor what is wicked" and "cling to what is good," just as Jesus did.—Rom. 12:9; Heb. 1:9. *w21.05 10 ¶10-11*

Friday, February 3

Oppose the Devil, and he will flee from you.—Jas. 4:7.

What if we discover that we have given in to pride or greed? We can escape! The apostle Paul said that those who “have been caught alive by” the Devil can still escape from the snare. (2 Tim. 2:26) Never forget, Jehovah is stronger than Satan. So if we accept Jehovah’s help, we can escape from any snare or trap that the Devil has set. Of course, rather than have to escape from Satan’s snares or traps, we should avoid them altogether. We can do so only with God’s help. So beg Jehovah daily to help you recognize if those ugly qualities have begun to influence your thinking and actions. (Ps. 139:23, 24) Never allow them to get a grip on you! For thousands of years, Satan has been the hunter. But soon he will be bound and eventually destroyed. (Rev. 20:1-3, 10) We long for that day. Until then, stay alert to Satan’s snares. Work hard to prevent pride or greed from dominating you. Be determined to “oppose the Devil, and he will flee from you.” *w21.06* 19 ¶15-17

Saturday, February 4

Beg the Master of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest.—Matt. 9:38.

Jehovah rejoices when a person accepts Bible truth and shares that truth with others. (Prov. 23:15, 16) How great Jehovah’s joy must be when he sees what is happening today! For example, despite a global pandemic during the 2020 service year, 7,705,765 Bible studies were conducted, which helped 241,-

994 people to dedicate themselves to Jehovah and get baptized. These new disciples will, in turn, conduct Bible studies and make more disciples. (Luke 6:40) Without doubt, we make Jehovah happy when we share in the disciple-making work. Making disciples is hard work, but with Jehovah’s help we can play a part in teaching new ones to love our heavenly Father. Could we set the goal of starting and conducting at least one Bible study? We may be surprised to see what will happen if we use every appropriate occasion to ask those whom we meet to study with us. *w21.07* 6-7 ¶14-16

Sunday, February 5

Because of my delight in the house of my God, there is also my private treasure of gold and silver that I am giving to the house of my God.—1 Chron. 29:3.

King David made substantial donations from his personal wealth to support the construction of the temple. (1 Chron. 22:11-16) When we no longer have the physical strength to participate in theocratic construction projects, we can continue to support these projects by means of our contributions, to the extent that our circumstances allow. And we can help younger ones to benefit from the experience we have acquired. In regard to generosity, consider the example set by the apostle Paul. He invited Timothy to join him in the missionary work, and Paul shared his preaching and teaching methods with this younger man. (Acts 16:1-3) Paul’s training helped Timothy to be effective in spreading the good news. (1 Cor. 4:17) Timothy, in turn, used Paul’s methods to train others. *w21.09* 12 ¶14-15

Monday, February 6

There are jealousy and strife among you.

—1 Cor. 3:3.

What can we learn from the examples of the disciple Apollos and the apostle Paul? Both men had an excellent knowledge of the Scriptures. Both were prominent and influential teachers. And both had helped to make many disciples. But neither man viewed the other as a rival. (Acts 18:24) In fact, some time after Apollos left Corinth, Paul urged him to return there. (1 Cor. 16:12) Apollos used his gifts in a good way—to proclaim the good news and to strengthen his brothers. We can also be sure that Apollos was a humble man. For example, there is no record that he took offense when Aquila and Priscilla “explained the way of God more accurately to him.” (Acts 18:24-28) The apostle Paul was aware of the good work done by Apollos. But Paul did not feel threatened by him. Paul’s humility, modesty, and reasonableness are seen in the counsel that he gave to the congregation in Corinth. —1 Cor. 3:4-6. *w21.07* 18-19 ¶15-17

Tuesday, February 7

Many will be made righteous.

—Rom. 5:19.

Adam and Eve deliberately disobeyed God, so they deserved to be disinherited by him. But what of their offspring? Jehovah lovingly made a provision for deserving ones among them to be adopted into his family. He did this by means of the sacrifice of his only-begotten Son. (John 3:16) As a result of Jesus’ sacrifice, 144,000 integrity-keeping humans are adopted as God’s sons.

(Rom. 8:15-17; Rev. 14:1) Additionally, untold millions of other faithful ones are obediently doing God’s will. They have the prospect of full membership in God’s family after the final test at the end of the Millennium. (Ps. 25:14; Rom. 8:20, 21) Even now they address Jehovah, their Creator, as “Father.” (Matt. 6:9) Resurrected ones too will be given the opportunity to learn what Jehovah expects of them. Those who respond well to his direction will eventually also become members of his family. *w21.08* 5 ¶10-11

Wednesday, February 8

Make sure of the more important things.

—Phil. 1:10.

The apostle Paul had been assigned a ministry, and for decades he viewed that ministry as one of the more important things. He preached “publicly and from house to house.” (Acts 20:20) In fact, he took advantage of every opportunity to preach! For example, while waiting for his companions in Athens, he introduced the good news to a distinguished group of people, with some positive results. (Acts 17:16, 17, 34) Even while in “prison bonds,” Paul preached to those who were around him. (Phil. 1:13, 14; Acts 28:16-24) Paul made the best use of his time. He often invited others to join him in the ministry. For example, on his first missionary tour, he took John Mark, and on his second, Timothy. (Acts 12:25; 16:1-4) No doubt Paul endeavored to teach these men how to organize a congregation, how to carry out the shepherding work, and how to become effective teachers.—1 Cor. 4:17. *w22.03* 27 ¶5-6

Thursday, February 9

[God] is not far off from each one of us.—Acts 17:27.

Some do not believe in a Creator because they say that they believe only in what they can see. They make exceptions, of course, for such unseen things as gravity, which is, after all, a reality. The type of faith mentioned in the Bible involves evidence for other “realities that are not seen.” (Heb. 11:1) It takes time and effort to study the evidence for ourselves, and many people lack the motivation they need to do the work. A person who does not investigate the evidence for himself may conclude that there is no God. After studying the evidence, some scientists have become convinced that God created the universe. Originally, they simply assumed that there was no Creator because creation had never been taught in university. However, they have now come to know and love Jehovah. Actually, all of us must build our faith in God, no matter what our educational background. *w21.08* 14 ¶1; 15-16 ¶6-7

Friday, February 10

Jehovah is good to all, and his mercy is evident in all his works.—Ps. 145:9.

Jesus used a parable about a lost son to paint a heartwarming picture of how much Jehovah loves to show mercy. The son had left home and “squandered his property by living a debauched life.” (Luke 15:13) Later, he repented of his immoral course, humbled himself, and returned home. How did his father respond? Jesus said: “While [the son] was still a long way off, his father

caught sight of him and was moved with pity, and he ran and embraced him and tenderly kissed him.” The older man did not humiliate his son. Rather, he mercifully forgave the young man and welcomed him back to the family. The lost son had sinned greatly, but on the basis of his repentance, his father forgave him. The merciful father in the illustration represents Jehovah. In this touching way, Jesus illustrated his Father’s willingness to forgive sinners who sincerely repent.—Luke 15:17-24. *w21.10* 8 ¶4; 9 ¶6

Saturday, February 11

God for the first time turned his attention to the nations to take out of them a people for his name.—Acts 15:14.

Today many religious leaders have done everything in their power to conceal the fact that God has a personal name. They have removed it from their Bible translations and, in some cases, have banned the use of that name in their religious services. Can anyone deny that Jehovah’s Witnesses are the only ones who give Jehovah’s name the respect and honor it deserves? We are making God’s personal name more widely known than any other religious group! In that regard, we are doing our very best to live up to our name, Jehovah’s Witnesses. (Isa. 43:10-12) We have produced over 240 million copies of the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, which uses Jehovah’s name in places where it has been omitted by other Bible translators. And we produce Bible-based publications that promote Jehovah’s name in more than 1,000 languages! *w21.10* 20-21 ¶9-10

Sunday, February 12

If one of your brothers becomes poor among you . . . , do not harden your heart or be tightfisted toward your poor brother.

—Deut. 15:7.

We worship Jehovah when we help fellow Christians who are in need. Jehovah promised to repay Israelites who showed favor to the poor. (Deut. 15:10) Yes, each time we help a fellow worshipper who is in need, Jehovah views it as a gift to Him. (Prov. 19:17) For example, when Christians from Philippi sent a gift to the prisoner Paul, he called it “an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.” (Phil. 4:18) Look around the congregation and ask yourself, ‘Is there someone I can help?’ Jehovah is pleased when he sees us use our time, energy, skills, and material things to help those in need. He considers that to be part of our worship. (Jas. 1:27) True worship requires time and effort. But it is not burdensome. (1 John 5:3) Why not? Because it is done out of love for Jehovah and our brothers and sisters. *w22.03* 24 ¶14-15

Monday, February 13

He makes his sun rise on both the wicked and the good.

—Matt. 5:45.

Before we can show compassionate concern for our brothers and sisters, we need to consider what challenges they are facing. For example, a sister may have a serious health problem. She never complains about it, but she would likely appreciate some practical help. Would she welcome a little assistance with preparing meals or cleaning the house? A brother may

have lost his job. Would a modest monetary gift, perhaps given anonymously, help tide him over until he finds another job? We should not wait until our brothers and sisters ask for our help before we show compassion. Like Jehovah, we can take the initiative. He makes the sun rise on us daily without our even asking for it! And the warmth of the sun sustains everyone, not just those who are thankful. Would you not agree that by providing for our needs, Jehovah is expressing his love for us? How we love Jehovah for being so kind and generous! *w21.09* 22-23 ¶12-13

Tuesday, February 14

You, O Jehovah, are good and ready to forgive; you abound in loyal love for all those who call on you.—Ps. 86:5.

God’s loyal love moves him to be forgiving. When Jehovah observes a sinner who is repentant and who rejects his sinful course, loyal love moves Him to be forgiving. The psalmist David stated about Jehovah: “He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor has he repaid us what our errors deserve.” (Ps. 103:8-11) David himself knew from painful experience how heavy the burden of a guilty conscience can be. But he also learned that Jehovah is “ready to forgive.” What moves Jehovah to be forgiving? The answer is recorded in today’s text. Yes, as David said in prayer, Jehovah forgives because he abounds in loyal love for all those who call on him. When we sin, it is appropriate—even healthy—to feel remorse. It can move us to repent and take steps to correct our mistakes. *w21.11* 5 ¶11-12

Wednesday, February 15

Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified.

—Matt. 6:9.

Jehovah loves his name, and he wants everyone to respect it. (Isa. 42:8) But for some six millenniums, his good name has been reproached. (Ps. 74:10, 18, 23) This started when the Devil (meaning “Slanderer”) accused God of depriving Adam and Eve of something they needed. (Gen. 3:1-5) Ever since then, Jehovah has been falsely accused of depriving humans of what they truly need. Jesus was concerned about the reproach that was being heaped on his Father’s name. Jehovah has the absolute right to rule the heavens and the earth, and his way of ruling is the very best. (Rev. 4:11) But the Devil has tried to mislead angels and humans into thinking that God does not have that right. Soon, the issue will be settled once and for all. Jehovah will be vindicated as he proves that his Kingdom alone can establish real peace and security on earth. *w21.07* 9 ¶5-6

Thursday, February 16

I will exult in Jehovah; I will be joyful in the God of my salvation.

—Hab. 3:18.

It is natural for a family head to want to provide sufficient food, clothing, and shelter for his wife and children. Are you facing economic hardship? If so, this is a difficult time for you. However, as challenging as your circumstances are, you can use this time to build your faith. Prayerfully read Jesus’ words recorded at Matthew 6: 25-34 and meditate on them. Con-

sider modern-day experiences that prove that Jehovah provides for those who stay busy in theocratic activities. (1 Cor. 15:58) Doing so will strengthen your confidence that just as your heavenly Father has helped others in similar circumstances, he will help you. He knows what you need, and he knows how to provide it. As you experience Jehovah’s help in your life, your faith will grow stronger so that you can endure greater trials in the future. *w21.11* 20 ¶3; 21 ¶6

Friday, February 17

If anyone does commit a sin, we have a helper with the Father, Jesus Christ.—1 John 2:1.

The faith of many Christians has been sustained by the teaching of the ransom. They have kept on preaching despite opposition and have endured all sorts of trials right on into old age. Consider the example of the apostle John. He loyally preached the truth about Christ and the ransom, likely for more than 60 years. When he was in his late 90’s, he was apparently considered to be such a threat to the Roman Empire that he was imprisoned on the isle of Patmos. His crime? “Speaking about God and bearing witness concerning Jesus.” (Rev. 1:9) What an outstanding example of faith and endurance! John expresses his deep love for Jesus and his appreciation for the ransom in his inspired writings. They contain over 100 references either to the ransom or to the benefits that the ransom makes possible. (1 John 2:2) Clearly, John deeply appreciated the ransom. *w21.04* 17 ¶9-10

Saturday, February 18

*You must not curse a deaf man
or put an obstacle before a
blind man.—Lev. 19:14.*

Jehovah expected his people to show consideration for those who had physical limitations. For example, the Israelites were not to curse a deaf man. Such cursing involved threatening someone or calling down evil on him. What a terrible thing to do to a deaf man! He could not hear what was being said about him, so he would not be in a position to defend himself. Furthermore, in Leviticus 19:14 we learn that God's servants were not to "put an obstacle before a blind man." One reference work comments regarding people with physical challenges: "In the ancient Near East [they] tended to be exploited and abused." Perhaps some inconsiderate person would place an obstacle before a blind man out of spite or out of some perverted sense of humor. How unkind! By means of this command, Jehovah helped his people to see that they should show compassion to those who were disadvantaged. *w21.12* 8-9 ¶13-4

Sunday, February 19

*Jacob became very frightened
and anxious.—Gen. 32:7.*

Jacob was worried that his brother might still be nursing a grudge against him. So he fervently prayed to Jehovah about the matter. Then, he sent a generous gift to Esau. (Gen. 32:9-15) Finally, when the estranged brothers met face-to-face, Jacob took the initiative to show honor to Esau. He bowed to Esau—not once, not twice, but seven times! With humble and respect-

ful action, Jacob made peace with his brother. (Gen. 33:3, 4) We learn a lesson from how Jacob prepared to meet his brother and how he approached Esau. Jacob humbly asked Jehovah for help. Then he followed through on his prayer by taking steps to make his reunion with his brother as pleasant as possible. When the brothers met, Jacob did not argue with Esau about who was right and who was wrong. Jacob's goal was to make peace with his brother. Can you imitate Jacob's example?—Matt. 5:23, 24. *w21.12* 25 ¶11-12

Monday, February 20

*God is greater than our hearts
and knows all things.
—1 John 3:20.*

When you think about Jesus' dying to cover your sins, you may say, 'I do not feel worthy of that honor.' Why might you feel that way? Our imperfect heart might deceive us, making us feel worthless or unlovable. (1 John 3:19) At such times, we need to remember that "God is greater than our hearts." Our heavenly Father's love and forgiveness are far stronger than any negative feelings that may lurk in our heart. We need to convince ourselves to accept Jehovah's view of us. To do that, we must study his Word often, pray to him frequently, and associate regularly with his loyal people. Why is doing those things so important? You will see Jehovah's warm personality more clearly. You will perceive his tender feelings for you. Meditating on a portion of God's Word each day can help you think more clearly, "setting things straight" in your mind and heart. —2 Tim. 3:16. *w21.04* 23-24 ¶12-13

Tuesday, February 21

*To God I will cry out,
and he will hear me.*

—Ps. 77:1.

To build strong faith, more is required than merely taking in knowledge. We need to meditate on what we are learning. Consider the experience of the writer of Psalm 77. He was distressed because he felt that he and his fellow Israelites had lost Jehovah's approval. Those anxious thoughts kept him up at night. (Verses 2-8) What did he do? He told Jehovah: "I will meditate on all your activity and ponder over your dealings." (Verse 12) Of course, the psalmist was well-aware of the things Jehovah had done for His people in the past, but the anxious man wondered: "Has God forgotten to show his favor, or has his anger caused his mercy to cease?" (Verse 9) The psalmist meditated on Jehovah's activity and on the fact that God had shown mercy and compassion in the past. (Verse 11) The result? The psalmist became convinced that Jehovah would not abandon His people. (Verse 15) *w22.01 30-31 ¶17-18*

Wednesday, February 22

They are all living to him.

—Luke 20:38.

How does Jehovah feel about faithful men and women who have died? He longs to see them again! (Job 14:15) Can you imagine how much Jehovah misses his friend Abraham? (Jas. 2:23) Or Moses, with whom he spoke "face-to-face"? (Ex. 33:11) And how he must yearn to hear David and the other psalmists sing their beautiful songs of praise! (Ps. 104:33) Although these friends

of God are sleeping in death, Jehovah has not forgotten them. (Isa. 49:15) He remembers every detail of their personality. One day, he will bring them back to life, and he will once again hear their earnest prayers and accept their worship. If you have lost a loved one in death, may these thoughts console and comfort you. When the rebellion began in Eden, Jehovah knew that conditions would get worse before they got better. Jehovah hates the wickedness, injustice, and violence in the world today. *w21.07 10 ¶11; 12 ¶12*

Thursday, February 23

*We should love . . . in deed
and truth.—1 John 3:18.*

When we show such love, we also show appreciation for the ransom. Why? Because Jesus gave his life not just for us but also for our brothers and sisters. If he was ready to die for them, they clearly have great value in his eyes. (1 John 3:16-18) We express our love for our brothers and sisters by the way we treat them. (Eph. 4:29, 31-5:2) For example, we help them when they are sick or when they are enduring severe trials, including natural disasters. But what should we do when a fellow believer does or says something that offends us? Are you inclined to hold a grudge? (Lev. 19:18) If so, follow this advice: "Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely even if anyone has a cause for complaint against another. Just as Jehovah freely forgave you, you must also do the same." (Col. 3:13) Every time we forgive our brother or sister, we prove to our heavenly Father that we truly appreciate the ransom. *w21.04 18 ¶12-13*

Friday, February 24

Use [your gift] in ministering to one another.—1 Pet. 4:10.

We may work hard for Jehovah, and we may help many progress to baptism. But we realize that any success we have is only because of Jehovah's blessing. From the examples of Apollos and the apostle Paul, we learn another lesson—the more prominence we have, the greater our opportunity to promote peace. How grateful we are when appointed men promote peace and unity by basing their counsel on God's Word and by focusing attention, not on themselves, but on our model, Christ Jesus! (1 Cor. 4:6, 7) Each one of us has some God-given talent or ability. We may feel that the part we play is small. But the small acts that promote unity are like the small stitches that hold a garment together. May we work hard to remove from ourselves any trace of a competitive spirit. Let us be determined to do all we can to promote peace and unity in the congregation.—Eph. 4:3. *w21.07* 19 ¶18-19

Saturday, February 25

*Your brother will rise.
—John 11:23.*

You can be convinced that you will see your dead loved ones again. Jesus' tears as he gave comfort to his grief-stricken friends are proof that the resurrection is close to his heart! (John 11:35) You can support those who grieve. Jesus not only wept with Martha and Mary but also listened and spoke reassuringly to them. (John 11:25-27) We can do the same for those who grieve. Dan, an

elder who lives in Australia, says: "After losing my wife, I needed support. Several couples made themselves available day and night just to listen to me. They let me grieve, and they were not embarrassed by my tears. They also offered practical help, such as washing my car, shopping for groceries, and cooking meals when I felt unable to care for these tasks myself. And they prayed with me often. They proved to be true friends and brothers who are 'born for times of distress.'" —Prov. 17:17. *w22.01* 16 ¶8-9

Sunday, February 26

*The one who listens to life-giving reproof is at home among the wise.
—Prov. 15:31.*

Jehovah wants what is best for us. (Prov. 4:20-22) When he counsels us by means of his Word, a Bible-based publication, or a mature fellow believer, he is expressing his love for us. (Heb. 12:9, 10) Focus on the content, not the delivery. At times, we may feel that the counsel was not given in the best manner. Of course, anyone giving counsel should try to make it as easy as possible to accept. (Gal. 6:1) But if we are the one being counseled, we do well to focus on the message—even if we feel that it could have been delivered in a better way. We might ask ourselves: 'Even if I do not appreciate the manner in which the counsel was given, is there some truth to what was said? Can I look past the imperfections of the messenger and benefit from the message itself?' It would be wise on our part to find a way to benefit from any counsel we receive. *w22.02* 12 ¶13-14

Monday, February 27

The reminder of Jehovah is trustworthy, making the inexperienced one wise.—Ps. 19:7.

Jehovah knows that it will take time and effort for us to avoid wrong thinking and bad habits. (Ps. 103:13, 14) However, through his Word, his spirit, and his organization, Jehovah gives us the wisdom, strength, and support that we need to change who we are. Use the Bible to examine yourself closely. God's Word acts like a mirror; it can help you to analyze the way that you think, speak, and act. (Jas. 1:22-25) And Jehovah is always ready to come to your aid. He knows best how to help you; he knows what is in your heart. (Prov. 14:10; 15:11) So get into the habit of praying to him and studying his Word each day. Be convinced that Jehovah's standards are best. We can benefit from everything that Jehovah asks us to do. Those who live by his standards gain self-respect, a purpose in life, and genuine happiness.—Ps. 19:8-11. *w22.03* 4 ¶11-10

Tuesday, February 28

Set your hearts upon its ramparts. Inspect its fortified towers, so that you may tell about it to future generations.—Ps. 48:13.

We worship Jehovah as we build and maintain places of worship. The Bible says that the work of making the tabernacle and its furnishings was "holy work." (Ex. 36:1, 4) Today, too, Jehovah views the work of constructing Kingdom Halls and other theocratic facilities as sacred service. Some brothers and sisters spend much time engag-

ing in these activities. Do we not appreciate this vital contribution to the Kingdom work? Of course, they also engage in the preaching work. Some of them may even want to be pioneers. Congregation elders can show their support for the construction activities by not hesitating to appoint these hardworking men and women as pioneers when they qualify. Whether we are skilled in construction work or not, all of us can share in keeping the buildings clean and in good repair. *w22.03* 22 ¶11-12

Wednesday, March 1

To the extent that you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.—Matt. 25:40.

"The sheep" in the parable found at Matthew 25:31-36 represent righteous ones in the time of the end who have the earthly hope—that is, the other sheep. They loyally support the remaining ones of Christ's spirit-anointed brothers primarily by helping them do the worldwide preaching and disciple-making work. (Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20) Every year in the weeks leading up to the Memorial, the other sheep show their support for Christ's brothers by sharing fully in a global campaign to invite interested ones to the Memorial. They also help make all the necessary arrangements so that the Memorial can be held in every congregation worldwide. The other sheep are thrilled to support Christ's brothers in such ways. These sheep know that Jesus views what they do for his anointed brothers as if they were doing it for him personally.—Matt. 25:37-40. *w22.01* 22 ¶11-12

Thursday, March 2

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

When we imitate Jesus' qualities and ways of dealing with others—for example, his pity for a leper, his empathy for a woman with a grievous illness, his compassion for the bereaved—we are imitating Jehovah as well. (Mark 1:40, 41; 5:25-34; John 11:33-35) The more we become like Jehovah, the closer we draw to him. Following Jesus' footsteps helps us not to be distracted by this wicked world. On the final night of his earthly life, Jesus was able to say: "I have conquered the world." (John 16:33) He meant that he had refused to allow himself to be influenced by the thinking, the goals, and the actions of this world. Jesus never allowed himself to lose his focus on the reason he was sent to earth—to vindicate Jehovah. What about us? In this world, there are many things that could distract us. But if, like Jesus, we keep focused on doing Jehovah's will, we too will "conquer" the world.—1 John 5:5. *w21.04* 3-4 ¶7-8

Friday, March 3

[Nothing] will be able to separate us from God's love.—Rom. 8:39.

The apostle Paul was familiar with Jesus' promise that "everyone exercising faith in [Jesus] might . . . have everlasting life." (John 3:16; Rom. 6:23) Paul certainly was among those who were exercising faith in the ransom. He was convinced that Jehovah is ready to forgive even those who have sinned seriously if they are repentant. (Ps. 86:5) Paul also had faith in the power of God's love as expressed by Christ. Notice the reassuring words

at the end of Galatians 2:20. Paul said: "The Son of God . . . loved me and handed himself over for me." Paul did not put a limit on God's love, as if to say, 'I can see why Jehovah would love my brothers, but he could not possibly love me.' Paul reminded the Romans: "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:8) God's love knows no boundaries! Paul was absolutely convinced of the power of God's love. Paul knew how Jehovah had patiently dealt with the nation of Israel. *w21.04* 22 ¶8-10

Saturday, March 4

For this is what the love of God means, that we observe his commandments.—1 John 5:3.

When conducting a Bible study, help your student come to love Jehovah. How? Look for opportunities to draw attention to Jehovah's qualities. Help your student to view Jehovah as a happy God who supports those who love him. (1 Tim. 1:11; Heb. 11:6) Show the student that he will benefit by applying the information, and explain that this is a reflection of Jehovah's love for him. (Isa. 48:17, 18) Your student will be more motivated to make any needed changes as his love for Jehovah deepens. To progress to baptism, a Bible student will need to make sacrifices. Some students may need to sacrifice material things. Many may have to leave behind friends who do not love Jehovah. Others may be abandoned by family members who dislike Jehovah's Witnesses. Jesus promised that those who follow him will not be disappointed. They will be richly rewarded with a loving spiritual family.—Mark 10:29, 30. *w21.06* 4 ¶8-9

Sunday, March 5

Lift up your eyes and view the fields, that they are white for harvesting.—John 4:35.

The apostle Paul likened the work of disciple-making to cultivating a crop, showing that we must do more than plant seeds. He reminded the Corinthians: “I planted, Apollos watered . . . You are God’s field under cultivation.” (1 Cor. 3:6-9) As workers in “God’s field,” not only do we plant the seeds but we water them and regularly check the progress of our plantings. At the same time, we recognize that it is God who makes the seed grow. What a privilege we have both to preach and to teach the truth to others! This work makes us genuinely happy. The apostle Paul, who helped many in Thessalonica to become disciples, expressed his feelings this way: “What is our hope or joy or crown of exultation before our Lord Jesus at his presence? Is it not in fact you? You certainly are our glory and joy.”—1 Thess. 2:19, 20; Acts 17:1-4. *w21.07 3 ¶5; 7 ¶17*

Monday, March 6

Do not despise one of these little ones.—Matt. 18:10.

Jehovah has drawn each of us to him. (John 6:44) Think of what that means. As Jehovah carefully examined all the billions of people in this world, he saw something precious in you—a sincere heart that could grow to love him. (1 Chron. 28:9) Jehovah knows you, understands you, and loves you. How reassuring that is! Jehovah cares deeply about you, and he also cares about all your Christian brothers and sisters. To illustrate this point, Jesus

compared Jehovah to a shepherd. If 1 sheep out of 100 strays from the flock, what will the shepherd do? He will “leave the 99 on the mountains and set out on a search for the one that is straying.” When the shepherd finds the sheep, he will not scold it for straying. He will rejoice. The point? Every sheep is important to Jehovah. Jesus said: “It is not a desirable thing to my Father who is in heaven for even one of these little ones to perish.”—Matt. 18:12-14. *w21.06 20 ¶1-2*

Tuesday, March 7

*Draw close to God.
—Jas. 4:8.*

When we reflect on God’s unfailing love for us, we deepen our own love for Jehovah and strengthen our bond with him. (Rom. 8:38, 39) We are moved to imitate Jesus’ example. (1 Pet. 2:21) In the days leading up to the Memorial, we focus on Bible accounts about Jesus’ final week on earth, his death, and his resurrection. Then on the evening of the Memorial, the discourse reminds us of Jesus’ love for us. (Eph. 5:2; 1 John 3:16) As we read about Jesus’ self-sacrificing example and meditate on it, we feel compelled to “go on walking just as that one walked.” (1 John 2:6) We are even more determined to remain in God’s love. (Jude 20, 21) We remain in God’s love by doing all we can to obey him, sanctify his name, and bring joy to his heart. (Prov. 27:11; Matt. 6:9; 1 John 5:3) The Memorial observance moves us to be more determined to live each day in a way that says to Jehovah, ‘I want to remain in your love forever!’ *w22.01 23 ¶17; 25 ¶18-19*

Wednesday, March 8

*Choose for yourselves . . .
whom you will serve.*
—Josh. 24:15.

Jehovah has given us the gift of free will. We can choose which course we will take in life. Our loving God rejoices when we choose to serve him. (Ps. 84:11; Prov. 27:11) We can use our free will properly in many areas. Following the example of Jesus, we can choose to put the interests of others ahead of our own. Once when Jesus and his apostles were very tired, they traveled to a quiet place where they hoped to get some rest. However, that was not to be. A crowd found them, and they were eager to be taught by Jesus. But Jesus did not become irritated. Instead, he felt pity for the people. So, what did Jesus do? “He started to teach them many things.” (Mark 6:30-34) When we imitate Jesus by sacrificing our time and energy to help others, we bring glory to our heavenly Father.—Matt. 5:14-16. *w21.08* 3 ¶7-8

Thursday, March 9

Let each one . . . have cause for rejoicing in regard to himself alone, and not in comparison with the other person.—Gal. 6:4.

Jehovah loves variety. This is evident in his amazing creations, including humankind. Each of us is unique. So Jehovah never compares you with others. He examines your heart, your inner person. (1 Sam. 16:7) He also takes into account your strengths, weaknesses, and background. And he does not ask more of you than you can give. We need to imitate Jeho-

vah by seeing ourselves as he does. Then we will have “a sound mind,” thinking neither too much nor too little of ourselves. (Rom. 12:3) Of course, we may benefit by observing the good example of a faithful brother or sister who has a productive ministry. (Heb. 13:7) We might then see ways in which we can be more effective in our own ministry. (Phil. 3:17) But there is a difference between imitating someone’s good example and using it to assess your value as an individual. *w21.07* 20 ¶1-2

Friday, March 10

Lift up your eyes to heaven and see. Who has created these things?—Isa. 40:26.

You can build your faith in the Creator by observing animals, plants, and stars. (Ps. 19:1) The more you study such things, the more convinced you will become that Jehovah is the Creator. When studying creation, pay careful attention to what the facts reveal about our Creator. (Rom. 1:20) For instance, you may know that our sun, in addition to providing life-giving heat, emits harmful energy in the form of ultraviolet rays. We humans need to be protected from those rays. And we are! How? Our earthly home has its own protective shield—a layer of ozone gas that filters out the harmful radiation. As the ultraviolet rays from the sun get more intense, the amount of ozone grows. Now, do you not agree that there must be someone behind this process and that he must be a loving and an intelligent Creator? *w21.08* 17 ¶9-10

Saturday, March 11

*Whoever loves God must
also love his brother.*

—1 John 4:21.

After a person gets baptized, we must continue to love and respect him. (1 John 4:20) What does this involve? For one thing, we give him the benefit of the doubt whenever possible. For example, we would not impute bad or selfish motives to him. Instead, we would show honor for our brother, considering him to be superior to us. (Rom. 12:10; Phil. 2:3) Actually, we should show mercy and kindness to all people. If we want to be among those who can rightly call Jehovah their Father forever, we must apply God's Word in our lives. For instance, Jesus taught that we should show mercy and kindness to all people, even our enemies. (Luke 6:32-36) We may find that at times this is difficult for us to do. If so, we must learn to think and act like Jesus. When we do our best to obey Jehovah and imitate Jesus, we show our heavenly Father that we want to be part of his family forever. *w21.08* 6 ¶14-15

Sunday, March 12

*See whether I will not open to you
the floodgates of the heavens and
pour out on you a blessing.*

—Mal. 3:10.

Learn to rely on Jehovah. He promises to shower us with blessings when we trust in him and give him our best. The Bible is filled with examples of individuals who exerted themselves in Jehovah's service. In many instances, they had to take the first step before they received special blessings from Jehovah. For example, it was only after Abra-

ham left his home—"although not knowing where he was going"—that Jehovah blessed him. (Heb. 11:8) It was only after Jacob wrestled with the angel that he received a special blessing. (Gen. 32:24-30) When the nation of Israel was about to enter the Promised Land, it was only after the priests stepped into the raging Jordan River that the people were able to cross over. (Josh. 3:14-16) You can also benefit from the examples of modern-day Witnesses who have relied on Jehovah and reached out. *w21.08* 29-30 ¶12-14

Monday, March 13

*Do not say, "Why were the
former days better than
these?"—Eccl. 7:10.*

You older brothers and sisters know from experience how things were done in the past, but you also see the need to adapt to changing circumstances. You older ones who recently got baptized also have much to give. Younger ones will appreciate hearing about your experiences and the lessons you have learned. If you "practice giving" from your storehouse of experience, Jehovah will bless you richly. (Luke 6:38) As you dear older ones draw closer to younger ones, you will be able to support one another. (Rom. 1:12) Each has something of value that the other does not possess. Older ones have the wisdom and experience that they gained with the passing of time. Younger ones have energy and strength. When young and old work together as friends, they bring praise to our loving heavenly Father and are a blessing to all in the congregation. *w21.09* 8 ¶3; 13 ¶17-18

Tuesday, March 14

We preach Christ executed on the stake, to the Jews a cause for stumbling.—1 Cor. 1:23.

Why were many Jews disturbed by the way Jesus died? To them, Jesus' death on a stake made him appear to be a criminal and a sinner—not the Messiah. (Deut. 21:22, 23) Those among the Jews who stumbled at Jesus failed to recognize that he was innocent, that he was falsely accused, and that he was treated unjustly. Those conducting Jesus' trial made a mockery of justice. The Jewish supreme court was hastily convened, and the proceedings were most irregular. (Luke 22:54; John 18:24) Rather than impartially listen to the charges and the evidence against Jesus, the judges themselves sought "false testimony against Jesus in order to put him to death." (Matt. 26:59; Mark 14:55-64) And after Jesus was raised from the dead, those unrighteous judges paid the Roman soldiers who were guarding his tomb "a considerable number of silver pieces" to spread a false story to explain why the tomb was empty.—Matt. 28:11-15. *w21.05* 11 ¶12-13

Wednesday, March 15

Concerning that day and hour nobody knows, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father.—Matt. 24:36.

Jehovah could put an end to this wicked system of things at any time. But his patience has proved to be a blessing for us! All descendants of Adam and Eve are imperfect when they come into the world. Still, Jehovah loves them and cares for them, and he has promised to bring an

end to this wicked system of things. (1 John 4:19) And he has set the date when he will undo all the maladies that plague his human creation. Should not his love motivate us to endure along with him for as long as it is necessary? Jehovah set the perfect example of endurance. Jesus succeeded in imitating his Father's endurance. As a human, Jesus endured hostile speech, shame, and a torture stake for our sake. (Heb. 12:2, 3) Jehovah's example of endurance undoubtedly gave Jesus the strength to endure. It can strengthen us too. *w21.07* 12-13 ¶15-17

Thursday, March 16

*Continue being merciful, just as your Father is merciful.
—Luke 6:36.*

We daily experience our heavenly Father's mercy. (Ps. 103:10-14) Jesus' followers were imperfect; yet, he showed them mercy and forgiveness. He was even willing to sacrifice his life so that our sins can be forgiven. (1 John 2:1, 2) We strengthen the bond of love in our spiritual family when we are "freely forgiving." (Eph. 4:32) Of course, forgiving others can be very hard at times, so we need to work at it. One sister felt that the *Watchtower* article "Forgive One Another Freely" helped her to do just that. She writes: "[The article] explained that being willing to forgive others does not mean that you approve of their wrong behavior or minimize the damage it causes. But forgiving does mean letting go of resentment for such wrongs and maintaining your own peace." When we freely forgive our brothers and sisters, we show that we love them and that we imitate our Father, Jehovah. *w21.09* 23-24 ¶15-16

Friday, March 17

Those worshipping [God] must worship with . . . truth.

—John 4:24.

Jesus loved the truth, that is, the truth about God and His purposes. Jesus lived in harmony with that truth, and he made that truth known to others. (John 18:37) Jesus' true followers also deeply loved the truth. (John 4:23) In fact, the apostle Peter referred to Christianity as "the way of the truth." (2 Pet. 2:2) Because of their strong love for truth, the early Christians rejected religious ideas, cultural traditions, and personal opinions that were out of harmony with the truth. (Col. 2:8) Likewise today, true Christians strive to "go on walking in the truth" by strictly basing all their beliefs and their way of life on Jehovah's Word. (3 John 3, 4) God's people today do not claim to have perfect or complete knowledge of the truth. At times, they have made mistakes in doctrinal matters and in organizational direction. When the matter has come to light, they have made the needed corrections. *w21.10* 21-22 ¶11-12

Saturday, March 18

The one trusting in Jehovah is surrounded by His loyal love.

—Ps. 32:10.

Just as the walls surrounding an ancient city protected its citizens, so Jehovah's acts of loyal love surround us, providing spiritual protection from dangers that could test our integrity. Further, Jehovah's loyal love moves him to draw us to him. (Jer. 31:3) The psalmist David used another word picture to describe the protection that God's

people enjoy. He wrote: "God is my secure refuge, the God who shows loyal love to me." David also stated about Jehovah: "He is my loyal love and my stronghold, my secure refuge and my rescuer, my shield and the One in whom I have taken shelter." (Ps. 59:17; 144:2) Why did David connect Jehovah's loyal love with a refuge and a stronghold? No matter where we live on earth, as long as we are his servants, Jehovah will provide us with all the protection we need to safeguard our precious relationship with him. *w21.11* 6 ¶14-15

Sunday, March 19

I will meditate on all your activity.—Ps. 77:12.

When Jesus and his disciples were caught in a storm at sea, Jesus used the event to help them see areas where they needed greater faith. (Matt. 8:23-26) As the storm raged on and water swept over the boat, Jesus was sleeping peacefully. When the terrified disciples woke him and asked him to save them, the Lord gently reproved them: "Why are you so afraid, you with little faith?" Are you facing "a great storm" in your life? It might involve hardship because of a natural disaster. Or it may be a figurative storm, such as a severe health problem that has left you feeling overwhelmed and unsure of what to do. You may be anxious at times, but do not let your anxiety stop you from trusting in Jehovah. Draw close to him in earnest prayer. Strengthen your faith by meditating on the times in the past when Jehovah helped you. (Ps. 77:11) You can be sure that he will never abandon you—not now, not ever. *w21.11* 22 ¶7, 10

Monday, March 20

You must not steal.

—*Lev. 19:11.*

Someone might conclude that as long as he was careful not to take anything that did not belong to him, he would be obeying that command. Yet, he might be stealing in other ways. For example, a merchant who used inaccurate scales or measurements in order to deceive his customers would in a sense be stealing from them. Leviticus 19:13 connects stealing with dishonest business practices, saying: “You must not defraud your fellow man.” So fraudulent business practices are linked with stealing and robbery. While the eighth commandment set out the law on stealing, the details found in Leviticus help us understand how to apply the spirit of that law. We can benefit from reflecting on Jehovah’s view of dishonesty and stealing. We might ask ourselves: ‘In the light of Leviticus 19:11-13, is there something in my life that merits attention? Do I need to make adjustments in my business dealings or work habits?’ *w21.12* 9-10 ¶6-8

Tuesday, March 21

Just as Jehovah freely forgave you, you must also do the same.

—*Col. 3:13.*

In your private prayers, think about specific mistakes you have made during the day and then ask Jehovah for forgiveness. Of course, if you have committed a serious sin, you will also need the help of the elders. They will listen to you and offer loving counsel from God’s Word. They will pray with you, asking Jehovah to continue applying the value of Jesus’ sacrifice “so that

you may be [spiritually] healed.” (Jas. 5:14-16) Also, it will be helpful to meditate on the ransom. You may find it painful to think about how God’s Son suffered so much. But the more you meditate on the sacrifice Jesus made, the deeper your love for him and for his Father will become. Each year we deepen our gratitude for the ransom by attending the Memorial of Jesus’ death and by zealously inviting others to join us. What a privilege Jehovah has given us to teach others about his Son! *w21.04* 18-19 ¶13-16

Wednesday, March 22

He started to teach them many things.—Mark 6:34.

Think of Jesus’ reaction when a multitude of people went to meet him on a mountainside. Jesus had spent the whole night in prayer. He must have been very tired, but when he saw the crowds, his heart went out to the poor and the sick among them. He not only healed them but also delivered one of the most motivating public discourses of all time—the Sermon on the Mount. (Luke 6:12-20) Jesus was also generous with his personal time. Can you imagine how Jesus felt when he learned that his friend John the Baptizer had been beheaded? The Bible says: “At hearing [about the death of John], Jesus departed from there by boat into an isolated place to be alone.” (Matt. 14:10-13) But a large crowd arrived at that isolated place before he did. (Mark 6:31-33) He could see that they desperately needed spiritual refreshment, and he was quick to fill that need.—Luke 9:10, 11. *w22.02* 21 ¶4, 6

Thursday, March 23

Be peaceable with all men.

—Rom. 12:18.

How should we proceed when we realize that we have offended a fellow believer? We should turn to Jehovah in earnest prayer. We can ask him to bless our efforts to gain our brother. We should also take time to analyze ourselves. We can ask ourselves such questions as these: 'Am I willing to sacrifice my pride, humbly apologize, and make peace? How will Jehovah and Jesus feel if I take the initiative to make peace with my brother or my sister?' Our answers can motivate us to listen to Jesus and humbly approach our fellow believer in order to make peace. When we go to our brother to settle a difference with him, we need to do so with a humble spirit. (Eph. 4:2, 3) We should approach the offended one with the goal of removing any hurt from his heart. Remember that restoring peace with your brother is more important than establishing who was right and who was wrong.—1 Cor. 6:7. *w21.12 26 ¶13-16*

Friday, March 24

He viewed the city and wept over it.—Luke 19:41.

Jesus felt pain of heart because he knew that his countrymen in general had already shown that they would refuse to respond favorably to the Kingdom message. As a result, Jerusalem would be destroyed and any Jews who survived the destruction of the city would be led into captivity. (Luke 21:20-24) Sadly, just as Jesus anticipated, most of the people rejected him. How do

people in general respond to the Kingdom message where you live? If few respond positively to your efforts to teach them the truth, what can you learn from Jesus' tears? Jehovah cares about people. Jesus' tears remind us of how much Jehovah cares about people. "He does not desire anyone to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance." (2 Pet. 3:9) Today we show that we love our neighbors by persevering in our self-sacrificing efforts to touch their heart with the good news.—Matt. 22:39. *w22.01 16 ¶10-12*

Saturday, March 25

I cling to you; your right hand keeps fast hold on me.

—Ps. 63:8.

Your faith will grow stronger as you meditate on what Jehovah has already done for his people and on what he has done for you personally. Most important, though, your love for Jehovah will deepen. Love, more than any other quality, will motivate you to obey Jehovah, to make sacrifices in order to please him, and to endure any trial. (Matt. 22:37-39; 1 Cor. 13:4, 7; 1 John 5:3) Nothing could be more precious than a close, loving friendship with Jehovah! (Ps. 63:1-7) Remember that prayer, study, and meditation are acts of worship. Like Jesus, seek out quiet settings in which to spend time with Jehovah. Eliminate unnecessary distractions. Ask Jehovah to help you focus when you are engaged in spiritual activities. If you make the best use of your time now, Jehovah will reward you with life forever in God's new world.—Mark 4:24. *w22.01 31 ¶18-20*

Sunday, March 26

Abhor what is wicked.

—Rom. 12:9.

Our thoughts influence our actions. That is why Jesus taught us to reject thoughts that can lead us to commit a serious sin. (Matt. 5: 21, 22, 28, 29) We want to be pleasing to our heavenly Father, do we not? How important it is, then, that we immediately reject any bad thoughts that come to our mind! Jesus said: “Whatever comes out of the mouth comes from the heart.” (Matt. 15:18) Yes, our speech reveals a lot about who we are on the inside. So ask yourself: ‘Do I refuse to lie, even if telling the truth will cause me trouble? As a married person, am I careful not to flirt with those of the opposite sex? Do I avoid immoral speech like the plague? Do I reply in a calm manner when someone upsets me?’ You will find it helpful to reflect on those questions. If you try your best to remove abusive, lying, and immoral speech from your conversation, you will find it easier to strip off the old personality. *w22.03 5 ¶12-14*

Monday, March 27

Wisdom belongs to those who seek advice.—Prov. 13:10.

Those who ask for counsel rather than wait for someone to approach them will often make greater spiritual progress than those who do not seek advice. So take the initiative by asking for counsel. When might we ask for counsel from fellow believers? Consider some situations. (1) A sister asks an experienced publisher to join her on a study and later asks for advice on

how she can improve her teaching methods. (2) A single sister would like to purchase a pair of slacks, so she asks a mature sister for her honest opinion about the selection. (3) A brother is assigned to give his first public talk. He asks an experienced speaker to listen carefully to his talk and offer him some constructive counsel on how he can improve. Even a brother who has given talks for many years does well to ask for such feedback from experienced speakers and then to apply the counsel he receives.—Prov. 19: 20. *w22.02 13 ¶15-17*

Tuesday, March 28

I am not alone, but the Father who sent me is with me.

—John 8:16.

Jehovah loves us and cares for us, just as he loved Jesus and cared for him during his challenging earthly assignment. (John 5:20) He provided for all of Jesus’ spiritual, emotional, and physical needs. And Jehovah did not hold back from expressing love for and approval of his Son. (Matt. 3:16, 17) Because he could always count on his loving heavenly Father, Jesus never felt alone. Like Jesus, all of us have experienced many expressions of Jehovah’s love. Just think: Jehovah drew us to him and has given us a loving and united spiritual family to make us happy and to help fill our emotional needs. (John 6:44) Jehovah also provides us with a steady supply of upbuilding spiritual food. And he even helps us to care for our daily material needs. (Matt. 6:31, 32) As we reflect on Jehovah’s love for us, our love for him grows. *w21.09 22 ¶8-9*

Wednesday, March 29

*Strip off the old personality
with its practices.—Col. 3:9.*

What was your life like before you began studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses? Many of us would be frightened to think about it. Our outlook and personality were likely shaped by the world's standards of right and wrong. If so, we "had no hope and were without God in the world." (Eph. 2:12) But, as you studied the Bible, you discovered that you have a heavenly Father who loves you very much. You realized that if you wanted to please Jehovah and become part of his family of worshippers, you would have to make significant changes in your lifestyle, outlook, and thinking. You would have to learn to live by his high standards. (Eph. 5:3-5) Our Creator and heavenly Father, Jehovah, has the right to determine how members of his family should behave. And he requires that before we get baptized, we put forth effort to "strip off the old personality with its practices." *w22.03 2 ¶1-3*

Thursday, March 30

*I have other sheep.
—John 10:16.*

The other sheep are happy to be present as observers at the Memorial and contemplate their hope. They look forward to the Memorial discourse, for much of it focuses on what Christ and his 144,000 corulers will do for faithful humans during the Thousand Year Reign. Under the leadership of their King Jesus Christ, those heavenly rulers will help transform the earth into a paradise and lift obedient humankind

to perfection. How thrilling it is for the millions of observers at the Memorial to imagine the future fulfillment of Bible prophecies, such as those found at Isaiah 35:5, 6; 65:21-23; and Revelation 21:3, 4. By picturing themselves and their loved ones in that new world, they strengthen their hope for the future and their determination never to stop serving Jehovah.—Matt. 24:13; Gal. 6:9. *w22.01 21 ¶5-7*

Memorial Bible reading:
(Events after sunset: Nisan 9)
Matthew 26:6-13

Friday, March 31

*The Son of man came . . . to give
his life as a ransom in exchange
for many.—Mark 10:45.*

What is the ransom? The price Jesus paid to buy back what Adam lost. (1 Cor. 15:22) Why do we need the ransom? Because Jehovah's standard of justice as set out in the Law required that a life be given for a life. (Ex. 21:23, 24) Adam lost his perfect human life. To satisfy God's justice, Jesus sacrificed his perfect human life. (Rom. 5:17) He thus becomes an "Eternal Father" to all those who exercise faith in the ransom. (Isa. 9:6; Rom. 3:23, 24) Jesus was willing to sacrifice his life because of his great love for his heavenly Father and for us. (John 14:31; 15:13) Moved by that love, he was determined to keep his integrity to the end and to accomplish his Father's will. Jesus did so by remaining faithful until his death. As a result, Jehovah's original purpose for mankind and for the earth will be fulfilled. *w21.04 14 ¶2-3*

Memorial Bible reading:
(Daytime events: Nisan 9)
Matthew 21:1-11, 14-17

Saturday, April 1

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

—*John 3:16.*

Jesus showed great love by willingly giving his life for us. (John 15:13) We can never repay Jehovah and Jesus for the love they have shown us. But we can show our thankfulness by how we live our life each day. (Col. 3:15) The anointed treasure the ransom, which makes their wonderful hope possible. (Matt. 20:28) Because of their faith in Christ's sacrifice, Jehovah has declared them righteous and has adopted them as his children. (Rom. 5:1; 8:15-17, 23) The other sheep too are thankful for the ransom. On the basis of their faith in Christ's shed blood, they have a clean standing before God and have the hope of coming "out of the great tribulation." (Rev. 7:13-15) Both groups show their gratitude for the ransom by being present at the Memorial each year. *w22.01 23 ¶14-15*

Memorial Bible reading:
(Daytime events: Nisan 10)
Matthew 21:18, 19; 21:12, 13;
John 12:20-50

Sunday, April 2

Christ purchased us.—Gal. 3:13.

Jesus was distressed by the charge that was the basis for his execution. He was falsely accused of being a blasphemer—someone who had no respect for God or for God's name. (Matt. 26:64-66) That charge tormented Jesus so much that he hoped his Father would spare him this humiliation. (Matt. 26:38, 39, 42) Jesus had to be hung on a stake to free the Jews from a special curse. (Gal. 3:10) They had agreed to observe God's Law but had fallen far short of keeping it. As a result,

this curse was in addition to their condemnation as offspring of sinful Adam. (Rom. 5:12) God's Law stated that a man who committed a sin deserving of death should be executed. Afterward, his dead body may be hung on a stake. (Deut. 21:22, 23; 27:26) So by being hung on a stake, Jesus made it possible for the very nation that rejected him to benefit from his sacrifice. *w21.04 16 ¶5-6*

Memorial Bible reading:
(Daytime events: Nisan 11)
Matthew 21:33-41; 22:15-22;
23:1-12; 24:1-3

Monday, April 3

I surrender my life.—John 10:17.

Imagine what the last day of Jesus' earthly life was like. Roman soldiers beat him mercilessly. (Matt. 26:52-54; John 18:3; 19:1) They use a whip that rips strips of flesh from his body. Later, they load a heavy beam on his lacerated back. Jesus begins to drag the stake to the place of execution, but soon a bystander is conscripted to carry it for him. (Matt. 27:32) When Jesus arrives at the place where he will die, his executioners nail his hands and his feet to the stake. The weight of Jesus' body tears at the nail wounds. His friends grieve and his mother weeps, but the Jewish rulers mock Jesus. (Luke 23:32-38; John 19:25) One agonizing hour follows another. His heart and lungs become strained, and his breathing becomes more difficult. With his dying breath, he utters one last triumphant prayer. He then bows his head and surrenders his life. (Mark 15:37; Luke 23:46; John 10:18; 19:30) It was truly a slow, painful, humiliating way to die! *w21.04 16 ¶4*

Memorial Bible reading:
(Daytime events: Nisan 12)
Matthew 26:1-5, 14-16; Luke 22:1-6

MEMORIAL DATE
After Sundown
Tuesday, April 4

*Keep doing this in remembrance
of me.—Luke 22:19.*

Jesus spoke to his 11 faithful apostles about two covenants, or agreements—the new covenant and the Kingdom covenant. (Luke 22:20, 28-30) These covenants opened up the way for those apostles and a limited number of others to become kings and priests in heaven. (Rev. 5:10; 14:1) Only the anointed remnant, who are in these two covenants, may partake of the bread and the wine at the Memorial. Jehovah has given them a remarkable hope—to enjoy immortal and incorruptible life in heaven, to serve alongside the glorified Jesus Christ and the rest of the 144,000 and, above all, to be in the very presence of Jehovah God! (1 Cor. 15:51-53; 1 John 3:2) The anointed recognize that they must remain faithful until their death. —2 Tim. 4:7, 8. *w22.01* 21 ¶4-5

Memorial Bible reading:
(Daytime events: Nisan 13)
Matthew 26:17-19; Luke 22:7-13
(Events after sunset: Nisan 14)
Matthew 26:20-56

Wednesday, April 5

You will be with me in Paradise.
—Luke 23:43.

Two criminals were being executed alongside Jesus. (Luke 23:40, 41) One of them turned to Jesus and said: “Remember me when you get into your Kingdom.” (Luke 23:42) Knowing that his Father is merciful, Jesus spoke words that gave hope to this dying criminal. (Ps. 103:8; Heb. 1:3) Jehovah is eager to forgive us and to show us mercy if we are truly sorry for the bad things we have done and we exercise faith

that we can obtain forgiveness of our sins through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. (1 John 1:7) Some may find it difficult to believe that Jehovah could ever forgive them. If you feel that way at times, consider this: Shortly before he died, Jesus made an expression of mercy to the condemned criminal who was just beginning to show faith. So how much more would Jehovah show mercy to his faithful worshippers!—Ps. 51:1; 1 John 2:1, 2. *w21.04* 9 ¶5-6

Memorial Bible reading:
(Daytime events: Nisan 14)
Matthew 27:1, 2, 27-37

Thursday, April 6

Jesus said: “It has been accomplished!”—John 19:30.

By maintaining his integrity till he died, Jesus accomplished a number of things. First, he proved Satan a liar. Jesus showed that a perfect human could keep perfect integrity in spite of all that Satan could do. Second, Jesus gave his life as a ransom. His sacrificial death made it possible for imperfect humans to have a righteous standing with God, and it gave them the prospect of living forever. Third, Jesus upheld the righteousness of Jehovah’s sovereignty and cleared his Father’s name of reproach. May we live each day as if it were our last chance to maintain our integrity! Then, even if we should face death, we would be able to say, “Jehovah, I have done my best to keep my integrity, to prove Satan a liar, and to vindicate your name and your sovereignty!” *w21.04* 12 ¶13-14

Memorial Bible reading:
(Daytime events: Nisan 15)
Matthew 27:62-66
(Events after sunset: Nisan 16)
Matthew 28:2-4

Friday, April 7

This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved. Listen to him.
—Matt. 17:5.

After being falsely accused and being judged guilty of a crime he did not commit, Jesus is mocked, cruelly tortured, and then nailed to a torture stake. Nails pierce his hands and feet. Every breath he takes, every word he speaks, is painful. But he must speak—he has important things to say. What powerful lessons we can learn from Jesus' final words! We are reminded of the need to forgive others and to trust that Jehovah will forgive us. We are privileged to have a wonderful spiritual family of brothers and sisters who are ready to help us. But when we need help, we must take the initiative to ask for it. We know that Jehovah will help us endure any trial that comes upon us. And we see the importance of living each day as if it were our last day to prove our integrity, confident that our life is safe in Jehovah's hands.
w21.04 8 ¶1; 13 ¶17

Memorial Bible reading:
(Daytime events: Nisan 16)
Matthew 28:1, 5-15

Saturday, April 8

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

Following Jesus' footsteps leads to everlasting life. When a rich young man asked what he needed to do to gain everlasting life, Jesus replied: "Come be my follower." (Matt. 19:16-21) To some Jews who did not believe that he was the Christ, Jesus said: "My sheep . . . follow me. I give them everlasting life." (John 10:24-

29) We exercise faith in Jesus by acting on what he taught both by word and by example. If we do that, we will stay on the road to everlasting life. (Matt. 7:14) Before we can follow Jesus' footsteps closely, we must come to know him. "Coming to know" Jesus is an ongoing process. We must become better and better acquainted with him—learning about his qualities, his thinking, and his standards. No matter how long we have been in the truth, we must keep working at coming to know Jehovah and his Son. *w21.04 4 ¶9-10*

Sunday, April 9

Formerly I was a blasphemer and a persecutor.—1 Tim. 1:13.

There must have been times when the apostle Paul was tormented by his past. He referred to himself as the "foremost" sinner, and no wonder! (1 Tim. 1:15) Before coming to a knowledge of the truth, Paul relentlessly pursued Christians in one city after another, putting some in prison and voting for the execution of others. (Acts 26: 10, 11) Can you imagine how Paul would have felt on meeting a young Christian whose parents had been executed with his approval? Paul regretted his mistakes, but he knew he could not change the past. He accepted that Christ had died for him, and he confidently wrote: "By God's undeserved kindness I am what I am." (1 Cor. 15:3, 10) What is the lesson for us? Accept that Christ died for you and paved the way for you to enter into a warm, personal relationship with Jehovah. (Acts 3:19) What counts with God is what we do now and in the future, not the mistakes we made in the past.—Isa. 1:18.
w21.04 23 ¶11

Monday, April 10

Test the inspired statements to see whether they originate with God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.—1 John 4:1.

Although many Jews in Jesus' day did not expect that the Messiah would need to die, notice what had been prophesied in the Scriptures: "He poured out his life even to death and was counted among the transgressors; he carried the sin of many people, and he interceded for the transgressors." (Isa. 53:12) So the Jews had no reason to be stumbled when Jesus was executed as a sinner. Today, we can avoid being stumbled by learning the facts. In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warned his listeners that some would "lyingly say every sort of wicked thing against" them. (Matt. 5:11) The source of these lies is Satan. He influences opposers to spread malicious slander about those who love the truth. (Rev. 12:9, 10) We must reject the lies told by our opponents. Never should we allow such lies to intimidate us or to undermine our faith. *w21.05* 11 ¶14; 12 ¶16

Tuesday, April 11

*Have no fear; you are worth more than many sparrows.
—Matt. 10:31.*

Help your Bible student to trust in Jehovah. Jesus assured his disciples that Jehovah would help them because He loved them. (Matt. 10:19, 20, 29, 30) Remind your student that Jehovah will help him too. You can help him to rely on Jehovah by praying with him about his goals. "My teacher often mentioned my goals in his prayers," says Franciszek, who lives in Poland. "When

I saw how Jehovah answered my teacher's prayers, I quickly started to pray. I felt Jehovah's help when I needed to have days off from my new job to attend the meetings and the convention." Jehovah cares deeply about our Bible students. He appreciates how hard Christian teachers work to help people draw closer to him, and he loves them for it. (Isa. 52:7) If you are not currently conducting a Bible study, you can still help Bible students to progress toward baptism by accompanying other publishers on their studies. *w21.06* 7 ¶17-18

Wednesday, April 12

His delight is in the law of Jehovah, and he reads His law in an undertone day and night.—Ps. 1:2.

We can show that we appreciate the privilege of having God's Word by reading it regularly. We cannot afford to leave personal study to chance, doing it when we feel that we have the time. By sticking to a regular routine of study, we can keep our faith strong. Unlike "the wise and intellectual ones" of this world, we have solid faith based on God's Word. (Matt. 11:25, 26) As a result of our study of that sacred volume, we know why conditions on earth are deteriorating and what Jehovah is going to do about it. So let us be determined to strengthen our faith and to help as many as possible to have faith in our Creator. (1 Tim. 2:3, 4) And let us continue to look forward to the time when all alive on earth will echo the words of Revelation 4:11: "You are worthy, Jehovah our God, to receive the glory . . . because you created all things." *w21.08* 19 ¶18-20

Thursday, April 13

In brotherly love have tender affection for one another.

—Rom. 12:10.

As shepherds, elders are responsible for giving counsel when it is needed. They should strive to give counsel that is both practical and motivating and that will “make the heart rejoice.” (Prov. 27:9) Elders love their brothers and sisters. At times, they show that love by counseling someone who is heading down a wrong path. (Gal. 6:1) Before speaking to the person, though, an elder might consider some of the facets of love that the apostle Paul mentioned. “Love is patient and kind. . . . It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” (1 Cor. 13:4, 7) Meditating on those Bible verses will help the elder to examine his motives for giving the counsel and to approach his brother with the proper attitude. If the one receiving the counsel can sense that the elder cares about him, he will be more likely to accept the counsel. *w22.02 14 ¶3; 15 ¶5*

Friday, April 14

They rebelled and grieved his holy spirit.—Isa. 63:10.

Jehovah created his spirit and human children perfect, without any flaws. But then the rebel angelic son Satan (meaning “Resister”) turned the perfect humans, Adam and Eve, against Jehovah. Other angels and humans joined in the rebellion. (Jude 6) Jehovah rightly felt betrayed. Still, he has endured, and he will keep on enduring un-

til the time comes to put an end to all rebels. That will bring blessed relief to his loyal ones, who along with him are enduring evil in this system of things! Satan accused Jehovah’s upright servant Job, saying in effect that all of Jehovah’s faithful worshippers serve God for selfish reasons. (Job 1:8-11; 2:3-5) The Devil has kept up his accusations to this day. (Rev. 12:10) We can do our part to prove that there is no truth to Satan’s lies by enduring our trials and remaining loyal to Jehovah out of love for Him. *w21.07 9 ¶7-8*

Saturday, April 15

Remove your evil deeds from my sight; stop doing bad.

—Isa. 1:16.

The apostle Paul used a powerful word picture to teach us just how serious we must be about changing our lifestyle. He wrote that we must nail our old personality “to the stake.” (Rom. 6:6) In other words, we want to follow Christ’s example. We need to kill off attitudes and practices that Jehovah hates. Only if we take these steps will we gain a clean conscience and have the prospect of enjoying everlasting life. (John 17:3; 1 Pet. 3:21) Jehovah will not change his standards to suit us. Instead, we need to change who we are and conform to his standards. (Isa. 1:17, 18; 55:9) Even after you get baptized, you will need to continue to fight fleshly desires. Pray for Jehovah’s help, and rely on his spirit, not on your own strength. (Gal. 5:22; Phil. 4:6) We must be determined if we are to strip off the old personality and keep it off. *w22.03 6 ¶15-17*

Sunday, April 16

[Jehovah] will sustain you.

—Ps. 55:22.

Jehovah promises that he will provide us with food, clothing, and shelter if we seek his Kingdom first and live by his righteous standards. (Matt. 6:33) With that in mind, we avoid thinking that the material things this world offers will bring us security and lasting happiness. We know that the only way we can gain real peace of mind is by doing Jehovah's will. (Phil. 4:6, 7) Even if we can afford to buy many things, we must consider whether we really have the time or the energy to use and care for them. Might we become too attached to our possessions? Remember that God expects us to be productive members of his family. That means we should not allow ourselves to be distracted. We certainly do not want to be like the man who turned down the opportunity to serve Jehovah as well as the potential to be adopted as one of his sons—all because he was attached to a few earthly possessions!—Mark 10:17-22. *w21.08* 6 ¶17

Monday, April 17

Make a defense before everyone.—1 Pet. 3:15.

As you study the Scriptures, you will note that a distinct personality emerges—one that harmonizes with the qualities reflected in creation. These qualities clearly belong to a real Person and are not a product of someone's imagination. (Ex. 34:6, 7; Ps. 145:8, 9) As you come to know Jehovah better and better, your faith in him will grow, your love for him will deepen, and your friend-

ship with him will become stronger. Share your faith in God with others. But what if someone you witness to raises a question about the existence of God and you are unsure of how to reply? Try to find a Scriptural answer to the question in one of our publications, and then share it with the individual. You can also ask an experienced fellow Witness for help. Whether the unbeliever accepts answers from the Bible or not, you will benefit from having done the research. Your faith will grow stronger. *w21.08* 18 ¶14-15

Tuesday, April 18

I did not hold back from telling you.—Acts 20:20.

We do not need to give up all comforts in order to please Jehovah. (Eccl. 5:19, 20) However, if we were to hold back from doing more in God's service just to avoid making personal sacrifices, we could make the same mistake as the man in Jesus' illustration who created a comfortable life for himself but ignored God. (Luke 12:16-21) When we face challenges, we prayerfully do our best to use our thinking ability to come up with a plan of action. (Prov. 3:21) Jehovah blesses us in many ways. We can show how much we appreciate those blessings by doing all we can to bring him praise. (Heb. 13:15) That may include expanding our ministry, putting us in line for additional blessings. Each day, let us look for ways to "taste and see that Jehovah is good." (Ps. 34:8) Then we will be like Jesus, who said: "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."—John 4:34. *w21.08* 30-31 ¶16-19

Wednesday, April 19

Pride is before a crash, and a haughty spirit before stumbling.

—Prov. 16:18.

Satan wants us to develop an unbalanced sense of pride. He knows that if we allow improper pride to dominate us, we will become like him and lose out on gaining everlasting life. Accordingly, the apostle Paul warned that a person might “get puffed up with pride and fall into the judgment passed on the Devil.” (1 Tim. 3:6, 7) That could happen to any one of us, whether we are new in the truth or we have been serving Jehovah for many years. Pride is a form of selfishness. Satan tries to get us to be selfish, to focus more on ourselves than on Jehovah, especially when we face a challenge. For example, have you been falsely accused? Or have you been treated unjustly? Satan would love to see you blame Jehovah or your brothers. And the Devil wants you to think that the only remedy is to do things your own way rather than to follow the guidance Jehovah gives you in his Word.—Eccl. 7:16, 20. *w21.06* 15 ¶4-5

Thursday, April 20

“Be strong, all you people of the land,” declares Jehovah, “and work. For I am with you,” declares Jehovah of armies.—Hag. 2:4.

The prophet Haggai received an important commission from Jehovah. Haggai had likely been among those who in 537 B.C.E. returned to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon. Soon after they arrived at their destination, those faithful worshippers laid the foundation of Jeho-

vah’s house, or temple. (Ezra 3:8, 10) But before long, a sad situation developed. They got discouraged and stopped working on the project because of opposition. (Ezra 4:4; Hag. 1:1, 2) So in 520 B.C.E., Jehovah commissioned Haggai to rekindle their zeal and motivate them to complete the temple. (Ezra 6:14, 15) Haggai’s message was designed to build faith in Jehovah. The expression “Jehovah of armies” must have been reassuring. Jehovah has a vast army of angelic warriors under his command, so the Jews needed to rely on him to succeed. *w21.09* 15 ¶4-5

Friday, April 21

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

Today, Jehovah’s Witnesses enjoy a loving unity on a global scale. Like no other organization, our close-knit brotherhood rises above national, racial, and social boundaries. We see evidence of genuine love at our meetings, assemblies, and conventions. That evidence strengthens our conviction that our form of worship is the one approved by Jehovah. (John 13:34) The Scriptures urge us to “have intense love for one another.” (1 Pet. 4:8) One way we show such love is by forgiving one another and putting up with one another’s imperfections. We also look for opportunities to be generous and hospitable to all in the congregation, even to those who may have offended us. (Col. 3:12-14) Such a loving bond is truly the foremost identifying mark of true Christians. *w21.10* 22 ¶13-14

Saturday, April 22

The one who loves [his son] disciplines him diligently.

—Prov. 13:24.

Can getting disfellowshipped help an unrepentant sinner change his course? It can. Many who have fallen into serious sin have found that the firm action the elders took gave them the very jolt they needed to come to their senses, change their course of action, and return to Jehovah's warm embrace. (Heb. 12: 5, 6) Consider an illustration. A shepherd notices that one of his sheep is ailing. He knows that treating this particular illness requires that he isolate the sick sheep from the rest of the flock. However, sheep are social creatures. They long to be with the flock, and they may become agitated when kept apart. Does this mean, though, that the shepherd is being harsh or cruel in choosing this treatment? Of course not. He knows that if he allows the sick sheep to mingle with the rest of the flock, the illness will spread. By isolating the sick one, he protects the whole flock. *w21.10* 10 ¶9-10

Sunday, April 23

Let your light shine before men, so that they may see your fine works and give glory to your Father who is in the heavens.—Matt. 5:16.

It is a great privilege to belong to a loving international family. We want as many as possible to join us in worshipping our God. With this in mind, we should be careful never to do anything that would reflect badly on Jehovah's people or on our heavenly Father. We try to conduct ourselves in a way that will

attract people to the good news. At times, some may belittle us or even persecute us because we obey our heavenly Father. What if we feel intimidated when speaking to others about our beliefs? We can count on Jehovah and his Son to come to our aid. Jesus reassured his disciples that they did not have to worry about how to speak or what to say. Why not? "What you are to speak will be given you in that hour," explained Jesus, "for the ones speaking are not just you, but it is the spirit of your Father that speaks by you."—Matt. 10:19, 20. *w21.09* 24 ¶17-18

Monday, April 24

I will say to Jehovah: "You are my refuge and my stronghold."

—Ps. 91:2.

Moses used a similar word picture about a refuge. (Ps. 90:1, ftn.) Moreover, toward the end of his life, Moses called attention to a heart-warming detail. He wrote: "God is a refuge from ancient times, his everlasting arms are beneath you." (Deut. 33:27) What does the phrase "his everlasting arms are beneath you" tell us about Jehovah? When Jehovah is our Refuge, we feel secure. Still, there may be days when we are down and struggle to get up. At such times, what will Jehovah do for us? (Ps. 136:23) He will put his arms beneath us, gently lift us up, and help us to get back on our feet. (Ps. 28:9; 94:18) Knowing that we can always count on God's support helps us to remember that we are blessed in two ways. First, we have a secure place of refuge no matter where we live. Second, our loving heavenly Father deeply cares for us. *w21.11* 6 ¶15-16

Tuesday, April 25

You have been distressed by various trials.—1 Pet. 1:6.

Jesus knew that injustice would challenge the faith of his disciples. To help them deal with it, he gave an illustration that is recorded in the book of Luke. Jesus told the story of a widow who kept crying out to an unrighteous judge for justice. She was confident that her persistence would pay off. Eventually, the judge responded to her pleas. The application? Jehovah is not unjust. So Jesus said: "Certainly, then, will not God cause justice to be done for his chosen ones who cry out to him day and night?" (Luke 18:1-8) Then Jesus added: "When the Son of man arrives, will he really find this faith on the earth?" When we suffer injustice, we need to prove by our patience and perseverance that we have strong faith like that of the widow. With such faith, we can be confident that sooner or later Jehovah will act in our behalf. We also need to believe in the power of prayer. *w21.11 23 ¶12; 24 ¶14*

Wednesday, April 26

*How can a young man keep his path clean? By keeping on guard according to your word.
—Ps. 119:9.*

Young ones, do you sometimes feel that Jehovah's standards are too restrictive? This is what Satan wants you to think. He would like you to focus on what those who are traveling on the spacious road are doing, on the good time they seem to be having. He may use what your peers at school are doing or what

you see on the Internet to make you feel that you are missing out on all the fun. Satan wants you to think that Jehovah's standards are keeping you from enjoying life to the full. But remember this: Satan does not want those who are traveling on his road to see what awaits them at the end of the journey. (Matt. 7:13, 14) Jehovah, on the other hand, has given you a clear picture of what he has in store for those who stay on the road to life.—Ps. 37:29; Isa. 35: 5, 6; 65:21-23. *w21.12 23 ¶6-7*

Thursday, April 27

Forgive your brother from your heart.—Matt. 18:35.

We know that we should forgive; that is the right thing to do. But we may still struggle to do so. The apostle Peter may have felt that way at times. (Matt. 18:21, 22) What can help? First, meditate on how much Jehovah has forgiven you. (Matt. 18:32, 33) We do not deserve his forgiveness, but he offers it freely. (Ps. 103:8-10) At the same time, "we are also under obligation to love one another." So forgiveness is not optional. We owe it to our brothers and sisters to forgive them. (1 John 4:11) Second, meditate on what happens when we forgive. We may help the person who has wronged us, unify the congregation, protect our friendship with Jehovah, and remove a burden from our shoulders. (2 Cor. 2:7; Col. 3:14) Finally, pray to the One who asks us to forgive. Do not allow Satan to disrupt the peace you enjoy with your fellow worshippers. (Eph. 4:26, 27) We need Jehovah's help if we are to avoid falling into Satan's trap. *w21.06 22 ¶11; 23 ¶14*

Friday, April 28

You will be king over Israel.

—1 Sam. 23:17.

David was running for his life. Saul, the powerful king of Israel, was determined to put him to death. When David needed provisions, he stopped at the city of Nob, where he made a modest request for five loaves of bread. (1 Sam. 21: 1, 3) Later, he and his men found refuge in a cave. (1 Sam. 22:1) How did David come to be in this situation? Saul was insanely jealous of David's popularity and military victories. Saul also knew that his own disobedience had led to Jehovah's rejecting him as king of Israel and that Jehovah had selected David for the throne. (1 Sam. 23: 16, 17) Still, as king of Israel, Saul had a large army and many supporters, so David had to flee for his life. Did Saul really think that he could fight against God's expressed purpose for David? (Isa. 55:11) The Bible does not say, but we can be sure of one thing: Saul was putting himself in a dangerous position. Those who fight against God always lose! *w22.01 2 ¶1-2*

Saturday, April 29

Nicodemus . . . came to him in the night.—John 3:1, 2.

Jesus worked hard in the ministry. He showed his love for people by continuing to teach them at every opportunity. (Luke 19:47, 48) What moved him to do so? Jesus felt compassion for them. At times, so many wanted to hear Jesus' words that he and his disciples "were not able even to eat a meal." (Mark 3: 20) He also made himself available

at night—a time that was more convenient for one of his listeners. The majority of those who initially listened to Jesus did not become his disciples. But all who heard him received a thorough witness. Today we want to give everyone the opportunity to hear the good news. (Acts 10:42) To accomplish this, we may need to adjust our approach to the ministry. Rather than stick to a schedule that is convenient for us, we should be willing to adjust our schedule to preach when we are more likely to meet people. If we do, we can be sure that Jehovah will be pleased. *w22.01 17 ¶13-14*

Sunday, April 30

Man has dominated man to his harm.—Eccl. 8:9.

Today many find it hard to trust anyone in authority. They have observed that the legal and the political systems tend to favor the wealthy and the powerful and to deny justice to the poor. In addition, the conduct of certain religious leaders leaves much to be desired, which has caused some people to lose confidence in God. So when a person agrees to study the Bible with us, we face the challenge of helping him to build trust in Jehovah and trust in His earthly representatives. Of course, Bible students are not the only ones who need to learn to trust in Jehovah and to trust in his organization. Even those of us who have been in the truth for many years must never lose sight of the fact that Jehovah's way of doing things is always best. At times, situations arise that may test our confidence in that regard. *w22.02 2 ¶1-2*

Monday, May 1

Consider closely the one who has endured.

—Heb. 12:3.

To help us come to know his Son, Jehovah lovingly included the four Gospels in his Word. The Gospels contain a historical account of the life and ministry of Jesus. That account tells us what Jesus said, shows us what he did, and reveals to us how he felt. These four books help us to “consider closely” the example of Jesus. In effect, they contain the footsteps that Jesus left behind. So by examining the Gospels, we can come to know Jesus better and better. As a result, we can follow his steps closely. To benefit fully from the Gospels, we must do more than just read them. We need to take the time to study them carefully and meditate on them deeply. (Compare Joshua 1:8, footnote.) Bring the Gospel accounts to life. Use your imagination to see, hear, and feel what was happening. Do some research in the study aids provided by Jehovah’s organization. *w21.04* 4-5 ¶11-13

Tuesday, May 2

We preach Christ executed on the stake, to the Jews a cause for stumbling.—1 Cor. 1:23.

Centuries before Jesus came to earth, Jehovah revealed in his Word that the Messiah would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver. (Zech. 11:12, 13) The betrayer would be one of Jesus’ close companions. (Ps. 41:9) The prophet Zechariah also wrote: “Strike the shepherd, and let the flock be scattered.” (Zech. 13:7) Instead of being stumbled by these events, honesthearted ones should

have been strengthened by seeing these prophecies fulfilled in Jesus. Do we see the same problem today? Yes. In modern times, a few well-known Witnesses have left the truth, become apostate, and then tried to turn others away. They have spread negative reports, half-truths, and outright lies about Jehovah’s Witnesses through the news media and the Internet. But honesthearted ones are not stumbled. On the contrary, they realize that the Bible foretold that such things would happen.—Matt. 24:24; 2 Pet. 2:18-22. *w21.05* 11 ¶12; 12-13 ¶18-19

Wednesday, May 3

The path of the righteous is like the bright morning light that grows brighter and brighter until full daylight.—Prov. 4:18.

The Scriptures make it clear that accurate knowledge increases with time. (Col. 1:9, 10) Jehovah reveals the truth gradually, and we must be willing to wait patiently for the light of truth to get brighter. When those taking the lead realize that our understanding on a certain point of truth needs to be clarified, they do not hesitate to make the needed adjustments. While many denominations in Christendom make changes to please their congregations or to get closer to the world, the changes made by Jehovah’s organization are designed to draw us closer to God and to the pattern of worship established by Jesus. (Jas. 4:4) The adjustments we make are driven, not by modern trends or popular demands, but by a clearer understanding of the Scriptures. We love the truth!—1 Thess. 2:3, 4. *w21.10* 22 ¶12

Thursday, May 4

*Throw all your anxiety
on him.—1 Pet. 5:7.*

What can you do if you feel alone? Focus on how Jehovah is sustaining you. (Ps. 55:22) This will help you to maintain a balanced view of your situation. Think, too, about how Jehovah is helping fellow believers who feel lonely. (1 Pet. 5:9, 10) Hiroshi, a brother who for many years has been the only Witness in his family, says: “Knowing that we are all doing our best to serve Jehovah can encourage those of us who are alone in the truth.” Also, maintain a good spiritual routine. This includes openly telling Jehovah how you feel. It is important to read God’s Word regularly, meditating on specific accounts that highlight Jehovah’s love for you. Some Christians memorize scriptures that are particularly comforting, such as Psalm 27:10 and Isaiah 41:10. Others find that listening to audio recordings of the study material helps them to feel less lonely when preparing for the meetings or doing their Bible reading. *w21.06* 9-10 ¶5-8

Friday, May 5

*You will not fear any
sudden terror.
—Prov. 3:25.*

Are you mourning the death of a loved one? Take time to strengthen your faith in the resurrection hope by reading Bible accounts of those who were raised from the dead. Are you grieving because a family member was disfellowshipped? Study in order to convince yourself that God’s way of administering disci-

pline is always best. Whatever problem is confronting you, use it as an opportunity to build your faith. Pour your heart out to Jehovah. Do not isolate yourself, but instead remain close to your brothers and sisters. (Prov. 18:1) Share in activities that will help you to endure, even if you have to do so with tears. (Ps. 126:5, 6) Keep up with your routine of meetings, field service, and Bible reading. And stay focused on the wonderful blessings that Jehovah has in store for you. As you see how Jehovah helps you, your faith in him will grow ever stronger. *w21.11* 23 ¶11; 24 ¶17

Saturday, May 6

*Likewise, it is not a desirable thing
to my Father who is in heaven for
even one of these little ones to
perish.—Matt. 18:14.*

In what way are Jesus’ disciples like “little ones”? Well, whom does the world consider important? The rich, the famous, and the powerful. In contrast, Jesus’ disciples seem to be unimportant, insignificant “little ones.” (1 Cor. 1:26-29) But Jehovah does not view them that way. What prompted Jesus to talk about “these little ones”? His disciples had asked him a question: “Who really is greatest in the Kingdom of the heavens?” (Matt. 18:1) Many Jews at that time viewed position and rank as very important. One scholar says: “Men lived and died in quest of honor, reputation, fame, approval, and respect.” Jesus knew that his disciples would have to work hard to root out from their heart the spirit of competition that was entrenched in Jewish culture. *w21.06* 20 ¶2; 21 ¶6, 8; 22 ¶9

Sunday, May 7

Oil and incense make the heart rejoice; so does sweet friendship springing from sincere counsel.

—Prov. 27:9.

The apostle Paul set a good example as an elder. For instance, when the brothers in Thessalonica needed counsel, Paul did not hesitate to give it. However, in his letters to them, Paul first took note of their faithful work, their loving labor, and their endurance. He also considered their circumstances, kindly acknowledging that their life was not easy and that they were bearing up under persecution. (1 Thess. 1:3; 2 Thess. 1:4) He even told those brothers that they were an example to other Christians. (1 Thess. 1:8, 9) How happy they must have been to receive Paul's warm commendation! There could be no doubt that Paul loved his brothers very much. That is why he was able to give effective counsel in both of his letters to the Thessalonians.—1 Thess. 4:1, 3-5, 11; 2 Thess. 3:11, 12. *w22.02* 15 ¶6

Monday, May 8

He will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more.—Rev. 21:4.

Satan uses leaders of false religion to say that Jehovah is cruel and is responsible for man's suffering. Some even say that when children die, it was God who took them because he needed more angels in heaven. How blasphemous! We know better. When we are stricken with a serious illness or when someone we love dies, we never blame our God. On the contrary, we

have faith that one day he will make things right. We can tell everyone who will listen what a loving God Jehovah is. That gives him a good reply to make to the one taunting him. (Prov. 27:11) Jehovah is a compassionate God. He hates to hear us cry out because of the suffering that we are enduring—be it persecution, illness, or our imperfections. (Ps. 22:23, 24) Jehovah feels our pain; he wants to stop it, and he will stop it.—Compare Exodus 3:7, 8; Isaiah 63:9. *w21.07* 9-10 ¶9-10

Tuesday, May 9

You crowned him with glory and splendor.

—Ps. 8:5.

Soon obedient humans will enjoy the greatest honor of all—the privilege of loving and worshipping Jehovah forever! Jesus will undo the conditions that resulted when Adam and Eve decided to leave God's family. Jehovah will resurrect millions and give them the opportunity for everlasting life in perfect health on an earth transformed into a paradise. (Luke 23:42, 43) As the earthly part of Jehovah's family of worshippers grows to perfection, each one will reflect the "glory and splendor" that David wrote about. If you belong to the "great crowd," you have a wonderful prospect. (Rev. 7:9) God loves you; he wants you to be a member of his family. So do all you can to please him. Live each day with God's promises in your mind and heart. Appreciate your privilege of worshipping our dear heavenly Father, and cherish the prospect of praising him forever! *w21.08* 7 ¶18-19

Wednesday, May 10

We will reap if we do not tire out.—Gal. 6:9.

The prophet Jeremiah preached for decades in the face of apathy and opposition. He became so discouraged by the “insults and jeering” of opposers that he thought of giving up his assignment. (Jer. 20:8, 9) But Jeremiah did not give up! What enabled him to overcome his negative thoughts and find joy in his ministry? He focused on two important facts. First, God’s message that Jeremiah took to the people involved “a future and a hope.” (Jer. 29:11) Second, Jehovah had placed his name on Jeremiah. (Jer. 15:16) We too bring a message of hope in a bleak world, and we bear Jehovah’s name as his Witnesses. When we focus our attention on these facts, we can find joy regardless of the response of the people. So do not get discouraged or give up if the progress of your Bible student is taking longer than you expected. Making disciples requires patience.—Jas. 5:7, 8. *w21.10* 27 ¶12-13

Thursday, May 11

Let us also throw off every weight and the sin that easily entangles us.—Heb. 12:1.

No matter how long we have been serving Jehovah, we must continue to build and maintain our faith in him. Why? Because if we are not careful, our faith can weaken. Remember, faith involves evidence of unseen realities. What we cannot see, we may easily forget. Thus, Paul called lack of faith “the sin that easily entangles us.”

How, then, can we avoid that trap? (2 Thess. 1:3) First, beg Jehovah for his holy spirit, and do so often. Why? Because faith is an aspect of the fruitage of the spirit. (Gal. 5:22, 23) We cannot build and maintain faith in our Creator without the help of his holy spirit. If we keep asking Jehovah for his spirit, he will give it to us. (Luke 11:13) In particular, we can pray: “Give us more faith.” (Luke 17:5) Additionally, be consistent in your personal study of God’s Word.—Ps. 1:2, 3. *w21.08* 18-19 ¶16-18

Friday, May 12

Gray hair is a crown of beauty.—Prov. 16:31.

Older ones have much to offer. Although they may not have the strength they once had, they do have a wealth of experience that they have acquired over the years. Jehovah can continue to use them in various ways. For example, the Bible tells of faithful ones who actively served Jehovah into their old age. Moses, for instance, was about 80 years old when he began serving as Jehovah’s prophet and representative to the nation of Israel. Jehovah was still using Daniel as His spokesman when the prophet was probably in his 90’s. And the apostle John was likely also in his 90’s when he was inspired to write the book of Revelation. The “righteous and devout” man Simeon is mentioned just briefly in the Bible, but Jehovah knew who he was and granted him the privilege of seeing the infant Jesus and of prophesying about the child and his mother.—Luke 2:22, 25-35. *w21.09* 3-4 ¶5-7

Saturday, May 13

O Jehovah, my heart is not haughty, . . . nor do I aspire to things too great.

—Ps. 131:1.

Parents should be careful not to compare one child with another or to ask more of a child than he or she can give. Unfavorable comparisons and unreasonable demands can exasperate a child. (Eph. 6:4) A sister named Sachiko says: “My mother wanted me to get 100 percent on my exams, which I found impossible. Although I left school years ago, at times I still wonder if my best is good enough for Jehovah.” King David said that he did not “aspire to things too great” or to things that were beyond him. His humility and modesty “calmed and quieted” him. (Ps. 131:2) What can parents learn from David’s words? Parents can be humble and modest not only in what they expect of themselves but also in what they expect of their child. Parents can reassure their child by acknowledging his strengths and weaknesses when helping him to set appropriate goals. *w21.07* 21-22 ¶5-6

Sunday, May 14

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

Jehovah has given each of us the gift of free will. This means that we can choose whether we will obey him or not. Some young ones whose upbringing was far from ideal choose to serve Jehovah, and they make a success of their service. Others whose parents did their very best to bring them up in harmony with Scriptural principles turn their back on the truth once they get older. In the final analysis,

we must personally decide whether we will serve Jehovah. (Josh. 24:15) So, grieving parents, fight the tendency to think that this tragedy must be your fault! At times, a parent abandons the truth and even the family. (Ps. 27:10) This can be devastating for children who had looked up to the parent as a role model. Young ones, if one of your parents has been disfellowshipped, be assured that Jehovah is also keenly aware of your pain. He loves you and appreciates your loyalty. Remember, too, that you are not responsible for your parent’s decisions. *w21.09* 27 ¶5-7

Monday, May 15

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

When a Christian is disfellowshipped, we might think of him as a contagious sheep that might infect the flock. He is sick in a spiritual sense. (Jas. 5:14) Spiritual sickness, like some forms of physical illness, can be quite contagious. So it is necessary in some cases to isolate a spiritually sick individual from the congregation. This discipline is an expression of Jehovah’s love for faithful members of His flock, and it may reach the wrongdoer’s heart and lead him to repentance. While disfellowshipped, the individual may be able to attend meetings, where he can be fed and built up spiritually. He is also free to receive literature for his personal use and to watch JW Broadcasting®. And as the elders observe his progress, they may from time to time offer personal counsel and direction to help him regain his spiritual health so that he can be reinstated as one of Jehovah’s Witnesses. *w21.10* 10 ¶9, 11

Tuesday, May 16

Not everyone saying to me, “Lord, Lord,” will enter into the Kingdom of the heavens.—Matt. 7:21.

Today, we follow the pattern of worship set by the first-century Christian congregation. For instance, our organizational structure—which includes traveling overseers, elders, and ministerial servants—mirrors the arrangement established by the apostles in the first century. (Phil. 1:1; Titus 1:5) Our view of sex and marriage, our respect for the sacredness of blood, and our desire to protect the congregation from unrepentant wrongdoers are all based on the pattern set in the first century. (Acts 15:28, 29; 1 Cor. 5:11-13; 6:9, 10; Heb. 13:4) The Bible plainly tells us that there is “one faith” that has God’s approval. (Eph. 4:4-6) What a privilege we have to be one of Jehovah’s people and to know the truth about Jehovah and his purposes! May we continue to hold fast to the truth with strong conviction. *w21.10 22-23 ¶15-17*

Wednesday, May 17

Take your position, stand still, and see the salvation of Jehovah in your behalf.—2 Chron. 20:17.

King Jehoshaphat was confronted with a serious challenge. A large army of Ammonites, Moabites, and men of the mountainous region of Seir threatened him, his family, and his people. (2 Chron. 20:1, 2) What did Jehoshaphat do? He looked to Jehovah for help and strength. Jehoshaphat’s humble prayer, recorded at 2 Chronicles 20:5-12, reveals

just how much he trusted in his loving heavenly Father. Jehovah spoke to Jehoshaphat by means of a Levite named Jahaziel, saying the words of today’s text. With full trust in his God, Jehoshaphat did as he was told. When he and the people went out to meet the enemy, he placed at the front of his troops, not the most skilled soldiers, but the unarmed singers. Jehovah did not let Jehoshaphat down; He defeated the enemy army.—2 Chron. 20:18-23. *w21.11 15-16 ¶6-7*

Thursday, May 18

*It is because of Jehovah’s loyal love that we have not come to our finish, for his mercies never end.
—Lam. 3:22.*

When facing a trial, we can be sure that Jehovah will act in our behalf by giving us the support we need to keep our integrity. (2 Cor. 4:7-9) We can have confidence that Jehovah’s loyal love will indeed rest on us because, as the psalmist assured us, “the eye of Jehovah watches over those fearing him, those waiting for his loyal love.” (Ps. 33:18-22) Before we began serving Jehovah, we received the love that God shows to mankind in general. As his worshippers, however, we also benefit from his loyal love. Moved by that love, Jehovah embraces us with his protective arms. He will always keep us close to him and will fulfill his purpose regarding us. He wants us to succeed! (Ps. 46:1, 2, 7) Therefore, no matter what trial we may face, Jehovah will give us the strength we need in order to keep our integrity. *w21.11 7 ¶17-18*

Friday, May 19

Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely.—Col. 3:13.

Most of us know of cases in which a person has held a grudge against a coworker, a schoolmate, a relative, or a family member—even for years! Recall that Joseph’s ten half brothers harbored a grudge against him, which finally led them to commit a hateful act. (Gen. 37:2-8, 25-28) How differently Joseph acted toward them! When he was in a position of authority and could get even with his half brothers, he showed them mercy. Joseph did not hold a grudge. Rather, he acted in harmony with the counsel recorded later at Leviticus 19:18. (Gen. 50:19-21) Joseph’s course of forgiving instead of nursing a grudge or taking vengeance sets a pattern for Christians who want to please God. Jesus urged us to forgive those who sin against us. (Matt. 6:9, 12) Likewise, the apostle Paul advised fellow Christians: “Do not avenge yourselves, beloved.”—Rom. 12:19. *w21.12* 11 ¶13-14

Saturday, May 20

He satisfies the desire of those who fear him; he hears their cry for help, and he rescues them.
—Ps. 145:19.

Late in the evening on Nisan 14, 33 C.E., Jesus went to the garden of Gethsemane. There he poured out his heart to Jehovah. (Luke 22:39-44) It was during those difficult hours that Jesus “offered up supplications . . . with strong outcries and tears.” (Heb. 5:7) What did Jesus pray for during that final night before his death? He prayed for

strength to remain loyal to Jehovah and to do His will. Jehovah heard the anguish in his Son’s prayer and sent an angel to strengthen him. Jesus was aware of the tremendous responsibility he bore—that of vindicating his Father’s name. Jehovah listened to Jesus’ earnest requests. Why? Because Jesus’ main concern was to stay loyal to his Father and to vindicate His name. If our main concern is to do the same, Jehovah will answer our prayers for help.—Ps. 145:18. *w22.01* 18 ¶15-17

Sunday, May 21

Go, therefore, and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them . . . , teaching them.
—Matt. 28:19, 20.

Many today are stumbled because of our neutral stand with regard to politics. They expect us to vote in elections. However, we realize that from Jehovah’s standpoint, if we choose a human leader to rule over us, we are rejecting Him. (1 Sam. 8:4-7) People may also feel that we should build schools and hospitals as well as perform other charitable works. They are stumbled because we focus our efforts on the preaching work, not on solving the world’s immediate problems. How can we avoid being stumbled? (Matt. 7:21-23) Our main focus should be on doing the work that Jesus commanded us to do. Never should we become distracted by the political and social issues of this world. We love people and care about their problems, but we know that the best way to assist our neighbors is by teaching them about God’s Kingdom and by helping them to develop a friendship with Jehovah. *w21.05* 7 ¶19-20

Monday, May 22

*In the last days critical times
hard to deal with will be
here.—2 Tim. 3:1.*

Even though many of the rulers of nations today claim to serve God, they do not want to give up their own power and authority. So just as the rulers did in Jesus' day, rulers today oppose Jehovah's Anointed One by attacking his loyal followers. (Acts 4:25-28) How does Jehovah respond? Psalm 2:10-12 answers: "So now, you kings, show insight; accept correction, you judges of the earth. Serve Jehovah with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Honor the son, or God will become indignant and you will perish from the way, for His anger flares up quickly. Happy are all those taking refuge in Him." Jehovah kindly grants these opposers a window of opportunity. They can still change their minds and accept Jehovah's Kingdom. However, time is running out. (Isa. 61:2) It has never been more urgent for people to get the facts and make the right choice. *w21.09 15-16 ¶8-9*

Tuesday, May 23

*Having food and clothing, we
will be content with these
things.—1 Tim. 6:8.*

Paul is saying that we should be content with whatever we have materially. (Phil. 4:12) Our most precious possession is our relationship with our God, not any material thing that we own. (Hab. 3:17, 18) Consider what Moses told the Israelites after they had spent 40 years in the wilderness: "Jehovah your God has blessed you in all that you have

done. . . . These 40 years Jehovah your God has been with you, and you have lacked nothing." (Deut. 2:7) During those 40 years, Jehovah provided the Israelites with manna to eat. Their clothes—the very clothes with which they had left Egypt—never wore out. (Deut. 8:3, 4) Jehovah will be pleased if we can learn to be content—to appreciate even the simple provisions he makes available, viewing them as a blessing and giving thanks for them. *w22.01 5 ¶10-11*

Wednesday, May 24

*Trust in Jehovah with all your
heart, and do not rely on your
own understanding.
—Prov. 3:5.*

Husbands, you are responsible for the welfare of your family, so you work hard to protect and support your family. When you face challenges, you may feel that you have the resources to handle the problem on your own. However, resist the inclination to rely on your own strength. Instead, pray privately for Jehovah's help. In addition, pray fervently with your wife. Seek direction from Jehovah by studying the Bible and publications provided by God's organization, and apply the counsel you find. Others might not agree with the Bible-based decisions you make. They might say that money and the things it can buy will provide the best protection for your family. But remember the example of King Jehoshaphat. (2 Chron. 20:1-30) He trusted in Jehovah and proved it by his actions. Jehovah did not abandon that loyal man, and he will not abandon you.—Ps. 37:28; Heb. 13:5. *w21.11 15 ¶6; 16 ¶8*

Thursday, May 25

God . . . is never unjust.

—Deut. 32:4.

God made us in his image, so we yearn to see people treated fairly. (Gen. 1:26) But because we are imperfect, we can misjudge matters, even when we think we have all the facts. Recall, for example, how displeased Jonah was with Jehovah's decision to extend mercy to the people of Nineveh. (Jonah 3:10–4:1) Yet, consider the results. The lives of well over 120,000 repentant Ninevites were saved! In the end, it was Jonah—not Jehovah—who needed to be corrected. Jehovah does not owe humans an explanation for his decisions. True, Jehovah did allow his servants in the past to express their concerns about decisions he had made or was about to make. (Gen. 18:25; Jonah 4:2, 3) And occasionally, he explained his decision. (Jonah 4:10, 11) Nevertheless, Jehovah does not need our approval, either before or after he acts.—Isa. 40:13, 14; 55:9. *w22.02* 3-4 ¶5-6

Friday, May 26

Let the one who is the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the one taking the lead as the one ministering.

—Luke 22:26.

We conduct ourselves as “the youngest” when we “consider others superior” to us. (Phil. 2:3) The more we cultivate that attitude, the less likely we are to stumble others. All our brothers and sisters are superior to us in one way or another. It is not hard to see this when we focus on their positive qualities. We should take to heart the counsel that the apostle Paul gave to the Co-

rinthians: “Who makes you different from another? Indeed, what do you have that you did not receive? If, in fact, you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not receive it?” (1 Cor. 4:7) We should beware of any temptation to draw attention to ourselves or to think of ourselves as superior to others. If a brother gives stimulating talks or a sister is gifted at starting Bible studies, he or she should be quick to give the credit to Jehovah. *w21.06* 22 ¶9-10

Saturday, May 27

Sow your seed . . . and do not let your hand rest.

—Eccl. 11:6.

Many Witnesses find it increasingly difficult to contact people in their homes. Some publishers live in areas where there are many high-security apartment buildings or gated communities. There may be a security guard who denies entry to anyone who does not have an invitation from a specific householder. Other publishers find few people at home or have territories where few people live. The publishers may cover great distances just to try to contact one householder—who may not even be at home! If we face these types of challenges, we must not give up. Try reaching people at a different time. We will contact more people if we preach when they are likely to be at home. After all, everyone returns home sometime! Many brothers and sisters find it practical to preach in the afternoon or in the evening because they find more people. In addition, householders may be more relaxed and ready to talk during those times. *w21.05* 15 ¶5, 7

Sunday, May 28

It is in vain that they keep worshipping me, for they teach commands of men as doctrines.—Mark 7:7.

Do we see the same problem today? Yes. Many become upset when Jehovah's Witnesses do not join them in celebrating unscriptural traditions, such as birthdays and Christmas. Others become angry when Jehovah's Witnesses do not join nationalistic celebrations or do not follow funeral customs that are out of harmony with God's Word. Those who are stumbled in this way may sincerely believe that they are worshipping God acceptably. But they cannot please him if they prefer the world's traditions to the clear teachings found in the Bible. (Mark 7:8, 9) How can we avoid being stumbled? We need to develop a strong love for Jehovah's laws and principles. (Ps. 119:97, 113, 163-165) When we love Jehovah, we will reject any traditions that displease him. We will not allow anything to interfere with our love for Jehovah. *w21.05 6 ¶15-16*

Monday, May 29

Keep your senses in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelizer.—2 Tim. 4:5.

How can we apply the advice of the apostle Paul? We need to keep our faith strong by studying regularly, by praying continually, and by keeping busy in the work that Jehovah has given us to do. (2 Tim. 4:4) If we exercise faith, we will not panic when we hear negative reports. (Isa. 28:16) Our love for Jehovah, his Word, and our brothers will help us to avoid being stumbled by those who have left the truth. In the first

century, many were stumbled, and they rejected Jesus. Yet, many others accepted him. These included at least one member of the Jewish Sanhedrin and even "a large crowd of priests." (Acts 6:7; Matt. 27:57-60; Mark 15:43) Likewise today, millions have not been stumbled. Why not? Because they know and love the truths found in the Scriptures. God's Word says: "Abundant peace belongs to those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble." —Ps. 119:165. *w21.05 13 ¶20-21*

Tuesday, May 30

My power is being made perfect in weakness.—2 Cor. 12:9.

The apostle Paul realized that everything he did in Jehovah's service was with God's strength, not his own. By means of His holy spirit, Jehovah gave Paul the power to accomplish his ministry fully—despite the persecution, imprisonment, and other challenges he faced. Timothy, Paul's younger companion, also had to rely on God's power to carry out his ministry. Timothy accompanied Paul on long missionary journeys. Moreover, Paul sent him on additional trips to visit and encourage congregations. (1 Cor. 4:17) Timothy may have felt inadequate. Perhaps that is why Paul admonished him: "Never let anyone look down on your youth." (1 Tim. 4:12) Furthermore, during this time, Timothy had his own thorn in the flesh—"frequent cases of sickness." (1 Tim. 5:23) But Timothy knew that Jehovah's powerful holy spirit would give him the strength he needed to preach the good news and serve his brothers. —2 Tim. 1:7. *w21.05 21 ¶6-7*

Wednesday, May 31

Take good care of your sheep.

—Prov. 27:23.

The principle recorded at James 1:19 certainly applies to those who give counsel. James wrote: “Everyone must be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger.” An elder may assume that he has all the facts, but does he really? Proverbs 18:13 reminds us: “When anyone replies to a matter before he hears the facts, it is foolish and humiliating.” It is best to get the facts directly from the person himself. That involves listening before speaking. The elder might ask: “What has been happening in your life?” “How can I help?” If elders take the time to get the facts, they are more likely to help and encourage their brothers and sisters. Giving effective counsel involves more than simply reading a few scriptures or offering a suggestion or two. Our brothers and sisters need to sense that we care for them, that we understand them, and that we want to help them. *w22.02 17 ¶14-15*

Thursday, June 1

A poor widow came and dropped in two small coins of very little value.

—Mark 12:42.

Life is very difficult for the widow; she likely struggles to obtain the basic necessities of life. Yet, she goes to one of the chests and discreetly puts in two small coins, which perhaps hardly make a sound as they are dropped into the chest. Jesus knows what she deposited—two lepta coins, the smallest coins in circulation at the time. That is not even enough money to buy a single sparrow, among the cheapest birds sold

for food. Jesus is deeply impressed by this widow. So he calls his disciples, draws their attention to the widow, and says: “This poor widow put in more than all the others.” Then he explains: “They [especially the rich people] all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her want, put in everything she had, all she had to live on.” (Mark 12:43, 44) When this faithful widow gave her last bit of money that day, she was putting her life in Jehovah’s caring hands.—Ps. 26:3. *w21.04 6 ¶17-18*

Friday, June 2

Look! you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching.—Acts 5:28.

Jesus maintained a positive attitude throughout his ministry on earth, and he wants his followers to remain positive about the ministry as well. (John 4:35, 36) While Jesus was with his disciples, they were enthusiastic about the preaching work. (Luke 10:1, 5-11, 17) With the arrest and death of Jesus, however, the disciples temporarily lost their desire to preach. (John 16:32) After his resurrection, Jesus urged them to focus on preaching. And after his ascension to heaven, they preached with so much zeal that their enemies complained as noted in today’s text. Jesus directed the work done by those first-century Christians, and Jehovah blessed them with growth. At Pentecost 33 C.E., for example, about 3,000 got baptized. (Acts 2:41) And the number of disciples continued to grow dramatically. (Acts 6:7) Still, Jesus foretold that the preaching work would have even greater success in the last days.—John 14:12; Acts 1:8. *w21.05 14 ¶1-2*

Saturday, June 3

*Happy is the one who finds
no cause for stumbling in
me.—Matt. 11:6.*

Do you remember the moment when you first realized that you had found the truth? You felt that everyone would want to accept the things you had come to believe. You were convinced that the Bible's message would give them a meaningful life now and a wonderful hope for the future. (Ps. 119:105) So you enthusiastically shared the truths you had found with all your friends and relatives. But what happened? To your surprise, many rejected what you told them. None of us should be surprised when others reject the message we preach. In Jesus' day, the majority rejected him, even though he performed miracles, proving that he had God's backing. For example, Jesus resurrected Lazarus—a miracle that those who opposed him could not deny. Nevertheless, the Jewish leaders did not accept Jesus as the Messiah. They even wanted to kill both Jesus and Lazarus!—John 11:47, 48, 53; 12:9-11. *w21.05 2 ¶1-2*

Sunday, June 4

[Do] not [forsake] our meeting together, . . . but [encourage] one another.—Heb. 10:25.

Strive to attend meetings regularly. You will benefit from the encouraging program, and you can also get to know your brothers and sisters. Seek out friends in the congregation whom you can learn from, even those whose age or background is different from yours. The Bible reminds us that wisdom is “found among the aged.” (Job 12:12) Older ones can learn much from faithful younger ones too. David was much

younger than Jonathan, but that did not prevent them from enjoying a close friendship. (1 Sam. 18:1) David and Jonathan helped each other to serve Jehovah despite serious challenges. (1 Sam. 23:16-18) “Our brothers and sisters can really become our spiritual parents or siblings,” says Irina, a sister who is currently the only Witness in her family. “Jehovah can use them to fill our need.” Your friends want to encourage and support you, yet they need you to let them know how they can do so. *w21.06 10-11 ¶9-11*

Monday, June 5

My heavenly Father will also deal with you in the same way if each of you does not forgive your brother from your heart.—Matt. 18:35.

Jesus gave an illustration about a king and his slave. The king canceled a large debt that the slave could never repay. Later, that same slave was unwilling to cancel the much smaller debt of his fellow slave. In the end, the king threw that merciless slave into prison. The slave's actions harmed not only him but others too. First, he heartlessly harmed his fellow slave by having him “thrown into prison until he could pay back what he owed.” Second, he hurt other slaves who observed what he had done. When his “fellow slaves saw what had happened, they became greatly distressed.” (Matt. 18:30, 31) Similarly, our actions affect others. If someone wrongs us and we refuse to forgive him, what can happen? First, we hurt him by denying him our forgiveness, attention, and affection. Second, we make others in the congregation uncomfortable when they notice that we are not at peace with that person. *w21.06 22 ¶11-12*

Tuesday, June 6

[He will] bring to ruin those ruining the earth.—Rev. 11:18.

Satan loves to degrade humans, who were created in God's image. When God "saw that man's wickedness was great" in Noah's day, "Jehovah regretted that he had made men on the earth, and he felt hurt at his heart." (Gen. 6:5, 6, ftn., 11) Have conditions improved since then? Certainly not! How pleased the Devil must be when he sees the prevalence of sexual immorality in all its forms, including immoral acts between people of the opposite sex and people of the same sex! (Eph. 4:18, 19) Satan is especially happy when he can cause those who practice true worship to fall into sin. Under Satan's rule, not only is man 'dominating man to his harm' but he is also mismanaging the earth and the animal creation that Jehovah entrusted to man's care. (Eccl. 8:9; Gen. 1:28) The result? Some experts warn that human actions could push one million more species to extinction in the next few years. *w21.07 12 ¶13-14*

Wednesday, June 7

[Jehovah] will forgive in a large way.—Isa. 55:7.

Some servants of God have become overwhelmed by guilt because of past mistakes. Their self-condemning heart convinces them that Jehovah could never forgive them—no matter how repentant they are. If you deal with such feelings, learning about God's willingness to extend loyal love to his servants will help you to serve Jehovah joyfully with a clean conscience.

This is possible because "the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin." (1 John 1:7) When you are discouraged about some imperfection, call to mind that Jehovah is willing, yes, eager to forgive a repentant sinner. Note the connection that the psalmist David made between loyal love and forgiveness. He wrote: "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so great is his loyal love toward those who fear him. As far off as the sunrise is from the sunset, so far off from us he has put our transgressions."—Ps. 103:11, 12. *w21.11 5-6 ¶12-13*

Thursday, June 8

Her children rise up and declare her happy; her husband rises up and praises her.—Prov. 31:28.

A Christian husband must show honor to his wife. (1 Pet. 3:7) Honor involves giving special attention and respect to others. For example, a husband honors his wife by dignifying her. He does not ask more of her than she can give. And he certainly does not compare her with other women. If he were to do so, what effect might such a comparison have? The non-Witness husband of a sister named Rosa often compares her with other women. His cruel words have done more than undermine Rosa's self-confidence. She says, "I need constant reassurance that Jehovah values me." In contrast, a Christian husband assigns honor to his wife. He knows that his doing so affects both his relationship with her and his relationship with Jehovah. A husband who honors his wife praises her, reassures her of his love, and commends her. *w21.07 22 ¶7-8*

Friday, June 9

I will show a waiting attitude.—Mic. 7:7.

Do you feel disappointed when a package containing an item that you really need does not arrive when you are expecting it? But if you learn that there are good reasons why, would you not likely be patient and willing to wait? An example that illustrates the need for patience is recorded at Proverbs 13:11. It says: “Wealth quickly gained will dwindle, but the wealth of the one who gathers it little by little will increase.” Do you see the principle? There is wisdom in doing things patiently, one step at a time. Proverbs 4:18 tells us that “the path of the righteous is like the bright morning light that grows brighter and brighter until full daylight.” These words aptly apply to the way in which Jehovah reveals his purpose to his people—gradually. However, the verse can also be applied to the way in which a Christian makes spiritual progress in his life. Spiritual growth cannot be rushed. It takes time. *w21.08* 8 ¶1, 3-4

Saturday, June 10

*Here I am! Send me!
—Isa. 6:8.*

We have a lot of work to do as this system nears its end. (Matt. 24:14; Luke 10:2; 1 Pet. 5:2) We all want to serve Jehovah as fully as we can. Many are expanding their ministry. Some hope to serve as pioneers. Others hope to serve at Bethel or share in the construction of theocratic facilities. And numerous brothers are reaching out to qualify as a ministerial servant or an elder.

(1 Tim. 3:1, 8) How pleased Jehovah must be to see this willing spirit among his people! (Ps. 110:3) But are you discouraged because you have not yet reached a certain spiritual goal? If so, share your concerns with Jehovah. (Ps. 37:5-7) In addition, ask mature brothers for suggestions on how you can improve in your service to God, and then try your best to apply their counsel. If you do, you may well receive that privilege or reach that goal. *w21.08* 20 ¶1; 21 ¶4

Sunday, June 11

*Jehovah . . . will not
abandon his loyal ones.
—Ps. 37:28.*

The widowed prophetess Anna was 84 years old but was “never missing from the temple.” Her faithful “meeting attendance” was richly rewarded when on one occasion she saw the infant Jesus. (Luke 2:36-38) In modern times, many faithful older ones serve as excellent examples for younger ones. We will benefit greatly when we take the time to draw them out and listen as they tell about the joys they have experienced in Jehovah’s organization. Our older brothers and sisters have an important role in Jehovah’s arrangement. They have seen how Jehovah has in many different ways blessed his organization and them personally. They have learned important lessons from mistakes they have made. View them as a “fountain of wisdom,” and draw on their experience. (Prov. 18:4) If you take the time to get to know them, your faith can be strengthened. *w21.09* 3 ¶4; 4 ¶7-8; 5 ¶11, 13

Monday, June 12

The little one will become a thousand and the small one a mighty nation.—Isa. 60:22.

As Isaiah expressed it, “the milk of nations” is being made available to Jehovah’s people. (Isa. 60:5, 16) With the various skills and abilities of the precious men and women coming into the truth, the preaching work is being carried out in 240 countries and literature is being produced in over 1,000 languages. In this time of the end, the shaking of the nations is forcing people to make a decision. Will they support God’s Kingdom, or will they place their confidence in the governments of this world? This is the choice that all will face. Although Jehovah’s people obey the laws of the government of the land in which they live, they remain completely neutral with regard to the politics of this world. (Rom. 13:1-7) They know that the Kingdom is the only true solution to mankind’s problems. That Kingdom is no part of this world.—John 18:36, 37. *w21.09* 17-18 ¶13-14

Tuesday, June 13

Pour out your hearts before him.
—Ps. 62:8.

When someone you love leaves Jehovah, it is vital that you continue strengthening yourself and other family members. How can you do so? Draw strength from Jehovah by maintaining a routine of reading God’s Word and meditating on it as well as attending Christian meetings. Joanna, whose father and sister left the truth, says: “I feel a calm come over me when I read about

such Bible characters as Abigail, Esther, Job, Joseph, and Jesus. Their examples feed my heart and mind with positive thoughts that soothe the pain.” When you experience distressing feelings, do not stop praying to Jehovah. Beg our loving God to help you view the situation from his perspective and to “give you insight and instruct you in the way you should go.” (Ps. 32:6-8) Of course, it may be very painful to tell Jehovah how you really feel. But Jehovah fully understands your pain of heart. He urges you to pour out your heart to him.—Ex. 34:6; Ps. 62:7. *w21.09* 28 ¶9-10

Wednesday, June 14

This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved. Listen to him.
—Matt. 17:5.

After the Passover of 32 C.E., the apostles Peter, James, and John witnessed an amazing vision. On a lofty mountain, possibly a spur of Mount Hermon, Jesus was transfigured before them. “His face shone as the sun, and his outer garments became brilliant as the light.” (Matt. 17:1-4) The apostles heard God say: “This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved. Listen to him.” The three apostles proved by their life course that they did listen to Jesus. We want to imitate their example. How grateful we are that Jehovah provides us with loving direction through the “head of the congregation,” Jesus Christ! (Eph. 5:23) May we be determined to “listen to him,” as were the apostles Peter, James, and John. By doing so, we will receive many blessings now and unending happiness in the future. *w21.12* 22 ¶1; 27 ¶19

Thursday, June 15

*I will discipline you to
the proper degree.*

—*Jer. 30:11.*

A Christian in Corinth was living immorally with his father's wife. The apostle Paul directed the Corinthians to disfellowship him. That man's immoral conduct was affecting others in the congregation, some of whom were not even ashamed of his outrageous behavior! (1 Cor. 5:1, 2, 13) Sometime later, Paul learned that the sinner was truly repentant! Paul told the elders: "Kindly forgive and comfort him." Note Paul's reason: "So that he may not be overwhelmed by excessive sadness." Paul felt pity for the repentant man. The apostle did not want to see the man so overwhelmed, so crushed, by what he did that he would give up on seeking forgiveness. (2 Cor. 2:5-8, 11) In imitation of Jehovah, the elders love to show mercy. They show firmness when necessary but mercy when possible if there is a real basis for it. Otherwise, it is not mercy but permissiveness. *w21.10* 11-12 ¶12-15

Friday, June 16

*You must not take vengeance
nor hold a grudge.*

—*Lev. 19:18.*

Hurt feelings can be likened to physical wounds. Some are minor; others are serious. For example, when we open an envelope, we might get a slight paper cut on our finger. That can really hurt, but after a day or two, perhaps we do not even recall where the cut was. Similarly, some offenses are minor. For example, a friend may say or do something thoughtless that hurts

us, but we are able to forgive him easily. But if we have a deeper wound, a doctor may have to stitch the wound and bind it in bandages. If we were to keep poking or picking at the wound, we would only harm ourselves. Sadly, a person might be doing something similar when he is deeply offended. He may constantly think about the emotional injury he suffered and the hurt the other person caused him. But those who hold a grudge hurt only themselves. How much better it is to obey the counsel found in today's text. *w21.12* 12 ¶15

Saturday, June 17

Why do you judge your brother?

—*Rom. 14:10.*

Suppose an elder is concerned about a fellow believer's choices in dress or grooming. The elder could ask himself, 'Is there a Scriptural reason to say something?' Conscious of the need to be objective, he might ask another elder or mature publisher for his thoughts. Together they might review Paul's counsel on dress and grooming. (1 Tim. 2:9, 10) Paul outlined certain broad principles, observing that a Christian's dress should be appropriate, modest, and sensible. But Paul did not make a list of dos and don'ts. He recognized that Christians have a right to express their individual taste within Scriptural limits. So the elders should consider if the person's choices reflect modesty and good sense. We do well to realize that two mature Christians may make different choices, both of which are acceptable. We should not impose our own standards of right and wrong on fellow believers. *w22.02* 16 ¶9-10

Sunday, June 18

*Deal with one another in
loyal love and mercy.*

—Zech. 7:9.

We have good reasons to show loyal love to one another. What are some of them? Note how the following inspired proverbs answer that question: “Do not let loyal love and faithfulness leave you. . . . Then you will find favor and good insight in the eyes of God and man.” “A man of loyal love benefits himself.” “Whoever pursues righteousness and loyal love will find life.” (Prov. 3:3, 4; 11:17, ftn.; 21:21) These proverbs mention three reasons why we should show loyal love. First, showing loyal love makes us precious in God’s eyes. Second, by showing loyal love, we benefit ourselves. For instance, we forge lasting friendships with others. Third, pursuing loyal love leads to future blessings, including everlasting life. Indeed, we have good reasons for heeding Jehovah’s reminder: “Deal with one another in loyal love and mercy.” *w21.11* 8 ¶1-2

Monday, June 19

Give us more faith.

—Luke 17:5.

If your trials, past or present, have exposed a weakness in your faith, do not be discouraged. See this as an opportunity to strengthen your faith. Pray fervently to Jehovah, especially when facing a crisis. Recognize that Jehovah may provide the needed help by means of family or friends. When you allow Jehovah to help you get through your present trials, you will become more confident that he will help you

endure any trials you may face in the future. Jesus pointed out areas where his disciples lacked faith, but he never doubted that with Jehovah’s help they would pass future tests successfully. (John 14:1; 16:33) He was confident that strong faith would allow a great crowd to survive the coming great tribulation. (Rev. 7:9, 14) You will be among them if you take advantage of every opportunity now to develop and strengthen your faith!—Heb. 10:39. *w21.11* 25 ¶18-19

Tuesday, June 20

*The angel of Jehovah camps
all around those fearing*

Him.—Ps. 34:7.

We do not expect to receive miraculous protection today. But we know that no one who puts his trust in Jehovah will suffer everlasting harm. In the near future, our trust in Jehovah’s ability to protect us will be put to the test. When Gog of Magog, a coalition of nations, attacks God’s people, our lives will appear to be in danger. We will need to be convinced that Jehovah can and will deliver us. To the nations, we will seem like defenseless sheep with no one to protect us. (Ezek. 38:10-12) We will be unarmed, untrained in warfare. The nations will see us as easy targets. They will not see what we see with our eyes of faith—a host of angels camped all around God’s people, ready to defend us. How could the nations see them? They have no spiritual vision. What a surprise is in store for them when the heavenly armies come to our aid!—Rev. 19:11, 14, 15. *w22.01* 6 ¶12-13

Wednesday, June 21

Have love for the whole association of brothers.

—1 Pet. 2:17.

All our brothers and sisters are important to Jehovah, so they should also be important to us. We should be willing to do whatever we can to protect and care for them. If we learn that we have hurt or offended someone, we should not simply brush it off, concluding that the person is too sensitive and needs to get over it. Why might some become offended? Perhaps because of their background, some brothers and sisters have a very low opinion of themselves. Others are new in the truth; they have not yet learned how to deal with people's imperfections. Whatever the case, we should do what we can to make things right. Additionally, though, a person who is often offended by others needs to recognize that this is an undesirable personality trait that he needs to work on. He needs to do that for his own peace of mind and for the well-being of others. *w21.06 21 ¶7*

Thursday, June 22

Jehovah is near to all those calling on him, to all who call on him in truth.—Ps. 145:18.

Jesus sympathizes with your feelings. When we are distraught, how happy we are to be comforted by a sympathetic friend, especially one who has faced trials similar to ours. Jesus is that friend. He knows what it is like to feel weak and in need of help. He understands our makeup, and he will see to it that we receive the support we need “at the

right time.” (Heb. 4:15, 16) Just as Jesus accepted help from an angel in the garden of Gethsemane, we should be willing to accept the help Jehovah provides, whether it is in the form of a publication, a video, a talk, or an encouraging visit from an elder or a mature friend. (Luke 22:39-44) Jehovah will give you “the peace of God” and strengthen you. When we pray, we will receive “the peace of God that surpasses all understanding.”—Phil. 4:6, 7. *w22.01 18-19 ¶17-19*

Friday, June 23

They would deliver . . . the decrees that had been decided on by the apostles.—Acts 16:4.

Jehovah always does what is right. The challenge for us, however, might be to trust in his human representatives. We might wonder whether those with a measure of authority in Jehovah's organization really act according to Jehovah's direction or their own. The plain truth is that we cannot say that we trust in Jehovah if we do not trust in his earthly representatives—those whom Jehovah trusts. Today Jehovah leads the earthly part of his organization by means of “the faithful and discreet slave.” (Matt. 24:45) Like the first-century governing body, this slave oversees God's people worldwide and gives direction to congregation elders. The elders, in turn, implement the direction in the congregations. We show that we trust in Jehovah's way of doing things by heeding the direction we receive from the organization and the elders. *w22.02 4 ¶7-8*

Saturday, June 24

*Let us not give up in
doing what is fine.*

—Gal. 6:9.

What joy and honor we have as Jehovah's Witnesses! We rejoice when we can help someone who is "rightly disposed for everlasting life" to become a believer. (Acts 13:48) We share the feelings of Jesus, who "became overjoyed in the holy spirit" when his disciples returned from a successful preaching campaign. (Luke 10:1, 17, 21) The apostle Paul urged Timothy: "Pay constant attention to yourself and to your teaching." Paul added: "By doing this you will save both yourself and those who listen to you." (1 Tim. 4:16) So lives are at stake. We pay constant attention to ourselves because we are subjects of God's Kingdom. We always want to act in a way that brings praise to Jehovah and is in harmony with the good news that we preach. (Phil. 1:27) We show that we are 'paying attention to our teaching' by preparing well for the ministry and by asking for Jehovah's blessing before we witness to others. *w21.10* 24 ¶1-2

Sunday, June 25

*Clothe yourselves with
the new personality.*

—Col. 3:10.

"The new personality" is a way of thinking and acting that reflects Jehovah's personality. A person clothes himself with the new personality by manifesting the fruitage of God's spirit, allowing holy spirit to influence his thoughts, feelings, and actions. For example, he loves Jehovah and His peo-

ple. (Matt. 22:36-39) Such a person maintains his joy even when coping with trials. (Jas. 1:2-4) He is a peacemaker. (Matt. 5:9) He is patient and kind when dealing with others. (Col. 3:13) He loves what is good and does it. (Luke 6:35) He proves by his actions that he has strong faith in his heavenly Father. (Jas. 2:18) He remains mild when provoked and exercises self-control when tempted. (1 Cor. 9:25, 27; Titus 3:2) To put on the new personality, we need to develop all the qualities mentioned at Galatians 5:22, 23 and in other Bible passages. *w22.03* 8-9 ¶3-4

Monday, June 26

Become imitators of me.

—1 Cor. 11:1.

Elders can imitate the apostle Paul not only by preaching from door to door but also by being ready and willing to give a witness on every occasion. (Eph. 6:14, 15) Like Paul, elders can use the time spent in the ministry to train others, including ministerial servants. (1 Pet. 5:1, 2) But elders should never be so busy caring for assignments that they have no time for the preaching work. (Matt. 28:19, 20) To remain balanced, they may on occasion need to say no to some assignments. After prayerful consideration, they may realize that they could not care for an assignment without neglecting the more important things, such as conducting family worship, having a full share in the preaching work, or training their children in that activity. They can be sure that Jehovah understands their desire to be balanced in all things. *w22.03* 27 ¶4, 7; 28 ¶8

Tuesday, June 27

Do not become fearful of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul.—Matt. 10:28.

Do you remember feeling a bit afraid of becoming one of Jehovah's Witnesses? Perhaps you felt that you would never be able to preach publicly. Or maybe you feared that your family or friends might oppose you. If so, you can sympathize with your Bible student when he feels the same. Jesus acknowledged that such fears are possible. However, he urged his followers not to let fear stop them from serving Jehovah. (Matt. 10:16, 17, 27) Progressively train your Bible student to share his faith. Jesus' disciples may have felt nervous when he sent them out to preach. But Jesus helped them by telling them where to preach and what their message was to be. (Matt. 10:5-7) How can you imitate Jesus? Help your student to see where he can preach. For example, ask him if he knows someone who could benefit from learning a specific Bible truth. Then help him to prepare what to say by showing him a simple way to share that truth. *w21.06 6 ¶15-16*

Wednesday, June 28

I will shake all the nations, and the precious things of all the nations will come in.—Hag. 2:7.

"Within minutes, the shops and old buildings started falling." "There was panic everywhere . . . A lot of people said it lasted for about two minutes. To me, it seemed like forever." Those are the comments of some who survived an earthquake that struck Nepal in 2015. We are, however, at this very moment experi-

encing a different kind of shaking—one that involves all the nations. The prophet Haggai wrote: "This is what Jehovah of armies says, 'Yet once more—in a little while—and I will shake the heavens and the earth.'" (Hag. 2:6) The shaking that Haggai describes is not like a literal earthquake, which brings only destruction. Instead, it produces good results. Jehovah himself tells us: "I will shake all the nations, and the precious things of all the nations will come in; and I will fill this house with glory." *w21.09 14 ¶1-3*

Thursday, June 29

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

A solid friendship with a fellow human is based on frequent and heartfelt communication. The same is true of our friendship with Jehovah. When we express our feelings, thoughts, and concerns to him in prayer, we demonstrate that we have confidence in him and that we know he loves us. (Ps. 94:17-19; 1 John 5:14, 15) Associate with loyal friends; they are a gift from Jehovah. (Jas. 1:17) Our heavenly Father shows personal interest in us by providing us with a spiritual family of brothers and sisters who show "love at all times." (Prov. 17:17) In his letter to the Colossians, the apostle Paul mentioned certain Christians who had supported him, referring to them as "a source of great comfort." (Col. 4:10, 11) Even Christ Jesus needed and appreciated the support he received from his friends, both angelic and human. (Luke 22:43) Sharing our concerns with a mature friend is not a sign of weakness; it can be a safeguard. *w21.04 24-25 ¶14-16*

Friday, June 30

[Love] bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.—1 Cor. 13:7.

What should you do if a fellow believer has acted in a way that is very troubling to you? Make every effort to maintain peace. Turn to Jehovah in earnest prayer. Ask him to bless the person who offended you and to help you see the good qualities in that person—the very qualities that Jehovah loves about him. (Luke 6:28) If you cannot overlook what your brother has done, consider how you should approach him. It is always best to assume that the brother would never intentionally hurt you. (Matt. 5:23, 24) When you speak to him, give him the benefit of the doubt. What if he does not want to make peace? “Continue putting up with” him. Do not give up on your brother. (Col. 3:13) Most important, never hold on to resentment, for that could harm your friendship with Jehovah. Never allow anything to stumble you. In doing so, you prove that you love Jehovah more than anything else.—Ps. 119:165. *w21.06* 23 ¶15

Saturday, July 1

Afterward, [discipline] yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.—Heb. 12:11.

Disfellowshipping is part of Jehovah’s arrangement. It is in the best interests of everyone, including the wrongdoer. Any negative comments about the way a disciplinary matter was handled have likely been initiated by someone who did not mention details that would put the wrongdoer in a bad light. We simply do not

have all the facts. It is wise, then, to trust that the elders who took judicial action made every effort to follow Scriptural principles and to judge “for Jehovah.” (2 Chron. 19:6) By supporting the elders’ decision to disfellowship your loved one, you may actually help him to return to Jehovah. “Severing family association with our adult son was extremely difficult,” admits Elizabeth. “But after he returned to Jehovah, he admitted that he deserved to be disfellowshipped. In time, he expressed appreciation for the lessons he learned.” *w21.09* 28-29 ¶11-12

Sunday, July 2

He saw a needy widow drop in two small coins of very little value.—Luke 21:2.

Think about that widow. No doubt she wished that she could have given more to Jehovah. Yet, she did what she could; she gave Jehovah her very best. And Jesus knew that her contribution was precious in his Father’s eyes. Here, then, is an important lesson for us: Jehovah is pleased when we give him our best—our wholehearted and whole-souled service. (Matt. 22:37; Col. 3:23) Jehovah is happy when he sees us doing all we can! That principle applies to the amount of time and energy we can devote to our worship, including the ministry and the meetings. How can you apply the lesson from the account about the widow? Try to think of specific individuals who may need to be reassured that their efforts are pleasing to Jehovah. It may be an older sister who perhaps feels guilty or useless because she no longer has the health or energy to do as much as she used to in the ministry. *w21.04* 6 ¶17, 19-20

Monday, July 3

Happy is the man who keeps on enduring trial, because on becoming approved he will receive the crown of life.—Jas. 1:12.

Jehovah knows the best time to end this wicked world. His patience has allowed for the gathering of a great crowd, numbering into the millions, who worship and praise him. All of them are glad that Jehovah has endured long enough for them to be born, to learn to love him, and to dedicate themselves to him. Jehovah's decision to endure will be fully justified when he joyfully rewards the millions of us who have endured to the end! Despite all the heartache and suffering Satan has caused, Jehovah remains "the happy God." (1 Tim. 1:11) We can likewise remain joyful while we patiently wait for Jehovah to sanctify his name, vindicate his sovereignty, end all wickedness, and bring an end to our present problems. Let us be determined to endure and to take comfort in knowing that our heavenly Father is enduring too. *w21.07 13 ¶18-19*

Tuesday, July 4

Can anything good come out of Nazareth?—John 1:46.

Many in the first century did not put faith in Jesus. To them, he was just the son of a humble carpenter. And he was from Nazareth, a city that may have been considered of little importance. Even Nathanael, who became a disciple of Jesus, at first said: "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" He may have had in mind the prophecy found at Micah 5:2, which foretold that the Messiah would be born

in Bethlehem, not in Nazareth. The prophet Isaiah foretold that Jesus' enemies would fail to concern themselves "with the details of [the Messiah's] generation." (Isa. 53:8) If those people had taken the time to examine all the facts, they would have learned that Jesus was born in Bethlehem and that he was a descendant of King David. (Luke 2: 4-7) So Jesus' place of birth was in line with the prophecy found at Micah 5:2. What, then, was the problem? People were too quick to make a judgment. They did not have all the facts. Because of this, they were stumbled. *w21.05 2-3 ¶4-6*

Wednesday, July 5

Should the righteous one . . . reprove me, it would be like oil on my head.—Ps. 141:5.

The Bible provides good examples of those who were blessed because they accepted counsel. Consider Job. Although he was God-fearing, he was not perfect. Under intense pressure, he expressed some wrong viewpoints. As a result, he received straightforward counsel, both from Elihu and from Jehovah. How did Job react? He said: "I spoke, but without understanding . . . I take back what I said, and I repent in dust and ashes." (Job 42:3-6, 12-17) He proved his humility by accepting the counsel that Elihu gave him, even though Elihu was much younger than he was. (Job 32:6, 7) Humility will likewise help us apply counsel, even when we feel that we do not deserve it or when the one giving it is younger than we are. Who among us does not need to make progress in cultivating the fruitage of the spirit and in carrying out the Christian ministry? *w22.02 11 ¶8; 12 ¶12*

Thursday, July 6

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

All in the congregation have a responsibility to contribute to a loving and peaceful environment where no one feels completely alone. What we do and say can really make a difference! What can you do to help those who are alone in the truth to feel that they are part of the congregation? Take the initiative to offer your friendship. We can start by warmly welcoming new ones to the congregation. (Rom. 15:7) However, we want to offer more than just a friendly greeting. We want to build strong friendships over time. So take a warm and sincere interest in new ones. While respecting their privacy, try to understand what they may be going through. Some may have difficulty expressing their feelings, so be careful not to pressure them to talk. Rather, kindly draw them out with discreet questions and listen patiently to their answers. For example, you could ask how they came to know of the truth. *w21.06 11 ¶13-14*

Friday, July 7

They will listen to my voice, and they will become one flock, one shepherd.—John 10:16.

We treasure the privilege of serving Jehovah unitedly as “one flock” under “one shepherd”! The book *Organized to Do Jehovah’s Will*, page 165, states: “Benefiting from that unity, you have the responsibility to help maintain it.” Thus, we need to “train ourselves to see our brothers and sisters as Jehovah sees them.” To Jehovah, we are all precious “little ones.” Is that how

you view your brothers and sisters? Jehovah notices and values everything you do to help them and care for them. (Matt. 10:42) We love our fellow worshippers. So we are “determined not to put a stumbling block or an obstacle before a brother.” (Rom. 14:13) We consider our brothers and sisters to be superior to us, and we want to forgive them from our heart. May we not allow ourselves to be stumbled by others. Rather, let us choose to “pursue the things making for peace and the things that build one another up.” —Rom. 14:19. *w21.06 24 ¶16-17*

Saturday, July 8

*God . . . makes it grow.
—1 Cor. 3:7.*

If we diligently study and apply the counsel we receive through God’s Word and his organization, we will gradually develop a Christ-like personality. We will also grow in our knowledge of God. Jesus used an illustration to explain how the Kingdom message we preach is like a tiny seed that gradually develops in honesthearted ones. He said: “The seeds sprout and grow tall—just how, he [the sower] does not know. On its own the ground bears fruit gradually, first the stalk, then the head, finally the full grain in the head.” (Mark 4:27, 28) Jesus was explaining that just as a plant grows little by little, so a person who accepts the Kingdom message grows spiritually little by little. For example, as our sincere Bible students draw closer to Jehovah, we begin to see the many fine changes that they have made. (Eph. 4:22-24) But we must remember that it is Jehovah who makes that tiny seed grow. *w21.08 8-9 ¶4-5*

Sunday, July 9

Better to enjoy what the eyes see than to wander after one's desires.

—Eccl. 6:9.

We can find joy if we look for it in the right place. A person who enjoys “what the eyes see” appreciates what he has, such as his present circumstances. In contrast, the person who wanders after his desires keeps wishing for something he simply cannot have. So, what is the lesson for us? To find joy, we should focus on what we have and on what we can realistically hope to obtain. Is it really possible to be satisfied with what you already have? After all, as time passes, we naturally seek out new challenges. Yes, it really is possible. We can enjoy and not merely settle for what our “eyes see.” How can we do that? To find out, consider Jesus’ parable of the talents, found at Matthew 25:14-30 and focus on what it can teach us about how to find joy and even increase our joy in the blessings we presently have. *w21.08 21 ¶5-6*

Monday, July 10

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

Jehovah cares deeply for those “crushed and lowly in spirit.” All of us, not just the elders, can help to encourage our dear brothers and sisters. One way we can encourage them is by showing a sincere interest in them. Jehovah wants us to convey to them his love for his precious sheep. (Prov. 19:17) We can also help our brothers and sisters by being humble and modest. We

do not want to draw attention to ourselves that could result in stirring up envy in others. Instead, we use our abilities and knowledge to encourage one another. (1 Pet. 4: 10, 11) We can learn much about how to treat others by considering how Jesus treated his followers. He was the greatest man who ever lived. Yet, he was “mild-tempered and lowly in heart.” (Matt. 11:28-30) He taught by using simple language and appealing illustrations that touched the hearts of lowly ones. —Luke 10:21. *w21.07 23 ¶11-12*

Tuesday, July 11

Ask . . . your elders, and they will inform you.

—Deut. 32:7.

Take the initiative to talk with older ones. True, their eyesight may have dimmed, their pace may have slowed, and their speech may have softened, but they are young at heart, and they have made “a good name” with Jehovah. (Eccl. 7:1) Remember why Jehovah treasures them. Continue to show them honor. Be like Elisha. He insisted on staying close to Elijah on their last day together. Three times Elisha declared: “I will not leave you.” (2 Ki. 2:2, 4, 6) Show genuine interest in older ones by kindly drawing them out. (Prov. 1:5; 20:5; 1 Tim. 5:1, 2) Ask such questions as these: “When you were younger, what convinced you that you had found the truth?” “How have your experiences drawn you closer to Jehovah?” “What have you found to be the secret to remaining happy in Jehovah’s service?” (1 Tim. 6:6-8) Then listen as they tell their story. *w21.09 5 ¶14; 7 ¶15*

Wednesday, July 12

God is the one who for the sake of his good pleasure energizes you, giving you both the desire and the power to act.—Phil. 2:13.

When you do your best to obey the command to preach and make disciples, you are demonstrating your love for God. (1 John 5:3) Think of this: Your love for Jehovah has already moved you to preach from house to house. Was that command easy to obey? Probably not. When you approached your very first door in the preaching work, were you nervous? No doubt you were! But you knew that this is the work that Jesus wants you to do, and you obeyed the command. And likely, with time, it has become easier for you to engage in the preaching work. Now what about conducting a Bible study? Does the very thought make you nervous? Perhaps. However, when you ask Jehovah to help you overcome your nervousness and muster up courage to offer a Bible study, Jehovah can help you to strengthen your desire to make disciples. *w21.07 3 ¶7*

Thursday, July 13

*These should be marked on their right hand or on their forehead.
—Rev. 13:16.*

Slaves in ancient times were branded with a mark to show who owned them. Similarly, all in our day will be expected to have a symbolic mark on their hand or forehead. Their thoughts and actions will show that they belong to and support the political systems. Will we accept this symbolic mark and give our allegiance to political governments? Those who refuse to re-

ceive the mark will face difficulties and danger. The book of Revelation says: “Nobody can buy or sell except a person having the mark.” (Rev. 13:17) But God’s people know what God will do to those who have the mark mentioned at Revelation 14:9, 10. Rather than bear that mark, they will, in effect, write on their hand, “Belonging to Jehovah.” (Isa. 44:5) Now is the time to make sure that our loyalty to Jehovah is strong. If it is, Jehovah will gladly claim us as his own! *w21.09 18 ¶15-16*

Friday, July 14

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

To accomplish our ministry, we can benefit from the assistance of others. The apostle Paul shared his preaching and teaching methods with Timothy, and he encouraged Timothy to use those methods to help others. (1 Cor. 4:17) Like Timothy, we can benefit from experienced ones in our congregation. Also, we should pray to Jehovah for help. Look to Jehovah for guidance every time you share in the ministry. Without the help of his powerful holy spirit, none of us would be able to accomplish anything. (Ps. 127:1; Luke 11:13) When you ask for Jehovah’s help in prayer, be specific. For example, ask him to direct you to anyone who may be rightly disposed and ready to listen. We should also make time for personal study. God’s Word says: “Prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Rom. 12:2) The more convinced we are that we know the truth about God, the greater will be our conviction when we talk to others in the ministry. *w21.05 18 ¶14-16*

Saturday, July 15

Your labor is not in vain in connection with the Lord.

—1 Cor. 15:58.

What if in spite of your earnest efforts and prayers in his behalf, a Bible student fails to make progress and the study needs to be discontinued? Or what if you have never directly helped someone to the point of baptism? Should you feel guilty, perhaps thinking that Jehovah has not blessed your ministry? Note how Jehovah measures our success. Jehovah looks at our efforts and endurance. In Jehovah's eyes, our work for him is successful when we carry it out with diligence and love, regardless of how others respond. Paul wrote: "God is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his name by ministering and continuing to minister to the holy ones." (Heb. 6:10) Jehovah remembers our efforts and our love, even if those efforts do not lead to positive results. Thus, you may apply to yourself what Paul said in today's text. *w21.10* 25 ¶4-6

Sunday, July 16

All those whom the Father gives me will come to me, and I will never drive away the one who comes to me.—John 6:37.

Jesus' kindness and love were reflected in the way he dealt with his disciples. He knew that they had different abilities and circumstances. So they could not all handle the same responsibilities; nor could they be equally productive in the ministry. Yet, he appreciated the whole-souled efforts of each one. Jesus' understanding attitude is re-

flected in the parable of the talents. In that illustration, the master assigned each slave work "according to his own ability." One of the two diligent slaves gained more than the other. But the master commended both with the same words: "Well done, good and faithful slave!" (Matt. 25:14-23) Jesus is kind and loving in the way he deals with us. He knows that our abilities and circumstances vary, and he is pleased when we do our best. We do well to treat others as Jesus did. *w21.07* 23 ¶12-14

Monday, July 17

I will not lift my hand against my lord.

—1 Sam. 24:10.

King David was not always merciful. For example, when Nabal, a harsh man by nature, spoke disrespectfully and refused to provide David and his men with food, David was enraged and decided to kill the man and all the men in his household. Thanks to quick action on the part of Nabal's long-suffering wife, Abigail, David avoided incurring bloodguilt. (1 Sam. 25:9-22, 32-35) Note that when David gave in to his rage, he judged Nabal and all his men as deserving of death. And later, David was ready to judge the man in Nathan's illustration as worthy of death. In this second instance, we might wonder why a normally warmhearted man would pronounce such a harsh judgment. Consider the context. At the time, David had a guilty conscience. A harsh, judgmental spirit is not a sign of good spiritual health. Quite the opposite, in fact. *w21.10* 12 ¶17-18; 13 ¶20

Tuesday, July 18

*You must be holy, because
I am holy.—1 Pet. 1:16.*

From the words of today's text, we learn that we can imitate Jehovah, who is the supreme example of holiness. We must be holy in our conduct. That may seem impossible because we are imperfect. The apostle Peter himself made a number of mistakes; yet, his example shows that we can become holy. When people think of someone who is holy, many imagine a joyless person who wears religious garments and always has a pious look on his face. But that cannot be accurate. Jehovah, who is holy, is described as "the happy God." (1 Tim. 1:11) Those who worship him are called "happy." (Ps. 144:15) Jesus condemned those who wore distinctive garments and practiced their righteousness in front of men. (Matt. 6:1; Mark 12:38) As Christians, we shape our view of holiness by what we have learned from the Bible. We are convinced that our loving God would never give us a command that we could not possibly obey. *w21.12 2 ¶1, 3*

Wednesday, July 19

*You must love Jehovah your
God with your whole heart.
—Mark 12:30.*

Of all the things that we have been kindly given by God, perhaps one of the greatest gifts is the ability to worship him. We show Jehovah that we love him by 'observing his commandments.' (1 John 5:3) Speaking for his Father, Jesus commanded us to make disciples, baptizing them. (Matt. 28:19) He also

commanded us to love one another. (John 13:35) Jehovah will make obedient ones a part of his worldwide family of worshippers. (Ps. 15: 1, 2) Show love for others. Love is Jehovah's foremost quality. (1 John 4:8) Jehovah showed love for us before we ever knew him. (1 John 4:9, 10) We imitate him when we show love for others. (Eph. 5:1) One of the best ways we can show love for people is by helping them learn about Jehovah while there is still time. (Matt. 9:36-38) In doing so, we give them an opportunity to become prospective members of God's family. *w21.08 5-6 ¶13-14*

Thursday, July 20

*No one has love greater
than this.—John 15:13.*

Jesus' deep love for Jehovah moved him to make sacrifices for his Father and for us. (John 14:31) Jesus proved the depth of his love for people by the way he lived his earthly life. Each day, he was loving and compassionate, even when some opposed him. A key way he showed his love for people was by teaching them about God's Kingdom. (Luke 4:43, 44) Jesus also proved his self-sacrificing love for God and for men by willingly suffering an agonizing death at the hands of sinners. He thus opened the way for all of us to gain everlasting life. We dedicated ourselves to Jehovah and got baptized because we love our heavenly Father. So, like Jesus, we should show love for Jehovah by how we treat people. The apostle John wrote: "The one who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen."—1 John 4:20. *w22.03 10 ¶8-9*

Friday, July 21

Keep strict watch that how you walk is not as unwise but as wise persons, making the best use of your time.—Eph. 5:15, 16.

Although we enjoy spending time with Jehovah, we face a challenge. We lead busy lives, which can make it difficult for us to schedule time for spiritual activities. Secular work, family responsibilities, and other necessary activities can demand so much of our time that we may feel that we are just too busy to pray, study, or meditate. There is another more subtle threat to our time. If we are not careful, we could allow activities that are not wrong in themselves to rob us of time that we could use to draw closer to Jehovah. For example, consider the matter of recreation. We all benefit from an occasional change of pace. But even wholesome recreation can cut into our time to the point that there is little time left for spiritual activities. We need to keep recreation in its place.—Prov. 25:27; 1 Tim. 4:8. *w22.01 26 ¶2-3*

Saturday, July 22

The foreigner who resides with you should become to you like a native among you; and you must love him as yourself.—Lev. 19:34.

When Jehovah commanded the Israelites to love their fellow man, he did not mean that they should show love only to those of the same race or nationality. They were also told to love the foreigners in their midst. That is the clear message found at Leviticus 19:33, 34. The foreigner was to be treated “like a

native,” and the Israelites were to “love him” as themselves. For example, the Israelites were to permit both the foreign residents and the poor to benefit from the gleanings arrangement. (Lev. 19:9, 10) The principle about loving foreigners applies to Christians today. (Luke 10:30-37) How so? There are millions of immigrants, and likely some live near you. It is important for us to treat these men, women, and children with dignity and respect. *w21.12 12 ¶16*

Sunday, July 23

Those seeking Jehovah will lack nothing good.—Ps. 34:10.

The more we look to Jehovah for guidance now, the more confident we will be in his ability to deliver us in the future. It takes faith and a willingness to rely on Jehovah to ask our employer for time off so that we can attend an assembly or a convention or to ask for an adjusted work schedule so that we can attend all our meetings and spend more time in the ministry. Suppose our employer refuses our request and we lose our job. Do we have faith that Jehovah will never leave us or abandon us and that he will always supply our basic needs? (Heb. 13:5) Many who are in full-time service can relate experiences that show how Jehovah came to their aid when they needed him most. Jehovah is faithful. With Jehovah on our side, we have no reason to fear the days ahead. Our God will never forsake us as long as we put his interests first in our lives. *w22.01 7 ¶16-17*

Monday, July 24

You do not judge for man but for Jehovah.
—2 Chron. 19:6.

How might our trust in the elders be tested? Suppose a person who has been disfellowshipped is a close companion. We might worry that the elders did not consider all the facts, or we might wonder whether they truly judged the matter the way Jehovah would. What can help us maintain the proper attitude toward the decision? We do well to remember that disfellowshipping is Jehovah's arrangement and that it benefits the congregation and may benefit the wrongdoer. If an unrepentant wrongdoer were permitted to remain in the congregation, he could be a corrupting influence. (Gal. 5:9) In addition, he may not recognize the seriousness of his sin, and he may have little incentive to adjust his thinking and actions so that he can regain Jehovah's favor. (Eccl. 8:11) We can be sure that when deciding if a person should be disfellowshipped, the elders take their responsibility seriously. *w22.02* 5-6 ¶13-14

Tuesday, July 25

No bruised reed will he crush, and no smoldering wick will he extinguish.—Matt. 12:20.

Patience and kindness are especially needed when someone initially resists Bible-based counsel. An elder must guard against the tendency to get irritated if his counsel is not immediately accepted or acted on. So in his private prayers, the elder may ask Jehovah to bless the one needing counsel and to help

him understand the reason for the counsel and apply it. The brother being counseled may need time to think about what was said. If the elder is patient and kind, the one he is trying to help will not be distracted by the way the counsel is given, but he will be able to focus on the message. Of course, the counsel should always be based on God's Word. We want our counsel not only to be effective but also to "make the heart rejoice."—Prov. 27:9. *w22.02* 18 ¶17; 19 ¶19

Wednesday, July 26

Expectation postponed makes the heart sick.
—Prov. 13:12.

When we pray for strength to deal with a trial or a weakness, we may feel that the relief we are seeking is taking longer than we had hoped. Why does Jehovah not answer all our prayers right away? He views our sincere prayers as evidence of our faith. (Heb. 11:6) Jehovah is also interested in seeing how determined we are to live in harmony with our prayers and to do his will. (1 John 3:22) So we may need to show patience and work along with our prayers whenever we are trying to overcome a bad habit or a weakness. Jesus implied that some of our prayers might not be answered immediately. He urged: "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; for everyone asking receives, and everyone seeking finds, and to everyone knocking, it will be opened."—Matt. 7:7, 8. *w21.08* 8 ¶1; 10 ¶9-10

Thursday, July 27

*How I do love your law!
I ponder over it all day
long.—Ps. 119:97.*

To build faith in your Creator, you need to continue studying God's Word. (Josh. 1:8) Pay attention to its prophecies and to its internal harmony. Doing so can reinforce your faith that a loving, wise Creator made us and that he inspired the Bible. (2 Tim. 3:14; 2 Pet. 1:21) When studying God's Word, note how helpful its counsel is. For example, the Bible long ago warned that the love of money is harmful and that it produces "many pains." (1 Tim. 6:9, 10; Prov. 28:20; Matt. 6:24) How helpful, then, is the Bible's warning against developing a love of money! Can you think of additional Bible principles that have proved to be beneficial? The more we appreciate the Bible's counsel, the more we will rely on the timeless wisdom provided by our loving Creator. (Jas. 1:5) As a result, our life will be more enjoyable.—Isa. 48:17, 18. *w21.08* 17-18 ¶12-13

Friday, July 28

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

If you are getting well along in years, be assured that Jehovah remembers the work you have done in the past. You have zealously supported the preaching work. You have endured trials—even heart-breaking ones—upheld the Bible's righteous standards, carried heavy loads of responsibility, and trained others. You have done your best

to keep pace with Jehovah's fast-moving organization. You have supported and encouraged others as they pursued the full-time ministry. Jehovah God loves you very much for being loyal. He promises that "he will not abandon his loyal ones"! (Ps. 37:28) He gives you this assurance: "Until your hair is gray I will keep bearing you." (Isa. 46:4) So do not conclude that in view of your advancing years, you no longer have an important role in Jehovah's organization. You most certainly do! *w21.09* 3 ¶4

Saturday, July 29

*Jehovah has shown mercy
to those who fear him.
—Ps. 103:13.*

Jehovah shows mercy because of his matchless wisdom. The Bible says that "the wisdom from above" is "full of mercy and good fruits." (Jas. 3:17) Like a loving parent, Jehovah knows that his mercy benefits his children. (Isa. 49:15) Divine mercy gives them hope despite their imperfections. So Jehovah's infinite wisdom moves him to extend mercy whenever he sees any basis for doing so. At the same time, Jehovah's mercy is perfectly balanced. Wisely, he never crosses the line from mercy to permissiveness. Suppose that a servant of God deliberately sets out to follow a course of sin. What then? "Stop keeping company with" him, Paul wrote under inspiration. (1 Cor. 5:11) Unrepentant wrongdoers are disfellowshipped from the congregation. That action is necessary in order to protect our faithful brothers and sisters and to reflect Jehovah's holy ways. *w21.10* 9-10 ¶7-8

Sunday, July 30

God loves a cheerful giver.

—2 Cor. 9:7.

We worship Jehovah when we support the Kingdom work with our donations. The Israelites were not to appear before Jehovah empty-handed. (Deut. 16:16) They were to bring a material gift according to their circumstances. Thus they expressed their appreciation for all the arrangements that had been made to benefit them spiritually. How can we express our love for Jehovah and our appreciation for the spiritual provisions we receive? One way is by giving financial support to the local congregation and to the worldwide work as our circumstances allow. The apostle Paul put it this way: “If the readiness is there first, it is especially acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what a person does not have.” (2 Cor. 8:4, 12) Jehovah values any heartfelt donation we make, no matter how modest the amount.—Mark 12:42-44. *w22.03* 24 ¶13

Monday, July 31

Speak consolingly to those who are depressed, support the weak, be patient toward all.

—1 Thess. 5:14.

Elders cannot remove all the trials that Jehovah’s people face. Even so, Jehovah wants elders to do what they can to encourage and protect his sheep. How can busy elders find the time to provide the needed assistance? Follow the apostle Paul’s example. Paul looked for ways to commend his brothers and build them up. Elders do well to follow his loving example by treat-

ing Jehovah’s people with tender affection. (1 Thess. 2:7) Paul assured fellow worshippers that he loved them and that Jehovah loved them. (2 Cor. 2:4; Eph. 2:4, 5) Paul treated those in the congregation as friends, spending time with them. He showed that he trusted them by speaking openly about his own fears and weaknesses. (2 Cor. 7:5; 1 Tim. 1:15) Paul, however, did not focus on his own problems. Rather, he wanted to help his brothers. *w22.03* 28 ¶9-10

Tuesday, August 1

Father, forgive them.

—Luke 23:34.

Jesus was likely referring to the Roman soldiers who drove the nails through his hands and feet. Jesus refused to allow the injustices he had suffered to make him bitter and resentful. (1 Pet. 2:23) Like Jesus, we need to be willing to forgive others. (Col. 3:13) Some, including relatives, may oppose us because they do not understand our beliefs and our way of life. They may lie about us, humiliate us in front of others, destroy our literature, or even threaten to cause us physical harm. Rather than harboring resentment, we can ask Jehovah to open the eyes of those who oppose us so that they may one day see the truth. (Matt. 5:44, 45) At times, we may find it hard to forgive, especially if we have experienced gross injustices. But if we allow bitterness and resentment to take root in our heart, we hurt ourselves. (Ps. 37:8) When we decide to forgive, we are choosing not to let negative experiences make us bitter.—Eph. 4:31, 32. *w21.04* 8-9 ¶3-4

Wednesday, August 2

*How often they . . . made
him feel hurt.—Ps. 78:40.*

Has one of your loved ones been disfellowshipped from the congregation? That can be heartbreaking! Think how heartbroken Jehovah must have been when members of his own angelic family turned their back on him! (Jude 6) And imagine how hurt he was at seeing his beloved people, the Israelites, rebel against him time and again. (Ps. 78:41) Be assured that our loving heavenly Father is also hurt when someone you love leaves him. He understands the grief you are experiencing. He will compassionately provide you with the encouragement and the support you need. When a precious son or daughter leaves Jehovah, it is common for the parents to wonder what more they could have done to help their young one stay in the truth. One brother said: “I blamed myself. I had nightmares about it.” A sister who faced a similar situation, agonized: “What did I do wrong as a mother? I felt that I must have failed to inculcate the truth in my son.” *w21.09 26 ¶1-2, 4*

Thursday, August 3

*[They] perceived that they were
uneducated and ordinary.
—Acts 4:13.*

Some feel that God’s people cannot teach about the Bible because they have not graduated from recognized theological schools. But they need to examine the facts. That is what the Gospel writer Luke was determined to do. He made it a point to trace “all things from the start with accuracy.” He wanted his readers to “know fully the certainty of the things” they had heard about Je-

sus. (Luke 1:1-4) The Jewish people in ancient Beroea were like Luke. When they first heard the good news about Jesus, they consulted the Hebrew Scriptures to confirm what they were being told. (Acts 17:11) In a similar way, people today need to examine the facts. They must compare what they are taught by God’s people with what the Scriptures say. They also need to study the record of Jehovah’s people in modern times. If they do a proper “background check,” they will not allow prejudice or hearsay to blind them. *w21.05 3 ¶7-8*

Friday, August 4

*Open your hearts wide.
—2 Cor. 6:13.*

Is there someone in your congregation to whom you can extend hospitality? There may be times when fellow Christians would especially appreciate our association. Some may find it difficult to be around unbelieving relatives during holidays. Others may find certain dates, such as the anniversary of the death of a loved one, very painful. When we offer to spend time with brothers and sisters who are experiencing such challenges, we show them that we “genuinely care.” (Phil. 2:20) There are many reasons why a Christian could at times feel alone. Yet, we must never forget that Jehovah is fully aware of such feelings. He provides us with what we need, often by means of our fellow Christians. (Matt. 12:48-50) In turn, we show Jehovah our appreciation for his loving arrangement when we do our best to support our spiritual family. No matter how we may sometimes feel, we are never alone because Jehovah is always by our side! *w21.06 13 ¶18-20*

Saturday, August 5

Maintain your conduct fine among the nations, so that when they accuse you of being wrongdoers, they may be eyewitnesses of your fine works and, as a result, glorify God.—1 Pet. 2:12.

Jesus remained positive and kept preaching even though some were indifferent to his message. Why? He knew how much the people needed to know the truth, and he wanted to give as many as possible an opportunity to accept the Kingdom message. He also knew that some who initially were indifferent would eventually respond. Consider what happened in his own family. During Jesus' entire three-and-a-half-year ministry, none of his brothers became his disciples. (John 7:5) Yet, after his resurrection, they became Christians. (Acts 1:14) We do not know who will eventually accept the Bible truths we teach. Some people take longer than others to respond to our message. Even those who choose not to listen to us see our good conduct and positive attitude, and they may eventually begin to "glorify God." *w21.05 18 ¶17-18*

Sunday, August 6

As you go, preach, saying: "The Kingdom of the heavens has drawn near."—Matt. 10:7.

When Jesus was on the earth, he gave his followers a two-fold commission. He told them to preach the good news of the Kingdom, and he showed them how to go about it. (Luke 8:1) Among other things, Jesus prepared his disciples for both a negative and a positive response to the Kingdom message. (Luke 9:2-5) He also foretold the extent of their

preaching activity, telling them that his followers would give "a witness to all the nations." (Matt. 24:14; Acts 1:8) In addition, he told his followers to teach potential disciples to observe all the things he had commanded. Jesus indicated that this vital work would continue even down to our day, "until the conclusion of the system of things." (Matt. 28:18-20) And in the revelation he gave to John, Jesus clearly indicated that all his disciples are expected to help others learn about Jehovah.—Rev. 22:17. *w21.07 2-3 ¶3-4*

Monday, August 7

*Let us not become egotistical, stirring up competition with one another, envying one another.
—Gal. 5:26.*

In the world today, many people are selfishly motivated by a spirit of competition. A businessman may resort to cutthroat tactics to get ahead of his competitors. An athlete in a sporting event may deliberately injure a player on the other team in order to win the game. A student competing for a place at a prestigious university may cheat on the entrance exams. As Christians, we recognize that such conduct is wrong; it is part of "the works of the flesh." (Gal. 5:19-21) However, could it be that some of Jehovah's servants might stir up competition in the congregation without even realizing it? That is an important question because a spirit of competition can affect the unity of our brotherhood. We do well, then, to consider the examples of faithful men and women in Bible times who did not give in to the spirit of competition. *w21.07 14 ¶1-2*

Tuesday, August 8

Happy is anyone who shows consideration to the lowly one; Jehovah will rescue him in the day of calamity.—Ps. 41:1.

Loyal love moves us to reach out to those in distress. Kindhearted brothers and sisters today willingly stick with those in the congregation who are despondent or depressed. They love their brothers and sisters, and they are eager to do whatever they can to help them. (Prov. 12:25, ftn.; 24:10) This is in line with the apostle Paul's admonition: "Speak consolingly to those who are depressed, support the weak, be patient toward all." (1 Thess. 5:14) Often the most effective way you can help a discouraged brother or sister is by lending a listening ear and by reassuring him or her of your love. Your kind attention to one of Jehovah's precious sheep does not go unnoticed by our God. Proverbs 19:17 states: "The one showing favor to the lowly is lending to Jehovah, and He will repay him for what he does." *w21.11* 10 ¶11-12

Wednesday, August 9

Taste and see that Jehovah is good; happy is the man who takes refuge in him.
—Ps. 34:8.

What can we do now to prepare for the future? We need to be content and to find our greatest joy in our relationship with Jehovah. The better we get to know our God, the more convinced we will be of his ability to protect us when Gog of Magog attacks. The words of today's text explain why David knew that he could count on Jehovah's support.

David often relied on Jehovah, and his God never disappointed him. When young, David faced the Philistine giant Goliath and told that formidable warrior: "This very day Jehovah will surrender you into my hand." (1 Sam. 17:46) Later, David was in the service of a king, Saul, who tried a number of times to murder him. But "Jehovah was with" David. (1 Sam. 18:12) Because David had experienced Jehovah's help in the past, David knew he could count on Him during his present trials. *w22.01* 6 ¶14-15

Thursday, August 10

All the sons of God began shouting in applause.
—Job 38:7.

In all that he does, Jehovah patiently takes whatever time is needed to complete his work. He does so both for the glory of his name and for the benefit of others. Consider, for example, the step-by-step manner in which Jehovah prepared the earth for mankind. When describing it, the Bible speaks of his setting "its measurements," sinking "its pedestals," and laying "its cornerstone." (Job 38:5, 6) He even took the time to reflect on his work. (Gen. 1:10, 12) Can you imagine how the angels felt as they saw Jehovah's creative works gradually taking shape? How exciting that must have been for them! Why, at one point, they began "shouting in applause." What do we learn? Jehovah's creative works took many thousands of years to accomplish, but when Jehovah surveyed everything that he had created so thoughtfully, he pronounced it "very good."—Gen. 1:31. *w21.08* 9 ¶6-7

Friday, August 11

Well done, good and faithful slave!—Matt. 25:23.

In Jesus' parable, a man was about to go on a trip. Before leaving, he called his slaves and gave each of them talents with which to do business. Taking into consideration their individual abilities, the man gave five talents to one slave, two to another, and one to a third slave. The first two slaves cared for these assets diligently. The third slave, however, did nothing with the money he was given, and he was dismissed from the master's service. The first and the second slave took very seriously the responsibility they had been given and worked hard to serve their master. As a result, they doubled the master's talents. Their diligence and skill were richly rewarded. Not only did their master rejoice but he judged them worthy of taking on even more responsibility! *w21.08* 21 ¶7; 22 ¶9-10

Saturday, August 12

Yet once more . . . I will shake the heavens and the earth.
—*Hag. 2:6.*

Jehovah has shown great patience during these last days. He does not want anyone to be destroyed. (2 Pet. 3:9) He has given all an opportunity to repent. But his patience has limits. Those who reject this opportunity will find themselves in a situation similar to that of Pharaoh in Moses' day. Jehovah said to Pharaoh: "By now I could have thrust my hand out to strike you and your people with a devastating plague, and you would have been wiped out from

the earth. But for this very reason I have kept you in existence: to show you my power and to have my name declared in all the earth." (Ex. 9:15, 16) All the nations will eventually have to know that Jehovah is the only true God. (Ezek. 38:23) The shaking mentioned in today's text will mean everlasting destruction for those who, like Pharaoh, refuse to acknowledge Jehovah's right to rule. *w21.09* 18-19 ¶17-18

Sunday, August 13

*Rejoice with those who rejoice;
weep with those who weep.*
—*Rom. 12:15.*

Do you feel pained at heart because a loved one has been disfellowshipped? And what if it seems that some in the congregation say things to you that make you feel worse? Realistically, not everyone will respond in an ideal way. (Jas. 3:2) We are all imperfect, so do not be surprised if some struggle with what to say or even unintentionally make comments that cause you pain. Remember the apostle Paul's admonition: "Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely even if anyone has a cause for complaint." (Col. 3:13) Continue to support faithful family members. They need your love and encouragement now more than ever. (Heb. 10:24, 25) At times, family members of disfellowshipped ones have felt that they too have been excluded from association with the congregation. Do not let that happen! Young people whose parents have left the truth especially need commendation and encouragement. *w21.09* 29 ¶13-14; 30 ¶16

Monday, August 14

A wise person listens and takes in more instruction.

—Prov. 1:5.

When an older one and a younger one talk with each other, both benefit. (Rom. 1:12) You younger ones will enrich your appreciation for the way Jehovah cares for his faithful servants, and the older one will feel dignified. He will enjoy recounting to you how he has received Jehovah's blessings. Physical beauty usually fades with age, but those who are loyal to Jehovah become more beautiful to him with each passing year. (1 Thess. 1:2, 3) Why is that true? Because over the years, they have allowed God's spirit to mold them and refine them. The more we get to know our precious older brothers and sisters, honor them, and learn from them, the more we will view them as priceless treasures! The congregation grows stronger not only when younger ones treasure older ones but also when older ones value younger ones. *w21.09* 7 ¶15-18

Tuesday, August 15

Stop judging that you may not be judged; for with the judgment you are judging, you will be judged.

—Matt. 7:1, 2.

We must keep on guard against harshness and strive to be "rich in mercy," like our God. (Eph. 2:4) Mercy is more than just a feeling. In fact, mercy has been defined as "compassion in action." All of us, then, can look carefully at the needs in our family, our congregation, and our community. Surely there are many opportunities to show mercy! Is someone in need of comfort? Can

we offer practical help, perhaps providing some food or doing some thoughtful deed? Might a reinstated Christian need some comforting, upbuilding association? Can we share the comforting message of the good news with others? (Job 29:12, 13; Rom. 10:14, 15; Jas. 1:27) If we are alert to such needs, we will see that there are opportunities all around us to show mercy. When we show mercy, how we must delight our heavenly Father, the God who is "rich in mercy"! *w21.10* 13 ¶20-22

Wednesday, August 16

Jehovah is my Shepherd.

I will lack nothing.

—Ps. 23:1.

In Psalm 23, David mentions things that are truly of lasting value—the abundant spiritual blessings he enjoys by accepting Jehovah as his Shepherd. Jehovah leads him "in the paths of righteousness," and He loyally supports David in good times and in bad times. David acknowledges that his life in Jehovah's "grassy pastures" will not be trouble free. At times, he may get discouraged, as if walking "in the valley of deep shadow," and he will have enemies. But with Jehovah as his Shepherd, David will "fear no harm." In what way did David "lack nothing"? Spiritually speaking, he had everything he needed. His happiness was not dependent on material things. David was satisfied with what Jehovah provided. What mattered most to him was the blessing and the protection of his God. From David's words we can see how important it is for us to have a proper view of material things. *w22.01* 3-4 ¶5-7

Thursday, August 17

Each person will receive his own reward according to his own work.

—1 Cor. 3:8.

Early witnesses of Jehovah faced unresponsive listeners. For example, Noah was “a preacher of righteousness,” likely for decades. (2 Pet. 2:5) No doubt, he hoped that others would respond favorably to his preaching, but Jehovah gave no such indication. Rather, when instructing Noah to build the ark, God said: “You must go into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you.” (Gen. 6:18) And considering the dimensions and capacity of the ark that God told him to build, Noah may have realized that any response to his preaching would be limited. (Gen. 6:15) As matters turned out, not one person from that violent world responded to Noah’s preaching. (Gen. 7:7) Did Jehovah view Noah as a failure? Not at all! In God’s eyes, Noah was a successful preacher because he faithfully did what Jehovah had asked him to do.—Gen. 6:22. *w21.10* 26 ¶10-11

Friday, August 18

I was full when I went, but Jehovah made me return empty-handed.—Ruth 1:21.

Imagine how Ruth must have felt on hearing those words from Naomi! Ruth had gone out of her way to help Naomi. Ruth had wept with her, comforted her, and walked with her for days on end. Despite all of this, Naomi said: “Jehovah made me return empty-handed.” With those words, Naomi did not even acknowledge the support of Ruth, who was

standing next to her. How painful that must have been for Ruth! Yet, she stuck with Naomi. (Ruth 1:3-18) Today, a sister in distress may initially speak to us in a hurtful way—despite all our efforts to help her. But we try not to take it personally. We stick with our sister who is in need, and we ask Jehovah to help us find a way to bring her comfort. (Prov. 17:17) A sister in need of assistance may at first refuse our help. Still, loyal love will move us to do our best to stick with her.—Gal. 6:2. *w21.11* 11 ¶17-19

Saturday, August 19

Become holy yourselves in all your conduct.

—1 Pet. 1:15.

In the Bible, the words “holy” and “holiness” basically refer to moral and religious cleanness or sacredness. The terms can also convey the idea of being set aside to serve God. In other words, we will be considered holy if we are morally clean, if we worship Jehovah acceptably, and if we have a close personal relationship with him. The very thought that we can have a personal relationship with our holy God is enough to take our breath away, especially when we consider what the Bible teaches us about Jehovah’s holiness. Jehovah is pure and clean in every way. We learn this from a description of him that was given by seraphs—angelic creatures who are close to his throne. Some of them testified: “Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of armies.” (Isa. 6:3) Of course, in order to have a close relationship with their holy God, the angels themselves must be holy—and they are. *w21.12* 3 ¶4-5

Sunday, August 20

Keep strict watch that how you walk is not as unwise but as wise persons, making the best use of your time.—Eph. 5:15, 16.

Young people are often concerned about the best way to spend their life. On the one hand, school guidance counselors and unbelieving family members may urge them to pursue higher education in preparation for a prestigious career in the world. That path would likely consume a great deal of their time. On the other hand, parents and friends in the congregation may encourage young people to spend their life in Jehovah's service. What can help a young person who loves Jehovah to make the best decision? He would benefit by reading Ephesians 5:15-17 and meditating on it. After reading these verses, a young person might ask himself: "What is "the will of Jehovah"? What decision will please him? Which path will result in my making the best use of my time?" Remember, "the days are wicked," and this system ruled by Satan will soon come to an end. *w22.01 27 ¶5*

Monday, August 21

*His brothers were, in fact, not exercising faith in him.
—John 7:5.*

When did James become a loyal follower of Jesus? After Jesus was raised from the dead, "he appeared to James, then to all the apostles." (1 Cor. 15:7) That meeting with Jesus marked a turning point in James' life. He was present when the apostles awaited the promised holy spirit in an upper room in Jerusalem. (Acts 1:13, 14) Later, James

had the joy of serving as a member of the first-century governing body. (Acts 15:6, 13-22; Gal. 2:9) And sometime before 62 C.E., he was inspired to write a letter to anointed Christians. That letter is of benefit to us today, whether our hope is heavenly or earthly. (Jas. 1:1) According to the first-century historian Josephus, James was executed at the order of the Jewish High Priest Ananias the Younger. James remained faithful to Jehovah until he finished his earthly course. *w22.01 8 ¶3; 9 ¶5*

Tuesday, August 22

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?—Matt. 27:46.

One lesson we can learn from today's text is that we must not expect Jehovah to shield us from challenges that test our faith. Just as Jesus was tested to the limit, we too must be prepared to prove faithful to death if necessary. (Matt. 16: 24, 25) However, we have the assurance that God will not let us be tested beyond what we can bear. (1 Cor. 10:13) Another lesson we learn is that, like Jesus, we may suffer unjustly. (1 Pet. 2:19, 20) Those who oppose us do so, not because we have done something wrong, but because we are no part of the world and we bear witness to the truth. (John 17:14; 1 Pet. 4:15, 16) Jesus understood why Jehovah allowed him to suffer. Unlike him, however, faithful worshippers under trial have sometimes wondered why Jehovah allowed certain things to happen. (Hab. 1:3) Our merciful and patient God understands that such ones do not lack faith; they need the comfort that only he can provide. —2 Cor. 1:3, 4. *w21.04 11 ¶9-10*

Wednesday, August 23

May my prayer be as incense prepared before you.

—Ps. 141:2.

Jehovah will accept our worship if it is in harmony with his purpose and is being offered with love and respect. We know that Jehovah deserves to be worshipped, and we want our gift of worship to be of the best possible quality. One way we worship Jehovah is when we pray to him. The Scriptures compare our prayers to the carefully prepared incense that was offered at the tabernacle and later at the temple. That incense was pleasing to God. Similarly, our heartfelt prayers are “a pleasure” to him, even if we use very simple words. (Prov. 15:8; Deut. 33:10) It warms Jehovah’s heart to hear us express our love and gratitude to him. He wants us to share with him our concerns, our hopes, and our desires. Before approaching Jehovah in prayer, why not give careful thought to what you are going to say? In doing so, you will offer the best possible “incense” to your heavenly Father. *w22.03 20 ¶2; 21 ¶7*

Thursday, August 24

You who suffer tribulation will be given relief along with us at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with his powerful angels.

—2 Thess. 1:7.

At Armageddon, it will not be up to us to decide who will receive Jehovah’s mercy and who will not. (Matt. 25:34, 41, 46) Will we be able to trust in Jehovah’s judgments, or will they be a stumbling block for us? Clearly, we need to strengthen our trust in Jehovah now so that

we will trust him implicitly in the future. Imagine how we will feel in God’s new world. False religion will be gone, and so will the greedy commercial system along with the political system that has oppressed people and caused untold misery throughout history. Poor health, old age, and the death of loved ones will no longer be part of our daily experience. Satan and the demons will be confined for a thousand years. The consequences of their rebellion will be gone. (Rev. 20:2, 3) How grateful we will then be that we trusted in Jehovah’s way of doing things! *w22.02 6-7 ¶16-17*

Friday, August 25

Happy are the peacemakers.

—Matt. 5:9.

Jesus took the initiative to make peace and encouraged others to settle their disputes. He taught them that they must make peace with their brother if they wanted Jehovah to accept their worship. (Matt. 5:23, 24) And he repeatedly helped the apostles to settle their dispute over which one among them was the greatest. (Luke 9:46-48; 22:24-27) To be a peacemaker, we need to do more than just avoid causing conflicts. We need to take the initiative to make peace and to encourage our brothers and sisters to settle their differences. (Phil. 4:2, 3; Jas. 3:17, 18) We can ask ourselves: ‘What am I willing to sacrifice in order to make peace with others? When a brother or a sister hurts my feelings, do I hold a grudge? Do I wait for the other person to take the initiative to restore peace, or do I take the first step, even if the other person seems to have caused the problem?’ *w22.03 10 ¶10-11*

Saturday, August 26

There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving.

—Acts 20:35.

Long ago, the Bible foretold that God's people would "offer themselves willingly" in Jehovah's service under the direction of his Son. (Ps. 110:3) That prophecy is certainly being fulfilled today. Each year, Jehovah's zealous servants devote hundreds of millions of hours to the preaching work. They do so voluntarily and at their own expense. They also take time to support their fellow believers physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Appointed brothers spend countless hours preparing meeting parts and shepherding fellow believers. What is the motivation behind all this work? It is love—love for Jehovah and love for neighbor. (Matt. 22:37-39) Jesus set an outstanding example in putting the interests of others ahead of his own. We are trying our best to follow his footsteps. (Rom. 15:1-3) Those who imitate him will reap benefits. *w22.02 20 ¶1-2*

Sunday, August 27

You should not withhold the wages of a hired worker all night until morning.

—Lev. 19:13.

In the agricultural society of Israel, hired laborers were to be paid at the end of each workday. To hold back the wages of such a worker would deprive him of the money he needed to feed his family that day. Jehovah explained: "He is in need and his life depends on his wages." (Deut. 24:14, 15; Matt.

20:8) Today many employees are paid once or twice a month, not every day. However, the principle set out at Leviticus 19:13 is still valid. Some employers take advantage of their employees by paying them an amount that is far below what is fair. They know that these workers may have little choice but to continue working for starvation wages. In a sense, such employers are 'withholding the wages of a hired worker.' A Christian who has a business would want to take this point to heart. *w21.12 10 ¶9-10*

Monday, August 28

I am thirsty.

—John 19:28.

After all that Jesus had suffered, he must have been very thirsty. He needed help to quench his thirst. Jesus did not consider it to be a sign of weakness to express how he felt; nor should we. For much of our life, we may have preferred not to tell others about our needs. But if the time comes when we need help, we should not hesitate to ask others for assistance. For example, if we are older or infirm, we may have to ask a friend to give us a ride to a grocery store or to a doctor's appointment. If we are downhearted or discouraged, we may need to ask an elder or other mature Christian friend to provide a listening ear or to share "a good word" to cheer us up. (Prov. 12:25) Let us remember that our brothers and sisters love us, and they want to help us in "times of distress." (Prov. 17:17) But they cannot read our minds. They may not know that we need help unless we take the initiative to say something. *w21.04 11-12 ¶11-12*

Tuesday, August 29

*If you become discouraged
in the day of distress, your
strength will be meager.*

—Prov. 24:10.

Change is challenging for many of us. Some who served in a form of special full-time service for a long time have received a change of assignment. Others have had to relinquish a cherished privilege because of their age. It is normal to feel disappointed when such a change affects us. We cope better with change when we look at things from Jehovah's perspective. He is accomplishing great things today, and we have the unique privilege of being his fellow workers. (1 Cor. 3:9) Jehovah's love for us will not change. Consequently, if a change in the organization affects you personally, avoid getting caught up in the whys and wherefores behind the change. Rather than long for "the former days," prayerfully look for the good in the change. (Eccl. 7:10) Keep a positive attitude. Thus we will remain joyful and faithful even when our circumstances change. *w22.03* 17 ¶11-12

Wednesday, August 30

*Jehovah, Jehovah, a God . . .
showing loyal love to thousands.*

—Ex. 34:6, 7.

To whom does Jehovah show loyal love? The Bible mentions that we can love many things, such as "agriculture," "wine and oil," "discipline," "knowledge," "wisdom"—to name a few. (2 Chron. 26:10; Prov. 12:1; 21:17; 29:3) Loyal love, however, is never extended to things or concepts; it is shown only to people. But Jeho-

vah does not show loyal love to just anyone. He shows it to those who are in a special relationship with him. Our God is loyal to his friends. He has a wonderful purpose for them, and he will not give up on them. Jehovah has shown love to mankind in general. Jesus told a man named Nicodemus: "God loved the world [of mankind] so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, so that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life."—John 3:1, 16; Matt. 5:44, 45. *w21.11* 2 ¶3; 3 ¶6-7

Thursday, August 31

*By your endurance you will
preserve your lives.*

—Luke 21:19.

Life in this system is hard, and we may be confronted with even more difficult challenges in the future. (Matt. 24:21) How we yearn for the day when all of that will be behind us—long forgotten and never to be repeated! (Isa. 65:16, 17) Clearly, we need to continue to strengthen our endurance. Why? Because Jesus said: "By your endurance you will preserve your lives." (Luke 21:19) Thinking about how others are successfully enduring trials similar to ours can strengthen our endurance. Who is the best example of endurance? Jehovah God. Does that answer surprise you? It might until you think about it. This world is under the control of the Devil, and it is riddled with problems. Jehovah has the power to end it in an instant, but he is waiting for a future day to do that. (Rom. 9:22) In the meantime, our God keeps on enduring until that appointed time arrives. *w21.07* 8 ¶2-4

Friday, September 1

They asked him to display to them a sign from heaven.

—Matt. 16:1.

Some in Jesus' day were not satisfied with his amazing teachings. They wanted more. But when he refused to give them the sign they were seeking, they were stumbled. (Matt. 16:4) What do the Scriptures say? Of the Messiah, the prophet Isaiah wrote: "He will not cry out or raise his voice, and he will not make his voice heard in the street." (Isa. 42:1, 2) Jesus went about his ministry in a quiet and modest way. He did not build impressive temples, and he did not wear distinctive religious garments or demand to be addressed by pretentious religious titles. When he was on trial for his life, Jesus refused to try to impress King Herod by performing a sign for him. (Luke 23:8-11) Jesus did perform some miracles, but his main focus was on preaching the good news. "This is why I have come," he told his disciples.—Mark 1:38. *w21.05 4 ¶9-10*

Saturday, September 2

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

We are looking for those who are "rightly disposed for everlasting life." (Acts 13:48) To assist those individuals in becoming disciples, we must help them to (1) understand, (2) accept, and (3) put into practice the things they learn from the Bible. (Col. 2:6, 7; 1 Thess. 2:13) All in the congregation can help Bible

students by setting an example in showing these new ones love and in making them feel welcome when they attend meetings. (John 13:35) The one conducting the study may also have to spend much time and energy helping a student overturn "strongly entrenched" beliefs or practices. (2 Cor. 10:4, 5) It may take many months to guide an individual through these steps so that he eventually reaches the goal of baptism. But it is well worth the effort. *w21.07 3 ¶6*

Sunday, September 3

Make sure of all things; hold fast to what is fine.

—1 Thess. 5:21.

Are we strongly convinced in our own mind that what we are teaching is the truth and that the pattern of worship that Jehovah's Witnesses are following today is the one that is acceptable to Jehovah? The apostle Paul was strongly convinced of the truth. (1 Thess. 1:5) That conviction was not based on emotion. Paul was a diligent student of God's Word. He believed that "all Scripture is inspired of God." (2 Tim. 3:16) What did his studies reveal? In the Scriptures, Paul found undeniable proof that Jesus was the promised Messiah—evidence that the Jewish religious leaders chose to ignore. Those religious hypocrites claimed to represent God but denied him by their works. (Titus 1:16) Unlike them, Paul did not pick and choose which parts of God's Word he would believe. He was ready to teach and apply "all the counsel of God."—Acts 20:27. *w21.10 18 ¶1-2*

Monday, September 4

No man can come to me unless the Father, who sent me, draws him.
—John 6:44.

As we plant and water, we must recognize the role that God plays. (1 Cor. 3:6, 7) Jehovah views all human life as precious. He gives us the privilege of working along with his Son in gathering people from all nations before the end of this system comes. (Hag. 2:7) Our preaching work could be likened to a rescue mission. And we are like members of a rescue team sent to free people trapped in a mine. Although only a few miners may be found alive, the work done by all the rescuers is valuable. The same is true of the work we do in our ministry. We do not know how many people will yet be rescued from Satan's system. But Jehovah can use any one of us to help them. Andreas, who lives in Bolivia, says, "I see each person who learns Bible truths and gets baptized as the result of a group effort." May we maintain a similar positive attitude toward our ministry. If we do, Jehovah will bless us, and our ministry will be a real source of joy. *w21.05* 19 ¶19-20

Tuesday, September 5

Escape from the snare of the Devil.—2 Tim. 2:26.

A hunter has but one goal—that of capturing or killing his prey. He may use a variety of snares or traps, even as noted by one of Job's false comforters. (Job 18:8-10) How might a hunter lure an animal into his snare? He studies the animal. Where does it go? What is it interested in? What will catch it by surprise? Satan is like that hunter. He studies us. He notices where we go and what

we are interested in. Then he sets a snare that he hopes will catch us unawares. Still, the Bible assures us that if we are caught, we may be able to escape. It also teaches us how to avoid those snares altogether. Two of Satan's most effective snares are pride and greed. For thousands of years, Satan has successfully used these undesirable traits. He is like a birdcatcher who lures his prey into a trap or who ensnares it in a net. (Ps. 91:3) But we do not have to be caught by Satan. Why not? Because Jehovah has revealed to us the tactics that Satan uses.—2 Cor. 2:11. *w21.06* 14 ¶1-2

Wednesday, September 6

Gray hair is a crown of beauty when it is found in the way of righteousness.—Prov. 16:31.

Faithful older ones are precious treasures. God's Word likens the gray hair of such ones to a crown. (Prov. 20:29) These treasures, though, can easily be overlooked. Younger ones who recognize the value of older ones can gain something more beneficial than literal riches. Faithful older ones are precious to Jehovah God. He sees them for who they really are on the inside, and he knows and values their wonderful qualities. He appreciates it when older ones pass on to younger ones the wisdom they have gained during a lifetime of faithful service. (Job 12:12; Prov. 1:1-4) Jehovah also treasures their endurance. (Mal. 3:16) Their lives have not been trouble free; yet, their faith in Jehovah has never wavered. Their hope for the future is brighter than it was when they first learned the truth. And Jehovah loves them because they continue to declare his name "even in old age."—Ps. 92:12-15. *w21.09* 2 ¶2-3

Thursday, September 7

Let each one examine his own actions, and then he will have cause for rejoicing in regard to himself alone.—Gal. 6:4.

From time to time, it is a good idea to examine our motives. We might ask ourselves: ‘Do I measure my worth by comparing myself with others? Am I motivated by a desire to view myself as the best at whatever I do or at least to see myself as better than a particular brother or sister? Or do I simply want to give my very best to Jehovah?’ The Bible urges us to avoid comparing ourselves with others. Why? On the one hand, if we think we are doing better than our brother, we may become prideful. On the other hand, if we compare ourselves unfavorably with others, we will likely get discouraged. (Rom. 12:3) We must remember that Jehovah drew us to him, not because we are beautiful, articulate, or popular, but because we are willing to love him and to listen to his Son.—John 6:44; 1 Cor. 1:26-31. *w21.07* 14-15 ¶3-4

Friday, September 8

You should continue to be made new in your dominant mental attitude.—Eph. 4:23.

To make our mind over, of course, we need to pray, study God’s Word, and meditate. Apply yourself to these things, and look to Jehovah for strength. His holy spirit will help you to overcome any tendency to compare yourself with others. Jehovah will also help you to recognize and quickly root out envy or undue pride if these undesirable feelings spring up in your heart.

(2 Chron. 6:29, 30) Jehovah knows our heart. He also knows our struggles—our fight against the spirit of the world and against our own imperfections. As Jehovah sees how hard we are fighting against such negative influences, his love for us grows. To illustrate how he feels about us, Jehovah uses the bond between a mother and her baby. (Isa. 49:15) How comforting it is to know that Jehovah feels that type of deep love for us when he sees us fighting to serve him whole-souled! *w21.07* 24-25 ¶17-19

Saturday, September 9

Rejoice with those who rejoice.—Rom. 12:15.

We can increase our joy by becoming absorbed in whatever we are given to do in Jehovah’s service. Be “intensely occupied” in the preaching work, and be fully involved in congregation activities. (Acts 18:5; Heb. 10:24, 25) Go to the meetings prepared to give upbuilding comments on the material that is being studied. Take seriously any student assignments you have on the midweek meeting. If you are asked to help out with a certain task in the congregation, be punctual and reliable. Do not treat any assignment you are given as if it were unworthy of your time. Strive to improve your skills. (Prov. 22:29) The more absorbed you are in your spiritual activities and assignments, the quicker you will progress and the greater your joy will be. (Gal. 6:4) You will also find it easier to rejoice with others when they receive a privilege that you would have liked to receive.—Gal. 5:26. *w21.08* 22 ¶11

Sunday, September 10

The wisdom from above is first of all pure, then peaceable, reasonable, ready to obey, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial, not hypocritical.—Jas. 3:17.

We must avoid pride and remain teachable. Just as disease can harden the arteries of a literal heart and restrict its ability to beat, pride can harden our figurative heart and prevent us from responding to Jehovah's direction. The Pharisees allowed their heart to become so hard that they refused to recognize the clear evidence being presented to them by God's spirit. (John 12:37-40) That was a dangerous course because it affected their everlasting future. (Matt. 23:13, 33) How important it is that we continue to allow God's Word and spirit to mold our personality and influence our thinking and our decisions! Because James was humble, he allowed himself to be taught by Jehovah. And it was because of his humility that he became a skillful teacher. *w22.01 10 ¶7*

Monday, September 11

Keep on asking.

—Matt. 7:7.

When we "persevere in prayer," we can be confident that our heavenly Father hears us. (Col. 4:2) Although an answer may seem to be delayed, Jehovah promises to answer our prayer "at the right time." (Heb. 4:16) That is why we must never blame Jehovah if something does not happen as quickly as we think it should. For example, many have been praying for years to see God's Kingdom bring an end to this sys-

tem of things. Jesus even said that we should pray for this. (Matt. 6:10) But how foolish it would be if someone allowed his faith in God to weaken because the end did not come when humans expected it! (Hab. 2:3; Matt. 24:44) We are wise to keep waiting on Jehovah and praying to him in faith. The end will come at exactly the right time, for Jehovah has already chosen the "day and hour" for it to arrive. And that day will prove to be the best time for all.—Matt. 24:36; 2 Pet. 3:15. *w21.08 10 ¶10-11*

Tuesday, September 12

With humility consider others superior to you.

—Phil. 2:3.

Humble older ones recognize that as they age, they cannot do as much as they once did. Consider, for example, our circuit overseers. When they reach 70 years of age, they are invited to take up a different assignment. That may be a challenge. They cherished the privilege of serving their brothers. But they understand that younger hands are needed to care for the work. They thus show an attitude similar to that of the Levites in ancient Israel who, at the age of 50, were required to discontinue their service at the tabernacle. The joy of those older Levites was not tied to a particular privilege. They took full advantage of the privileges that were available to them, doing all they could to assist the younger ones. (Num. 8:25, 26) Today, former circuit overseers, although no longer serving a number of congregations, are proving to be a real blessing to their congregations. *w21.09 8-9 ¶3-4*

Wednesday, September 13

Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy of being called your son.

—Luke 15:21.

Jesus told a heartwarming story about a wayward son, recorded at Luke 15:11-32. A young man rebelled against his father, left home, and traveled “to a distant country.” There he led an immoral, debauched life. When hard times struck, though, he did some serious thinking. He realized how much better off he had been while in his father’s house. As Jesus put it, the young man “came to his senses.” He resolved to go back home and seek his father’s forgiveness. The moment when the son realized how far he had fallen was important. He had to take action! The lost son demonstrated sincere repentance for what he had done. This parable is not just a heartwarming story. The principles it teaches can help congregation elders to discern whether a fellow believer has repented of his serious wrongdoing. *w21.10* 5 ¶14-15

Thursday, September 14

I will shake the heavens and the earth.—Hag. 2:6.

What will not be shaken, or removed? The apostle Paul wrote: “Seeing that we are to receive a Kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us continue to . . . offer God sacred service with godly fear and awe.” (Heb. 12:28) Yes, when the dust settles after this final great shaking, only God’s Kingdom will remain unshaken. (Ps. 110:5, 6; Dan. 2:44) There is no time to waste! People must choose: Will they continue to

support the way of life promoted by this world, leading to destruction, or will they work to bring their life into harmony with God’s will, leading to everlasting life? (Heb. 12:25) By our preaching work, we can help people decide what position they will take on this important issue. And may we keep in mind the words of our Lord Jesus: “This good news of the Kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”—Matt. 24:14. *w21.09* 19 ¶18-20

Friday, September 15

I will never leave you, and I will never abandon you.
—Heb. 13:5.

Elders, you have a special responsibility to console fellow worshippers whose loved ones have left Jehovah. (1 Thess. 5:14) Take the initiative to encourage them before and after Christian meetings. Visit them and pray for them. Work with them in the ministry, or at times invite them to join you for family worship. Spiritual shepherds need to show Jehovah’s grieving sheep the compassion, love, and attention they need. (1 Thess. 2:7, 8) Jehovah “does not desire anyone to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance.” (2 Pet. 3:9) Although a person may commit a serious sin, his life is still precious to God. Think of the high price Jehovah has paid—the ransom sacrifice of his own beloved Son—for the lives of sinners. Jehovah compassionately reaches out to help such ones return to him. He hopes they will choose to do so, as we can see from Jesus’ illustration of the lost son. —Luke 15:11-32. *w21.09* 30-31 ¶17-19

Saturday, September 16

*You have entered into the
benefit of their labor.*

—John 4:38.

What if your share in preaching and teaching the good news is limited by your failing health? You can still find joy in your role in the harvest. Consider the experience of King David when he and his men rescued their families and belongings from marauding Amalekites. Two hundred of the men were too exhausted to fight, so they stayed behind to guard the baggage. After the battle was won, David ordered that the spoil be shared equally by all of them. (1 Sam. 30:21-25) It is similar with our worldwide disciple-making work. Everyone who does his best can share equally in the joy over each new one who is helped to start on the road to life. Jehovah notices our diligence and good motives, and he rewards us. He also teaches us how to find joy in the part we play in the great harvest. (John 14:12) We can be assured of God's approval as long as we do not give up! *w21.10* 28 ¶15-17

Sunday, September 17

*The glory of young men
is their strength.*

—Prov. 20:29.

As we grow older, we may be afraid that we are not going to be as useful to Jehovah as we once were. While it may be true that we have less energy than before, we can use the wisdom and experience we have acquired to help younger ones reach their full potential and take on new responsibilities. Older ones must be humble if they want to help younger ones. A humble per-

son views others as being superior to him. (Phil. 2:3, 4) Older ones who show this quality realize that in many cases there is more than one Scriptural and effective way to carry out an assignment. Thus, they have a realistic view of the way they did things in the past. (Eccl. 7:10) While they have much valuable experience to share with the younger generation, they realize that "the scene of this world is changing" and that it may be necessary for them to adapt to new circumstances.—1 Cor. 7:31. *w21.09* 8 ¶1, 3

Monday, September 18

*Who among the gods is like you,
O Jehovah? Who is like you, showing
yourself mighty in holiness?*

—Ex. 15:11.

Jehovah would never require his worshippers to do anything that would degrade them. He is the essence of holiness. This was made clear by the inscription found on a gold plate on the turban of the high priest. Engraved on this plate was the statement: "Holiness belongs to Jehovah." (Ex. 28:36-38) The message on that plate would assure anyone seeing it that Jehovah is truly holy. What, though, of an Israelite who was not able to see the plate because he could not approach the high priest? Would he miss this vital message? No! Every Israelite heard that message as the Law was read before men, women, and children. (Deut. 31:9-12) If you had been present, you would have heard these statements: "I am Jehovah your God, and you must . . . be holy, because I am holy." "You must be holy to me, because I, Jehovah, am holy." —Lev. 11:44, 45; 20:7, 26. *w21.12* 3 ¶6-7

Tuesday, September 19

Stop being in anxious suspense.

—*Luke 12:29.*

Some may be anxious about their material needs. They may live in a country with poor economic conditions. It may be difficult for them to earn enough money to care for their family. Or the breadwinner in the family may have died, leaving the rest of the family without financial support. We will benefit from replacing anxiety with confidence. Remember that Jehovah guarantees that he will care for our material needs if we put spiritual things first. (Matt. 6:32, 33) He has a perfect record of fulfilling that promise. (Deut. 8:4, 15, 16; Ps. 37:25) If Jehovah provides for the birds and the flowers, surely we do not have to be anxious about what we will eat or wear! (Matt. 6:26-30; Phil. 4:6, 7) Just as love impels caring parents to provide materially for their children, love motivates our heavenly Father to care for the material needs of his people. *w21.12* 17 ¶4-5; 18 ¶8

Wednesday, September 20

Jehovah continued with Joseph and kept showing loyal love to him.—Gen. 39:21.

Have you ever been severely wronged by someone, even by a fellow worshipper? Note the example of Joseph who suffered injustice at the hands of his own brothers. He remained focused on his service to Jehovah, who richly rewarded him for his patient endurance. Over time, Joseph was able to look past the hurt he had experienced and see how Jehovah had blessed him. (Gen. 45:5) Like Joseph, we are

comforted when we draw close to Jehovah and leave justice in his hands. (Ps. 7:17; 73:28) If you are enduring an injustice or some other cause for hurt, remember that Jehovah draws close to “the broken-hearted.” (Ps. 34:18) He loves you for your patience and for throwing your burden on him. (Ps. 55:22) He is the Judge of all the earth. Nothing escapes his notice. (1 Pet. 3:12) When you are undergoing difficulties that you cannot resolve, are you willing to wait on him? *w21.08* 11 ¶14; 12 ¶16

Thursday, September 21

Keep perceiving what the will of Jehovah is.—Eph. 5:17.

It would be wise on our part to use our life in a way that will endear us to Jehovah. We must set proper priorities. Sometimes, making the best use of our time involves choosing between two activities that are not wrong in themselves. The well-known account about Jesus’ visit to the home of Mary and Martha illustrates the point. No doubt thrilled to receive Jesus as her guest, hospitable Martha set about preparing an elaborate meal. Meanwhile, her sister, Mary, took advantage of the visit to sit close to her Lord and listen to his teaching. While Martha was certainly motivated by the best of intentions, Mary “chose the best portion.” (Luke 10:38-42, ftn.) In time, Mary may have forgotten what food was served on that occasion, but we can be sure that she never forgot what she learned from Jesus. Just as Mary cherished that limited time with Jesus, we cherish our time with Jehovah. *w22.01* 27 ¶5-6

Friday, September 22

Have you seen how Ahab has humbled himself on my account?—1 Ki. 21:29.

Although Ahab humbled himself before Jehovah, his later conduct showed that he was not truly repentant. He did not try to remove Baal worship from his kingdom. And he did not promote the worship of Jehovah. After Ahab died, Jehovah revealed how he viewed that man. God's prophet Jehu said he was "wicked." (2 Chron. 19:1, 2) Now consider: If Ahab's repentance had been genuine, surely the prophet would not have described him as a wicked man who hated Jehovah. Clearly, although Ahab had shown a degree of regret, he never fully repented. What can we learn from Ahab's example? When he heard Elijah's message of calamity against his family line, Ahab initially humbled himself. That was a good start. But his later actions showed that he was not repentant at heart. Repentance, then, must involve more than temporarily expressing sorrow. *w21.10 3 ¶4-5, 7-8*

Saturday, September 23

This good news of the Kingdom will be preached.—Matt. 24:14.

Isaiah was a prophet, and it may well be that his wife had her own prophetic assignments, since she is called "the prophetess." (Isa. 8:1-4) As a couple, Isaiah and his wife were evidently focused on their worship of Jehovah. Married couples today can also build their life around serving Jehovah by doing all they can in his service. They can reinforce their trust in Jehovah

by studying Bible prophecy together and seeing how it always comes true. (Titus 1:2) They can reflect on the share they can have in the fulfillment of certain Bible prophecies. For example, they can have a part in fulfilling Jesus' prophecy that the good news will be preached in all the earth before the end comes. The more a couple are certain that Bible prophecy is coming true, the greater will be their determination to do as much as possible for Jehovah. *w21.11 16 ¶9-10*

Sunday, September 24

*He said to the disciple:
"See! Your mother!"
—John 19:27.*

Jesus was concerned about his mother, who was likely a widow. Moved by love and concern for Mary, Jesus entrusted her care to John, knowing that he would care for her spiritual welfare. From that day on, John became like a son to Mary and cared for her as if she were his mother. What love Jesus showed to the precious woman who had tenderly cared for him at his birth and was standing near him at his death! What can we learn from Jesus' words? Our bond with our Christian brothers and sisters can be stronger than our ties to immediate family members. Our relatives may oppose us or even abandon us, but as Jesus promised, by sticking to Jehovah and His organization, we will "get 100 times more" than we have lost. Many will become to us like a loving son, daughter, mother, or father. (Mark 10:29, 30) How do you feel about being part of a spiritual family who are united by faith and love—love for Jehovah and for one another?—Col. 3:14; 1 Pet. 2:17. *w21.04 9-11 ¶7-8*

Monday, September 25

Do not forget to do good and to share what you have with others.

—*Heb. 13:16.*

Loyal love goes beyond what is expected. Today, as in the past, many of our brothers and sisters have chosen to show loyal love for fellow believers, even to those whom they do not know personally. For example, when they learn that a natural disaster has occurred, they immediately want to know how they can help. When someone in the congregation falls on hard times, they do not hesitate to reach out to that person and help in practical ways. Like the first-century Macedonians, they do more than what is expected. They make personal sacrifices, giving “even beyond their means” in order to help their less fortunate brothers. (2 Cor. 8:3) Observant elders today gratefully acknowledge the help that loving brothers and sisters provide. Timely and warm commendation will give the brothers and sisters the strength they need to carry on.—Isa. 32:1, 2. *w21.11* 11 ¶14; 12 ¶21

Tuesday, September 26

Incline your ear and listen to the words of the wise.—Prov. 22:17.

All of us need counsel from time to time. In some cases, we may take the initiative to ask someone we respect for advice. In other cases, a concerned brother may approach us and point out that we are about to take “a false step”—one that we will regret. (Gal. 6:1) Finally, counsel may come to us in the form of correction after we have made a serious mistake. Whatever form it takes, we should listen to counsel.

Doing so is good for us and could save our life! (Prov. 6:23) Our day’s text encourages us to “listen to the words of the wise.” No human knows everything; there is always someone who has greater knowledge or experience than we do. (Prov. 12:15) So listening to counsel is a sign of humility. It indicates that we are aware of our limitations; we realize that we need help to reach our goals. Wise King Solomon wrote: “There is accomplishment through many advisers [or “counselors,” ftn.]”—Prov. 15:22. *w22.02* 8 ¶1-2

Wednesday, September 27

The one covering over his transgressions will not succeed, but whoever confesses and abandons them will be shown mercy.

—*Prov. 28:13.*

True repentance involves more than saying we are sorry that we have pursued a sinful course. It also involves a genuine change of mind and heart. This includes abandoning a wrong course and turning around to walk in Jehovah’s ways again. (Ezek. 33:14-16) A sinner’s primary concern should be to repair his damaged relationship with Jehovah. What should we do if we learn that a close friend of ours has committed a serious sin? We would only harm our friend by trying to cover up his sin. Such efforts never succeed anyway because Jehovah is watching. (Prov. 5:21, 22) You can help your friend by reminding him that the elders want to help. If your friend refuses to confess to the elders, you should inform the elders about the matter, thereby showing that you truly want to help him. *w21.10* 7 ¶19-21

Thursday, September 28

Look out not only for your own interests, but also for the interests of others.—Phil. 2:4.

All of us can learn to imitate Jesus' self-sacrificing spirit. The Bible says that he "took a slave's form." (Phil. 2:7) A valued slave, or servant, would look for opportunities to please his master. As a slave of Jehovah and a servant to your brothers, no doubt you desire to become even more useful to Jehovah and to your fellow believers. Ask yourself: 'How willing am I to make personal sacrifices to help others? Am I quick to offer my help when there is a need for volunteers to clean a convention site or to maintain the Kingdom Hall?' Suppose you discern that you need to improve in some aspect, but you lack the motivation to make the necessary changes. In that case, turn to Jehovah in earnest prayer. Tell Jehovah how you feel, and ask him to give you "both the desire and the power to act."—Phil. 2:13. *w22.02* 22-23 ¶9-11

Friday, September 29

*I will refresh you.
—Matt. 11:28.*

Jesus showed kindness by being gentle and yielding, even under difficult circumstances. (Matt. 11:29, 30) For instance, when a Phoenician woman begged him to heal her child, he declined her request at first, but when she showed great faith, he kindly healed her child. (Matt. 15:22-28) Although he was kind, Jesus was not overly sentimental. Sometimes he showed kindness by being firm with those

he loved. For instance, when Peter tried to discourage Jesus from doing Jehovah's will, Jesus rebuked him in front of the other disciples. (Mark 8:32, 33) He did this, not to humiliate Peter, but to train him and to warn the other disciples not to be presumptuous. No doubt Peter felt some embarrassment, but he benefited from the discipline. To be genuinely kind to those you love, at times you may have to speak frankly to them. When you do so, imitate Jesus by basing your counsel on principles found in God's Word. *w22.03* 11 ¶12-13

Saturday, September 30

Let us always offer to God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of our lips that make public declaration to his name.—Heb. 13:15.

We worship Jehovah when we praise him. (Ps. 34:1) We praise Jehovah by speaking appreciatively of his marvelous qualities and his works. Praise springs from a grateful heart. By taking the time to meditate on Jehovah's goodness—on all the things he has done for us—we will never run out of reasons to praise him. The preaching work gives us an especially fine opportunity to "offer to God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of our lips." Just as we should give careful thought to what we are going to say before approaching Jehovah in prayer, we do well to think carefully about what we will say to those we come in contact with in our ministry. We want our "sacrifice of praise" to be our very best. We speak from our heart when we share the truth with others. *w22.03* 21 ¶8

Sunday, October 1

*Happy is the one who finds
no cause for stumbling in me.*

—Matt. 11:6.

God's Word forms the basis for our teachings and beliefs. Even so, many today are stumbled because they think that our way of worship is too simple and that what we teach does not match what they want to hear. How can we avoid being stumbled? The apostle Paul told Christians living in Rome: "Faith follows the thing heard. In turn, what is heard is through the word about Christ." (Rom. 10:17) So we build up our faith by studying the Scriptures, not by participating in unscriptural religious ceremonies, no matter how pleasing to the eye these ceremonies might be. We must acquire strong faith based on accurate knowledge because "without faith it is impossible to please God well." (Heb. 11:1, 6) Thus, we do not need to see a spectacular sign from heaven to prove that we have found the truth. A careful examination of the Bible's faith-strengthening teachings is enough to convince us and to dispel any doubt. *w21.05* 4-5 ¶11-12

Monday, October 2

*My situation has actually turned
out for the advancement of the
good news.—Phil. 1:12.*

The apostle Paul faced many challenges. He especially needed strength when he was beaten, stoned, and imprisoned. (2 Cor. 11:23-25) Paul openly admitted that he at times battled negative emotions. (Rom. 7:18, 19, 24) He also endured "a thorn in the flesh" of some sort, which he desperately wanted God to remove. (2 Cor. 12:7, 8) Jehovah empowered Paul to car-

ry out his ministry despite all the challenges he faced. Consider what Paul accomplished. For example, while he was housebound—in custody in Rome—he zealously defended the good news before Jewish leaders and perhaps before government officials. (Acts 28:17; Phil. 4:21, 22) He also preached to many in the Praetorian Guard, and he witnessed to all who visited him. (Acts 28:30, 31; Phil. 1:13) During that same time, Paul wrote inspired letters that benefit true Christians to this day. *w21.05* 21 ¶4-5

Tuesday, October 3

*"Do not go beyond the things that
are written," so that you may not
be puffed up with pride.*

—1 Cor. 4:6.

Pride led King Uzziah of Judah to resist counsel and to act presumptuously. Uzziah was a very capable man. He was successful in military campaigns, in construction projects, and in agricultural developments. "The true God made him prosper." (2 Chron. 26:3-7, 10) "However, as soon as he was strong, his heart became haughty to his own ruin," the Bible says. Jehovah had earlier commanded that only the priests were allowed to offer incense at the temple. But King Uzziah presumptuously went into the temple to offer incense. Jehovah was not pleased and struck that proud man with leprosy. (2 Chron. 26:16-21) Could pride lead us into a snare like the one that caught Uzziah? Yes, it could, if we think too much of ourselves. Let us remember that any talents we have and any privileges we receive in the congregation are from Jehovah. (1 Cor. 4:7) If we are proud, Jehovah will not use us. *w21.06* 16 ¶7-8

Wednesday, October 4

Do not rejoice because the spirits are made subject to you, but rejoice because your names have been written in the heavens.

—Luke 10:20.

Jesus knew that his disciples would not always have outstanding experiences in their ministry. In fact, we do not know how many of those who initially listened to the disciples became believers. The disciples needed to find joy not just through their accomplishments but, more important, from knowing that Jehovah was pleased with their diligent efforts. If we endure in our ministry, we will gain everlasting life. As we wholeheartedly sow and cultivate seeds of Kingdom truth, we are also “sowing with a view to the spirit” by allowing God’s holy spirit to operate freely in our life. As long as we do not “give up” or “tire out,” Jehovah guarantees that we will reap everlasting life, regardless of whether we help a new disciple to dedicate himself to God.—Gal. 6:7-9. *w21.10* 26 ¶8-9

Thursday, October 5

He was moved with pity for them . . . And he started to teach them many things.

—Mark 6:34.

On one occasion, Jesus and his disciples were exhausted from their intensive preaching activity. They needed a place where they could rest, but a large crowd found them. Moved with pity, Jesus began teaching the people “many things.” Jesus put himself in the place of the people in the crowd. He

saw how much they were suffering—how much they needed hope—and he wanted to help them. People today are in the same condition. Do not be misled by their outward appearance. They are like sheep straying helplessly, having no shepherd to guide them. The apostle Paul described people like this as being without God and having no hope. (Eph. 2:12) When we consider the spiritual condition of those in our territory, love and compassion move us to help them. And the best way we can help is by offering to study the Bible with them. *w21.07* 5 ¶8

Friday, October 6

Let us not become egotistical, . . . envying one another.

—Gal. 5:26.

An egotistical person is proud and selfish. An envious person not only wants what another person has but also wants to deprive the other person of what he has. Really, envy is a form of hatred. The negative qualities of egotism and envy could be likened to impurities contaminating the fuel that powers an aircraft. The plane may be able to take off, but the contaminants can block the fuel lines, causing the plane to crash. Similarly, someone may serve Jehovah for a while. But if he is motivated by egotism and envy, he will crash. (Prov. 16:18) He will stop serving Jehovah and will harm himself and others. We can combat egotism by keeping in mind the apostle Paul’s counsel: “Do nothing out of contentiousness or out of egotism, but with humility consider others superior to you.” —Phil. 2:3. *w21.07* 15-16 ¶6-8

Saturday, October 7

The good news we preach did not come to you with speech alone but also with power and with holy spirit and with strong conviction.

—1 Thess. 1:5.

Some feel that the true religion should be able to answer every question, even questions that are not specifically addressed in the Bible. Is that a realistic expectation? Consider the apostle Paul's example. He encouraged fellow believers to "make sure of all things," but he also admitted that there were many things he did not understand. (1 Thess. 5:21) "We have partial knowledge," he wrote, adding, "we see in hazy outline by means of a metal mirror." (1 Cor. 13:9, 12) Paul did not understand everything; nor do we. But Paul did see the general outline of Jehovah's purposes. He knew enough to be convinced that he had the truth! One way we can strengthen our conviction that we have found the truth is by comparing the pattern of worship set by Jesus with what Jehovah's Witnesses are doing today. *w21.10* 18-19 ¶2-4

Sunday, October 8

After the age of 50 years, he will retire. —Num. 8:25.

Older ones, whether you are in full-time service or not, you can do much to help others. How? Adapt to your changed circumstances, set new goals, and focus on what you can do rather than on what you cannot do. King David wanted to build a house for Jehovah. But when Jehovah informed him that this privilege would be given to young Solomon, David accepted Jehovah's decision

and gave his wholehearted support to the project. (1 Chron. 17:4; 22:5) David did not feel that he was the better one for the assignment because Solomon was "young and inexperienced." (1 Chron. 29:1) David knew that the success of the construction project depended on Jehovah's blessing, not on the age or the experience of those taking the lead. In imitation of David, older ones today remain active even when their role changes. And they know that Jehovah will bless the young ones who are doing the work they once did. *w21.09* 9 ¶4; 10 ¶5, 8

Monday, October 9

He will guide the meek in what is right, and he will teach the meek ones his way. —Ps. 25:9.

Spiritual goals give our life direction and purpose. The key, however, is to set goals according to our abilities and circumstances, not those of others. We do not want to set ourselves up for disappointment and discouragement. (Luke 14:28) As a servant of Jehovah, you are a unique and valued member of his diverse family. Jehovah did not draw you to himself because you were better than your neighbors. He drew you because he looked into your heart and saw a meek and teachable person whom he could mold. Be assured that he appreciates it when you do your best to serve him. Your endurance and your faithfulness are evidence of "a fine and good heart." (Luke 8:15) So continue to give Jehovah your best. Then you will have good reason to rejoice "in regard to [yourself] alone."—Gal. 6:4. *w21.07* 24 ¶15; 25 ¶20

Tuesday, October 10

Whoever turns a sinner back from the error of his way will save him.

—Jas. 5:20.

We often need to be patient while waiting for justice to be done. For instance, when the elders become aware of serious wrongdoing in the congregation, they prayerfully seek “wisdom from above” so that they can get Jehovah’s view on the situation. (Jas. 3:17) Their goal is to help the one who is sinning to turn “back from the error of his way” if possible. (Jas. 5:19, 20) They also want to do everything they can to protect the congregation and to comfort those who have been hurt. (2 Cor. 1:3, 4) And when handling cases of serious wrongdoing, the elders must first get all the facts, which may take some time. Then they prayerfully and carefully provide counsel from the Scriptures and apply correction “to the proper degree.” (Jer. 30:11) The elders do not rush to judgment. When matters are handled properly, the congregation will see the greatest good come to all. *w21.08 11 ¶12-13*

Wednesday, October 11

Where you go I will go . . . Your people will be my people, and your God my God.

—Ruth 1:16.

Because of a famine in Israel, Naomi, her husband, and two sons moved to Moab. While there, Naomi’s husband died. Her two sons got married, but sadly, they too died. (Ruth 1:3-5) Those blows caused Naomi to sink deeper and deeper into despair. She became so over-

whelmed by anguish that she concluded that Jehovah was opposing her. Note how she expressed her feelings about God: “The hand of Jehovah has turned against me.” “The Almighty has made life very bitter for me.” She also said: “It is Jehovah who opposed me and the Almighty who caused me calamity.” (Ruth 1:13, 20, 21) Jehovah understands that “oppression can drive the wise one into madness.” (Eccl. 7:7) He moved Ruth to reach out and show loyal love to Naomi. Willingly and gently, Ruth helped her mother-in-law to regain her emotional and spiritual balance. *w21.11 9 ¶9; 10 ¶10, 13*

Thursday, October 12

Keep asking God.

—Jas. 1:5.

Does focusing on our present assignments mean that we should stop looking for ways to expand our service to Jehovah? By no means! We can and should set spiritual goals that help us to keep stretching forward in our efforts to be productive in the ministry and helpful to our brothers and sisters. We succeed when we wisely and modestly focus on serving others instead of ourselves. (Prov. 11:2; Acts 20:35) What goals might you set for yourself? Ask Jehovah to help you discern what you can realistically hope to accomplish. (Prov. 16:3) Could you pursue the goal of becoming an auxiliary or a regular pioneer, serving at Bethel, or sharing in theocratic construction projects? Or maybe you are in a position to learn a new language in order to spread the good news or even to preach in a foreign territory. *w21.08 23 ¶14-15*

Friday, October 13

[Jehovah's] loyal love endures forever.

—Ps. 136:1.

Jehovah takes delight in loyal love. (Hos. 6:6) By means of the prophet Micah, our God urges us “to love loyal love.” (Mic. 6:8, ftn.) Obviously, before we can do that, we need to know what loyal love is. What is loyal love? The expression “loyal love” occurs some 230 times in the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*. What is it? According to the “Glossary of Bible Terms” found in that translation, it refers to “love motivated by commitment, integrity, loyalty, and deep attachment. It is often used in connection with God’s love for humans, but it is also love shown between humans.” Jehovah is the supreme example of loyal love. No wonder King David was moved to exclaim: “O Jehovah, your loyal love reaches to the heavens . . . How precious your loyal love is, O God!” (Ps. 36:5, 7) Like David, do we deeply appreciate God’s loyal love? *w21.11* 2 ¶1-2; 3 ¶4

Saturday, October 14

*You must pray, then, this way:
“Our Father in the heavens.”*

—Matt. 6:9.

Jehovah’s family of worshippers includes Jesus, who is “the first-born of all creation,” and a multitude of angels. (Col. 1:15; Ps. 103:20) When Jesus was on earth, he indicated that faithful humans can view Jehovah as their Father. Speaking to his disciples, Jesus referred to Jehovah as “my Father and your Father.” (John 20:17) And when we dedicate ourselves to Jehovah and get baptized, we become part of a

loving family of brothers and sisters. (Mark 10:29, 30) Jehovah is a loving Father. Jesus wants us to view Jehovah the way he does—as a warm and loving parent who is easy to approach, not as a cold authority figure. He began the model prayer with the words: “Our Father.” Jesus could have directed us to call Jehovah “the Almighty,” “the Creator,” or “the King of eternity”—all of which are appropriate and Scriptural titles. (Gen. 49:25; Isa. 40:28; 1 Tim. 1:17) However, Jesus used the intimate term “Father.” *w21.09* 20 ¶1, 3

Sunday, October 15

*Manasseh came to know that
Jehovah is the true God.*

—2 Chron. 33:13.

King Manasseh stubbornly ignored warnings that Jehovah gave him by means of His prophets. Finally, “Jehovah brought against [Judah] the army chiefs of the king of Assyria, and they captured Manasseh with hooks and bound him with two copper fetters and took him to Babylon.” There, imprisoned in a foreign land, Manasseh apparently did some serious thinking. He “kept humbling himself greatly before the God of his forefathers.” He went even further. “He begged Jehovah his God for favor.” In fact, Manasseh “kept praying to Him.” (2 Chron. 33:10-12) In time, Jehovah answered Manasseh’s prayers. He saw the changes in that man’s heart, as reflected in his prayers. Jehovah was moved by Manasseh’s entreaty and restored him to the throne. Manasseh took full advantage of the opportunity to demonstrate the depth of his repentance. *w21.10* 4 ¶10-11

Monday, October 16

Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their hard work.—Eccl. 4:9.

Aquila and Priscilla had to leave familiar surroundings, set up a new home, and establish their tent-making business in a new location. In their new home in Corinth, Aquila and Priscilla got involved with the local congregation and worked along with the apostle Paul to strengthen the brothers there. Later, they moved to other towns where there was a greater need for preachers. (Acts 18:18-21; Rom. 16:3-5) What a rich and rewarding life they must have enjoyed together! Modern-day couples can imitate Priscilla and Aquila by putting Kingdom interests first. The best time for a couple to talk about their goals in life is while they are courting. When a couple make decisions together and strive to reach common spiritual goals, they have more opportunities to see Jehovah's spirit at work in their life.—Eccl. 4:12. *w21.11 17 ¶11-12*

Tuesday, October 17

*Each of you should respect his mother and his father . . . I am Jehovah your God.
—Lev. 19:3.*

Clearly, we ought to take to heart God's direction to honor our parents. Bear in mind that the direction found at Leviticus 19:3—to respect one's mother and father—comes right after the statement: "You should be holy, because I, Jehovah your God, am holy." (Lev. 19:2) In harmony with Jehovah's counsel to honor our parents,

we might ask ourselves, 'How am I doing in this regard?' If you feel that you should have done more in the past, you could decide now to make improvements. You cannot change the past, but you can be resolved from this point on to do more with and for your parents. Perhaps you could arrange to spend more time with them. Or what about offering them more support materially, spiritually, or emotionally? Doing so is in line with what Leviticus 19:3 says. *w21.12 4-5 ¶10-12*

Wednesday, October 18

*Stop judging.
—Matt. 7:1.*

King David made serious mistakes. For example, he committed adultery with Bath-sheba, and he even had her husband killed. (2 Sam. 11:2-4, 14, 15, 24) As a result, David hurt not only himself but also his family, including his other wives. (2 Sam. 12:10, 11) On another occasion, David failed to manifest full reliance on Jehovah when he ordered an illegal registration of Israel's army. What was the outcome? Some 70,000 Israelites died from pestilence! (2 Sam. 24:1-4, 10-15) Would you judge David to be unworthy of Jehovah's mercy? Jehovah did not. He focused on David's overall record of faithfulness and his sincere repentance. As a result, Jehovah forgave David for these serious sins. Jehovah knew that David loved him very much and wanted to do what was right. Are you not grateful that our God looks for the good in us? —1 Ki. 9:4; 1 Chron. 29:10, 17. *w21.12 19 ¶11-13*

Thursday, October 19

Instantly he recovered his sight, and he began to follow him, glorifying God.—Luke 18:43.

Jesus showed compassion to those who had physical limitations. Recall the report he sent to John the Baptist: “The blind are now seeing, the lame are walking, the lepers are being cleansed, the deaf are hearing, [and] the dead are being raised up.” In response to Jesus’ miracles, “all the people gave praise to God.” (Luke 7:20-22) Christians are happy to imitate Jesus’ compassionate attitude toward those who have physical limitations. So we are kind, considerate, and patient with such ones. Granted, Jehovah has not given us the power to perform miracles. We are privileged, though, to tell those who are physically or spiritually blind the good news about a paradise where mankind will be restored to full physical and spiritual health. (Luke 4:18) This good news is already leading many to give praise to God. *w21.12 9 ¶5*

Friday, October 20

You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome Jehovah gave.—Jas. 5:11.

James relied on the Scriptures as his authority. He used God’s Word to help his audience to see that Jehovah always rewards those who, like Job, are loyal to Him. James got his point across by using simple words and logic. In that way, he drew attention, not to himself, but to Jehovah. The lesson: Keep your message simple, and teach from God’s Word. Our goal

should be, not to impress others with how much we know, but to impress them with how much Jehovah knows and how much he cares about them. (Rom. 11:33) We can reach that goal by always basing what we say on the Scriptures. For example, rather than tell our Bible students what we would do in their place, we should help them to reason on Bible examples and to perceive Jehovah’s thinking and feelings. Then they will be motivated by a desire to please Jehovah, not us. *w22.01 11 ¶9-10*

Saturday, October 21

*You must love your fellow man as yourself.
—Lev. 19:18.*

God’s interest in how we treat people includes more than merely telling us to refrain from doing harm to our fellow man. Loving him as much as oneself is fundamental for a Christian who wants to please God. Consider how Jesus emphasized the importance of the command recorded at Leviticus 19:18. A Pharisee once asked Jesus: “Which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied that “the greatest and first commandment” is to love Jehovah with our whole heart, our whole soul, and our whole mind. Then Jesus quoted Leviticus 19:18, saying: “The second, like it, is this: ‘You must love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Matt. 22:35-40) There are countless ways to show love for neighbor. One way is by applying the counsel found at Leviticus 19:18. It says: “You must not take vengeance nor hold a grudge.” *w21.12 10-11 ¶11-13*

Sunday, October 22

Looking at the windstorm, he became afraid. And when he started to sink, he cried out: "Lord, save me!"—Matt. 14:30.

Jesus stretched out his hand and saved the apostle Peter. Significantly, Peter was able to walk on turbulent waters as long as he kept his focus on Jesus. But when Peter looked at the storm, he became overwhelmed with fear and doubt and began to sink. (Matt. 14:24-31) We can learn from Peter's example. When Peter stepped out of the boat and onto the sea, he did not expect to get distracted and start sinking. He wanted to stay on top of the waters until he reached his Master. But he failed to remain focused on that goal. Granted, we cannot walk on water, but we do face tests of faith. If we lose sight of Jehovah and his promises, we will begin to sink spiritually. No matter what figurative storms come up in our life, we must keep our mind focused on Jehovah and his ability to help us. *w21.12* 17-18 ¶6-7

Monday, October 23

I will come into your house because of your great loyal love.
—Ps. 5:7.

Prayer, study, and meditation are part of our worship. When we pray, we are communicating with our heavenly Father, who loves us dearly. When we study the Bible, we are taking in "the knowledge of God," who is the Source of all wisdom. (Prov. 2:1-5) When we meditate, we are considering Jehovah's appealing personality as well as his awe-inspiring purpose for all cre-

ation and how we fit into that purpose. Can you think of a better way to use your time? But how can we get the most from the limited time at our disposal? If possible, choose a quiet setting. Consider the example of Jesus. Before he undertook his earthly ministry, Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness. (Luke 4:1, 2) In that quiet setting, Jesus could pray to Jehovah and meditate on his Father's will for him. Doing so no doubt prepared Jesus for the tests that would soon come his way. *w22.01* 27-28 ¶7-8

Tuesday, October 24

There is accomplishment through many counselors.
—Prov. 15:22, *ftn.*

An elder or another qualified brother might point out something that we need to work on. If someone loves us enough to share Bible-based counsel with us, we should take the counsel to heart. Realistically, we may find it especially difficult to accept direct counsel. We might even become offended. Why? Although we readily admit that we are imperfect, we might find it challenging to accept counsel when someone points out a specific flaw in us. (Eccl. 7:9) We might justify ourselves. We might question the counselor's motives or take offense at the way he gave the counsel. We might even find fault with the counselor himself, reasoning: 'What right does he have to counsel me? He has his own flaws!' Ultimately, if the counsel we receive does not suit us, we might ignore it or look elsewhere for counsel that is more to our liking. *w22.02* 8-9 ¶2-4

Wednesday, October 25

Your strength will be in keeping calm and showing trust.

—Isa. 30:15.

Might life in God's new world present some challenges that could test our trust in Jehovah's way of doing things? Consider, for example, what happened shortly after the Israelites were freed from slavery in Egypt. Some started complaining because they missed the fresh food they had enjoyed there, and they treated Jehovah's provision of manna with contempt. (Num. 11:4-6; 21:5) Might we have similar thoughts after the great tribulation comes to its end? We do not know how much work will be involved in removing the effects of the destruction and in gradually making the earth a paradise. Likely, there will be a lot of work to do and some inconveniences at first. Would we dare to complain about what Jehovah provides at that time? One thing is certain: The more we appreciate Jehovah's provisions now, the more likely we will do so then. *w22.02 7 ¶18-19*

Thursday, October 26

They will take firm hold of the robe of a Jew, saying: "We want to go with you."—Zech. 8:23.

In the prophecy found at Zechariah 8:23, the expressions "a Jew" and "you people" refer to the same group—the anointed remnant. (Rom. 2:28, 29) The "ten men out of all the languages of the nations" represent the other sheep. They "take firm hold of"—loyally attach themselves to—the anointed, joining them in pure worship. Similarly, in fulfill-

ment of the prophecy at Ezekiel 37:15-19, 24, 25, Jehovah has brought the anointed and the other sheep together in an unbreakable bond of unity. The prophecy mentions two sticks. Those with the heavenly hope are like the stick "for Judah" (the tribe from which the kings of Israel were chosen), and those with the earthly hope are like the stick "of Ephraim." Jehovah would unite the two groups so that they would become "one stick." This means that they serve unitedly under their one King, Christ Jesus.—John 10:16. *w22.01 22 ¶9-10*

Friday, October 27

Take care not to practice your righteousness in front of men to be noticed by them.

—Matt. 6:1.

Jesus spoke about those who gave alms to the poor but made sure that others knew about their gifts. Those seemingly good works were of little value to Jehovah. (Matt. 6:2-4) We can be genuinely good only if we do the right thing for unselfish reasons. So you might ask yourself: 'Do I not only know what is the right thing to do but also follow through and actually do it? What is my motive for doing good things?' Jehovah is a God of action, and his spirit is an active force. (Gen. 1:2) So every aspect of the fruitage of the spirit can and must move us to action. For example, the disciple James wrote: "Faith without works is dead." (Jas. 2:26) The same could be said of all the other aspects of the fruitage of God's spirit. Each time we display them, we give evidence that God's spirit is active in us. *w22.03 11-12 ¶14-16*

Saturday, October 28

Like the Holy One who called you, become holy yourselves in all your conduct.—1 Pet. 1:15.

While we may engage in various spiritual activities and do many good works, the apostle Peter highlighted one in particular. Leading up to his encouragement to become holy in all our conduct, Peter urges us: “Brace up your minds for activity.” (1 Pet. 1:13) What would that activity involve? Peter said that Christ’s anointed brothers would “‘declare abroad the excellencies’ of the One who called” them. (1 Pet. 2:9) In fact, all Christians today have the honor of doing this most important work, one that does the greatest amount of good. What a special privilege we have as a holy people to share regularly and zealously in the preaching and teaching work! (Mark 13:10) When we diligently do this, we prove that we love our God and our neighbor. And we show that we want to “become holy” in all our conduct. *w21.12 13 ¶18*

Sunday, October 29

*If you forgive anyone for anything, I do also.
—2 Cor. 2:10.*

The apostle Paul kept a positive view of his brothers and sisters. He knew the difference between bad conduct and bad people. He loved his brothers and focused on their good qualities. If they were struggling to do the right thing, he assumed that their motives were good and that they simply needed help. Consider how Paul dealt with two sisters in the congregation in Phi-

lippi. (Phil. 4:1-3) Euodia and Syntyche seemed to have allowed personal differences to cause a rift between them. Paul was not harsh or judgmental; he focused on their good qualities. They were faithful sisters who had built up a fine record. Paul knew that Jehovah loved them. Paul’s positive view of these sisters motivated him to encourage them to resolve their differences. His outlook also allowed him to keep his joy and maintain strong friendships with those in that congregation. *w22.03 30 ¶16-18*

Monday, October 30

Jehovah is close to the broken-hearted; he saves those who are crushed in spirit.—Ps. 34:18.

The peace that Jehovah gives calms our heart and stabilizes our thoughts. Consider how this proved true for a sister named Luz. She says: “I struggle with feelings of loneliness. At times, those feelings cause me to think that Jehovah does not love me. But when that happens, I immediately tell Jehovah how I feel. Prayer allows me to gain control of my feelings.” As her experience shows, we can find peace through prayer. (Phil. 4:6, 7) We know that Jehovah and Jesus will support us when we lose a loved one in death. We are motivated to preach and teach with compassion because Jehovah God and Jesus Christ show this tender quality. And we find comfort in knowing that Jehovah and his dear Son sympathize with our weaknesses and want to help us endure. We look forward to the day when Jehovah will “wipe out every tear from [our] eyes”! —Rev. 21:4. *w22.01 15 ¶7; 19 ¶19-20*

Tuesday, October 31

Go in through the narrow gate, because broad is the gate and spacious is the road leading off into destruction, and many are going in through it.—Matt. 7:13.

Jesus mentioned two different gates leading to two different roads, a “spacious” road and a “cramped” road. (Matt. 7:14) There is no third road. We must choose for ourselves on which road we will travel. This is the most important decision we will ever make—our everlasting life depends on it. The “spacious” road is popular because it is easy to travel. Sadly, many choose to remain on that road and to follow the crowd traveling on it. They fail to recognize that the one promoting this road is Satan the Devil and that his road leads to a dead end. (1 Cor. 6: 9, 10; 1 John 5:19) In contrast with the “spacious” road, the other road is “cramped,” and Jesus said that few are able to find it. Why? Note that in the next verse, Jesus warns his followers against false prophets.—Matt. 7:15. *w21.12* 22-23 ¶3-5

Wednesday, November 1

They will all be taught by Jehovah.—John 6:45.

Jehovah supports us in a number of ways. He can help you to keep calm when faced with an opposer. He can also help you to recall just the right scripture to share with an interested householder. And he gives you the strength to continue when you meet with indifference in the territory. (Jer. 20:7-9) Jehovah has also shown us his goodness by training us for the ministry. At our midweek meeting, we listen to well-

thought-out sample conversations, and we are encouraged to use them in the ministry. At first, we may be a bit apprehensive about trying something new, but when we do, we may find that the new approach appeals to those in our territory. We are also encouraged at meetings and conventions to engage in forms of the ministry that we might never have tried before. Once again, that will mean leaving our comfort zone, but when we do, we give Jehovah something to bless. *w21.08* 27 ¶5-6

Thursday, November 2

[Make] the best use of your time, because the days are wicked.—Eph. 5:16.

In a letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul gave strong counsel. After writing that letter, he sent Titus to them. How happy he was to find out that they had taken the counsel well! (2 Cor. 7:6, 7) Elders can follow Paul’s example by spending time with fellow worshippers. One way to do this is to arrive early at congregation meetings in order to have meaningful conversations with others. It often takes just a few minutes to provide some loving encouragement that a brother or a sister needs. (Rom. 1:12) An elder who follows Paul’s example will also strengthen fellow worshippers by using God’s Word to build them up and to assure them of God’s love for them. He looks for opportunities to commend them. When an elder must offer counsel, he bases it on God’s Word. He is specific but kind because he cares about how his words are received.—Gal. 6:1. *w22.03* 28-29 ¶11-12

Friday, November 3

We have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the power beyond what is normal may be God's and not from us.—2 Cor. 4:7.

Today, Jehovah gives his people “power beyond what is normal” so that they can continue to serve him faithfully. One way we are strengthened is by means of prayer. As recorded at Ephesians 6:18, the apostle Paul encourages us to pray to God “on every occasion.” In response, God will strengthen us. At times, we may feel overwhelmed or unsure about what we should pray for. But Jehovah invites us to pray to him even if we find it hard to put our thoughts and feelings into words. (Rom. 8:26, 27) He also strengthens us by means of the Bible. Just as Paul relied on the Scriptures for strength and comfort, we too can rely on them. (Rom. 15:4) As we read God’s Word and meditate on it, Jehovah can use his spirit to help us understand better how the Scriptures apply to our situation.—Heb. 4:12. *w21.05 22 ¶8-10*

Saturday, November 4

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

We take seriously our commission to teach even though we face challenges that may keep us from doing as much as we would like to do in making disciples. We may feel limited by our circumstances. For example, some publishers are older or have poor health. Does that describe your situation? If it does, remember we have discovered that we can conduct effective Bible studies electronically! So you may be

able to start and conduct a study from the comfort of your own home. And there is another advantage. Some would enjoy studying the Bible, but they are not available during the times our brothers usually set aside for preaching. However, they may be available early in the morning or late at night. Might you be able to make yourself available to fill that need? Jesus taught Nicodemus at night, which was a time that Nicodemus preferred.—John 3:1, 2. *w21.07 5 ¶10-11*

Sunday, November 5

This people approach me with their mouth and they honor me with their lips, but their heart is far removed from me.—Isa. 29:13.

The disciples of John the Baptist were puzzled because Jesus’ disciples did not fast. Jesus explained that they had no reason to fast while he was still alive. (Matt. 9:14-17) Even so, the Pharisees and other opposers of Jesus condemned him because he did not follow their customs and traditions. They got angry when he chose to heal sick ones on the Sabbath. (Mark 3:1-6; John 9:16) On the one hand, they piously claimed to honor the Sabbath; but on the other hand, they had no problem doing business in the temple. They were furious when Jesus condemned them for it. (Matt. 21:12, 13, 15) And those to whom Jesus preached in the synagogue in Nazareth were incensed when Jesus made unfavorable historical comparisons that exposed their selfishness and lack of faith. (Luke 4:16, 25-30) Jesus’ unexpected behavior caused many to stumble.—Matt. 11:16-19. *w21.05 5-6 ¶13-14*

Monday, November 6

We are not ignorant of his designs.—2 Cor. 2:11.

One of the ways in which Jehovah warns us about pride and greed is by encouraging us to learn from real-life experiences. When we think of greed, Satan the Devil likely comes to mind. As one of Jehovah's angels, Satan must have had many fine privileges. But he wanted more. He wanted the worship that only Jehovah rightly deserves. Satan wants us to become like him, so he tries to make us feel discontented with what we have. That sort of effort started when he approached Eve. Jehovah had lovingly provided Eve and her husband with an abundance of satisfying food to eat—"from every tree of the garden" except one. (Gen. 2:16) Still, Satan deceived Eve into thinking that she needed to eat from the one tree that was forbidden. Eve failed to appreciate what she had; she wanted more. We know what that led to. Eve gave in to sin and eventually died.—Gen. 3:6, 19. *w21.06* 14 ¶2-3; 17 ¶9

Tuesday, November 7

*Be fruitful and become many,
fill the earth and subdue it.
—Gen. 1:28.*

Adam and Eve were to have children and take good care of their earthly home. If they had obediently cooperated with Jehovah's purpose for them, Adam and Eve and their offspring would have remained members of God's family forever. Adam and Eve had an honorable place in Jehovah's family. As recorded at Psalm 8:5 and footnote, David said this about Jehovah's creation of

man: "You made him a little lower than angels, and you crowned him with glory and splendor." True, humans were not given the same power, intelligence, and abilities as the angels. (Ps. 103:20) Yet, mankind is only "a little lower" than those mighty spirit creatures. Sadly, Adam and Eve lost their place in Jehovah's family. This has had disastrous consequences for their descendants. But Jehovah's purpose has not changed. He wants obedient humans to be his children forever. *w21.08* 2-3 ¶2-4

Wednesday, November 8

"Not by a military force, nor by power, but by my spirit," says Jehovah.—Zech. 4:6.

Today, many of Jehovah's worshippers face opposition. For example, some live in lands where our work is restricted and they may be arrested and "brought before governors and kings" for a witness to them. (Matt. 10:17, 18) Other Witnesses face opposition of a different sort. They live in a country where there is considerable freedom to worship Jehovah, but they still face opposition from family members who are determined to stop them from serving their God. (Matt. 10:32-36) In many cases, when opposers realize that their efforts to discourage their Witness relatives are in vain, they stop opposing them. And in some cases, those who were once violently opposed have later become zealous Witnesses. When you face opposition, do not give up! Be courageous. You have Jehovah and his powerful holy spirit on your side, so you have nothing to fear! *w22.03* 16 ¶8

Thursday, November 9

*O you who love Jehovah,
hate what is bad.*

—Ps. 97:10.

The Bible reveals that Jehovah hates “haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood.” (Prov. 6:16, 17) He also “detests violent and deceptive people.” (Ps. 5:6) Jehovah hates these attitudes and actions so much that he wiped out all the wicked in Noah’s day because they had filled the earth with violence. (Gen. 6:13) Also, through the prophet Malachi, Jehovah said that He hates those who treacherously scheme to divorce their innocent marriage partner. God rejects their worship and will call them to account for their conduct. (Mal. 2:13-16; Heb. 13:4) Jehovah wants us to “abhor what is wicked.” (Rom. 12:9) The word “abhor” describes a strong emotional response; it means to hate something intensely, to be disgusted by it. Therefore, even the thought of doing something that Jehovah says is bad should be repulsive to us. *w22.03* 4-5 ¶11-12

Friday, November 10

*Happy are all those keeping
in expectation of him.*

—Isa. 30:18.

Soon our heavenly Father will bless us richly by means of his Kingdom. Those who keep in expectation of Jehovah will receive many blessings both now and in the new world to come. When God’s people enter into the new world, they will never again have to endure the anxieties and the challenges that they must face today. Injustice will

be gone, and pain will be no more. (Rev. 21:4) We will not have to wait anxiously for what we need because there will be an abundance. (Ps. 72:16; Isa. 54:13) What a blessing that will be! In the meantime, with every bad habit we conquer and every godly quality we develop, Jehovah is preparing us for life under his rulership. Do not lose heart, and do not give up. The best is yet to come! With a bright future ahead of us, may we continue to wait willingly and patiently on Jehovah as he completes his work! *w21.08* 13 ¶17-19

Saturday, November 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.*

Not long after receiving the apostle Paul’s letter, Christians in Judea had to leave their homes, their businesses, and their unbelieving relatives and had to “begin fleeing to the mountains.” (Matt. 24:16) At that time, there was no doubt an urgent need for them to help one another. If prior to this they had been applying Paul’s advice to share what they had with one another, they would have found it easier to adapt to their new way of life. Our brothers and sisters may not always let us know about their needs. So be approachable. No doubt you know brothers and sisters in your congregation who are always ready to help others. They never make us feel that we are imposing on them. We know that we can count on them when a need arises, and we would love to be just like them! *w22.02* 23-24 ¶13-15

Sunday, November 12

*Maintain the oneness of the spirit
in the uniting bond of peace.*

—Eph. 4:3.

In recent years many congregations and circuits have been reorganized. If we are asked to join a new congregation, we may find it difficult to leave friends and family. Do the elders receive divine direction that tells them where to assign each publisher? No. And that fact might make it challenging for us to follow the direction we receive. But Jehovah trusts the elders to make such decisions, and we too need to trust them. Why should we cooperate with the elders and support their decisions even when the decisions are not what we would have preferred? Because in doing so, we help preserve the unity among God's people. Congregations thrive when all humbly submit to the decisions reached by the body of elders. (Heb. 13:17) More important, we show Jehovah that we trust in him by cooperating with those whom he trusts to care for us.—Acts 20:28.
w22.02 4-5 ¶9-10

Monday, November 13

*Continue applying yourself to
public reading, to exhortation,
to teaching.—1 Tim. 4:13.*

If you are a baptized brother, you might work on improving your speaking and teaching ability. Why? Because your getting “absorbed in” reading, speaking, and teaching will be a blessing to your listeners. (1 Tim. 4:15) Try setting the goal of studying and applying each speech quality discussed in the brochure *Apply Yourself to Reading*

and Teaching. Study one quality at a time, practice diligently at home, and endeavor to manifest that quality in your talk assignments. Seek out suggestions from the auxiliary counselor or other elders “who work hard in speaking and teaching.” (1 Tim. 5:17) Focus not only on understanding the technique but also on helping your listeners to strengthen their faith or on motivating them to take a certain course of action. By doing so, you will enhance your joy and theirs.
w21.08 24 ¶17

Tuesday, November 14

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

If we consider others superior to us, we will not compete with those who may have greater talents and abilities than we possess. On the contrary, we will be happy for them. That is especially true if they are using their abilities in Jehovah's service to his praise. As a result, we will all promote peace and unity in the congregation. We can control our tendency toward envy by cultivating modesty, that is, by being aware of our own limitations. If we are modest, we will not try to prove that we are more talented or more capable than everyone else. Instead, we will look at how we can learn from those who are more capable than we are. For example, suppose a brother in the congregation gives excellent public talks. We might ask him how he goes about preparing his talks. If a sister is a fine cook, we might ask her for suggestions that will help us to improve in that area. w21.07 16 ¶8-9

Wednesday, November 15

[Jehovah] is never unjust.

—Deut. 32:4.

In the book of Numbers, we read that Jehovah sentenced an Israelite to death for collecting wood on the Sabbath. In the second book of Samuel, we learn that centuries later, Jehovah pardoned King David for committing adultery and murder. (Num. 15:32, 35; 2 Sam. 12:9, 13) We might wonder, ‘Why did Jehovah forgive David for murder and adultery but sentence the other man to death for a seemingly less serious transgression?’ The Bible does not always provide all the details of an account. For example, we know that David was sincerely repentant of his actions. (Ps. 51:2-4) But what kind of person was the man who broke the Sabbath law? Was he sorry for what he had done? Had he disobeyed Jehovah’s laws in the past? Had he ignored or even rejected previous warnings? The Bible does not say. However, we know more than enough about our God to be certain that he “is righteous in all his ways.”—Ps. 145:17. *w22.02* 2-3 ¶3-4

Thursday, November 16

Wisdom is with the modest ones.

—Prov. 11:2.

A modest person will adjust his expectations of how much he can do. As a result, he will remain happy and productive. We could compare a modest person with someone driving a vehicle uphill. The driver needs to change to a lower gear in order to continue driving up the slope. True, he will probably travel more slowly, but he will keep moving forward. Similarly, a mod-

est person knows when it is time to “change to a lower gear” so that he can continue to be active and productive in Jehovah’s service. (Phil. 4:5) Note the example of Barzillai, who was 80 years old when King David invited him to become part of the royal court. Modest Barzillai declined the king’s offer. Recognizing his personal limitations, Barzillai recommended that a younger man, Chimham, go in his place. (2 Sam. 19:35-37) Like Barzillai, older men are happy to give younger men the opportunity to serve. *w21.09* 10 ¶6-7

Friday, November 17

No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son is willing to reveal him.—Luke 10:22.

Do you find it difficult to view Jehovah as a loving Father? Some of us do. We may find the idea of a loving parent hard to grasp because our upbringing was painful. How comforting it is to know that Jehovah completely understands our feelings! He wants to be close to us. That is why his Word urges us: “Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you.” (Jas. 4:8) Jehovah loves us, and he offers to be the best Father we could ever have. Jesus can help us to draw closer to Jehovah. Jesus knows Jehovah so well and reflects His qualities so perfectly that he said: “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father also.” (John 14:9) Like an older brother, Jesus teaches us how to respect and obey our Father, how to avoid displeasing Him, and how to gain His approval. But Jesus’ life course on earth especially reveals how kind and loving Jehovah is. *w21.09* 21 ¶4-5

Saturday, November 18

*Shepherd the flock of God
under your care.*

—1 Pet. 5:2.

Jehovah's people are united in worship of the one true God. Jehovah has entrusted the elders with the weighty responsibility of keeping the congregation clean. If a Christian commits a serious sin, Jehovah expects the elders to determine whether that individual can remain in the congregation. Among other things, they need to find out whether the person is truly sorry for what he did. He may claim to be repentant, but does he truly hate what he did? Is he determined not to repeat the sin? If bad associations led up to the wrongdoing, is he willing to cut off those associations? The elders prayerfully consider the facts in the light of the Scriptures, taking into account the wrongdoer's attitude toward what happened. Then they decide whether the wrongdoer may remain in the congregation. In some cases, he must be disfellowshipped.—1 Cor. 5:11-13. *w22.02* 5 ¶11-12

Sunday, November 19

*Clothe yourselves with
the new personality.*

—Col. 3:10.

Whether we have been baptized for just a few days or for many decades, all of us want to have the kind of personality that Jehovah loves. To be that type of person, we need to control our thinking. Why? Because our personality is largely shaped by our thoughts. If we regularly think about what appeals to our fleshly desires, we will say and do bad things. (Eph. 4:17-19) On the

other hand, if we fill our mind with good thoughts, we will more likely speak and act in a way that pleases our Father, Jehovah. (Gal. 5:16) However, we cannot stop all bad thoughts from entering our mind. But we can choose not to act on such thoughts. Before we get baptized, we need to stop speaking and acting in a way that Jehovah hates. That is the first and most important step in stripping off the old personality. To please Jehovah fully, however, we must also put on the new personality. *w22.03* 8 ¶1-2

Monday, November 20

*In every respect you demonstrated
yourselves to be pure in this
matter.—2 Cor. 7:11.*

It is no easy task for the elders to determine whether someone who has committed a serious sin is now truly repentant. Why not? The elders cannot read hearts, so they must rely on outward evidence that their brother has had a complete change of viewpoint toward his sin. They need to see evidence of genuine changes in the sinner's thinking, feelings, and conduct. It might take the man considerable time to make the needed changes. To show that he is genuinely repentant, a disfellowshipped person would come to the meetings regularly and follow the elders' counsel to have a good routine of prayer and study. He would also diligently avoid the circumstances that led to his wrongdoing. If he works hard to repair his relationship with Jehovah, he can be assured that Jehovah will forgive him fully and that the elders will restore him to the congregation. *w21.10* 6 ¶16-18

Tuesday, November 21

You must not make for yourself a carved image or a form like anything that is in the heavens above or on the earth below . . . You must not bow down to them.

—Ex. 20:4, 5.

Moved by his deep love for God, Jesus worshipped Jehovah exclusively, both when he was in heaven and when he was on earth. (Luke 4:8) He taught his disciples to do likewise. Neither Jesus nor his faithful disciples ever used images in worship. Since God is a Spirit, nothing that man could possibly conceive could even come close to representing Jehovah's glory! (Isa. 46:5) But what about making images of so-called saints and praying to them? In the second of the Ten Commandments, Jehovah said the words of today's text. Those words are clear to those who desire to please God. Secular historians have acknowledged that the early Christians gave exclusive devotion to God. Today, Jehovah's Witnesses follow the pattern set by the first-century Christians. *w21.10* 19-20 ¶5-6

Wednesday, November 22

Let the man on the housetop not come down to take the goods out of his house.—Matt. 24:17.

Jesus warned the first-century Christians living in Judea that the time would come when the city of Jerusalem would be "surrounded by encamped armies." (Luke 21:20-24) When that occurred, they needed to "begin fleeing to the mountains." Their flight would lead to their salvation, but it would come

at a high cost. Some years ago, *The Watchtower* put it this way: "They left fields and homes, not even gathering their possessions from their houses. Confident of the protection and support of Jehovah, they put his worship ahead of everything else that might seem important." It added: "There may be tests ahead as to how we view material things; are they the most important thing, or is the salvation that will come for all on God's side more important? Yes, our fleeing may involve some hardships and deprivations. We will have to be ready to do whatever it takes." *w22.01* 4 ¶7-8

Thursday, November 23

How precious your loyal love is, O God!—Ps. 36:7.

Not long after Israel's Exodus from Egypt, Jehovah revealed himself to Moses by declaring His name and qualities. He said: "Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and compassionate, slow to anger and abundant in loyal love and truth, showing loyal love to thousands, pardoning error and transgression and sin." (Ex. 34:6, 7) With this heart-warming statement about His qualities, Jehovah revealed to Moses a unique characteristic of His loyal love. What is it? Jehovah described himself not merely as having loyal love but as being "abundant in loyal love." That description is mentioned six more times in the Bible. (Num. 14:18; Neh. 9:17; Ps. 86:15; 103:8; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2) In all instances, that description refers only to Jehovah, never to humans. Is it not remarkable that Jehovah himself so strongly emphasized his quality of loyal love? *w21.11* 2-3 ¶3-4

Friday, November 24

Stop being anxious about your lives.—Matt. 6:25.

Married couples can learn from the example set by the apostle Peter and his wife. About six months to a year after his first encounter with Jesus, the apostle Peter had to make an important decision. Peter made his living in the fishing business. So when Jesus invited Peter to follow him full-time, Peter had to take into account his family situation. (Luke 5:1-11) Peter chose to accompany Jesus in his preaching activity. And evidently, his wife supported his decision. The Bible indicates that after Jesus' resurrection, she traveled with Peter for at least some of the time. (1 Cor. 9:5) Undoubtedly, her example as a Christian wife gave Peter freeness of speech to record inspired counsel for Christian husbands and wives. (1 Pet. 3:1-7) Obviously, both Peter and his wife trusted Jehovah's promise that He would provide for them if they put the Kingdom first in their life.—Matt. 6:31-34. *w21.11* 18 ¶14

Saturday, November 25

*Become imitators of me.
—1 Cor. 11:1.*

The apostle Paul loved his brothers. He worked tirelessly in their behalf. (Acts 20:31) In turn, his fellow believers had deep affection for Paul. On one occasion, "quite a bit of weeping broke out" when the elders from Ephesus learned that they would never see him again. (Acts 20:37) Our devoted elders likewise love their brothers and sisters very much and spare no effort when it comes to helping them.

(Phil. 2:16, 17) Sometimes, however, elders experience challenges. What can help them to overcome these? Our hardworking elders can consider the example of Paul. He was not superhuman. Paul was an imperfect man who at times struggled to do what was right. (Rom. 7:18-20) And he had to contend with various hardships. But Paul did not give up or lose his joy. By imitating Paul, elders can overcome the challenges they face and maintain their joy while serving Jehovah. *w22.03* 26 ¶1-2

Sunday, November 26

*You should keep my sabbaths.
I am Jehovah your God.
—Lev. 19:3.*

Leviticus 19:3 mentions keeping the Sabbath. Christians are not under the Law, so we need not observe a weekly Sabbath. Still, we can learn much from how the Israelites kept the Sabbath and how they benefited from doing so. The Sabbath was a time to rest from normal labors and give attention to spiritual matters. Fittingly, on that day Jesus would go to the synagogue in his hometown and read from God's Word. (Ex. 31:12-15; Luke 4:16-18) God's exhortation recorded at Leviticus 19:3 to "keep [his] sabbaths" should move us to buy out some time from our day-to-day activities so that we can give more attention to spiritual matters. Do you feel that you should make some adjustments in that respect? If you regularly set aside time to focus on spiritual matters, you will develop a warm, personal relationship with Jehovah, which is essential to become holy. *w21.12* 5 ¶13

Monday, November 27

I have come to call, not righteous people, but sinners to repentance.

—Luke 5:32.

While on earth, Jesus chose to associate with all types of people. He dined with the rich and the powerful, but he also spent much of his time with the poor and the downtrodden. In addition, he was compassionate toward those who were generally regarded as “sinners.” Some self-righteous individuals stumbled at what Jesus did. They asked his disciples: “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” To this, Jesus replied with the words of today’s text. (Luke 5:29-31) Long before the Messiah came, the prophet Isaiah described him as one who would not be accepted by the world. The prophecy foretold: “He was despised and was avoided by men . . . It was as if his face were hidden from us. He was despised, and we held him as of no account.” (Isa. 53:3) The Messiah was to be avoided “by men,” so those first-century Jews should have expected that Jesus would be rejected. *w21.05* 8-9 ¶3-4

Tuesday, November 28

Jehovah will raise him up.

—Jas. 5:15.

Some early Christians were slow to apply counsel. (Jas. 1:22) Others showed partiality toward the rich. (Jas. 2:1-3) Still others had a hard time controlling their tongue. (Jas. 3:8-10) Those Christians had serious problems, but James did not give up on them. He presented his counsel in a kind but straightforward way and encouraged those

who were struggling spiritually to seek additional help from the elders. (Jas. 5:13, 14) The lesson: Be realistic, but keep a positive view of others. Many with whom we study the Bible may struggle to apply its counsel. (Jas. 4:1-4) It may take them some time to root out bad traits and replace them with Christ-like qualities. We must have the courage to tell our students where they need to improve. We also need to remain positive, trusting that Jehovah will draw humble people to him and will give them the strength to make changes in their life.—Jas. 4:10. *w22.01* 11 ¶11-12

Wednesday, November 29

Whoever stops up his ear to the cry of the lowly one will himself call and not be answered.—Prov. 21:13.

All Christians seek to imitate Jehovah’s mercy. Why? One reason is that Jehovah will not listen to those who fail to show mercy to others. None of us would want Jehovah to refuse to listen to our prayers, so we carefully avoid developing a hard-hearted spirit. Rather than turn a deaf ear to a fellow Christian in pain, we must always be ready to listen to “the cry of the lowly one.” Similarly, we take to heart this inspired counsel: “The one who does not practice mercy will have his judgment without mercy.” (Jas. 2:13) If we humbly remember how much we need mercy, we are more likely to show mercy. We especially want to show mercy when a repentant wrongdoer returns to the congregation. Bible examples of those who were kind and merciful can help us to embrace mercy and to avoid harshness. *w21.10* 12 ¶16-17

Thursday, November 30

*Sit down here while I go
over there and pray.*

—Matt. 26:36.

On the final night of his life on earth, as his ministry came to an end, Jesus sought out a quiet setting where he could meditate and pray. He found that setting in the garden of Gethsemane. On that occasion, Jesus gave his disciples some timely counsel about prayer. When they arrived at the garden of Gethsemane, it was very late, perhaps past midnight. Jesus asked the apostles to “keep on the watch,” and he went off to pray. (Matt. 26:37-39) But while he was praying, they fell asleep. When he found them sleeping, Jesus again urged them to “keep on the watch and pray continually.” (Matt. 26:40, 41) He realized that they had been under much stress and that they were tired. Jesus compassionately acknowledged that “the flesh is weak.” Still, two more times Jesus went off to pray, and when he returned he found his disciples sleeping rather than praying.—Matt. 26:42-45. *w22.01* 28 ¶10-11

Friday, December 1

They will listen to my voice.

—John 10:16.

Jesus compared his relationship with his followers to the close bond between a shepherd and his sheep. (John 10:14) That comparison is appropriate. The sheep know their shepherd and respond to his voice. A traveler experienced this firsthand. He reported: “We wanted to film some sheep and tried to make them come near. But they did

not follow us because they did not know our voices. Then a small shepherd boy came along; hardly had he called them when they followed along.” The experience of that traveler reminds us of Jesus’ words regarding his sheep—his disciples. He said: “They will listen to my voice.” But Jesus is in heaven. How can we say that we are listening to him? A key way we show that we are listening to our Master’s voice is by applying his teachings in our life.—Matt. 7:24, 25. *w21.12* 16 ¶1-2

Saturday, December 2

*All have sinned and fall
short of the glory of God.*

—Rom. 3:23.

The apostle Paul had been a headstrong, harsh persecutor of Christians. But later, he acknowledged his shortcomings and was willing to change his attitude and personality. (1 Tim. 1:12-16) With Jehovah’s help, Paul became a loving, compassionate, humble shepherd. He chose to trust in Jehovah’s forgiveness rather than dwell on his failings. (Rom. 7:21-25) He did not expect to be perfect. Instead, he worked hard to improve his Christian personality and humbly relied on Jehovah’s help to accomplish his work. (1 Cor. 9:27; Phil. 4:13) Elders are not appointed because they are perfect. Jehovah, though, does expect them to admit their mistakes and to cultivate a Christian personality. (Eph. 4:23, 24) An elder should examine himself in the light of God’s Word and make any needed adjustments. Then Jehovah will help him to be happy and successful.—Jas. 1:25. *w22.03* 29-30 ¶13-15

Sunday, December 3

Stop judging.

—Matt. 7:1.

What should we do if we detect that we have judged a fellow believer? We must remember that we are to love our brothers. (Jas. 2:8) We should also earnestly pray to Jehovah, begging him to help us to stop judging. We can work in harmony with our prayers by taking the initiative to speak with the person we have been critical of. We might ask him to work with us in the field ministry or to join us for a meal. As we get to know our brother better, we can try to follow the example of Jehovah and Jesus by looking for the good in him. In this way, we show that we are listening to the fine shepherd's command to stop judging. Just as literal sheep listen to the voice of their shepherd, Jesus' followers listen to his voice. Whether we are part of the "little flock" or the "other sheep," may we continue to listen to and obey the voice of the fine shepherd.—Luke 12:32; John 10:11, 14, 16. *w21.12* 19 ¶11; 21 ¶17-18

Monday, December 4

He rejected the advice that the older men gave him.

—1 Ki. 12:8.

When Rehoboam became king of Israel, his subjects came to him with a request. They asked him to lighten the load that his father, Solomon, had laid upon them. Commendably, Rehoboam consulted with the older men of Israel to see how he should reply to the people. The older men advised the king that if he did what the people asked, they would always support him. (1 Ki. 12:3-7) Apparent-

ly, Rehoboam was not satisfied with that advice, so he consulted the men who had grown up with him. They counseled him to add to the burdens of the people. (1 Ki. 12:9-11) Rehoboam could have asked Jehovah which advice he should follow. Instead, he listened to the younger men. The consequences were disastrous for Rehoboam and for the people of Israel. In our case, the advice we receive may not always be what we want to hear. Still, if it is based on God's Word, we should accept it. *w22.02* 9 ¶6

Tuesday, December 5

The glory of young men is their strength.

—Prov. 20:29.

A person who is humble and modest will focus, not on the inexperience of young ones, but on their strengths. He will view them, not as competitors, but as fellow workers. Older ones view younger ones as gifts from Jehovah for which they are grateful. As their energy decreases, older ones are thankful that those who have the strength of youth are willing and able to fill the need and serve the congregation. The Bible character Naomi is an excellent example of an older one who gratefully accepted help from a younger one. At first, Naomi urged her widowed daughter-in-law Ruth to return to her own people. However, when Ruth insisted on accompanying Naomi back to Bethlehem, she accepted Ruth's loyal support. (Ruth 1:7, 8, 18) And what a blessing that was for both women! (Ruth 4:13-16) Humility will move older ones to follow Naomi's example. *w21.09* 10-11 ¶9-11

Wednesday, December 6

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

Our heavenly Father understands our individual circumstances. Maybe you can do more than many whom you know and love. Or you may not be able to do as much as others do, perhaps because of your age, health, or family responsibilities. Do not be discouraged. (Gal. 6:4) Jehovah will not forget your work. As long as you are giving your best and with the right motive, he will be pleased. Jehovah sees even the intentions of your heart. He wants you to be happy and satisfied with the worship you are able to give him. We already have peace of mind because we know that Jehovah helps his worshippers when they experience problems. (Isa. 41:9, 10) We certainly have good reasons to be happy as we worship our loving Father, who is worthy “to receive the glory and the honor” from all his creation!—Rev. 4:11. *w22.03* 24 ¶16; 25 ¶18

Thursday, December 7

I hurry and do not delay to keep your commandments.—Ps. 119:60.

We want to imitate Jesus, but we should not be discouraged if we fail to imitate Jesus perfectly. (Jas. 3:2) A student artist cannot perfectly imitate the work of a master artist. But as the student learns from his mistakes and strives to follow the example of the master artist as closely as possible, he will keep improving. Similarly, if we act on what we have learned through

personal Bible study, doing our best to correct any flaws we may have, we can successfully follow the model that Jesus left for us. (Ps. 119:59) We live in a world that is dominated by selfishness. But Jehovah’s people stand out as different. We have been touched by the self-sacrificing spirit of Jesus, and we are determined to follow his example. (1 Pet. 2:21) As we do our best to imitate Jesus’ self-sacrificing attitude, we too will experience the joy of gaining Jehovah’s approval. *w22.02* 24 ¶16; 25 ¶18

Friday, December 8

Some things in them are hard to understand.—2 Pet. 3:16.

One way that Jehovah provides direction to his people today is by means of his Word, the Bible. If we take the time to ponder over what Jehovah is teaching us, we will be able to follow his direction and accomplish our preaching work. (1 Tim. 4:15, 16) Another way that Jehovah provides direction is by means of “the faithful and discreet slave.” (Matt. 24:45) At times, this slave may give direction that we do not fully understand. For example, we may receive specific instructions designed to prepare us to survive a natural disaster that we think is unlikely to occur in our area. What should we do if we feel that the instructions given are not practical? Think about Bible accounts that we have read. Sometimes God’s people received direction that did not appear to be practical from a human standpoint but turned out to be lifesaving.—Judg. 7:7; 8:10. *w22.03* 18-19 ¶15-16

Saturday, December 9

Father, into your hands I entrust my spirit.—Luke 23:46.

With complete confidence, Jesus said the words of today's text. Jesus knew that his future depended on Jehovah, and he was certain that his Father would remember him. What can we learn from Jesus' words? Be willing to put your life in Jehovah's hands. To do that, you must "trust in Jehovah with all your heart." (Prov. 3:5) Consider the example of Joshua, a 15-year-old Witness with a terminal illness. He refused to accept medical procedures that violate God's law. Shortly before he died, he told his mother: "Mom, I'm in Jehovah's hands. . . . I can tell you this, Mom, with all certainty: I know Jehovah is definitely going to bring me back in the resurrection. He has read my heart, and I truly love him." Each of us would do well to ask, 'If I were to face a life-threatening situation that tests my faith, would I put my life in Jehovah's hands and trust in him to remember me?' *w21.04* 12-13 ¶15-16

Sunday, December 10

*Whoever refreshes others will himself be refreshed.
—Prov. 11:25.*

Jehovah's people are strengthened by means of the ministry. When we share Bible truths with others, we feel refreshed and invigorated, whether they respond positively or not. Because of their circumstances, some may feel that they are not able to do much in the ministry. If that is how you feel, remember that Jehovah is pleased if you do your best. Jehovah sees and appreciates our desire to share in

the ministry even if we are housebound. He can open opportunities for us to give a witness to caregivers or medical personnel. If we compare our present activity with what we were able to do in the past, we may become discouraged. But if we recognize how Jehovah is helping us now, we will have the strength we need to endure any trial with joy. We do not know which of the seeds of truth that we plant may take root and start to grow.—Eccl. 11:6. *w21.05* 24-25 ¶14-17

Monday, December 11

Why did you despise the word of Jehovah by doing what is bad in his eyes?—2 Sam. 12:9.

Greed led King David to forget what Jehovah had given him, including wealth, prominence, and victory over many of his enemies. David gratefully acknowledged that God's gifts were "too numerous to recount!" (Ps. 40:5) But at one point, David forgot what Jehovah had given him. Although David had several wives, he let an improper desire for another man's wife develop in his heart. The woman was Bath-sheba, and her husband was Uriah the Hittite. David selfishly had sexual relations with Bath-sheba, and she became pregnant. As if the adultery were not bad enough, David arranged for Uriah to be killed! (2 Sam. 11:2-15) What was David thinking? Did he imagine that Jehovah could not see? That once faithful servant of Jehovah gave in to selfish greed and paid dearly for it. Happily, though, in time David admitted his error and repented. How thankful he was to have Jehovah's favor again!—2 Sam. 12:7-13. *w21.06* 17 ¶10

Tuesday, December 12

Not that we of ourselves are adequately qualified . . . , but our being adequately qualified comes from God.—2 Cor. 3:5.

We may lack confidence in our ability to conduct a Bible study. Perhaps we feel that we should have more knowledge or skill as a teacher before we can study with someone. If this is how you feel, consider three factors that can bolster your confidence. First, Jehovah considers you qualified to teach others. Second, Jesus, who has ‘all authority in heaven and on the earth,’ has authorized you to teach. (Matt. 28:18) And third, you can rely on others to help you. Jesus relied on what his Father taught him to say and speak, and so can you. (John 8:28; 12:49) In addition, you can ask your field service group overseer, a qualified pioneer, or an experienced publisher to help you to start and conduct a Bible study. One way you could gain confidence is by sitting in on a Bible study conducted by one of these publishers. *w21.07 6 ¶12*

Wednesday, December 13

The person faithful in what is least is faithful also in much, and the person unrighteous in what is least is unrighteous also in much.—Luke 16:10.

As the end of this system of things draws near, we need to trust in Jehovah’s way of doing things as never before. Why? During the great tribulation, we may receive instructions that seem strange, impractical, or illogical. Of course, Jehovah will not speak to us personally. He will likely provide direction through

his appointed representatives. That will hardly be the time to second-guess the direction or to view it with skepticism, wondering, ‘Is this really coming from Jehovah, or are the responsible brothers acting on their own?’ How will you fare during that crucial time in human history? The answer might be indicated by how you view theocratic direction now. If you trust the direction we receive today and readily obey, you will likely do the same during the great tribulation. *w22.02 6 ¶15*

Thursday, December 14

What have I done compared with you?—Judg. 8:2.

With Jehovah’s backing, Gideon and his 300 men had a remarkable victory for which they could have taken great pride. The men of Ephraim met Gideon, not to commend him, but to quarrel with him because they had not been asked to join the fight. (Judg. 8:1) Gideon gave them a specific example of how Jehovah had blessed them. As a result, the men “calmed down.” (Judg. 8:3) Gideon willingly set pride aside in order to maintain peace among God’s people. From the example of the Ephraimites, we learn that we should not become more focused on protecting our own honor than on honoring Jehovah. As family heads and elders, we can learn a lesson from Gideon. If someone is upset by something we did, we should try to see things from his perspective. We can also commend the person for what he has done well. That will require humility on our part. But peace is worth much more than our personal pride. *w21.07 16-17 ¶10-12*

Friday, December 15

Let us make man in our image.

—*Gen. 1:26.*

Jehovah honored us by making us in his image. Because we are made in God's image, we can develop and manifest many of his wonderful qualities, such as love, compassion, loyalty, and righteousness. (Ps. 86:15; 145:17) As we cultivate such qualities, we honor Jehovah and prove that we are grateful to him. (1 Pet. 1:14-16) When we behave in a way that pleases our heavenly Father, we are happy and satisfied. And by making us in his image, Jehovah gave us the ability to become the kind of people he wants in his family. Jehovah prepared a special home for us. Long before he created the first man, Jehovah prepared the earth for humans. (Job 38:4-6; Jer. 10:12) Because he is thoughtful and generous, Jehovah provided an abundance of good things for us to enjoy. (Ps. 104:14, 15, 24) At times, he reflected on his creative work, and he "saw that it was good."—*Gen. 1:10, 12, 31. w21.08 3 ¶5-6*

Saturday, December 16

The fruitage of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control.—*Gal. 5:22, 23.*

All of us have the assignment to preach and make disciples. (Matt. 28:19, 20; Rom. 10:14) Would you like to sharpen your skills in this all-important work? Set specific goals as you study and apply what you learn in the *Teaching* brochure. When considering goals for yourself, do not neglect one of the most

important—cultivating Christian qualities. (Col. 3:12; 2 Pet. 1:5-8) No doubt all of us wish we could do more for Jehovah than we can do at present. In God's new world, we will be able to serve him to the full. Meanwhile, by taking advantage of whatever opportunities are available to us, we can add to our joy and reduce any feelings of disappointment. Even more important, we will bring honor and praise to Jehovah, our "happy God." (1 Tim. 1:11) So let us find joy in the privileges we have!
w21.08 25 ¶18-20

Sunday, December 17

Whoever approaches God must believe that he is.

—*Heb. 11:6.*

If you were raised as one of Jehovah's Witnesses, you likely learned about Jehovah from an early age. You were taught that he is the Creator, that he has an appealing personality, and that he has a loving purpose for mankind. (Gen. 1:1; Acts 17:24-27) Many people, however, do not believe that God exists, let alone that he is the Creator. Instead, they believe that life started by chance and then slowly evolved to complex forms of life. Some of these individuals are highly educated. They may claim that science has proved the Bible wrong and that faith in a Creator is for people who are ignorant, weak, or naive. No matter how long we have been one of Jehovah's Witnesses, we all need to keep building our faith. In doing so, we will not be misled by "the philosophy and empty deception" taught by men who contradict God's Word.—*Col. 2:8. w21.08 14 ¶1-3*

Monday, December 18

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

Abel, Noah, Abraham, and Job demonstrated their respect and love for Jehovah by means of their obedience, faith, and sacrifices. They clearly did their best to honor Jehovah, and their worship was acceptable to him. Jehovah then gave the Mosaic Law to Abraham's descendants. This series of laws included instructions about how to worship Jehovah in a way that he approved. After Jesus' death and resurrection, Jehovah no longer required obedience to the Mosaic Law. (Rom. 10:4) Christians were to follow a new law, "the law of the Christ." (Gal. 6:2) They could obey this "law," not by adhering to a long list of dos and don'ts, but by imitating Jesus' example and following his teachings. Today, too, Christians do their best to follow the Christ in order to please Jehovah and "find refreshment" for themselves.—Matt. 11:29. *w22.03* 20-21 ¶4-5

Tuesday, December 19

He often went into the desolate areas to pray.—Luke 5:16.

Jehovah listens to his children. He heard many prayers offered by his Son when he was on earth. He heard Jesus pray about weighty decisions, such as when he selected his 12 apostles. (Luke 6:12, 13) Jehovah also heard Jesus pray when he was in distress. Just before his betrayal, Jesus fervently prayed to his Father concerning the difficult test he was about to face. Jehovah not only heard Jesus' prayer but

also sent an angel to strengthen His dear Son. (Luke 22:41-44) Today, Jehovah continues to listen to the prayers of his servants, and he answers them at the right time and in the best possible way. (Ps. 116:1, 2) Consider how a sister in India personally experienced this. She had been dealing with severe emotional problems, and she earnestly prayed to Jehovah about the matter. She writes: "The May 2019 JW Broadcasting® program about how to deal with worry and anxiety was just the right thing for me. It was an answer to my prayers." *w21.09* 21-22 ¶6-7

Wednesday, December 20

[Flee] to the mountains.
—*Luke 21:21.*

Can you imagine how difficult it was for those first-century Christians to leave almost everything they had and start over? It took faith on their part to rely on Jehovah for their basic needs. But they were not without help. Five years before the Romans surrounded Jerusalem, the apostle Paul gave the Hebrews some valuable advice: "Let your way of life be free of the love of money, while you are content with the present things. For he has said: 'I will never leave you, and I will never abandon you.' So that we may be of good courage and say: 'Jehovah is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?'" (Heb. 13:5, 6) No doubt those who took to heart Paul's advice before the Roman invasion found it easier to adapt to what might have been a modest lifestyle in their new home. They were certain that Jehovah would care for their basic needs. *w22.01* 4 ¶7, 9

Thursday, December 21

[Jehovah's] mercy is evident in all his works.—Ps. 145:9.

When we think of a merciful person, we may picture someone who is kind, warmhearted, compassionate, and generous. The story Jesus told about the neighborly Samaritan may come to mind. That man of another nation “acted mercifully toward” a Jew who had fallen among thieves. The Samaritan “was moved with pity” for the injured Jew and lovingly arranged for his care. (Luke 10:29-37) This illustration highlights a beautiful quality of our God—mercy. That quality is a facet of God’s love, and he displays it each day in the way that he deals with us. There is another aspect of mercy that may come to mind. It involves holding back punishment when there is a basis for doing so. In that sense, Jehovah has certainly been merciful toward us. “He has not dealt with us according to our sins,” the psalmist said. (Ps. 103:10) At other times, though, Jehovah may provide firm discipline to an erring one. *w21.10 8 ¶1-2*

Friday, December 22

My loyal love will not be removed from you.—Isa. 54:10.

Jehovah shows his loyal love only to those who have an approved relationship with him—his servants. This is evident from statements made by King David and by the prophet Daniel. For example, David said: “Continue showing your loyal love to those who know you.” “The loyal love of Jehovah is for all eternity toward those who fear him.” And Daniel declared: “O Jehovah the true God, [who] shows loyal love

to those who love him and keep his commandments.” (Ps. 36:10; 103:17; Dan. 9:4) According to these inspired expressions, Jehovah shows loyal love to his servants because they know him, fear him, love him, and keep his commandments. Jehovah reserves his loyal love for his people, his true worshippers. Before we began serving Jehovah, we received the love that God shows to mankind in general. (Ps. 104:14) However, as his worshippers, we also benefit from his loyal love. *w21.11 4 ¶8-9*

Saturday, December 23

It is Jehovah your God you must worship.—Matt. 4:10.

Come what may, we are determined to obey Jesus’ words above. Today many follow charismatic church leaders. Enthusiasm for such men sometimes borders on idolatry. People pack their churches, buy their books, and donate heavily to the causes these leaders promote. Some individuals hang on to their every word. It is hard to imagine that these churchgoers could be more excited if Jesus himself were to appear to them! In contrast, true worshippers of Jehovah have no clergy. Although we respect those who are taking the lead, we accept Jesus’ clear teaching: “All of you are brothers.” (Matt. 23:8-10) We do not idolize men, whether they are religious leaders or political rulers. And we do not support their causes. Rather, we remain neutral and separate from the world. In these areas, we stand out as different from the many groups of professed Christians.—John 18:36. *w21.10 20 ¶6-7*

Sunday, December 24

I am Jehovah your God . . . You must not have any other gods besides me.—Ex. 20:2, 3.

Every Christian who wants to become holy must ensure that nothing or no one comes between him and his relationship with his God. And because we bear the name Jehovah's Witnesses, we are determined to avoid any actions that would disgrace or profane his holy name. (Lev. 19:12; Isa. 57:15) For the Israelites, recognizing Jehovah as their God involved keeping many laws. Leviticus 18:4 says: "You should carry out my judicial decisions, and you should keep my statutes and walk in them. I am Jehovah your God." Chapter 19 includes some of those "statutes" for Israel. For example, verses 5-8, 21, 22 deal with animal sacrifices. Those were to be made in a way that would not 'profane a holy thing of Jehovah.' Reading those verses should move us to want to please Jehovah and to offer him acceptable sacrifices of praise, as Hebrews 13:15 urges us to do. *w21.12* 5-6 ¶14-15

Monday, December 25

*May you rejoice with the wife of your youth.
—Prov. 5:18.*

Young couples today can benefit from the experience of others who have learned to rely on Jehovah. Some couples may have spent decades serving in the full-time ministry. Why not seek their advice if you feel the need to assess your goals? This is a way to show that you are trusting in Jehovah. (Prov. 22:

17, 19) Remember, marriage is a gift from Jehovah. (Matt. 19:5, 6) He wants married couples to enjoy that gift. Young couples, why not examine how you are spending your life? Are you doing all you can to show Jehovah how much you appreciate the gifts he has given you? Talk to Jehovah in prayer. Search his Word for principles that apply to your situation. Then heed the advice that Jehovah gives you. You can be certain that you will have a happy and rewarding life if you build your marriage around serving Jehovah! *w21.11* 19 ¶16, 18

Tuesday, December 26

We all make mistakes many times.—Jas. 3:2, ftn.

James kept the right view of himself. James did not feel that his family background or his privileged assignments made him special or placed him above his brothers and sisters. He referred to his fellow worshippers as "my beloved brothers." (Jas. 1:16, 19; 2:5) He did not give the impression that he was perfect. The lesson: Remember that we are all sinners. We must not think that we are somehow superior to those whom we teach. Why not? If we give our student the impression that we are flawless, he may conclude that he could never measure up to God's requirements. But when we honestly admit that it has not always been easy for us to follow Scriptural principles and we explain how Jehovah has helped us to overcome our challenges, we will help our student to see that he too can serve Jehovah. *w22.01* 11-12 ¶13-14

Wednesday, December 27

Keep this mental attitude in you that was also in Christ Jesus.

—*Phil. 2:5.*

The more we think like Jesus, the more we will act like him and the more successful we will be in reflecting his personality. (Heb. 1:3) We may think: ‘Jesus is perfect. I will never be completely like him!’ If you feel that way, remember these facts. First, you were designed to be like Jehovah and Jesus. So you can choose to imitate them, and you can succeed at least to some degree. (Gen. 1:26) Second, God’s holy spirit is the most powerful force in the universe. With its help, you can accomplish things that you could never do on your own. Third, Jehovah does not expect you to display the fruitage of the spirit perfectly now. In fact, our loving Father has set aside 1,000 years for those with an earthly hope to become perfect. (Rev. 20:1-3) What Jehovah requires of us now is to try our best and to rely on him for help. *w22.03 9 ¶5-6*

Thursday, December 28

There is not a word on my tongue, but look! O Jehovah, you already know it well.—*Ps. 139:4.*

Prayer is not the only avenue we can use to strengthen our bond with Jehovah. A study of God’s Word and attendance at congregation meetings can also help us to draw closer to God. Is there anything you can do to make the best use of study periods and the time you spend at congregation meetings? Ask yourself, ‘What tends to interfere with my concentration during the meetings or when I am

trying to study?’ Could it be receiving calls, emails, or text messages on your smartphone or on some other electronic device? When you notice that your mind is wandering during a study period or a congregation meeting, ask Jehovah to help you focus. It may not be easy to set your concerns aside and focus on spiritual things, but it is essential that you do so. Pray for the peace that will guard not only your heart but also your “mental powers.”—*Phil. 4:6, 7. w22.01 29-30 ¶12-14*

Friday, December 29

Incline your ear and listen to the words of the wise.

—*Prov. 22:17.*

King Uzziah rejected counsel. He entered a section of Jehovah’s temple where only the priests were allowed to be, and he attempted to offer incense. The priests of Jehovah said to him: “It is not proper for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to Jehovah! It is only the priests who should burn incense.” How did Uzziah react? If he had humbly accepted the counsel and left the temple immediately, Jehovah might have forgiven him. Instead, “Uzziah . . . became enraged.” Why did he reject the counsel? He evidently felt that as king, he had the right to do whatever he wanted. But Jehovah did not see it that way. As a result of his presumptuous act, Uzziah was struck with leprosy and “remained a leper until the day of his death.” (2 Chron. 26:16-21) Uzziah’s example teaches us that, no matter who we are, if we reject Bible-based counsel, we will lose Jehovah’s approval. *w22.02 9 ¶7*

Saturday, December 30

Repent, therefore, and turn around so as to get your sins blotted out, so that seasons of refreshing may come from Jehovah himself.—Acts 3:19.

A person who is controlled by “the old personality” generally thinks and acts in a fleshly way. (Col. 3:9) He may be selfish, prone to anger, unthankful, and proud. He may enjoy viewing pornographic material and watching immoral or violent movies. No doubt he has some good qualities, and he may feel guilty about the bad things he says or does. But he lacks the motivation to change his thinking and conduct. (Gal. 5:19-21; 2 Tim. 3:2-5) We are imperfect, so none of us can completely remove all bad thoughts and desires from our heart and mind. At times, we will do or say something that we will regret. (Jer. 17:9; Jas. 3:2) But when we strip off the old personality, fleshly attitudes and practices no longer control us. They no longer identify who we are as a person.—Isa. 55:7. *w22.03 3 ¶4-5*

Sunday, December 31

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

Elders, look for the good qualities that your brothers and sisters possess. Each one is imperfect; yet, each one has qualities we can admire. True, elders may from time to time need to adjust the thinking of a brother or a sister. But like the apostle Paul, elders should strive to look beyond a person’s irritating words and actions. Instead, they do well to focus on that individual’s love for Jehovah, his endurance in serving God, and his potential for doing good. Elders who have a positive view create a warm and nurturing environment in the congregation. Remember that Jehovah is not asking you to be perfect; he is asking you to be faithful. (1 Cor. 4:2) You can be sure that God also values what you do in his service. Jehovah will never “forget your work and the love you showed for his name by ministering and continuing to minister to the holy ones.”—Heb. 6:10. *w22.03 31 ¶19, 21*