

***Examining
the Scriptures
Daily***

2018

Large-Print Edition



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the Scriptures
Daily***

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Yeartext

**“Those hoping in Jehovah
will regain power.”**

—Isaiah 40:31.

Name

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Examining the Scriptures Daily—2018—Large Print
June 2017 Printing
English (*eslp18-E*)

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

Publishers

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

Made in the United States of America

2018

JANUARY

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OUR CHRISTIAN LIFE AND MINISTRY BIBLE READING SCHEDULE FOR 2018

January

- 1 Matthew 1-3
- 8 Matthew 4-5
- 15 Matthew 6-7
- 22 Matthew 8-9
- 29 Matthew 10-11

February

- 5 Matthew 12-13
- 12 Matthew 14-15
- 19 Matthew 16-17
- 26 Matthew 18-19

March

- 5 Matthew 20-21
- 12 Matthew 22-23
- 19 Matthew 24
- 26 Matthew 25

April

- 2 Matthew 26
- 9 Matthew 27-28
- 16 Mark 1-2
- 23 Mark 3-4
- 30 Mark 5-6

May

- 7 Mark 7-8
- 14 Mark 9-10
- 21 Mark 11-12
- 28 Mark 13-14

June

- 4 Mark 15-16
- 11 Luke 1
- 18 Luke 2-3
- 25 Luke 4-5

July

- 2 Luke 6-7
- 9 Luke 8-9
- 16 Luke 10-11
- 23 Luke 12-13
- 30 Luke 14-16

August

- 6 Luke 17-18
- 13 Luke 19-20
- 20 Luke 21-22
- 27 Luke 23-24

September

- 3 John 1-2
- 10 John 3-4
- 17 John 5-6
- 24 John 7-8

October

- 1 John 9-10
- 8 John 11-12
- 15 John 13-14
- 22 John 15-17
- 29 John 18-19

November

- 5 John 20-21
- 12 Acts 1-3
- 19 Acts 4-5
- 26 Acts 6-8

December

- 3 Acts 9-11
- 10 Acts 12-14
- 17 Acts 15-16
- 24 Acts 17-18
- 31 Acts 19-20

Monday, January 1

Put up a hard fight for the faith.

—Jude 3.

The anxious wait is over. Relieved to see her father returning safely from battle, the young woman races to greet him and rejoices over his astounding victory. Instead of joining her in song and dance, he rips apart his battle-stained garments and cries out: “Oh no, my daughter! You have broken my heart.” Then he utters the words that change her life forever, shattering her dreams and hopes of a normal life. Yet, without hesitation, she encourages her father to follow through on what he promised Jehovah. Her words reveal her great faith. She trusts that whatever Jehovah asks is best for her. (Judg. 11:34-37) Her father’s heart swells with pride because he knows that his daughter’s willingness to support his decision brings Jehovah’s smile of approval. Jephthah and his daughter put their trust and confidence in Jehovah’s way of doing things, even when it was hard to do so. They were convinced that gaining God’s approval was worth any sacrifice. *w16.04 1:1, 2*

Tuesday, January 2

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

If you are crushed by the discouraging words of a friend or family member, are plagued by a serious illness, or are grieved by the death of a loved one, you can find comfort in the example of Job. (Job 1: 18, 19; 2:7, 9; 19:1-3) Although he was unaware of the source of his troubles, Job did not give up in despair. Why not? For one thing, “he feared God.” (Job 1:1) Job was determined

to please Jehovah in favorable and unfavorable circumstances. With God’s help, Job reflected on the wondrous things Jehovah had already accomplished by means of His holy spirit. Job became even more confident that Jehovah would end his trials at the right time. (Job 42:1, 2) And that is precisely what happened. “Jehovah removed Job’s tribulation and restored his prosperity. Jehovah gave him double what he had before.” Job lived “a long and satisfying life.”—Job 42:10, 17. *w16.04 2:11, 13*

Wednesday, January 3

Prove yourselves cautious as serpents and yet innocent as doves.

—Matt. 10:16.

We show caution by recognizing dangers early, and we remain innocent by not letting them lead us into compromise. We must exercise caution when political issues are brought up. For example, when presenting the Kingdom message, avoid either praising or criticizing the policies of a political party or leader. Try to establish common ground with the householder by focusing on the underlying problem rather than on any proposed political solution. Then, show from the Bible how God’s government will solve the problem completely and permanently. If such volatile issues as same-sex marriage or abortion come up, defend God’s standards and explain how we follow these in our own lives. During the discussion, remain strictly neutral on the political aspects of these topics. We take no position regarding what laws should be enacted, repealed, or changed, and we do not pressure others to agree with our view. *w16.04 4:8, 9*

Thursday, January 4

Go, therefore, and make disciples.

—*Matt. 28:19.*

We must make disciples, baptize them, and teach them, but what is the first thing we need to do? Jesus said: “Go”! With regard to this command, one Bible scholar commented: “To ‘go’ is the task of each believer, whether across the street or across the ocean.” (Matt. 10:7; Luke 10:3) Was Jesus referring only to the individual efforts of his followers, or was he alluding to an organized campaign to preach the good news? Since one individual would not be able to go to “all the nations,” this work would require the organized efforts of many. Jesus indicated as much when he invited his disciples to become “fishers of men.” (Matt. 4:18-22) The type of fishing he referred to here was not that of a lone fisherman using a line and a lure, sitting idly while waiting for the fish to bite. Rather, it involved the use of fishing nets—a labor-intensive activity that at times required the coordinated efforts of many.—Luke 5:1-11. *w16.05 2:3, 4*

Friday, January 5

Trust in Jehovah with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding. In all your ways take notice of him, and he will make your paths straight.

—*Prov. 3:5, 6.*

To acquaint ourselves with Jehovah’s thinking, we need to make personal study a priority. When reading or studying God’s Word, we might ask ourselves, ‘What does this material reveal about Jehovah, his righteous ways, and his thinking?’ We need to have an attitude like that

of the psalmist David, who sang: “Make me know your ways, O Jehovah; teach me your paths. Cause me to walk in your truth and teach me, for you are my God of salvation. In you I hope all day long.” (Ps. 25:4, 5) As you meditate on a Bible passage, you might consider questions like these: ‘*How* can I apply this information in my family? *Where* can I apply it? At home? At work? At school? In the ministry?’ Once we have determined *where* the material can be applied, it may become easier to perceive *how* we can put it to work. *w16.05 3:9, 11*

Saturday, January 6

The overseer should . . . be irreprehensible.—1 Tim. 3:2.

By giving a list of qualifications for overseers, Jehovah reveals that he has a high standard for those who serve in an appointed capacity. (1 Tim. 3:2-7) He expects them to set a good example, and he holds them accountable for the way they treat the congregation, “which he purchased with the blood of his own Son.” (Acts 20:28) Jehovah wants us to feel safe in the care of the appointed undershepherds. (Isa. 32:1, 2) From that standpoint, the Scriptural qualifications for Christian elders remind us of how much Jehovah truly cares for us. In fact, each Christian can learn from the qualifications listed in these verses, as most of them involve things that Jehovah asks of all Christians. For instance, all of us should be reasonable and sound in mind. (Phil. 4:5; 1 Pet. 4:7) As elders prove to be “examples to the flock,” we can learn from them and “imitate their faith.”—1 Pet. 5:3; Heb. 13:7. *w16.05 5:8-10*

Sunday, January 7

Above all the things that you guard, safeguard your heart.

—Prov. 4:23.

Against what hardening traits must we be on guard? They include inordinate pride, the practice of sin, and a lack of faith. These could foster a disobedient, rebellious spirit. (Dan. 5:1, 20; Heb. 3:13, 18, 19) King Uzziah of Judah certainly displayed pride. (2 Chron. 26:3-5, 16-21) At first, Uzziah did “what was right in Jehovah’s eyes,” and “he kept searching for God.” But “as soon as he was strong, his heart became haughty,” even though his strength was from God! He even attempted to burn incense at the temple—a privilege reserved for the Aaronic priests. Then, when the priests confronted him, proud Uzziah became enraged! The result? He had a humiliating “crash” at God’s hands and died a leper. (Prov. 16:18) If we failed to guard against pride, we too could begin “to think more of [ourselves] than it is necessary to think,” perhaps even to the point of resisting Scriptural counsel.—Rom. 12:3; Prov. 29:1. *w16.06* 2:3, 4

Monday, January 8

[Put] up with one another in love.

—Eph. 4:2.

How do you feel about fellow Christians who are from cultures very different from your own? Their first language, style of clothing, manners, and food may not be what you are accustomed to. Do you tend to shy away from them and associate mainly with those who have a background similar to yours? Or what if those appointed as overseers in your congregation—or in

your circuit or branch—are younger or are culturally or racially different from you? Do you allow such matters to undermine the unity and oneness of purpose that should exist among Jehovah’s people? What can help us to avoid such pitfalls? To the Christians in Ephesus, a prosperous and diversified city, Paul offered some practical counsel. (Eph. 4:1-3) Paul first mentioned such qualities as humility, mildness, patience, and love. These might be likened to the pillars of a house that keep it standing. *w16.06* 3:17, 18

Tuesday, January 9

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

—Luke 12:15.

Satan wants us to slave for Riches rather than for Jehovah. (Matt. 6:24) Those who spend most of their energy accumulating material things end up with a life that is, at best, shallow because it appeals to selfish gratification or that is, at worst, spiritually empty and full of grief and frustration. (1 Tim. 6:9, 10; Rev. 3:17) It is as Jesus described in his illustration of the sower. When the Kingdom message is “sown among the thorns . . . , the desires for everything else make inroads and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.” (Mark 4:14, 18, 19) As we near the end of this system of things, now is not the time to amass more and more material things for ourselves. We should not expect that any of our possessions, regardless of how treasured or valuable they may be, will survive with us through the great tribulation.—Prov. 11:4, ftn.; Matt. 24:21, 22. *w16.07* 1:5, 6

Wednesday, January 10

We all received . . . undeserved kindness upon undeserved kindness.—John 1:16.

A winegrower went to the marketplace early one morning to hire men to work in his vineyard. The men he found agreed to the wage he offered and went to work. The owner needed more workers, however, and returned to the marketplace throughout the day to hire more and more men, offering a fair wage even to those whom he hired at the end of the afternoon. When evening came, he gathered the workers together to give them their wages, and he gave the same amount to each of them, whether they had labored many hours or just one. When those first hired realized this, they complained. The winegrower replied: ‘Did you not agree to the wage I offered? Do I not have the right to give all my workers whatever I want? Are you envious because I am generous?’ (Matt. 20:1-15, ftn.) Jesus’ parable reminds us of one of Jehovah’s qualities that is often mentioned in the Bible—his “undeserved kindness.”—2 Cor. 6:1. *w16.07* 3:1, 2

Thursday, January 11

Look! I am making all things new. . . . Write, for these words are faithful and true.—Rev. 21:5.

More than ever, our mission as the end nears is to preach the good news of the Kingdom! (Mark 13:10) Undeniably, the good news highlights Jehovah’s undeserved kindness. We should keep this in mind when we share in our witnessing work. Our objective when we preach is to honor Jehovah. We can do this by showing people that all

the promises of new world blessings are expressions of Jehovah’s wonderful kindness. As we witness to others, we can explain that under Christ’s Kingdom rule, mankind will benefit from the full application of the ransom sacrifice and will gradually be brought to perfection. The Bible says: “The creation itself will also be set free from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God.” (Rom. 8:21) This will be possible only through Jehovah’s extraordinary kindness. *w16.07* 4:17-19

Friday, January 12

Let the husband give to his wife her due, and let the wife also do likewise to her husband.

—1 Cor. 7:3.

Although the Bible does not provide specific rules about the kinds and limits of love play that might be associated with natural sexual intimacy, it mentions displays of affection. (Song of Sol. 1:2; 2:6) Christian marriage partners should treat each other with tenderness. Strong love for God and neighbor will not allow anyone or anything to interfere with the marriage bond. Some marriages have been strained or even ruined by a mate’s addiction to pornography. Any tendency toward being attracted to this or toward sexual interests of any sort outside marriage should be firmly resisted. Even giving the appearance of flirting with someone to whom one is not married is unloving and should be avoided. Remembering that God is aware of all our thoughts and actions will reinforce our desire to please him and to remain chaste.—Matt. 5:27, 28; Heb. 4:13. *w16.08* 2:7-9

Saturday, January 13

We have never stopped praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the accurate knowledge of [God's] will.—Col. 1:9.

With such accurate knowledge, the Colossian Christians would be able “to walk worthily of Jehovah in order to please him fully.” This would enable them to continue “bearing fruit in every good work,” especially in the preaching of the good news. (Col. 1:10) To serve effectively, a worshipper of Jehovah must follow a routine of Bible study. We do well to help Bible students grasp that fact. Moreover, we ourselves must be convinced of its value. In fact, we ourselves need to have good Bible study habits. So you might ask yourself, ‘When householders express opinions that are contrary to Scriptural teachings or they ask difficult questions, am I able to give answers that are based on the Bible?’ If we tell others how much we have benefited from our personal study of the Bible, we may encourage them to obtain such benefits by being diligent students of the Scriptures. *w16.08 4:3, 4*

Sunday, January 14

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

It is vital that we resist being affected by the world’s “strongly entrenched things.” These include its doctrines, philosophies, and harmful practices, such as committing immorality, using tobacco, and abusing alcohol and drugs. And we must constantly fight against our fleshly weaknesses and discouragement. (2 Cor. 10:3-6; Col. 3:5-9) Is it really possible to defeat such pow-

erful opponents? Yes, but not without a struggle. Drawing on the example of a boxer of ancient times, Paul said of himself: “The way I am aiming my blows is so as not to be striking the air.” (1 Cor. 9:26) Just as a boxer fights off his opponent, we must fend off our enemies. Jehovah trains us and helps us in our fight. He provides life-saving instructions in his Word. He also helps us through our Bible-based publications, Christian meetings, assemblies, and conventions. Are you putting into practice what you are learning? *w16.09 2:2, 3*

Monday, January 15

Even the Christ did not please himself.—Rom. 15:3.

Yes, Jesus put helping others ahead of personal convenience—helping them was key to his doing God’s will. Hence, we will forgo items or styles of clothing that we like but that could close the minds of people to whom we want to witness. (Rom. 15:2) Christian parents have a responsibility to teach their families to apply Bible principles. This includes making sure that they and their children strive to make God’s heart rejoice by their modest style of dress and grooming. (Prov. 22:6; 27:11) Parents can instill in their children a healthy respect for the holy God whom they worship by setting the right example for their children and by giving loving and practical instruction. How good it is when parents teach their youngsters where and how to find suitable clothes! This means not just what they like but also what will enable them to carry out their privilege of representing Jehovah God. *w16.09 3:13, 14*

Tuesday, January 16

A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly instructed will be like his teacher.

—Luke 6:40.

As a teacher, Jesus reached hearts because he loved Jehovah, God's Word, and people. (Luke 24:32; John 7:46) Similar love will help parents reach the hearts of their children. (Deut. 6:5-8; Luke 6:45) So parents, be good students of the Bible and of our study aids. Take an interest in creation and in articles in our publications that discuss this topic. (Matt. 6:26, 28) Your doing so will broaden your knowledge, deepen your appreciation for Jehovah, and better equip you to teach your young ones. When your heart is filled with Bible truth, you will want to discuss it with your family. Do this not only when preparing for Christian meetings or during family worship but at any time. Moreover, such discussions should not be forced but should be natural and spontaneous—a part of your everyday conversation. *w16.09* 5:6, 7

Wednesday, January 17

None of them knew how to speak the language of the Jews.

—Neh. 13:24.

The inability to grasp God's Word in a foreign language can pose a real threat to our spiritual health. In the fifth century B.C.E., Nehemiah showed concern when he learned that some children among the Jews who had returned from Babylon could not speak the Hebrew language. These children were actually losing their identity as God's servants because they could not fully understand the meaning of God's

Word. (Neh. 8:2, 8) Some Christian parents serving in a foreign-language field have come to realize that their children's interest in the truth has waned. Why? When we read in a foreign tongue, our heart may not be as involved as it would be in our own language. Moreover, the inability to communicate well in another language can be mentally and spiritually draining. So while keeping alive our desire to serve Jehovah in a foreign-language field, we do well to safeguard our spiritual health.—Matt. 4:4. *w16.10* 2:4-6

Thursday, January 18

Faith is . . . the convincing evidence of realities that are not seen.—Heb. 11:1, ftn.

Christian faith is a precious quality. Not all humans possess it. (2 Thess. 3:2) However, Jehovah has given to each one of his worshippers "a measure of faith." (Rom. 12:3; Gal. 5:22) All who have it should be deeply grateful. Jesus Christ said that his heavenly Father draws people to himself through His Son. (John 6:44, 65) Acquiring faith in Jesus, in turn, makes it possible for an individual to gain forgiveness of sins. That, then, opens up the prospect of enjoying an everlasting relationship with Jehovah. (Rom. 6:23) What did we do to deserve such a wonderful blessing? As sinners, the only thing we deserve is death. (Ps. 103:10) But Jehovah saw a potential for good in us. Out of his undeserved kindness, he opened our heart to the good news. So we began to exercise faith in Jesus with everlasting life in view.—1 John 4:9, 10. *w16.10* 4:1, 2

Friday, January 19

[Paul gave] many words of encouragement to the ones there.

—Acts 20:2.

In his letters, Paul spoke highly of his fellow Christians. He had traveled with some of them for years and undoubtedly knew their faults, but he said good things about them. For instance, Paul described Timothy as his “beloved and faithful child in the Lord,” one who would genuinely care for the concerns of other Christians. (1 Cor. 4:17; Phil. 2:19, 20) The apostle commended Titus to the Corinthian congregation as “my companion and a fellow worker for your interests.” (2 Cor. 8:23) How encouraged Timothy and Titus must have been to learn what Paul thought of them! Paul and Barnabas risked their lives by going back to places where they had suffered violent attacks. For instance, even though they had faced fanatic opposition in Lystra, they returned there in order to encourage new disciples to remain in the faith. (Acts 14:19-22) In Ephesus, after Paul faced an angry crowd, he encouraged the disciples there.—Acts 20:1. *w16.11* 1:10, 11

Saturday, January 20

Be completely united in the same mind and in the same line of thought.—1 Cor. 1:10.

Jehovah leads and feeds those in the earthly part of his organization by means of “the faithful and discreet slave” under the direction of Christ, the “head of the congregation.” (Matt. 24:45-47; Eph. 5:23) Like the first-century governing body, this slave accepts God’s inspired word, or message, and highly

esteems it. (1 Thess. 2:13) The Bible directs us to attend meetings regularly. (Heb. 10:24, 25) It urges us to promote unity of doctrine. God’s Word tells us to give the Kingdom first place in our lives. (Matt. 6:33) The Scriptures also emphasize our duty and privilege to preach from house to house, in public places, and informally. (Matt. 28:19, 20; Acts 5:42; 17:17; 20:20) God’s own Book directs Christian elders to keep his organization clean. (1 Cor. 5:1-5, 13; 1 Tim. 5:19-21) And Jehovah decrees that all those in his organization must be clean physically and spiritually.—2 Cor. 7:1. *w16.11* 3:7, 8

Sunday, January 21

Get out of her, my people.

—Rev. 18:4.

In the decades leading up to World War I, Charles Taze Russell and his associates realized that the organizations of Christendom were not teaching Bible truth. Accordingly, they resolved to have nothing to do with false religion as they understood it. As early as November of 1879, *Zion’s Watch Tower* straightforwardly set out their Scriptural position by stating: “Every church claiming to be a chaste virgin espoused to Christ, but in reality united to and supported by the world (beast) we must condemn as being in scripture language a *harlot church*,” a reference to Babylon the Great. (Rev. 17:1, 2) God-fearing men and women knew what they must do. They could not expect to receive God’s blessing if they continued to support false religious organizations. Consequently, many Bible Students prepared letters of withdrawal from their churches. *w16.11* 5:2, 3

Monday, January 22

Those who live according to the spirit, [set their minds] on the things of the spirit.—Rom. 8:5.

In connection with the annual commemoration of Jesus' death, have you read Romans 8:15-17? Probably so. That key passage explains how Christians know that they are anointed—holy spirit bears witness with their spirit. Anointed Christians are those principally addressed in that chapter. They receive "the spirit" as ones "waiting for adoption as sons, the release from [their fleshly] bodies." (Rom. 8:23) Yes, their future is to be sons of God in heaven. That is possible because they became baptized Christians, and God applied the ransom in their behalf, forgave their sins, and declared them righteous as spiritual sons. (Rom. 3:23-26; 4:25; 8:30) However, Romans chapter 8 is also of interest to those who have the earthly hope because God in a sense views them as righteous. They too can benefit from the counsel found there that is given to righteous ones. *w16.12 2:1-3*

Tuesday, January 23

Never be anxious.—Matt. 6:34.

What did Jesus mean when he said: "Never be anxious"? Obviously, he could not have meant that a servant of God would not at some point in life experience anxiety. Instead, Jesus was helping his disciples to realize that *undue*, or *extreme*, anxiety does not solve problems. Each day has its own challenges, so Christians do not need to add anxious thoughts about the past or the future to the concerns of the present. Unwarranted anxiety often results if a Chris-

tian agonizes over possible future problems. However, you need not be consumed by anxiety, or worry, over events that you do not know anything about. Why not? Because things often do not turn out to be as bad as we feared they might be. Moreover, there is no situation beyond the control of the God on whom you can throw all your anxiety. You can be certain that God can reward his faithful ones and help them deal with anxiety about the past, the present, and the future. *w16.12 3:13, 16*

Wednesday, January 24

*Wisdom is with the modest ones.
—Prov. 11:2.*

King Saul of ancient Israel began his reign as a modest and respected man. (1 Sam. 9:1, 2, 21; 10:20-24) But soon after he became king, he carried out a series of presumptuous acts. When God's prophet Samuel did not show up in Gilgal at the appointed time, Saul became impatient. The Philistines were preparing for battle, and the Israelites were deserting Saul. He must have thought, 'I have to do something—and quickly.' So he offered up a sacrifice to God, which he was not authorized to do. Jehovah was not pleased. (1 Sam. 13:5-9) When Samuel arrived in Gilgal, he rebuked Saul. Instead of accepting the correction, Saul made excuses, tried to shift the blame, and minimized what he had done. (1 Sam. 13:10-14) That started a terrible chain of events that eventually cost Saul his kingship and, more important, Jehovah's approval. (1 Sam. 15:22, 23) Despite a promising beginning, Saul's life ended in complete disaster.—1 Sam. 31:1-6. *w17.01 3:1, 2*

Thursday, January 25

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

—Acts 13:22.

David's life course was one of faithfulness. Even so, on occasion he fell into serious sin. He committed adultery with Bath-sheba. (2 Sam. 11:1-21) David could not undo what he had done. And he could not escape the consequences of his mistakes. In fact, some of those consequences would stay with David for the rest of his life. (2 Sam. 12:10-12, 14) Thus, he needed faith. He had to trust that when he truly repented, Jehovah would forgive him and help him endure the consequences of his actions. Being imperfect, all of us sin. Some mistakes are more serious than others. In some cases, we may not be able to undo our mistakes. We may simply have to live with the consequences. (Gal. 6:7) But we take God at his word, trusting that if we are repentant, Jehovah will support us through difficult times—even when those difficulties are of our own making. —Isa. 1:18, 19; Acts 3:19. *w17.01* 1:10-12

Friday, January 26

Mankind cannot comprehend what happens under the sun. No matter how hard men try, they cannot comprehend it. Even if they claim that they are wise enough to know, they cannot really comprehend it.

—Eccl. 8:17.

Modesty can help us to make good decisions even when we cannot fully know or control how things will turn out. As an example, if we enter some feature of the full-time service, what will happen to us if we get sick? What if our aging parents

need our help? How will we look after ourselves in our old age? No amount of prayer or research will reveal a complete answer to questions like these. Our confidence in Jehovah will help us not only to acknowledge but also to accept our limitations. After doing research, consulting others, and praying for guidance, we need to take steps in the direction that God's spirit is leading us. (Eccl. 11:4-6) That gives Jehovah something to bless, or he can gently redirect our goals. —Prov. 16:3, 9. *w17.01* 4:14

Saturday, January 27

You must not eat from it.

—Gen. 2:17.

Adam and Eve had to decide what to do. Would they obey Jehovah, or would they listen to the serpent? They decided to disobey God. (Gen. 3:6-13) By rebelling against Jehovah, Adam and Eve lost their perfection. Moreover, their rebellion resulted in alienation from Jehovah because his "eyes are too pure to look on what is evil." Therefore, he "cannot tolerate wickedness." (Hab. 1:13) If he had tolerated it, the well-being of all living creatures—in heaven and on earth—would be threatened. Above all, had God done nothing about the sin committed in Eden, his own trustworthiness would have been called into question. But Jehovah is faithful to his own standards; he never violates them. (Ps. 119:142) Thus, having free will did not entitle Adam and Eve to disregard God's law. As a consequence of rebelling against Jehovah, they died and returned to the dust from which they had been created.—Gen. 3:19. *w17.02* 1:8, 10, 11

Sunday, January 28

Man must live, not on bread alone, but on every word that comes from Jehovah's mouth.—Matt. 4:4.

From the beginning of his ministry, Jesus allowed the Scriptures to direct him. Even his final words before he died included quotations of Messianic prophecies. (Matt. 27:46; Luke 23:46) In contrast, the religious leaders of that time disregarded God's Word whenever it contradicted their own traditions. Quoting Jehovah's words through the prophet Isaiah, Jesus said about them: "This people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far removed from me. It is in vain that they keep worshipping me, for they teach commands of men as doctrines." (Matt. 15:7-9) Jesus allowed God's Word to guide not only his actions but also his teaching. When confronted with religious controversies, he appealed neither to his vast wisdom nor to his unparalleled experience. Instead, he held up the Scriptures as the final authority.—Matt. 22:33-40. *w17.02* 3:18, 19

Monday, January 29

*Honor men of all sorts,
. . . honor the king.
—1 Pet. 2:17.*

Jehovah's Witnesses willingly render honor to public servants, even as it may be expected and as may be customary in the land. We cooperate with them as they perform their duties. Of course, our honor and support have reasonable, Scriptural limits. We cannot go to the point of disobeying God or violating our Christian neutrality. (1 Pet. 2:13-16) Jehovah's ser-

vants in the past set the pattern in their relationship with governments and officials. When the Roman Empire called on people to participate in a census, Joseph and Mary complied. They traveled to Bethlehem despite the fact that Mary was soon to give birth to her first child. (Luke 2:1-5) Later, when Paul was accused of wrongdoing, he respectfully defended himself and showed proper honor to King Herod Agrippa and to Festus, governor of the Roman province of Judea.—Acts 25:1-12; 26:1-3. *w17.03* 1:9, 10

Tuesday, January 30

These things . . . were written for a warning to us.—1 Cor. 10:11.

When the Israelites adopted the sinful ways of the Canaanites, Jehovah no longer granted them his protective care. (Judg. 2:1-3, 11-15; Ps. 106:40-43) What a challenge it must have been for God-fearing families to remain loyal to Jehovah during those hard years! Nevertheless, the Bible reveals that there were faithful ones, such as Jephthah, Elkanah, Hannah, and Samuel, who were determined to gain God's approval. (1 Sam. 1:20-28; 2:26) We live in a world where people think and act in ways that are similar to those in ancient Canaan—they glorify sex and violence and promote materialism. Jehovah has given us clear warnings—just as he did the Israelites—to safeguard us from such influences. Will we learn from the mistakes of the Israelites? (1 Cor. 10:6-10) We must strive to remove any trace of Canaanitelike thinking from our lives. (Rom. 12:2) Have we been faithful in making an effort to do so? *w16.04* 1:4-6

Wednesday, January 31

A man of understanding acquires skillful direction.—Prov. 1:5.

When we are faced with serious decisions, it is vital to draw on the Bible as the best source of advice and to seek Jehovah's guidance in prayer. Jehovah can give us the qualities we need to make decisions that are in harmony with his will. Make it a practice to ask: 'Will this decision give evidence of my love for Jehovah? Will it bring joy and peace to my family? And will it show that I am patient and kind?' Jehovah does not coerce us into loving him and serving him. In line with the free will that he grants us, he respects our responsibility and right to 'choose for ourselves' whether we will serve him. (Josh. 24:15; Eccl. 5:4) But he expects us to follow through on other decisions that we make based on his guidance. With faith in Jehovah's way of doing things and the principles that he has kindly provided, we can make wise decisions and prove ourselves steady in all our ways.—Jas. 1:5-8; 4:8. *w17.03* 2:17, 18

Thursday, February 1

Let endurance complete its work.—Jas. 1:4.

What "work" must endurance complete? It helps us to "be complete and sound in all respects, not lacking in anything." (Jas. 1:4) Trials often reveal our weaknesses, aspects of our personality that we need to refine. If we endure those trials, however, our Christian personality becomes more complete, or sound. For example, we may become more patient, appreciative, and compassionate. Because endurance completes the vital work of molding us as Christians, do not

compromise Scriptural principles to bring an end to tests that come your way. For instance, what if you struggle with unclean thoughts? Rather than give in to temptation, prayerfully reject such desires. You will thus fortify your self-control. Are you facing opposition from an unbelieving family member? Instead of yielding under pressure, be determined to maintain your pattern of wholehearted worship. Remember: To have God's approval, we must endure.—Rom. 5:3-5; Jas. 1:12. *w16.04* 2:15, 16

Friday, February 2

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

We know that taking undue pride in tribe, culture, or nation puts us at odds with Jehovah's view of human rule and the human family. Of course, God does not expect us to renounce our culture. In fact, cultural differences illustrate the marvelous diversity of the human family. Still, we must remember that in God's sight, all people are equal. (Rom. 10:12) Taking undue pride in our place of origin is at the heart of nationalism and could be the first step on a path to compromise. Christians are not immune to such pride, for even some in the first-century congregation discriminated against their brothers because of their nationality. (Acts 6:1) How can we tell if undue pride is taking root in us? Suppose a brother or sister from another land offered you a suggestion. Would you reject it, immediately thinking, 'We do things better around here'? Instead, we should all apply the inspired counsel of today's text. *w16.04* 4:12, 13

Saturday, February 3

I must . . . declare the good news of the Kingdom.—Luke 4:43.

Jesus preached “the good news of the Kingdom,” and he expects his disciples to do the same. What group of people are preaching that message in “all the nations”? (Matt. 28:19) The answer is obvious—only Jehovah’s Witnesses. A missionary priest once told a Witness that he had lived in many different countries and that he had asked the Witnesses in each country what message they were preaching. What answer was he given? The priest said: “They were all so stupid that they gave the same answer: ‘The good news of the Kingdom.’” Far from being “stupid,” however, those Witnesses were speaking in unity, as true Christians should. (1 Cor. 1:10) And they were echoing the message contained in *The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah’s Kingdom*. This magazine is available in 254 languages, and an average of nearly 59 million copies of each issue are produced, making it the most widely circulated magazine in the world. *w16.05 2:6*

Sunday, February 4

Let each one do just as he has resolved in his heart.—2 Cor. 9:7.

As Kingdom publishers, we may desire to enter the full-time ministry as regular pioneers. In order to make this possible, we begin taking steps to simplify our life. At the same time, we may find ourselves worrying about whether we could be genuinely happy with less in a material way. Of course, there is no Bible command that we pioneer; we could continue serving Jehovah

as faithful publishers. However, Jesus assures us that those who make sacrifices for the Kingdom will receive abundant blessings. (Luke 18:29, 30) Moreover, the Scriptures show that it pleases Jehovah when we make “voluntary offerings of praise” to him and cheerfully do what we can to advance true worship. (Ps. 119:108) From these Scriptural points, along with prayers for guidance, can we not perceive Jehovah’s thinking? Reflecting on these thoughts may help us come to a decision that will be practical for us and will have our heavenly Father’s blessing. *w16.05 3:13*

Monday, February 5

Remember . . . your Grand Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of distress come.—Eccl. 12:1.

Many of the problems addressed in our publications for young people are not unique to them. All of us need to defend our faith, control our emotions, reject harmful peer pressure, and avoid unwholesome associations and entertainment. These topics and many others have been addressed in material designed for teenagers. Should adult Christians feel that it is demeaning for them to read publications directed to young people? Not at all! Although the material is presented in a way that appeals to youths, the information is based on timeless Scriptural principles, and all of us can benefit from these spiritual provisions. Besides helping young people to deal with problems, our publications help them to grow spiritually and draw close to Jehovah. Here, too, adult Christians can benefit.—Eccl. 12:13. *w16.05 5:15, 16*

Tuesday, February 6

Listen, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah. You must love Jehovah your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your strength.—Deut. 6:4, 5.

“Jehovah our God is one Jehovah.” What a powerful statement! That reminder fortified the Israelites to confront the challenges facing them as they entered and took possession of the Promised Land. Our taking those words to heart will empower us to face the great tribulation just ahead and contribute to the Paradise to follow. Let us go on rendering exclusive devotion to Jehovah by loving and serving him whole-souled and putting forth earnest effort to maintain oneness in the Christian brotherhood. If we continue to do so, we can look forward with confidence to seeing fulfilled what Jesus said about those whom he will judge as sheep: “Come, you who have been blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the founding of the world.”—Matt. 25:34. *w16.06 3:2, 20*

Wednesday, February 7

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

Pride can cause us to justify our actions, making us quite the opposite of malleable. Have you ever been hurt by a fellow Christian or by the loss of certain privileges? If so, how did you respond? Did pride come into play? Or was your main concern that of making peace with your brother and remaining loyal to Jehovah? (Ps. 119:165; Col. 3:13) Making a practice of sin, perhaps even committing secret sins,

can also make one unresponsive to divine counsel. Sinning can then become easier. (Eccl. 8:11) One brother, who got into the habit of viewing pornography, later admitted, “I found myself developing a critical attitude toward the elders.” His habit was hurting him spiritually. Eventually, his conduct came to light, and he received much-needed help. Of course, we are all imperfect. If, however, we begin to develop a critical attitude or to excuse a wrong course rather than seek God’s forgiveness and help, our heart may already be hardening. *w16.06 2:5, 6*

Thursday, February 8

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

Jesus’ listeners were anxious about things they ought not be anxious about. Jesus said to stop that—and for good reason. Needless anxiety or worry, even about legitimate concerns, can divide a person’s mind and distract him, shutting out the more important spiritual matters of life. Jesus was so concerned for his disciples that he warned them about this dangerous tendency four more times in his Sermon on the Mount. (Matt. 6:27, 28, 31, 34) Jesus was well-aware of people’s day-to-day needs. More than that, he knew of the difficult conditions facing his disciples who centuries later would live during “the last days,” characterized by “critical times hard to deal with.” (2 Tim. 3:1) Such conditions include unemployment, inflation, food shortages, and abject poverty that many experience. Yet, Jesus also realized that ‘life means more than food and the body than clothing.’ *w16.07 1:8, 9*

Friday, February 9

I became a minister of this according to the free gift of God's undeserved kindness.—Eph. 3:7.

If we met all of Jehovah's requirements perfectly, his kindness toward us would be deserved. As it is, we fail to do so. Thus, wise King Solomon wrote: "There is no righteous man on earth who always does good and never sins." (Eccl. 7:20) The apostle Paul likewise stated: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," and "the wages sin pays is death." (Rom. 3:23; 6:23a) That is what we deserve. Jehovah, however, expressed his love toward fallen mankind in an incomparable act of undeserved kindness. He sent his greatest gift of all, "his only-begotten Son," to earth to die in our behalf. (John 3:16) So Paul wrote concerning Jesus that he is "now crowned with glory and honor for having suffered death, so that by God's undeserved kindness he might taste death for everyone." (Heb. 2:9) Yes, "the gift God gives is everlasting life by Christ Jesus our Lord."—Rom. 6:23b. *w16.07* 3:3, 4

Saturday, February 10

I am going to make a helper for him.—Gen. 2:18.

Marriage is very much a part of life. A review of its origin and purpose can help us to have a proper view of this relationship and enjoy its intended blessings more fully. After God created the first man, Adam, the animals were brought to him so that he could name them. But "for man there was no helper as a complement of him." God therefore caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep, took a rib from him, built it

into a woman, and brought her to the man. (Gen. 2:20-24) Thus, marriage is of divine origin. Jesus confirmed that it was Jehovah who stated: "A man will leave his father and his mother and will stick to his wife, and the two will be one flesh." (Matt. 19:4, 5) God's use of a rib from Adam in creating the first woman could have impressed on the first human couple the closeness of their union. There was no arrangement for divorce or for having more than one mate at the same time. *w16.08* 1:1, 2

Sunday, February 11

*[Jesus] set out from there to teach and preach in their cities.
—Matt. 11:1.*

Jesus often spoke to individuals about the Kingdom. For instance, he carried on a lively and fruitful conversation with a woman at Jacob's well near the city of Sychar. (John 4:5-30) He also spoke with Matthew Levi, a tax collector. Matthew accepted Jesus' invitation to be his follower. Matthew and others heard Jesus speak at some length during a feast held in Matthew's home. (Matt. 9:9; Luke 5:27-39) On another occasion, Jesus spoke in a friendly way to Nathanael, who had a negative view of people from Nazareth. However, Nathanael was moved to change his thinking. He decided to learn more about what Jesus, a man from Nazareth, was teaching. (John 1:46-51) So we have good reason to train new publishers to converse with people in a friendly, relaxed manner. Those whom we help in this way will likely be delighted to see how honesthearted people respond favorably to personal interest and kind words. *w16.08* 4:7-9

Monday, February 12

A wife should not separate from her husband. . . . And a husband should not leave his wife.

—1 Cor. 7:10, 11.

Serious problems that persist in marriage may lead one mate or both mates to consider separation or divorce. Separating from one's marriage partner should not be viewed lightly. Though separation may seem to be the answer when serious difficulties arise, it often causes more problems. After repeating what God had stated about a man leaving his father and his mother and sticking to his wife, Jesus said: "What God has yoked together, let no man put apart." (Matt. 19:3-6; Gen. 2:24) This also means that neither a husband nor a wife should 'put apart what God has yoked together.' Jehovah views marriage as a lifelong bond. (1 Cor. 7:39) Bearing in mind that all of us will render an account to God should move marriage mates to make earnest efforts to resolve problems quickly so that these do not become more serious. *w16.08 2:10, 11*

Tuesday, February 13

Do not let yourself be conquered by the evil.—Rom. 12:21.

Our enemies may attack us when we least expect it and kick us when we are at our lowest point, so we must ever remain alert. The encouragement not to let ourselves "be conquered by the evil" shows that we *can* defeat evil. We can do so if we keep on fighting against it. In contrast, we could be overcome by Satan, his evil world, and our imperfect flesh if we let our guard down and quit fighting. Never allow

Satan to intimidate you into dropping your hands in defeat! (1 Pet. 5:9) To be successful, those who are contending must not lose sight of their reason for struggling. To gain God's approval and blessing, they should keep focused on the assurance that we read at Hebrews 11:6: "Whoever approaches God must believe that he is and that he becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him." The Greek verb translated "earnestly seeking" is a form that implies intensity and concerted effort.—Acts 15:17. *w16.09 2:4, 5*

Wednesday, February 14

Do all things for God's glory.
—1 Cor. 10:31.

God's Word provides practical guidance that can help us to make wise choices that will bring glory to God. Still, what we wear involves some personal preference. Our individual tastes vary, as do our financial resources. But our clothes should always be neat, clean, modest, appropriate to the occasion, and acceptable locally. We must admit that it is not always easy to make a decision that shows good judgment, that is sensible, and that takes all factors into account. Many stores cater to popular fashions, so it may take more time and effort to find modest skirts, dresses, and blouses or suits and slacks that are not too tight. Yet, fellow believers will likely note and appreciate the results of our sincere efforts to find attractive and appropriate clothing. And the satisfaction we have of bringing glory to our loving heavenly Father more than makes up for any inconveniences that we may face to dress so as to glorify him. *w16.09 3:15, 16*

Thursday, February 15

He stretches out the northern sky over empty space, suspending the earth upon nothing.—Job 26:7.

Children tend to have a vivid imagination. So parents, try to use illustrations liberally in your teaching. Effective illustrations can strengthen a child's faith in the accuracy of the Bible. For example, consider today's text. How might you show that this scripture was inspired? You could just state facts. Instead, why not stimulate your child's imagination? Bring up the fact that Job lived long before telescopes and spaceships. Your child's job could be to show how difficult it might be for some to believe that a very large object, such as the earth, could sit on nothing. The child could use a ball or a stone to illustrate the point by showing that objects with mass have to rest on something. Such a lesson would impress on your child that Jehovah had facts recorded in the Bible long before humans could prove them.—Neh. 9:6. *w16.09* 5:9, 12

Friday, February 16

*Exercise faith in your heart.
—Rom. 10:9.*

Faith involves much more than a mental understanding of God's purpose. It is a powerful motivating force that impels a person to act in harmony with God's will. Faith in God's means of salvation moves a believer to share the good news with others. Our prospect of enjoying eternal life in God's new world depends on our having faith and keeping it strong. The need to keep our faith healthy can be likened to a plant's need for water. Unlike an

artificial plant, a living plant keeps changing. A live plant either withers because of a lack of water or continues to thrive with a regular supply of moisture. If deprived of sufficient water, a once healthy plant will eventually die. So, too, our faith. It will wither and die if neglected. (Luke 22:32; Heb. 3:12) But if we give it due attention, our faith will stay alive and keep "growing," and we will be "healthy in faith."—2 Thess. 1:3; Titus 2:2. *w16.10* 4:4, 5

Saturday, February 17

*The principal court official assigned names to them; he gave to Daniel the name Belteshazzar.
—Dan. 1:7.*

When Daniel and his companions were exiled, the Babylonians tried to assimilate them into their culture by teaching them "the language of the Chaldeans." Moreover, the court official in charge of their training gave them Babylonian names. (Dan. 1:3-7) The name given to Daniel referred to Bel, the main divinity of Babylon. King Nebuchadnezzar likely wanted to impress Daniel with the idea that his God, Jehovah, had been subjected by Babylon's god. (Dan. 4:8) Although Daniel was offered food to eat from the king's delicacies, he "resolved in his heart" that he would not "defile himself." (Dan. 1:8) Because he kept studying "the sacred books" in his mother tongue, he maintained his spiritual health while living in a foreign land. (Dan. 9:2, ftn.) Thus, some 70 years after his arrival in Babylon, he was still known by his Hebrew name.—Dan. 5:13. *w16.10* 2:7, 8

Sunday, February 18

They would go where the spirit inclined them to go.—Ezek. 1:20.

Jesus has appointed the ‘faithful slave’ to be the only channel for dispensing spiritual food. (Matt. 24:45-47) Since 1919, the glorified Jesus Christ has been using that slave to help his followers understand God’s own Book and heed its directives. By obeying the instructions found in the Bible, we promote cleanness, peace, and unity in the congregation. Each one of us does well to ask himself, ‘Am I loyal to the channel that Jesus is using today?’ Jehovah’s written Word acquaints us with the heavenly part of his organization. For example, the prophet Ezekiel received a vision in which the heavenly part of God’s organization is represented by a celestial chariot. (Ezek. 1:4-28) With Christ and the holy angels about to destroy this wicked world, Jehovah’s chariot is rapidly moving toward the vindication of his sovereignty and the sanctification of his holy name! *w16.11 3:9, 10*

Monday, February 19

[Encourage] one another, and all the more so as you see the day drawing near.—Heb. 10:25.

Just like Jesus’ early followers, we meet together to learn and to be encouraged. (1 Cor. 14:31) Even experienced servants of God need encouragement. Consider Joshua. He had served God faithfully for many years. Yet, Jehovah told Moses to encourage him, saying: “Commission Joshua and encourage him and strengthen him, because he is the one who will cross over before this

people and he is the one who will cause them to inherit the land that you will see.” (Deut. 3:27, 28) Joshua was about to take on the huge responsibility of leading the Israelites in the conquest of the Promised Land. He would face setbacks and at least one military defeat. (Josh. 7:1-9) No wonder Joshua needed to be encouraged and strengthened! So let us personally encourage elders, including circuit overseers, who work hard to care for the flock of God.—1 Thess. 5:12, 13. *w16.11 1:12, 13*

Tuesday, February 20

I will show you the judgment on the great prostitute who sits on many waters.—Rev. 17:1.

The Bible Students understood that it was not enough for them to inform relatives, close friends, and church members of their stand on false religion. The whole world needed to see Babylon the Great for what it is—a religious prostitute! Accordingly, between December 1917 and early 1918, the few thousand Bible Students zealously distributed 10,000,000 copies of a tract featuring the subject “The Fall of Babylon”—a hard-hitting indictment of Christendom. As you can imagine, the clergy were furious; but undeterred, the Bible Students kept right on with this important work. They were determined to obey “God as ruler rather than men.” (Acts 5:29) What can we conclude? That far from becoming enslaved to Babylon the Great during the war, these Christian men and women were breaking free from its influence and were helping others to do so. *w16.11 5:2, 4*

Wednesday, February 21

Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the spirit, on the things of the spirit.—Rom. 8:5.

Some might imagine that this is a contrast between those who are not in the truth and those who are, between those who are not Christians and those who are. However, Paul was writing to “those who are in Rome as God’s beloved ones, *called to be holy ones.*” (Rom. 1:7) Thus, Paul was contrasting Christians who walked according to the flesh with Christians who walked according to the spirit. He linked “living according to the flesh” with “the sinful passions” that were then “at work in [their] bodies.” (Rom. 7:5) So when speaking of those who “set their minds on the things of the flesh,” Paul was referring to people who are ruled by or focused on their desires and leanings as imperfect humans. In the main, these are ones who follow their cravings, impulses, and passions, whether sexual or otherwise. *w16.12 2:5, 7*

Thursday, February 22

Happy is the one whose transgression is pardoned.—Ps. 32:1.

Some anxiety may be caused by a person’s past actions or failings. At times, King David felt that his ‘errors loomed over his head.’ He admitted: “My anguished heart makes me groan aloud.” (Ps. 38:3, 4, 8, 18) In that situation, what was the wise thing for David to do? What did he do? He trusted in Jehovah’s mercy and forgiveness. (Ps. 32:2, 3, 5) At other times, you may become anxious about the present. For in-

stance, when David wrote Psalm 55, he feared for his life. (Ps. 55:2-5) Nevertheless, he did not allow anxiety to destroy his confidence in Jehovah. David made his problems a subject of fervent prayer, but he also understood the value of taking practical steps to deal with the cause of the anxiety. (2 Sam. 15:30-34) Learn a lesson from David. Instead of allowing anxiety to overwhelm you, take what steps you can to deal with the situation and then confidently leave matters in Jehovah’s hands. *w16.12 3:14, 15*

Friday, February 23

*I have sinned against Jehovah.
—2 Sam. 12:13.*

David accepted correction from Jehovah’s representative, the prophet Nathan. David also prayed to Jehovah, confessing his sins and expressing a sincere desire to be restored to Jehovah’s favor. (Ps. 51:1-17) Instead of being paralyzed by guilt, David learned from his mistakes. Indeed, he never repeated those serious sins. Years later, he died faithful, his record of integrity firmly sealed in Jehovah’s memory. (Heb. 11:32-34) What can we learn from David’s example? If we fall into serious sin, we need to repent sincerely and seek Jehovah’s forgiveness. We must confess our sins to him. (1 John 1:9) We also need to approach the elders, who can offer us spiritual help. (Jas. 5:14-16) By availing ourselves of Jehovah’s arrangements, we show that we trust in his promise to heal and forgive us. Thereafter, we do well to learn from our mistakes, move forward in our service to Jehovah, and look to the future with confidence.—Heb. 12:12, 13. *w17.01 1:13, 14*

Saturday, February 24

Hold your servant back from presumptuous acts.—Ps. 19:13.

What are “presumptuous acts”? By definition, when someone rashly or impertinently does something that he is not authorized to do, he is acting presumptuously. Because of inherited sin, we all act presumptuously at times. But as King Saul’s example illustrates, if we develop a pattern of pushing ahead, sooner or later we will find ourselves in serious trouble with God. Psalm 119:21 says of Jehovah: “You rebuke the presumptuous.” Why is that? Presumptuous acts are more serious than innocent mistakes. First, when we act immodestly, we fail to honor Jehovah as our rightful Sovereign. Second, if we act beyond the scope of our authority, we are likely to get into conflict with others. (Prov. 13:10) And third, when it becomes clear that we have acted presumptuously, we may be embarrassed or even humiliated. (Luke 14: 8, 9) Presumptuous acts do not turn out well. As the Scriptures show, modesty is always the right course. *w17.01 3:4, 5*

Sunday, February 25

They are the ones who have acted corruptly. They are not his children, the defect is their own.

—Deut. 32:5.

No longer perfect, Adam could not reflect God’s qualities perfectly. He not only lost a marvelous future for himself but also handed down to his children imperfection, sin, and death. (Rom. 5:12) He deprived his offspring of the prospect of life without end. Furthermore, Adam and Eve could no lon-

ger have a perfect child; neither could any of their children have a perfect child. After turning Adam and Eve away from God, Satan the Devil has continued to mislead mankind until today. (John 8:44) God’s love for humans, however, endures. Despite Adam and Eve’s rebellion, Jehovah wants mankind to enjoy a good relationship with him. He does not desire any to die. (2 Pet. 3:9) So right after the rebellion, God made arrangements to enable humans to restore their friendship with him while he at the same time maintained his own righteous standards. —John 3:16. *w17.02 1:12-14*

Monday, February 26

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

Appreciation for our role in Jehovah’s service will grow as we, in imitation of our God, look for the good in others. Instead of seeking the spotlight or always stepping in to take over, we will more often find ourselves modestly seeking the advice of others and yielding to their suggestions. We will rejoice with them when they receive privileges. And we will praise Jehovah as we see how he blesses “the entire association of [our] brothers in the world.” (1 Pet. 5:9) Also, we will develop good judgment by modestly learning to see things from Jehovah’s viewpoint. Through regular study, prayer, and application of what we learn, we can gradually strengthen our conscience. (1 Tim. 1:5) We learn to put others first. If we do our part, Jehovah promises that he will ‘finish our training,’ helping us to develop modesty and other godly qualities.—1 Pet. 5:10. *w17.01 4:17, 18*

Tuesday, February 27

Let the elders who preside in a fine way be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard in speaking and teaching.—1 Tim. 5:17.

Those related to us in the faith certainly merit honor and respect. This is especially true of the elders who are taking the lead. We honor these brothers regardless of their nationality, education, social standing, or financial status. The Bible refers to them as “gifts in men,” and they are a key part of God’s arrangement to care for the needs of his people. (Eph. 4:8) Think of congregation elders, circuit overseers, Branch Committee members, and the members of the Governing Body. Our brothers and sisters in the first century had high regard for those appointed to take the lead, and we feel similarly today. We do not idolize well-known representatives of the Christian congregation or react in their presence as if angels were standing nearby. Still, we do respect and honor such brothers for their hard work and humility.—2 Cor. 1:24; Rev. 19:10. *w17.03* 1:13

Wednesday, February 28

*Why do you call me good? Nobody is good except one, God.
—Mark 10:18.*

What a contrast existed between Jesus and Herod Agrippa I, who became king of Judea! At a diplomatic function, Herod clothed himself “with royal raiment.” His adoring crowd shouted: “A god’s voice, and not a man’s!” Herod evidently basked in the praise. But “instantly the angel of Jehovah struck him, because he did not give the glory

to God, and he was eaten up with worms and died.” (Acts 12:21-23) Surely, no objective observer could conclude that Herod was chosen by Jehovah to be leader. Jesus, on the other hand, gave convincing evidence of being appointed by God, and he constantly glorified Jehovah as the Supreme Leader of his people. Jesus’ leadership was not meant to last only a few years. “All authority has been given me in heaven and on the earth,” he declared after his resurrection. “And look! I am with you all the days until the conclusion of the system of things.”—Matt. 28:18-20. *w17.02* 3:20, 21

Thursday, March 1

*They drove Jephthah out.
—Judg. 11:2.*

Jealousy and hatred moved Jephthah’s half brothers to drive him away, illegally depriving him of his rightful inheritance as firstborn. (Judg. 11:1-3) Yet, he came to their aid when they pleaded for his help. (Judg. 11:4-11) The fight to defend Jehovah’s name was more important to Jephthah than any personal conflicts. He was determined to be faithful to Jehovah, resulting in good for himself and for others. (Heb. 11:32, 33) Will we allow Jephthah’s example to touch our hearts? Perhaps we have experienced disappointment or ill-treatment from certain Christian brothers. If so, we should not allow such challenges to hold us back from attending Christian meetings or serving Jehovah and being with the congregation to the full. In imitation of Jephthah, we too can allow divine standards to help us overcome negative circumstances and continue to be a force for good.—Rom. 12:20, 21; Col. 3:13. *w16.04* 1:7, 9, 10

Friday, March 2

We do not give up.—2 Cor. 4:1.

We must endure, not for a time, but *to the end*. To illustrate: Imagine a ship that capsizes. To survive, the passengers must swim to shore. The swimmer who gives up only a few yards from shore faces the same fate as the swimmer who gave up much earlier. Similarly, we are determined to endure until we reach the new world. Our life depends on our enduring. We have an attitude like that of the apostle Paul, who twice stated: “We do not give up.” (2 Cor. 4:16) We can be absolutely confident that Jehovah will help us endure to the end. We share Paul’s conviction as expressed at Romans 8:37-39: “We are coming off completely victorious through the one who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life nor angels nor governments nor things now here nor things to come nor powers nor height nor depth nor any other creation will be able to separate us from God’s love that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” *w16.04 2:17, 18*

Saturday, March 3

If any one of you is lacking in wisdom, let him keep asking God, . . . and it will be given him.

—Jas. 1:5.

Ask Jehovah for the wisdom to recognize and deal with situations that could cause you to violate your Christian neutrality. If you are imprisoned or otherwise punished because of your resolute stand for true worship, pray for the strength to defend your faith with boldness and to endure whatever persecution may come. (Acts 4:27-31) Jeho-

vah can strengthen you by means of his Word. Meditate on verses that will help you maintain your neutrality under test. Commit them to memory now, so that they can sustain you if you do not have access to a Bible later. God’s Word can also reinforce your hope in future Kingdom blessings. This hope is essential if we are to endure persecution. (Rom. 8:25) Select passages that describe blessings that you especially hope to enjoy, and visualize yourself experiencing those blessings in Paradise. *w16.04 4:14, 15*

Sunday, March 4

*You received free, give free.
—Matt. 10:8.*

The clergy of Christendom are not preaching God’s Kingdom. If they do speak about the Kingdom, many refer to it as a feeling or a condition in the heart of a Christian. (Luke 17:21) They do not help people to understand that God’s Kingdom is a heavenly government with Jesus Christ as Ruler, that it is the solution to all mankind’s problems, and that it will soon remove all wickedness from this earth. (Rev. 19:11-21) Rather, they prefer to remember Jesus at Christmas and Easter. They seem to have no idea of what Jesus will accomplish as earth’s new Ruler. They have also lost sight of what should be the motive for preaching. It should not be to collect money and construct elaborate buildings. The Word of God should not be commercialized. (2 Cor. 2:17, ftn.) Those preaching the Kingdom message should not seek personal gain for the work that they do.—Acts 20:33-35. *w16.05 2:7, 8*

Monday, March 5

Let each one keep seeking, not his own advantage, but that of the other person.—1 Cor. 10:24.

Suppose you are drawn to a certain style of dress that could possibly disturb some in the congregation. Yet, you may know of no specific Bible law that forbids it. What is Jehovah's mind on the matter? The apostle Paul offered this inspired counsel: "The women should adorn themselves in appropriate dress, with modesty and soundness of mind, not with styles of hair braiding and gold or pearls or very expensive clothing, but in the way that is proper for women professing devotion to God." (1 Tim. 2:9, 10) In principle, this counsel applies equally to Christian men. As devoted servants of Jehovah, we are concerned not only with our personal preferences but with the effect that our dress and grooming could have on others. Modesty and love move us to take into account the opinions of fellow believers in order to avoid distracting or even offending them.—1 Cor. 10:23; Phil. 3:17. *w16.05* 3:14

Tuesday, March 6

O Jehovah, you are our Father. We are the clay, and you are our Potter; we are all the work of your hand.—Isa. 64:8.

Adam lost his sonship when he rebelled against his Maker. Nonetheless, throughout the generations "a great cloud" of Adam's descendants have chosen to uphold God's sovereignty. (Heb. 12:1) By humbly submitting to their Creator, they have demonstrated that they wanted him, not Satan, to be their Father and

Potter. (John 8:44) Their loyalty to God calls to mind the words of our day's text. Today, all who worship Jehovah in spirit and truth endeavor to reflect the same humble, submissive attitude. They consider it an honor to address Jehovah as Father and to submit to him as their Potter. Do you see yourself as soft clay in God's hands, willing to be molded into a vessel that is desirable in his eyes? Do you similarly see each of your spiritual brothers and sisters as a work in progress, being molded by God? *w16.06* 1:2, 3

Wednesday, March 7

Keep testing whether you are in the faith.—2 Cor. 13:5.

As we approach the new world, *our* faith is being tested. We would do well to assess the quality of our faith. For example, we might examine our view of Jesus' words recorded at Matthew 6:33. Ask yourself: 'Do my priorities and decisions reflect that I truly believe Jesus' words? Would I decide to miss meetings or field service so as to increase my income? What will I do if secular pressures continue to mount? Will I allow the world to squeeze me into its mold—and perhaps right out of the truth?' As another example, think about a servant of Jehovah who is somewhat reluctant to follow Bible standards, perhaps regarding associations, disfellowshipping, or entertainment. Ask yourself, 'Might it be that this is true in my case?' If we detect such a hardening attitude developing within us, we urgently need to examine our faith! Honest self-appraisal in the light of God's Word should be a regular part of our thinking. *w16.06* 2:8, 9

Thursday, March 8

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

Jehovah's faithful servants on earth, his Witnesses, make up an organization that is indeed exceptional. True, it is composed of humans who are imperfect and who have their faults. Still, God's holy spirit has been moving his global congregation to grow and prosper. When the last days of the present system began back in 1914, God's servants on earth were relatively few in number. But Jehovah blessed their preaching work. During the following decades, millions of new ones learned Bible truths and became Jehovah's Witnesses. Jehovah actually pointed forward to this outstanding growth, saying the words of today's text and adding: "I myself, Jehovah, will speed it up in its own time." That prophetic statement has certainly come true in these last days. Thus, the number of God's people on earth is now greater than the entire population of many nations. *w16.06 4:1, 2*

Friday, March 9

*Are you not worth more than [the birds of heaven] are?
—Matt. 6:26.*

For Jesus, it was unthinkable that his heavenly Father would provide food for the birds but not take care of the same basic needs of humans. (1 Pet. 5:6, 7) He will not put the food in our mouths, but he may bless our efforts to grow the food we need or to earn the money to buy our daily provisions. In cases of need, he may motivate others to share what they have. Although Je-

sus did not mention providing shelter for the birds of heaven, Jehovah has provided them with the instincts, skills, and materials needed to make nests for themselves. Jehovah can likewise help us find adequate housing for our families. When saying the words found in today's text, Jesus no doubt had in mind that he would soon give his life in behalf of mankind. (Compare Luke 12:6, 7.) Jesus did not die for the birds of heaven, but he did die for us so that we might enjoy unending life.—Matt. 20:28. *w16.07 1:11-13*

Saturday, March 10

*Sin must not be master over you, seeing that you are not under law but under undeserved kindness.
—Rom. 6:14.*

How did humans inherit the sinful, dying condition that plagues us all? The Bible explains: "By the trespass of the one man [Adam] death ruled as king" over Adam's descendants. (Rom. 5:12, 14, 17) Happily, though, we can choose no longer to be ruled, or dominated, by sin. By exercising faith in Christ's ransom sacrifice, we place ourselves under the rule of Jehovah's undeserved kindness. (Rom. 5:20, 21) Even though we remain sinners, we need not resign ourselves to having sin dominate our lives. When we do give in to sin, we will ask Jehovah for his forgiveness. Therefore, we come under the rule of undeserved kindness. With what result? Paul explained: "The undeserved kindness of God . . . trains us to reject ungodliness and worldly desires and to live with soundness of mind and righteousness and godly devotion amid this present system of things." —Titus 2:11, 12. *w16.07 3:5, 6*

Sunday, March 11

[God] brought her to the man.

—Gen. 2:22.

The first marriage was struck with calamity because both Adam and Eve chose to misuse their free will by disobeying Jehovah. “The original serpent,” Satan the Devil, deceived Eve by leading her to believe that eating fruit from “the tree of the knowledge of good and bad” imparted special knowledge that would enable her to decide what was good and what was bad. She did not show respect for her husband’s headship by asking him about the matter. And instead of obeying God, Adam accepted the fruit Eve held out to him. (Rev. 12:9; Gen. 2:9, 16, 17; 3:1-6) When brought to account by God, Adam blamed his wife. Eve blamed the serpent for deceiving her. (Gen. 3:12, 13) Lame excuses but no justification! Because the first human pair had disobeyed Jehovah, they stood before him as condemned rebels. What a warning for us! For success in marriage, each mate must accept personal responsibility and obey Jehovah. *w16.08* 1:1, 4, 5

Monday, March 12

What God has yoked together, let no man put apart.—Matt. 19:6.

Unrealistic expectations may be at the root of a marital problem. When dreams about a happy marriage do not come true, a person may feel dissatisfied, cheated, even bitter. Differences in emotional nature and upbringing may become issues, or disagreements may arise regarding money, in-laws, and child-rearing. However, it is commendable that the vast majority of

Christian married couples find mutually acceptable solutions for all such problems because they let God guide them. Christian marriage mates who have serious problems should seek help from the elders. These experienced brothers can assist married couples to apply the counsel of God’s Word. In resolving marital problems, we should also pray for Jehovah’s spirit and his help in applying Bible principles and displaying the fruitage of his spirit.—Gal. 5:22, 23. *w16.08* 2:11-13

Tuesday, March 13

From now on you will be catching men alive.—Luke 5:10.

Jesus had limited time to carry out his ministry. Nevertheless, he took time to cultivate the interest people showed in the good news. For instance, Jesus taught a crowd, using a boat as a platform. On that occasion, he miraculously gave Peter a huge catch of fish and said the words of today’s text. What result did Jesus’ words and actions produce? Peter and his associates “abandoned everything and followed [Jesus].” (Luke 5:1-11) Nicodemus, a member of the Sanhedrin, became interested in Jesus’ teaching. He wanted to learn more but was afraid of what others would say if he spoke with Jesus in public. Jesus was flexible and generous with his time; he met with Nicodemus at night—away from the crowds. (John 3:1, 2) God’s Son set aside time to build up the faith of individuals. Should we not be diligent in making return visits and conducting Bible studies with interested ones? *w16.08* 4:10, 11

Wednesday, March 14

Walk in modesty with your God.

—*Mic. 6:8.*

Our modesty includes making a humble evaluation of ourselves when compared with Jehovah's purity and holiness, for we are completely dependent on him for the best guidance. Also, modesty includes showing respect for the feelings and opinions of others. Therefore, we 'walk in modesty with God' by conforming our lives to his elevated standards and showing respect for other people's sensitivities. Our choice of clothing should not make people conclude anything other than that we are worshippers of Jehovah. Our brothers and sisters as well as people in general should be able to see that we fittingly represent our righteous God. He has high standards, and we happily strive to reflect those standards. Commendation is in order for brothers and sisters whose appearance and fine conduct attract honest-hearted people to the Bible's life-saving message and bring glory and joy to Jehovah. *w16.09 3:18-20*

Thursday, March 15

You have contended with God and with men and you have at last prevailed.—*Gen. 32:28.*

Jacob was a very determined contender, and he proved that he would not turn aside from the challenge! (Gen. 32:24-26) And he was, indeed, rewarded for his perseverance. He received the fitting name Israel, (meaning "Contender [Perseverer] With God" or "God Contends"). Jacob gained the rich reward that we too are seeking—Jehovah's approval and blessing. Jacob's beloved wife,

Rachel, was eager to see how Jehovah would fulfill his promise to bless her husband's offspring. But she had no children. In her day, that situation was viewed as a great affliction. How did Rachel find the emotional and physical strength to continue battling against circumstances that were discouraging but completely beyond her control? She never gave up hope. Rather, she kept contending by praying with more intensity. Jehovah heard Rachel's heartfelt supplications, and she was eventually blessed with children.—Gen. 30:8, 20-24. *w16.09 2:6, 7*

Friday, March 16

The word of God is alive and exerts power and is sharper than any two-edged sword.—*Heb. 4:12.*

It is particularly important that you impress on your children the value of Bible principles. (Ps. 1:1-3) There are many ways to do this. For example, you could ask your children to imagine that they are going to live on a remote island and will have to choose a number of people to live there with them. Then ask, "What qualities must each person have if all in the group are to live in peace and get along well?" You could also talk with them about the wise directions found at Galatians 5:19-23. That exercise could teach two important lessons. First, God's standards promote genuine peace and harmony. Second, by educating us now, Jehovah is preparing us for life in the new world. (Isa. 54:13; John 17:3) You could drive these points home by selecting an experience from our publications. It might be from the series "The Bible Changes Lives," published in *The Watchtower*. *w16.09 5:13, 14*

Saturday, March 17

[Make] the best use of your time.

—*Eph. 5:16.*

Although we may be very busy, we all need to make time for personal study and family worship. (Eph. 5:15) Our aim, though, should not be simply to cover a certain number of pages or solely to prepare comments to participate at meetings. We want to make sure that we allow God's Word to reach our heart and strengthen our faith. We should find a balance between keeping in mind the needs of others when studying and reflecting on our own spiritual needs. (Phil. 1:9, 10) We must recognize that when we prepare for the ministry, for the meetings, or for a talk, we may not necessarily apply what we read to ourselves. To illustrate: Although a chef has to taste dishes before serving them, he cannot live merely on the food he samples. If he wants to remain healthy, he has to prepare nutritious meals for himself. Similarly, we should strive to nourish our heart with spiritual food that fills our personal needs. *w16.10 2:10, 11*

Sunday, March 18

By faith we perceive that the systems of things were put in order by God's word, so that what is seen has come into existence from things that are not visible.

—*Heb. 11:3.*

The Bible's description of faith is found at Hebrews 11:1. Faith focuses on two kinds of things that are not visible to us: (1) "What is hoped for"—this may include future events that have been promised to happen but that have not yet occurred, such as the end of all wickedness and

the coming new world. (2) "Realities that are not seen." In this context, the Greek word translated "evident demonstration" refers to "convincing evidence" of an invisible reality, such as the existence of Jehovah God, Jesus Christ, the angels, and the activities of the heavenly Kingdom. How do we prove that our hope is alive and that we believe in the unseen things spoken of in God's Word? By our words and deeds—without which our faith would be incomplete. *w16.10 4:6*

Monday, March 19

Keep on encouraging one another.

—*Heb. 3:13.*

Jehovah and Jesus greatly value what all of us do to support Kingdom interests, even if our efforts and contributions are limited because of our circumstances. (Luke 21:1-4; 2 Cor. 8:12) For instance, some of our dear elderly ones make great effort to attend and share in meetings and the ministry regularly. Should we not commend and encourage them? Yes, seize opportunities to encourage others. If we see something that merits commendation, why hold back? Consider what happened when Paul and Barnabas were at Antioch in Pisidia. The presiding officers of the synagogue there told them: "Men, brothers, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, tell it." Paul responded by giving a fine talk. (Acts 13:13-16, 42-44) If we can offer a word of encouragement, why not speak up? We will very likely find that if we make it a habit to be encouraging, people will encourage us in return.—Luke 6:38. *w16.11 1:3, 15, 16*

Tuesday, March 20

The eyes of Jehovah are everywhere, watching both the bad and the good.—Prov. 15:3.

What a privilege it is to be part of Jehovah's organization! With our knowledge of God's requirements and standards comes the responsibility to do what is right and uphold his sovereignty. As this world sinks deeper and deeper into debauchery, we must "hate what is bad," as Jehovah does. (Ps. 97:10) We refuse to join the ungodly and say: "Good is bad and bad is good." (Isa. 5:20) Because we want to please God, we strive to remain clean physically, morally, and spiritually. (1 Cor. 6:9-11) We love Jehovah and put our trust in him; we choose to show our loyalty to him by living up to the standards clearly outlined in his own precious Book. And we make every effort to comply with those standards at home, in the congregation, on the job, at school—everywhere. *w16.11 3:13*

Wednesday, March 21

Let every person be in subjection to the superior authorities.

—Rom. 13:1.

The Bible Students were sincere. But during the period between 1914 and 1919, they did not always have a proper view of subjection to the secular governments. Therefore, as a group, they were not always neutral with regard to the war effort. For example, when the president of the United States decreed that May 30, 1918, would be set aside as a day of prayer for peace, *The Watch Tower* urged the Bible Students to join in the observance.

Some brothers purchased bonds to provide financial assistance to the war effort, and a few even went into the trenches with guns and bayonets. However, it would be a mistake to conclude that the Bible Students were first taken into captivity to Babylon the Great because they needed correction and discipline. On the contrary, they understood their obligation to separate themselves from false religion, and during World War I, the break with that world empire was almost complete. —Luke 12:47, 48. *w16.11 5:9*

Thursday, March 22

[We] walk, not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit.

—Rom. 8:4.

You may wonder why Paul would stress to anointed Christians the danger of living "according to the flesh." And could a similar danger today threaten Christians, whom God has accepted as his friends and views as righteous? Sadly, any Christian could begin to walk according to the sinful flesh. For example, Paul wrote that some among the brothers in Rome were slaves "of their own appetites," which could have been sexual appetite or appetite for food, drink, or other things. Some of them were 'seducing unsuspecting ones.' (Rom. 16:17, 18; Phil. 3:18, 19; Jude 4, 8, 12) Recall, too, that for a time, a brother in Corinth was "living with his father's wife." (1 Cor. 5:1) It is understandable, then, why God used Paul to warn Christians about "setting the mind on the flesh." (Rom. 8:5, 6) That warning is equally valid now. *w16.12 2:5, 8, 9*

Friday, March 23

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

Good communication, sharing your feelings with a trusted confidant, can help you cope with anxiety. A marriage mate, a close friend, or a congregation elder may be able to help you to put your anxiety into perspective. Frank and honest communication can do much to help you to understand and deal with your concerns. The Bible tells us: "Plans fail when there is no consultation, but there is accomplishment through many advisers." (Prov. 15:22) Jehovah also helps Christians to deal with anxieties by means of weekly congregation meetings. There you can associate with fellow believers who are concerned about you and who want to encourage one another. (Heb. 10:24, 25) Such "an interchange of encouragement" will help to replenish your spiritual resources and make it easier for you to deal with any anxiety.—Rom. 1:12. *w16.12* 3:17, 18

Saturday, March 24

Hannah . . . began to pray to Jehovah.—1 Sam. 1:10.

When we deal with health problems or other challenges beyond our control, we should throw our anxiety on Jehovah, trusting that he cares for us. (1 Pet. 5:6, 7) Also, we should do what is within our power to benefit from Christian meetings and other spiritual provisions. (Heb. 10:24, 25) What about faithful parents whose children have gone astray? Elderly Samuel could not force his adult sons to remain loyal to the righteous standards he

taught them. (1 Sam. 8:1-3) He had to leave the matter in Jehovah's hands. Even so, Samuel could maintain his own integrity and please his heavenly Father, Jehovah. (Prov. 27:11) Today, a number of Christian parents find themselves in a similar situation. They trust that Jehovah is ever on the lookout to welcome back sinners who repent. (Luke 15:20) At the same time, such parents work hard to remain loyal to Jehovah, hoping that their example will move their children to return to the fold. *w17.01* 1:15, 16

Sunday, March 25

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

A humble person is generally also a modest person, able to estimate accurately his own abilities and achievements, to acknowledge his mistakes, and to accept suggestions and new ideas. Humility greatly pleases Jehovah. In the Bible, modesty similarly refers to having a proper estimate of ourselves and an awareness of our limitations. In the original language of the text, the emphasis seems to be on how that awareness should affect our behavior toward others. When might we start to think or act immodestly? Consider a few of the warning signs. We might be taking ourselves or our privileges too seriously. (Rom. 12:16) We might be drawing attention to ourselves in inappropriate ways. (1 Tim. 2:9, 10) Or we might be advocating strong opinions solely on the basis of our position, connections, or personal thinking—not even being aware that we have crossed the line from modesty to presumptuousness.—1 Cor. 4:6. *w17.01* 3:6-8

Monday, March 26

The glory of young men is their strength, and the splendor of old men is their gray hair.

—Prov. 20:29.

In recent times, the work of Jehovah's people has grown in scope and complexity. As we tackle new projects, new ways of doing things are adopted—often ways that involve the use of rapidly changing technology. Some older ones may find it hard to keep pace with these advances. (Luke 5:39) Even when that is not the case, younger ones may have greater strength and energy than older ones have. Thus, it is both loving and practical for older ones to prepare younger ones to take on greater responsibility. (Ps. 71:18) Those in positions of authority may not find it easy to delegate to younger ones. Some fear losing a position they cherish or are convinced that younger ones cannot do things as well. Some may reason that they do not have time to train someone else. On the other hand, those who are younger must guard against becoming impatient when they are not given more to do. *w17.01* 5:3, 4

Tuesday, March 27

Through one act of justification the result to men of all sorts is their being declared righteous for life.—Rom. 5:18.

Jesus became a perfect human, just as Adam had been. (John 1:14) But unlike Adam, Jesus lived up to the standard Jehovah expected from a perfect man. Even under the most extreme tests, Jesus never sinned nor broke any of God's laws. As a perfect man, Jesus could save humankind from sin and death by dying in their behalf.

He corresponded exactly to all that Adam should have been—a perfect man, absolutely loyal and obedient to God. (1 Tim. 2:6) Jesus became the ransom sacrifice that opened the way to endless life “for many”—men, women, and children. (Matt. 20:28) Indeed, the ransom is the key that unlocks the door to the fulfillment of God's original purpose. (2 Cor. 1:19, 20) The ransom gives all faithful humans the prospect of everlasting life. *w17.02* 1:15, 16

Memorial Bible reading:
(Daytime events: Nisan 9)
John 12:12-19; Mark 11:1-11

Wednesday, March 28

For the joy that was set before him he endured.—Heb. 12:2.

Suppose that you are in the middle of a long, dark tunnel. You may wonder if you will again see light. Similarly, you may at times feel overwhelmed by the problems you face. Even Jesus could have felt that way. He was the target of “hostile speech from sinners,” humiliation, and even painful execution on “a torture stake”—surely the darkest period of his life on earth! (Heb. 12:3) Yet, Jesus endured it all. He focused on the rewards of his endurance, particularly his contribution to the sanctification of God's name and the vindication of Jehovah's sovereignty. The darkness of Jesus' trials was temporary, but the brilliance of his heavenly reward would be everlasting. Today, the trials you face may be painful and even crushing. But remember that your tribulations on the road to eternal life are temporary. *w16.04* 2:10

Memorial Bible reading:
(Daytime events: Nisan 10)
John 12:20-50

Thursday, March 29

By means of him [Jesus] we have the release by ransom through the blood of that one, yes, the forgiveness of our trespasses.

—Eph. 1:7.

In this permissive world, sin has all but lost its stigma, so that many are unaware of the need for redemption. They do not understand what sin is, how it affects us, and what we need to do to be delivered from slavery to sin. Honesthearted ones are relieved to learn that Jehovah, out of his great love and undeserved kindness, sent his Son to earth to ransom us from sin and its consequence, death. (1 John 4:9, 10) The ransom sacrifice of Christ is the greatest proof of God's love for us and illustrates the richness of His undeserved kindness. What a relief it is to learn that if we exercise faith in the shed blood of Jesus, our sins will be forgiven and our conscience will be cleansed! (Heb. 9:14) Good news indeed to share with others! *w16.07* 4:6, 7

Memorial Bible reading:
(Daytime events: Nisan 11)
Luke 21:1-36

Friday, March 30

[Christ] obtained an everlasting deliverance for us.—Heb. 9:12.

The door to complete forgiveness opens to us when we exercise faith in the ransom. God's Word assures us that our sins can be "blotted out." (Acts 3:19-21) On the basis of the ransom, Jehovah adopts his spirit-anointed servants as his children. (Rom. 8:15-17) As to those of us who are of the "other sheep," it is as though Jehovah has drawn up an

adoption certificate with our name on it. After we have reached perfection and have passed the final test, Jehovah will be delighted to sign the certificate, as it were, and adopt us as his beloved earthly children. (Rom. 8:20, 21; Rev. 20:7-9) Jehovah's love for his precious children is everlasting. The benefits of the ransom last forever. This gift will never lose its value. No person or power can take it away from us. *w17.02* 2:15, 16

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

MEMORIAL DATE
After Sundown
Saturday, March 31

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

When Jehovah drew us into a relationship with him, he was aware of what sort of imperfect tendencies would be particularly troublesome for us. And he knew that we would occasionally transgress. Yet, this did not prevent Jehovah from wanting us as his friends. Love moved God to offer us a precious gift—the ransom sacrifice of his beloved Son. (John 3:16) If on the basis of this priceless provision we repentantly seek Jehovah's forgiveness when we err, we can have the confidence that our friendship with him is still intact even though we are in an imperfect state.—1 Tim. 1:15. *w16.05* 4:6, 7

Memorial Bible reading:
(Daytime events: Nisan 13)
Matthew 26:17-19; Mark 14:12-16;
Luke 22:7-13
(Events after sunset: Nisan 14)
John 13:1-5; 14:1-3

Sunday, April 1

You who were once alienated and enemies because your minds were on the works that were wicked, he has now reconciled by means of that one's fleshly body through his death.—Col. 1:21, 22.

We have the responsibility to make known to our fellow humans that they can come into a friendly relationship with their Creator. Before humans exercise faith in Jesus' sacrifice, God considers them to be his enemies. The apostle John wrote: "The one who exercises faith in the Son has everlasting life; the one who disobeys the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God remains upon him." (John 3:36) Happily, Christ's sacrifice makes reconciliation with God possible. (2 Cor. 5:18-20) We share in teaching people spiritual truth, helping them to develop a personal relationship with Jehovah. This is an important part of our preaching work. *w16.07* 4:8-10

Memorial Bible reading:
(Daytime events: Nisan 14)
John 19:1-42

Monday, April 2

Let your name be sanctified.
—Matt. 6:9.

Jesus mentioned the sanctification of God's name as the first request in his model prayer. Since Jehovah is holy, all principles and laws that originate with him are holy. In spite of this, in the garden of Eden, Satan slyly questioned God's right to set standards for humans. By lying about Jehovah, Satan slandered God's sacred name. (Gen. 3:1-5) Jesus, on the other hand, truly loved the name of Jehovah. (John

17:25, 26) Jesus contributed to the sanctification of the divine name. (Ps. 40:8-10) By his perfect life course on earth, Jesus proved that it is reasonable and righteous for Jehovah to set standards for his intelligent creatures. By being loyal to his heavenly Father until death, Jesus proved that a perfect human could maintain perfect obedience to God's righteous standards. *w17.02* 2:2-4

Memorial Bible reading:
(Daytime events: Nisan 15)
Matthew 27:62-66
(Events after sunset: Nisan 16)
John 20:1

Tuesday, April 3

To the Lamb be . . . the honor and the glory.—Rev. 5:13.

The Lamb is Jesus Christ, "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29) The Bible tells us that he is far superior to all men who are or have been kings. It explains: "He is the King of those who rule as kings and Lord of those who rule as lords, the one alone having immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see." (1 Tim. 6:14-16) Indeed, what other king has ever voluntarily died as a ransom for our sins? Do you not feel moved to join with myriads of heavenly creatures in proclaiming: "The Lamb who was slaughtered is worthy to receive the power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing." (Rev. 5:12) Honoring Jehovah and Christ is not optional. Our everlasting life depends on our doing so.—Ps. 2:11, 12; John 5:23. *w17.03* 1:3, 4

Memorial Bible reading:
(Daytime events: Nisan 16)
John 20:2-18

Wednesday, April 4

If you bring me back . . . , then I will indeed become your leader!

—Judg. 11:9.

Jephthah's thorough grasp of Israel's history gave him a clear picture of what was right and what was wrong in Jehovah's eyes. (Judg. 11:12-27) Godly principles that were embedded in the Mosaic Law molded Jephthah's thinking as well as his heart. He knew that Jehovah disapproved of holding grudges; rather, God required that His people love one another. The Law also taught that a person must not ignore the needs of others, even of someone who "hates" him. (Ex. 23:5; Lev. 19:17, 18) Examples of faithful ones like Joseph, who showed mercy to his brothers—even though "they began to hate him"—may also have influenced Jephthah's response. (Gen. 37:4; 45:4, 5) Meditating on such examples would have helped Jephthah to choose a course of action that was pleasing to Jehovah. The conduct of his brothers no doubt hurt him deeply, but he would not hold back from serving Jehovah and His people.—Judg. 11:1-3. *w16.04* 1:8, 9

Thursday, April 5

They continued devoting themselves . . . to associating together.

—Acts 2:42.

Jehovah's people have always treasured occasions to meet together. Immediately after the Christian congregation was formed, followers of Jesus began "devoting themselves . . . to associating together." You likely share their desire to attend congregation meetings regularly. Nevertheless, all Christians

face obstacles. Secular work, a busy schedule, or fatigue because of our daily routine can make it difficult to attend meetings. Appreciating the value of the meetings can motivate us to try to overcome these obstacles and maintain a healthy pattern of meeting attendance. Granted, some of our fellow believers are unable to attend meetings regularly because of circumstances beyond their control, such as serious illness. Elders may assist these infirm ones to benefit from spiritual programs, perhaps by helping them to tie in by telephone hookup or by recording the meetings for them. *w16.04* 3:3

Friday, April 6

Take courage! I have conquered the world.—John 16:33.

The examples of faithful servants of Jehovah can give us the wisdom and strength we need to endure. For instance, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to worship an image representing the Babylonian State. (Dan. 3:16-18) Reading about their determination has given Witnesses today the courage to refuse to worship the flag of the nation in which they live. Also, Jesus stayed completely separate from the political and social conflicts of the world. Noting the effect that his example would have on others, he urged his disciples to "take courage." Support also comes from the brothers and sisters in your congregation. Members of the congregation will encourage you if they are aware of the challenges you are facing. Ask them to pray in your behalf. Of course, if we want our brothers to support us and pray for us, we should do the same for them.—Matt. 7:12. *w16.04* 4:16, 18

Saturday, April 7

Your people will offer themselves willingly.—Ps. 110:3.

What is the record of Jehovah's Witnesses regarding collections? Their work is supported by voluntary donations. (2 Cor. 9:7) No collections are taken at their Kingdom Halls or conventions. Yet, in 2015 alone, Jehovah's Witnesses spent 1.93 billion hours in preaching the good news and conducting free of charge over nine million Bible studies each month. Amazingly, not only do they go unpaid for their work but they also gladly cover their own expenses. When speaking of the work of Jehovah's Witnesses, one researcher stated: "The main goal is preaching and teaching. . . . There is no clergy, which cuts costs considerably." What, then, is our motive for doing this work? Put simply, we do this work of our own volition because we love Jehovah and we love our neighbor. This willing spirit is in fulfillment of the prophecy found in today's text. *w16.05 2:9*

Sunday, April 8

The wisdom from above is first of all pure, then peaceable, reasonable, ready to obey, full of mercy and good fruits.—Jas. 3:17.

Being aware of this, we should be moved to reject entertainment that fuels impure thoughts and inclinations. Perceptive Christians do not need to ask whether it is acceptable to be entertained by a certain book, movie, or game that features what Jehovah hates. His mind on such matters is made clear in his Word. Many matters could be decided one way or another, and Jehovah would still be pleased. In the

case of weighty decisions, though, it is sometimes advisable to seek counsel from the elders or the advice of other experienced Christians. (Titus 2:3-5; Jas. 5:13-15) Of course, it would be inappropriate to ask others to make a decision for us. Christians must train and exercise their powers of discernment. (Heb. 5:14) All of us should act in accord with Paul's inspired words: "Each one will carry his own load of responsibility."—Gal. 6:5, ftn. *w16.05 3:15, 16*

Monday, April 9

I was a blasphemer and a persecutor and an insolent man.

—1 Tim. 1:13.

When Jehovah observes humans, he does not pay attention to outward appearances. Rather, he examines the heart, the inner person. (1 Sam. 16:7b) This fact was amply demonstrated when God formed the Christian congregation. He drew to himself and his Son many individuals who from a human standpoint might have seemed to be undesirable. (John 6:44) One such person was a Pharisee named Saul. "The examiner of hearts," however, did not see Saul as useless clay. (Prov. 17:3) Instead, God saw that he could be molded into a desirable vessel—in fact, "a chosen vessel" to bear witness "to the nations as well as to kings and the sons of Israel." (Acts 9:15) Others whom God saw as potential vessels "for an honorable use" included former drunkards, immoral people, and thieves. (Rom. 9:21; 1 Cor. 6:9-11) As they gained accurate knowledge of God's Word and expressed faith, they allowed Jehovah to mold them. *w16.06 1:4*

Tuesday, April 10

Look! As the clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand.

—Jer. 18:6.

God's provisions to help us remain like soft clay include his Word, the Christian congregation, and the field ministry. As water softens clay, *daily Bible reading and meditation* can help us be malleable in Jehovah's hands. Jehovah required that the kings of Israel write for themselves a copy of God's Law and read it daily. (Deut. 17:18, 19) The apostles realized that reading the Scriptures and meditating on them was essential for their ministry. They quoted from and referred to the Hebrew Scriptures hundreds of times in their writings and encouraged the people to whom they preached to do the same. (Acts 17:11) Today, we too see the importance of reading God's Word daily and prayerfully meditating on it. (1 Tim. 4:15) Doing so helps us to remain humble before Jehovah and be malleable in his hands. *w16.06* 2:10

Wednesday, April 11

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

—John 13:35.

This proved especially important in recent history when the nations engaged in deadly wars on a shocking scale. For instance, some 55 million people were killed in World War II alone. However, Jehovah's Witnesses did not participate in that global slaughter. (Mic. 4:1, 3) This has helped them to remain "clean from the blood of all men."

(Acts 20:26) The progress of God's people is taking place in a very hostile world, which the Bible says is controlled by Satan, "the god of this system of things." (2 Cor. 4:4) He manipulates the political elements of this world, as he does the world's mass media. But he cannot stop the preaching of the good news. However, knowing that he has only a short time left, Satan tries to turn people away from true worship, and he uses various means to do so.—Rev. 12:12. *w16.06* 4:3, 4

Thursday, April 12

Take a lesson from the lilies of the field.

—Matt. 6:28.

Jesus turns our attention to Jehovah's handiwork. We can learn a lot from the appearance of "the lilies of the field." Jesus may have had in mind such lilylike flowers as gladiolus, hyacinths, irises, and tulips—all beautiful in their own way. These creations do not have to spin thread and sew or weave garments for themselves. Yet, their blooms are gorgeous to behold! Why, "not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these"! Do not miss the point of what Jesus is saying: "If this is how God clothes the vegetation of the field . . . , will he not much rather clothe you, you with little faith?" (Matt. 6:29, 30) Most assuredly he will! Jesus' disciples, though, were somewhat lacking in faith. (Matt. 8:26; 14:31; 16:8; 17:20) They needed stronger faith and trust in Jehovah. What about us? How strong is our faith in Jehovah's desire and ability to provide for us? *w16.07* 1:15, 16

Friday, April 13

To the extent that each one has received a gift, use it in ministering to one another as fine stewards of God's undeserved kindness.

—1 Pet. 4:10.

Whatever the nature of the trials we may face in life, Jehovah can enable us to cope with them. (1 Pet. 1:6) There will always be an expression of God's kindness that will match each trial. The various expressions of Jehovah's kindness result in our receiving many blessings. One of them is being forgiven of our sins. Because of Jehovah's undeserved kindness, we have our sins forgiven, provided we repent and continue to put up a hard fight against our sinful inclinations. (1 John 1:8, 9) God's mercy should fill us with gratitude and move us to glorify him. Paul stated: "[Jehovah] rescued us from the authority of the darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, by means of whom we have our release by ransom, the forgiveness of our sins." (Col. 1:13, 14) Being forgiven of our sins opens the door to many other wonderful blessings. *w16.07 3:7-9*

Saturday, April 14

He will crush your head.

—Gen. 3:15.

Despite what Satan did in Eden, Jehovah held out hope for mankind in the first Bible prophecy. God would send one who would "crush" the Devil and provide the means for obedient mankind to enjoy the prospect that the first human pair lost—that of living forever on the earth in keeping with Jehovah's original purpose. (John 3:16) The rebellion of Adam and Eve had an impact on their marriage and on all mar-

riages thereafter. For example, Eve and her female descendants would experience much pain during pregnancy and childbirth. Women would have a longing for their husbands, but men would dominate their wives, even abusively, as we see in many marriages today. (Gen. 3:16) The Bible requires that husbands exercise headship in a loving way. In turn, wives are to submit to the headship of their husbands. (Eph. 5:33) Because of cooperation between God-fearing mates, situations that cause friction are kept to a minimum or eliminated entirely. *w16.08 1:6, 7*

Sunday, April 15

Wife, how do you know whether you will save your husband? Or, husband, how do you know whether you will save your wife?

—1 Cor. 7:16.

In some cases, a Christian is married to one who is not yet a servant of Jehovah. Under those circumstances, the Bible gives good reasons why they should remain together. (1 Cor. 7:12-14) Whether the unbelieving mate realizes it or not, he or she is "sanctified" because of being married to a believer. Any children born to them are considered "holy" and thus have a standing with God. Nearly every congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses has married couples in which the Christian has been instrumental in 'saving' his or her mate. The apostle Peter counsels Christian wives to be in subjection to their husbands, "so that if any are not obedient to the word, they may be won without a word through the conduct of their wives, because of having been eyewitnesses of your chaste conduct together with deep respect."—1 Pet. 3:1-4. *w16.08 2:14, 15*

Monday, April 16

Love one another intensely from the heart.—1 Pet. 1:22.

Bible accounts highlight the privilege we have of showing “brotherly affection” and serving one another. (Luke 22:24-27) The Son of God gave everything, including his life, in ministering to others. (Matt. 20:28) Dorcas “abounded in good deeds and gifts of mercy.” (Acts 9:36, 39) Mary, a sister in Rome, “worked hard” in behalf of those in the congregation. (Rom. 16:6) How can we help new ones grasp the importance of helping their brothers and sisters? Mature Witnesses can invite new ones to come along when visiting the sick and the elderly. If appropriate, parents can take their children on such visits. Elders can work with others in making sure that our dear older ones have good food and that their homes are maintained. In these ways, younger ones and those newly associated learn to perform acts of kindness for others and to appreciate that all in the congregation should feel loved.—Rom. 12:10. *w16.08* 4:13, 14

Tuesday, April 17

*This is the one hearing the word and getting the sense of it, who really does bear fruit.
—Matt. 13:23.*

A young sister in France said: “Teachers in my school are quite astonished that there are students who still believe in the Bible.” As a young servant of Jehovah or as someone learning about Him, do you feel under pressure to conform to popular beliefs, such as evolution, rather than believe in a Creator? If so, there are steps you can

take to strengthen your faith and keep it strong. One step is for you to use your God-given thinking ability, which “will keep watch over you.” It will protect you from secular philosophies that could destroy your faith. (Prov. 2:10-12) Genuine faith is based on accurate knowledge about God. (1 Tim. 2:4) So as you study God’s Word and our Christian publications, do not just skim over the material. Use your thinking ability so that you ‘get the sense’ of what you read. *w16.09* 4:1-3

Wednesday, April 18

Keep conquering the evil with the good.—Rom. 12:21.

Even if we had a difficult childhood or if our present circumstances seem hopeless, we need to keep contending and persevering. We can trust that if we do so, Jehovah will bless us. (Gen. 39:21-23) Think of a situation that you are facing and that may be a trial for you. Perhaps it is some type of injustice, prejudice, or ridicule. Or the trial you face may be that someone falsely accuses you, perhaps out of jealousy. Rather than drop your hands in defeat, remember what enabled Jacob, Rachel, and Joseph to continue serving Jehovah with joy. God strengthened and blessed them because they kept on showing deep appreciation for spiritual things. They kept on contending and acting in harmony with their earnest prayers. We are living close to the end of the present wicked system of things; thus, we have strong reason to hold on to the firm hope set before us! Are you willing to exert yourself to gain Jehovah’s favor? *w16.09* 2:8, 9

Thursday, April 19

*The fruitage of the spirit is . . .
faith.—Gal. 5:22.*

As parents, *your* example of faith is very important. Your children will observe what you do, and it certainly will affect them for the good. So as parents, keep building your own faith. Let your children see how real Jehovah is to you. When a couple in Bermuda have anxious moments, they pray with their children that Jehovah guide them, and they encourage their children to pray on their own. “We also tell our older daughter, ‘Have complete trust in Jehovah, keep busy in Kingdom service, and do not worry too much.’ When she sees the outcome, she knows that Jehovah is helping us. This has done wonders for her faith in God and in the Bible.” In the end, of course, children have to develop their own faith. As parents, you can plant and water. Only God can make it grow. (1 Cor. 3:6) So pray for his spirit, and work hard to teach your precious children, for by doing so, you give Jehovah much to bless.—Eph. 6:4. *w16.09* 5:16-18

Friday, April 20

*You must inculcate [these words]
in your sons.—Deut. 6:7.*

After serving in a foreign-language field for over three years, Serge and his wife, Muriel, noticed that their 17-year-old son lacked joy in theocratic activities. “When we realized that this situation had hindered our son from making spiritual advancement,” explains Serge, “we decided to move back to our former congregation.” What factors might influence parents to move back? First, they should determine wheth-

er they really have enough time and resources to instill love for Jehovah in their children while at the same time teaching them a foreign tongue. Second, they may notice in their children a lack of interest in spiritual activities or in the foreign-language field in which they are serving. In such circumstances, Christian parents might consider moving back to a congregation that uses the language their children best understand until their children take a firm stand for the truth.—Deut. 6:5-7. *w16.10* 2:14, 15

Saturday, April 21

By faith Noah, after receiving divine warning of things not yet seen, showed godly fear and constructed an ark for the saving of his household.—Heb. 11:7.

Without doubt, Noah’s neighbors must have asked him why he was building such a colossal structure. Did Noah keep quiet or tell them to mind their own business? By no means! His faith moved him to witness boldly and to warn his contemporaries of God’s coming judgment. Quite likely, Noah repeated to the people the exact words that Jehovah had spoken to him: “I have decided to put an end to all flesh, because the earth is full of violence on account of them . . . I am going to bring floodwaters upon the earth to destroy from under the heavens all flesh that has the breath of life. Everything on the earth will perish.” Also, Noah no doubt explained to the people the only means of escape, repeating God’s command: “You must go into the ark.” Thus, Noah further exercised his faith by being “a preacher of righteousness.”—Gen. 6:13, 17, 18; 2 Pet. 2:5. *w16.10* 4:7

Sunday, April 22

It does not belong to man . . . to direct his step.—Jer. 10:23.

Christian parents display loyalty to Jehovah by training their children according to his Word. Godly parents are not unduly influenced by local cultural views about child-rearing. The spirit of the world is unacceptable in a Christian home. (Eph. 2:2) A baptized Christian father will not think, ‘Well, in our country the women teach the children.’ The Bible is clear on this subject when it says: “Fathers, . . . go on bringing [your children] up in the discipline and admonition [instruction; guidance] of Jehovah.” (Eph. 6:4; ftn.) God-fearing fathers and mothers want their children to be like Samuel, for Jehovah was with him while he was growing up. (1 Sam. 3:19) Would it be wise to make important decisions about our family and our livelihood without first consulting the Bible? Of course not! We need our heavenly Father’s help because we are unable to direct our own steps. *w16.11 3:14, 15*

Monday, April 23

*When I see your heavens, the works of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have prepared, what is mortal man that you keep him in mind?
—Ps. 8:3, 4.*

Creation proves that God is the incomparable Organizer. “Jehovah founded the earth in wisdom,” says the Bible. “He solidly established the heavens in discernment.” (Prov. 3:19) We know only “the fringes of [God’s] ways,” and “only a faint whisper has been heard

of him.” (Job 26:14) Yet, the little we know about planets, stars, and galaxies moves us to acknowledge that these celestial bodies are superbly organized. Galaxies consist of millions of stars, all moving in space in an orderly way. Why, planets in our solar system travel in orbits around the sun as though they were humbly obeying traffic laws! Surely the mind-boggling order evident in the universe helps us to see that Jehovah, who “skillfully made the heavens” and the earth, deserves our praise, loyalty, and worship.—Ps. 136:1, 5-9. *w16.11 2:3*

Tuesday, April 24

*They will certainly become to Jehovah people presenting a gift offering in righteousness.
—Mal. 3:3.*

Malachi 3:1-3 describes the time—from 1914 to early 1919—when the anointed “sons of Levi” would undergo a period of refinement. During that time, Jehovah God, “the true Lord,” accompanied by Jesus Christ, “the messenger of the covenant,” came to the spiritual temple to inspect those serving there. After receiving needed discipline, Jehovah’s cleansed people were ready to take up a further assignment of service. In 1919, a “faithful and discreet slave” was appointed to provide spiritual food to the household of faith. (Matt. 24:45) God’s people were now free of the influence of Babylon the Great. Since that time, by Jehovah’s undeserved kindness, his people have constantly been growing in knowledge of God’s will and in love for their heavenly Father. How grateful they are for his blessing! *w16.11 5:14*

Wednesday, April 25

“Test me out, please, . . .” Jehovah of armies says, “to see whether I will not open to you the floodgates of the heavens and pour out on you a blessing until there is nothing lacking.”—Mal. 3:10.

We love Jehovah “because he first loved us.” (1 John 4:19) As one expression of his tender love, Jehovah has taken the initiative to bless his loyal servants. The more we love our God, the stronger our faith becomes, not only that he exists, but that he unfailingly rewards those whom he loves. (Heb. 11:6) Being a rewarder is an integral part of who Jehovah is and what he does. Our faith is not complete unless we are firmly convinced that God will reward those who earnestly seek him, for “faith is the assured expectation of what is hoped for.” (Heb. 11:1) Yes, faith involves the certain expectation of God’s promised blessings. As shown in today’s text, Jehovah invites us to reach out for his blessing. We show our deep appreciation and gratitude when we accept Jehovah’s generous offer. *w16.12 4:1-3*

Thursday, April 26

Setting the mind on the flesh means death.—Rom. 8:6.

After serving God for years, a Christian could begin to set his or her mind on the things of the flesh. That does not refer to a Christian who occasionally thinks about food, employment, recreation, or even romance. Those are aspects of life for the average servant of God. Jesus enjoyed food, and he fed others. He saw the need for refreshment. And Paul wrote about the

proper place for passion or intimacy within marriage. The Greek word that Paul used means “to set one’s mind or heart upon something, to employ one’s faculty for thoughtful planning, w[ith] the emphasis upon the underlying disposition or attitude.” Those who live according to the flesh allow their life course to be determined basically by their sinful human nature. One scholar says about that word at Romans 8:5: “They set their minds on—are most deeply interested in, constantly talk about, engage and glory in—the things pertaining to the flesh.” *w16.12 2:5, 9, 10*

Friday, April 27

Who are you to be judging your neighbor?—Jas. 4:12.

Anyone can act immodestly if he allows himself temporarily to be overcome by fleshly desires. Selfish ambition, envy, and uncontrolled anger have led many to presumptuous acts. Bible characters like Absalom, Uzziah, and Nebuchadnezzar succumbed to such works of the flesh and were humbled by Jehovah for their presumptuousness. (2 Sam. 15:1-6; 18:9-17; 2 Chron. 26:16-21; Dan. 5:18-21) There are other reasons, though, why someone may act immodestly. Consider, for example, the following Bible accounts: Genesis 20:2-7 and Matthew 26:31-35. Were the seemingly presumptuous actions of Abimelech and Peter motivated by sinful desires? Or were these individuals simply unaware of all the facts, or were they caught off guard? Since we cannot read hearts, it is both wise and loving to avoid jumping to conclusions about other people’s motives. *w17.01 3:9, 10*

Saturday, April 28

She, out of her want, put in all the means of living she had.

—*Luke 21:4.*

Like the needy widow, many of our modern-day fellow believers trust that if they seek first the Kingdom, Jehovah will make sure that they have what they need. (Matt. 6:33) Consider a brother named Malcolm. Over the decades that he and his wife served Jehovah, they experienced ups and downs. “Life is unpredictable at times, uncertain, and even hard to deal with,” he said. “But Jehovah blesses those who lean on him.” Malcolm’s advice? “Pray to be as productive and as active in Jehovah’s service as you can be. Focus on what you can do, not on what you cannot do.” As this system of things goes “from bad to worse,” we can expect to face increasingly greater difficulties. (2 Tim. 3:1, 13) So it is more important than ever that we do not allow ourselves to be paralyzed by such challenges. Rather, we need to cultivate strong trust in Jehovah while taking whatever appropriate action we can. *w17.01 1:17-19*

Sunday, April 29

You are not the one who will build the house.—1 Chron. 17:4.

Dismayed that there was no “house,” or temple, dedicated to Jehovah, David wanted to build one. However, Jehovah directed otherwise, as noted in today’s text. Although Jehovah lovingly assured David that He would continue to bless him, God directed that David’s son Solomon build the temple. How did David react? (1 Chron. 17:1-4, 8, 11, 12; 29:1) David did

not withhold his support, brooding over the prospect that the credit for temple construction would not be his. The building did, in fact, become known as Solomon’s temple, not David’s. While David may have been disappointed that he could not fulfill his heart’s desire, he fully supported the project. He eagerly organized work groups and gathered iron, copper, silver, and gold, as well as cedar timbers. Further, he encouraged Solomon, saying: “Now, my son, may Jehovah be with you, and may you be successful and build the house of Jehovah.” —1 Chron. 22:11, 14-16. *w17.01 5:6, 7*

Monday, April 30

Rescue us and forgive our sins for the sake of your name.—Ps. 79:9.

Even when we are persecuted, we do our best to live according to God’s righteous principles and laws. By performing righteous deeds, we let our light shine and thus bring glory to Jehovah’s name. (Matt. 5:14-16) As holy people, we prove by the way we live our lives that Jehovah’s laws are good and that Satan’s accusations are false. When we make mistakes, as we all do, we genuinely repent and turn away from practices that dishonor Jehovah. On the basis of Christ’s sacrifice, Jehovah forgives the sins of those who exercise faith. He accepts as his worshipers those who dedicate themselves to him. Jehovah declares anointed Christians righteous as his sons and those of the “other sheep” righteous as his friends. (John 10:16; Rom. 5:1, 2; Jas. 2:21-25) So even now, the ransom enables us to have a righteous standing with our Father and to share in the sanctification of his name. *w17.02 2:5, 6*

Tuesday, May 1

The Ammonites were subdued.

—*Judg. 11:33.*

Jephthah realized that he would need God's help to free Israel from the Ammonites. He promised Jehovah that if He gave him the victory, he would offer to Jehovah, as "a burnt offering," the first one who came out of his house when he returned home from the battle. (*Judg. 11:30, 31*) What did that offering involve? The sacrificing of humans is something detestable to Jehovah. Thus, it is clear that Jephthah did not intend to sacrifice anyone literally. (*Deut. 18:9, 10*) Under the Mosaic Law, a burnt offering was given entirely to Jehovah, so Jephthah evidently meant that he would devote the person to the exclusive service of God. This promise implied permanent service at the tabernacle. Jehovah accepted Jephthah's terms and blessed him with a resounding victory. (*Judg. 11:32*) When Jephthah returned from battle, who went out to meet him but his beloved daughter, his only child! Then came the test. Would he keep his word? *w16.04 1:11-13*

Wednesday, May 2

They helped the people to understand what was being read.

—*Neh. 8:8.*

A few years ago, most congregations considered the book *Draw Close to Jehovah* at the Congregation Bible Study. Did not that study of God's qualities, along with the heartfelt comments of your brothers and sisters, strengthen your love for your heavenly Father? We also increase our knowledge of God's Word by paying careful attention to talks,

demonstrations, and Bible readings. Meetings teach us to apply Bible principles in all aspects of our life. (1 Thess. 4:9, 10) The *Watchtower* Study, for example, is tailored to the needs of God's people. Has a *Watchtower* Study motivated you to reevaluate your goals, to forgive a fellow Christian, or to improve the quality of your prayers? The midweek meeting educates us for the ministry. We learn how to preach the good news and how to teach Scriptural principles effectively.—*Matt. 28:19, 20. w16.04 3:4, 5*

Thursday, May 3

All the things that were written beforehand were written for our instruction.—Rom. 15:4.

Have you ever thought about the personal conflicts recorded in the Bible? Consider just the first few chapters of Genesis. Cain kills Abel (*Gen. 4:3-8*); Lamech kills a young man for striking him (*Gen. 4:23*); the shepherds of Abraham (Abram) and Lot quarrel (*Gen. 13:5-7*); Hagar despises Sarah (Sarai), who becomes upset with Abraham (*Gen. 16:3-6*); Ishmael is against everyone and everyone's hand is against him. (*Gen. 16:12*) Why does the Bible mention such conflicts? Well, one reason is that it helps imperfect humans learn why they need to keep peace. It also shows us the way we can do this. We benefit from reading Bible accounts about real people struggling with real problems. We learn about the results of their efforts and may thus be able to apply such points to some situations we encounter in life. Indeed, all of this helps us to consider how we should or should not deal with similar issues. *w16.05 1:1, 2*

Friday, May 4

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

—*Mark 13:10.*

What methods did Jesus and his disciples use to preach the good news? They went to the people wherever they could be found—in public areas and in private homes. The preaching work included searching for deserving ones from house to house. (Matt. 10:11; Luke 8:1; Acts 5:42; 20:20) This systematic method showed impartiality. What has been the record of Jehovah's Witnesses? They are the only ones who preach that Jesus has been ruling as King since 1914. As Jesus instructed, they place a high priority on the preaching work. The book *Pillars of Faith—American Congregations and Their Partners* notes: "Jehovah's Witnesses . . . never forget that their primary task is delivering a spiritual message about the coming end of the world and the necessity for salvation." Jehovah's Witnesses continue to deliver that message, using methods that Jesus and his disciples used. *w16.05 2:10, 12*

Saturday, May 5

You will find the knowledge of God.—Prov. 2:5.

When we base our decisions on Jehovah's thinking, we draw closer to him. (Jas. 4:8) We enjoy his approval and blessing. This, in turn, strengthens our faith in our heavenly Father. Therefore, let us be guided by Bible laws and principles, for they reveal God's mind on matters. Of course, we will always have something new to learn about Jehovah. (Job 26:14) With diligent effort,

however, we can even now acquire the wisdom, knowledge, and discernment needed to make wise decisions. (Prov. 2:1-5) The ideas and plans of imperfect humans come and go, but the psalmist fittingly reminds us: "The decisions of Jehovah will stand forever; the thoughts of his heart are from generation to generation." (Ps. 33:11) Clearly, we can make the best personal decisions when our thoughts and actions are in harmony with the thinking of our all-wise God, Jehovah. *w16.05 3:17*

Sunday, May 6

Jehovah sees into the heart.

—*1 Sam. 16:7.*

Our faith in Jehovah's ability to read hearts and to draw to himself those whom *he* chooses should prevent us from judging others, both in our territory and in our congregation. (John 6:44) Accepting Jehovah as our Potter can affect our attitude toward fellow believers. (Isa. 64:8) Do you see your brothers and sisters as God does—not as a finished product, but as a work in progress? He can see the inner person as well as the kind of person one can become in his capable hands. Hence, Jehovah takes a positive view of people and does not focus on temporary imperfections. (Ps. 130:3) We can imitate him by seeing his servants in a positive light. In fact, we can work along with our Potter by supporting our brothers and sisters as they strive to make spiritual advancement. (1 Thess. 5:14, 15) As "gifts in men," the elders ought to take the lead in this regard.—Eph. 4:8, 11-13. *w16.06 1:4-6*

Monday, May 7

Let the one who thinks he is standing beware that he does not fall.

—1 Cor. 10:12.

Sharing the good news with others can help us to cultivate humility and various aspects of the fruitage of God's spirit. (Gal. 5:22, 23) What is more, as we display the Christ-like personality, we adorn our message, which may affect the attitude of some householders. For example, two Witnesses in Australia listened respectfully to a householder who spoke very unkindly to them. Later, however, she regretted her manner and wrote to the branch office. In part, she said: "To those two very patient and humble individuals, I would like to convey my apology for my most self-righteous and condescending behaviour. I am a fool to stand before two people spreading God's Word and attempt to steer them away like that." Would the householder have written that if the publishers had shown even a hint of anger? Probably not. Yes, how beneficial our ministry is—both for ourselves and for our neighbors! *w16.06 2:12, 13*

Tuesday, May 8

You must love your neighbor as yourself.—Matt. 22:39.

We are all born imperfect. (Rom. 5:12, 19) So at times some in the congregation may hurt us by what they say or do. This can test our love for Jehovah and for his people. What will we do on such occasions? For example, High Priest Eli had two sons who did not uphold Jehovah's laws. We read: "The sons of Eli were wicked men; they had no

regard for Jehovah." (1 Sam. 2:12) Though their father played a key role in promoting true worship, his two sons committed very serious sins. Eli knew about this and should have disciplined them, but he was lax in that regard. As a result, God adversely judged the household of Eli. (1 Sam. 3:10-14) In time, his descendants would not be allowed to serve as high priests. Had you lived in Eli's day, how would you have reacted to Eli's toleration of the sins committed by his sons? Would you have let it stumble you to the point that you would no longer serve God? *w16.06 4:5, 6*

Wednesday, May 9

All these other things will be added to you.—Matt. 6:33.

Why could Jesus say the above? He explained in the preceding verse: "Your heavenly Father *knows* that you need all these things," meaning the necessities of life. Jehovah can easily anticipate our individual needs regarding food, clothing, and shelter, even before we become aware of them. (Phil. 4:19) He knows which piece of our clothing will wear out next. He knows what our dietary requirements are and what would be adequate shelter for us, given the size of our family. Jehovah will see to it that we have what we really *need*. Yes, we can be ever confident that if we do what we are supposed to do—give spiritual interests priority in our life—Jehovah will not hold back what is good from us. Our "godly devotion" should prompt us to be content with "food and clothing," or "sustenance and shelter."—1 Tim. 6:6-8; ftn. *w16.07 1:17, 18*

Thursday, May 10

When we were enemies we became reconciled to God through the death of his Son.—Rom. 5:10.

This reconciliation enables us to be at peace with Jehovah. Paul links this privilege to Jehovah's undeserved kindness, stating: "Now that we [Christ's anointed brothers] have been declared righteous as a result of faith, let us enjoy peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we also have obtained access by faith into this undeserved kindness in which we now stand." (Rom. 5:1, 2) What a blessing this is! All of us are unrighteous by nature. But the prophet Daniel foretold that during the time of the end, "those having insight," the anointed remnant, would be "bringing the many to righteousness." (Dan. 12:3) By their preaching and teaching work, they have brought millions of "other sheep" into a righteous standing before Jehovah. (John 10:16) However, this has been possible only through Jehovah's undeserved kindness.—Rom. 3:23, 24. *w16.07* 3:10, 11

Friday, May 11

They began taking as wives all whom they chose.—Gen. 6:2.

This unnatural union of materialized angels and women produced violent hybrids known as Nephilim. Moreover, "man's wickedness was great on the earth." (Gen. 6:1-5) Jehovah brought about the Flood of Noah's day in order to destroy the wicked. At that time, people were so occupied with the daily affairs of life, including marriage, that they did not take seriously what "Noah, a preacher of righteousness," said

about the impending destruction. (2 Pet. 2:5) Jesus compared conditions then with what we would see in our day. (Matt. 24:37-39) Today, most people refuse to listen to the good news of God's Kingdom that is being preached throughout the earth for a witness to all the nations before this wicked system is brought to its end. Let us take to heart the lesson that even family-matters, such as marriage and the raising of children, should not be allowed to crowd out our sense of urgency as to Jehovah's day. *w16.08* 1:8, 9

Saturday, May 12

The time left is reduced. From now on, let those who have wives be as though they had none, . . . and those making use of the world as those not using it to the full.

—1 Cor. 7:29-31.

Because we are living deep in "the last days," we are experiencing "critical times hard to deal with." (2 Tim. 3:1-5) Yet, keeping spiritually strong will do much to offset this world's negative influences. In today's text, Paul was not telling married couples to neglect their marital duties. In view of the reduced time, however, they needed to give priority to spiritual matters. (Matt. 6:33) Although we are living in very trying times and marital relationships are failing all around us, it is possible for us to make marriage happy and successful. Indeed, married Christians who stick with Jehovah's people, apply Scriptural counsel, and accept the guidance of Jehovah's holy spirit can preserve "what God has yoked together."—Mark 10:9. *w16.08* 2:17, 18

Sunday, May 13

Shepherd the flock of God.

—1 Pet. 5:2.

The need for shepherds in the Christian congregation is great, and those who will do such work in the future need ongoing training. Paul told Timothy: “The things you heard from me that were supported by many witnesses, these things entrust to faithful men, who, in turn, will be adequately qualified to teach others.” (2 Tim. 2:1, 2) Timothy learned by serving alongside the apostle, an older man. Then Timothy applied Paul’s methods in his own ministry and other aspects of sacred service. (2 Tim. 3:10-12) Paul did not leave Timothy’s training to chance. He had the young man accompany him. (Acts 16:1-5) Elders can imitate Paul’s example by taking qualified ministerial servants along on shepherding calls when appropriate. Elders thus give such brothers an opportunity to observe firsthand the teaching, faith, patience, and love required of Christian overseers. This procedure contributes to the training of future shepherds of “the flock of God.” *w16.08 4:16, 17*

Monday, May 14

Do not let your hands drop down.

—Zeph. 3:16.

To let the figurative hands drop down has at times been used to describe someone who is discouraged, disheartened, or without hope. (2 Chron. 15:7, ftn.; Heb. 12:12) It is common for a person in that situation to give up. Sadly, life in Satan’s wicked world creates a tremendous amount of pressure, which can cause anxiety and thus

make a person feel weighed down. That can be like an anchor attached to a boat, not allowing the boat to move forward. (Prov. 12:25) What could cause you to feel that way? Well, maybe you are trying to cope with the death of a loved one, deal with a serious illness, provide for your family in these hard economic times, or you may be facing opposition. The resulting emotional stress might in time drain your strength. It could even cause you to lose your joy. But you can be assured that God is ready to give you a helping hand.—Isa. 41:10, 13. *w16.09 1:2, 4*

Tuesday, May 15

I will eagerly pursue the way of your commandments.—Ps. 119:32.

One circumstance that many have faced is the struggle to overcome a fleshly weakness. Others have had to put forth determined effort to maintain a positive view of the ministry. Or in your case, it may be the need to keep enduring, even though you have poor health or are lonely. We should also not overlook the struggle some have to forgive someone who has offended them or has sinned against them. No matter how long we have been serving Jehovah, all of us must fight against things that might hinder our service to God, who rewards the faithful. If you realize that you have to some extent been affected in a negative way, by all means pray for holy spirit. Prayer and holy spirit can give you energy to pursue the course that you know to be right and that Jehovah can bless. Act on your prayers. Try to read a portion of the Bible each day, and make time for personal study as well as regular Family Worship sessions.—Ps. 119:32. *w16.09 2:10, 11*

Wednesday, May 16

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

—*Heb. 11:1.*

Have people said to you that they believe in evolution because it is based on science whereas belief in God is based on faith? Many hold this view. But it is good for us to keep this in mind: No matter what someone believes about God or about evolution, some type of faith is involved. How so? None of us have seen God or observed something being created. (John 1:18) And no human—whether he is a scientist or not—has observed one kind of life evolve into another kind. No one has watched a reptile evolve into a mammal, for example. (Job 38:1, 4) Hence, all of us must examine the evidence and use our thinking ability to reach sound conclusions. Regarding creation, the apostle Paul wrote: “[God’s] invisible qualities are clearly seen from the world’s creation onward, because they are perceived by the things made, even his eternal power and Godship, so that they are inexcusable.”—Rom. 1:20. *w16.09 4:4*

Thursday, May 17

Do not forget kindness to strangers.—*Heb. 13:2, ftn.*

Jehovah lovingly made provisions for the foreigners living in Israel, such as the right to glean food. (Lev. 19:9, 10) Rather than order the Israelites to respect foreigners, Jehovah appealed to their empathy. (Ex. 23:9) They knew ‘how it felt to be a foreigner.’ Even before they were reduced to slavery, the Hebrews were likely shunned by the Egyptians because of racial pride

or religious prejudice. (Gen. 43:32; 46:34; Ex. 1:11-14) The Israelites had experienced a bitter life as foreign residents, but Jehovah expected them to treat the foreigner “like a native” among them. (Lev. 19:33, 34) No doubt, Jehovah is equally concerned about people from a foreign background who attend meetings in our congregations. (Deut. 10:17-19; Mal. 3:5, 6) If we reflect on the challenges that they are facing, such as discrimination or the language barrier, we will look for ways to show them kindness and fellow feeling. —1 Pet. 3:8. *w16.10 1:3-5*

Friday, May 18

Just as the body without spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.—*Jas. 2:26.*

The letter of James explains that true Christian faith is not just a matter of believing; action is involved. “Show me your faith without the works,” wrote James, “and I will show you my faith by my works.” (Jas. 2:18) James goes on to show the clear difference between mere belief and the exercising of one’s faith. The demons believe that God exists, but they have no true faith. Rather, they faithlessly work against the fulfillment of God’s purposes. (Jas. 2:19, 20) By contrast, referring to another ancient man of faith, James asks: “Was not Abraham our father declared righteous by works after he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? You see that his faith was active along with his works and his faith was perfected by his works.” (Jas. 2:21-23) Then to drive home the point that faith must be shown by works, James adds the words of today’s text. *w16.10 4:8*

Saturday, May 19

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

Science has revealed much about the universe and our earthly home, and it has brought us advantages in various aspects of life. But there are many questions science has not been able to answer. For instance, astronomers cannot tell us exactly *how* the universe came into existence or *why* we are on planet Earth with its abundance of life. Also, people in general cannot explain why mankind has a strong desire to live forever. Why are there so many important but unanswered questions? Partly because numerous scientists and others tend to promote godless thinking and endorse the theory of evolution. But in his own Book, Jehovah answers questions weighing on the hearts of people everywhere. We are dependent on the consistent and reliable laws of nature established by Jehovah. Electricians, plumbers, engineers, pilots, surgeons—all of them depend on these laws in order to do their work. *w16.11 2:4, 5*

Sunday, May 20

By [God] we have life and move and exist.—Acts 17:28.

There are many reasons why we should be thankful to Jehovah! We owe him our very life, for without him we would not even move or exist. He has given us a very precious gift—his own book, the Bible. We gratefully accept it as God’s message, even as the Christians in Thessalonica received God’s word and accepted it. (1 Thess. 2:13) With the written Word of God in hand, we have drawn close to Jehovah and

he has drawn close to us. (Jas. 4:8) Our heavenly Father has granted us the wonderful privilege of being part of his organization. How we appreciate such blessings! The psalmist put matters beautifully when he sang: “Give thanks to Jehovah, for he is good; his loyal love endures forever.” (Ps. 136:1) Twenty-six times in Psalm 136, we find the refrain “his loyal love endures forever.” By proving loyal to Jehovah and his organization, we will experience the truthfulness of those heartening words because we will live forever! *w16.11 3:18, 19*

Monday, May 21

Just as through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because they had all sinned.—Rom. 5:12.

That verse is repeatedly used in the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* As you study this book with your children or others, you will likely read Romans 5:12 when you discuss God’s purpose for the earth, the ransom, and the condition of the dead—chapters 3, 5, and 6. But how often do you think of Romans 5:12 with regard to your own standing before Jehovah, your actions, and your future prospects? All of us, of course, must face the reality that we are sinners. We make mistakes every day. Yet, we are assured that God remembers that we are made of dust, and he is willing to show us mercy. (Ps. 103:13, 14) Jesus included in the model prayer the request to God: “Forgive us our sins.” (Luke 11:2-4) Hence, we have no reason to dwell on mistakes that God has forgiven. Still, we can benefit from thinking about how he could—and did—forgive us. *w16.12 1:1-3*

Tuesday, May 22

Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh.—Rom. 8:5.

It was fitting for Christians in Rome to analyze what their focus in life really was. Could it be that their lives were dominated by or centered on “things of the flesh”? And it is fitting for us to consider the same about our lives. What is of greatest interest to us, and to what does our speech gravitate? What do we really pursue day in and day out? Some may find that they are focusing on trying different types of wine, decorating the home, finding new clothing styles, making investments, planning vacation trips, and the like. Such matters are not bad in themselves; they can be normal aspects of life. For example, Jesus once made wine, and Paul told Timothy to take “a little wine.” (1 Tim. 5:23; John 2:3-11) But did Jesus and Paul make wine a prominent aspect of their lives? Was it their passion, what they constantly talked about? No. What about us? What is our key interest in life? *w16.12 2:5, 10, 11*

Wednesday, May 23

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

We can link that inspired statement with what Jesus said about seeking first the Kingdom and God’s righteousness. (Matt. 6:33) The apostle Peter once asked Jesus: “We have left all things and followed you; what, then, will there be for us?” (Matt. 19:27) Instead of rebuking Peter for asking that question, Jesus told his disciples that they would be rewarded for their sacri-

fices. The faithful apostles and others will rule with him in heaven. But even now there are rewards. Jesus said: “Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for the sake of my name will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit everlasting life.” (Matt. 19:29) His disciples would gain blessings far in excess of any personal sacrifices they might make. Are not spiritual fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and children much more valuable than anything we have renounced or given up for the sake of the Kingdom? *w16.12 4:4, 5*

Thursday, May 24

Faith is the assured expectation of what is hoped for.—Heb. 11:1.

What a wonderful hope true Christians share! All of us, whether of the anointed or of the “other sheep,” hope to see the fulfillment of God’s original purpose and the sanctification of Jehovah’s name. (John 10:16; Matt. 6:9, 10) Such expectations are the most noble any human can cherish. We also long for the promised reward of everlasting life, either as part of God’s “new heavens” or as part of his “new earth.” (2 Pet. 3:13) In the meantime, we hope for the continued increase of the spiritual prosperity of God’s people. Those who are part of Satan’s world also have some sort of hope, but they may doubt whether theirs will ever be realized. For example, millions of gamblers may hope to win a lottery, but they could hardly feel sure about that. Real faith, on the other hand, is “the assured expectation” of our Christian hope. *w16.10 3:1, 2*

Friday, May 25

To the extent that each one has received a gift, use it in ministering to one another.—1 Pet. 4:10.

In his undeserved kindness, Jehovah has given each of us certain gifts, assets, abilities, or talents. We can use them to glorify him and to benefit others. (Rom. 12:4-8) Jehovah has entrusted us with a stewardship that comes with honor, trust, and responsibility. Our place in God's arrangement is not fixed, however. It can change over time. Consider Jesus' example. Initially, he was alone with Jehovah. (Prov. 8:22) Then he helped make other spirit creatures, the material universe, and finally, humans. (Col. 1:16) Still later, Jesus took on a new role on earth, first as a helpless baby and then as an adult. (Phil. 2:7) After his sacrificial death, Jesus returned to heavenly spirit life to become the King of God's Kingdom in 1914. (Heb. 2:9) And after his Thousand Year Reign, Jesus will hand over his Kingdom to Jehovah so that "God may be all things to everyone."—1 Cor. 15:28. *w17.01* 3:11, 12

Saturday, May 26

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

When faced with making a personal choice, one woman told a friend: "Do not make me think; just tell me what to do. That is easier." The woman preferred being told what to do instead of using a precious gift from her Creator, the gift of free will. What about you? Do you like making your own decisions, or

do you prefer that others decide for you? How do you view the matter of free will? People have debated this subject for centuries. Some claim that there is no such thing as free will—that all our actions are predetermined by God. Others argue that true free will is only possible if we have absolute freedom. However, to understand this matter properly, we must turn to God's Word, the Bible. Why? It reveals that Jehovah created us with free will; that is, the capacity and freedom to make our own intelligent choices. *w17.01* 2:1, 2

Sunday, May 27

*My son Solomon is young and inexperienced . . . Therefore, I will make preparation for him.
—1 Chron. 22:5.*

David might have concluded that Solomon was not qualified to oversee such an important project as building a house for God. After all, the temple was to be "exceedingly magnificent," and Solomon was at the time "young and inexperienced." Yet, David knew that Jehovah would equip Solomon to handle the work given to him. So David focused on what he could do to assist, preparing materials in great quantity. Likewise, older brothers today should not be disheartened when it becomes necessary to hand their assignments over to younger men. Rather, it is in the best interests of the work when younger ones are trained to handle responsibilities. Appointed men should have great satisfaction when the younger ones whom they have trained become qualified to take on the work. *w17.01* 5:8, 9

Monday, May 28

I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring. He will crush your head.—Gen. 3:15.

As King of God's Kingdom, Jesus will crush the serpent's head and erase from the universe all traces of Satan's rebellion. While on earth, Jesus helped his disciples to see the importance of God's Kingdom. Immediately after his baptism, Jesus proclaimed "the good news of the Kingdom of God" far and wide. (Luke 4:43) In his last words to his disciples before he returned to heaven, Jesus instructed them to be witnesses of him "to the most distant part of the earth." (Acts 1:6-8) By means of the Kingdom-preaching work, people throughout the earth would have an opportunity to learn about the ransom and become subjects of God's Kingdom. Today, we show our support for the Kingdom by assisting Christ's brothers on earth in carrying out the commission to preach the good news of the Kingdom worldwide.—Matt. 24:14; 25:40.
w17.02 2:7, 8

Tuesday, May 29

*[Christ] gave some as apostles.
—Eph. 4:11.*

Although the governing body had authority in the early congregation, they acknowledged that their Leader was Jesus. "Let us by love grow up in all things into him who is the head, Christ," wrote the apostle Paul. (Eph. 4:15) Instead of naming themselves after a prominent apostle, "the disciples were by divine providence called Christians."

(Acts 11:26) True, Paul acknowledged the importance of "holding fast the traditions," or Scripturally based practices, given by the apostles and other men who took the lead. Nevertheless, he added: "But I want you to know that the head of every man [including every member of the governing body] is the Christ; . . . in turn, the head of the Christ is God." (1 Cor. 11:2, 3) Yes, under his Head, Jehovah God, the invisible and glorified Christ Jesus was leading the congregation.
w17.02 4:7

Wednesday, May 30

Let the elders who preside in a fine way be considered worthy of double honor.—1 Tim. 5:17.

Showing honor to those to whom it is due keeps us from becoming self-centered. It helps us to avoid having an inflated opinion of ourselves if some honor comes our way. It also keeps us in line with Jehovah's organization, which refrains from giving humans—whether believers or unbelievers—excessive or undue honor. Moreover, it is the course of wisdom, helping us to avoid being stumbled if some human to whom we showed honor disappoints us. The most important benefit of giving proper honor to those to whom it is due is that we thereby please God. We act as he wants us to and thus maintain integrity to him. That contributes to making a reply to any who would try to taunt him. (Prov. 27:11) The world is full of people whose sense of how to bestow honor is distorted. We are truly grateful to know how to give honor Jehovah's way. *w17.03 1:13, 20, 21*

Thursday, May 31

[Jehoshaphat] did what was right in Jehovah's eyes.

—2 Chron. 20:32.

Like his father, Asa, Jehoshaphat encouraged the people to search for Jehovah. He did so by organizing a teaching campaign that used “the book of Jehovah’s Law.” (2 Chron. 17:7-10) He even went to the territory of the northern kingdom of Israel, to the mountainous region of Ephraim, “to bring them back to Jehovah.” (2 Chron. 19:4) We can all have a share in the great teaching campaign that Jehovah is having done today. Is it your goal each month to teach the Word of God to others, trying to move their heart to serve God? By your extending yourself and with God’s blessing, you may be able to start a Bible study. Is that a goal that you pray about? Are you willing to accept this challenge, even giving up some of what is commonly viewed as free time? And just as Jehoshaphat went to the territory of Ephraim to help people return to true worship, we can reach out to those who have become inactive. *w17.03* 3:10, 11

Friday, June 1

I will offer that one up as a burnt offering.—Judg. 11:31.

Jephthah had no other child; his daughter was his only hope for a descendant, someone to carry on his name and his inheritance in Israel. (Judg. 11:34) Nevertheless, Judges 11:35 concludes with Jephthah saying: “I have opened my mouth to Jehovah, and I am unable to turn back.” His faithfulness even at great personal cost brought him God’s approval and blessing. Would

you have made the same choice? When we dedicated our lives to Jehovah, we vowed that we would do his will unreservedly. We knew that living up to that promise would require self-sacrifice. However, our willingness is especially put to the test when we are asked to do things that are not initially to our liking. When we make such sacrifices and serve God in a way that takes us out of our comfort zone, we prove ourselves faithful. The resulting blessings are always far greater than any sacrifices we may make, painful as they may be.—Mal. 3:10. *w16.04* 1:11, 14, 15

Saturday, June 2

Let the one who has an ear hear what the spirit says to the congregations.—Rev. 2:7.

Jesus leads the Christian congregation by means of holy spirit. We need holy spirit to help us resist temptation, to embolden and equip us for the ministry, and to enable us to make sound decisions. Should we not take advantage of every provision—including congregation meetings—to receive that spirit? At many of our meetings, we review the fulfillment of Bible prophecy. As a result, we reinforce our conviction that Jehovah’s promises for the future will likewise be fulfilled. Of course, it is not just those who speak from the platform who encourage us. Fellow Christians who offer comments and sing from the heart also build us up. (1 Cor. 14:26) And when we converse with our brothers and sisters before and after the meetings, we feel a sense of belonging and enjoy true refreshment.—1 Cor. 16:17, 18. *w16.04* 3:6, 7

Sunday, June 3

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

Jesus described the scope of the preaching work by saying that the good news would be preached “in all the inhabited earth.” (Matt. 24:14) Disciples are to be made “of people of all the nations.” That entails a global work. To understand how Jehovah’s Witnesses have fulfilled Jesus’ prophecy with regard to the scope of the preaching work, let us consider some facts. There are approximately 600,000 members of the clergy in the various denominations in the United States, where there are some 1,200,000 Witnesses of Jehovah. Worldwide, the Roman Catholic Church has a little over 400,000 priests. Now consider the number of Witnesses involved in the Bible-based Kingdom-preaching work. Worldwide, some eight million volunteer ministers preach to people in 240 lands. What an amazing work is being accomplished, all to Jehovah’s praise and glory!—Ps. 34:1; 51:15. *w16.05* 2:13, 14

Monday, June 4

A man prone to anger stirs up strife; anyone disposed to rage commits many transgressions.—Prov. 29:22.

The world abounds with people and societies motivated by a spirit of independence that fosters pride, egotism, and rivalry. Anyone who allows himself to be swept along by this spirit is, in effect, accepting Satan’s argument that it is the course of wisdom to pursue one’s own interests regardless of how do-

ing so may affect others. (Gen. 3:1-5) Such a selfish course leads to strife. In contrast, Jesus taught people to seek peace, even if such a course would seem detrimental to their own interests. In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gave excellent advice about handling disagreements or potential conflicts. For instance, he urged his disciples to be mild-tempered, to be peacemakers, to eliminate causes for anger, to settle matters quickly, and to love their enemies.—Matt. 5:5, 9, 22, 25, 44. *w16.05* 1:4, 5

Tuesday, June 5

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

Many of us had to make significant changes prior to our baptism in order to bring our life into harmony with the Bible’s basic requirements. After baptism, we discerned the need to continue making changes—more subtle ones—so as to imitate God and Christ more closely. (Eph. 5:1, 2; 1 Pet. 2:21) For instance, we may have noted in ourselves a critical spirit, a fear of man, a tendency toward harmful gossip, or some other weakness. Has making progress in this regard proved to be harder than we expected? Remember, we are still imperfect. (Col. 3:9, 10) It is therefore unrealistic to expect that after baptism—or even after many years in the truth—we will no longer make mistakes, experience setbacks, or be troubled with wrong motives and inclinations. Certain tendencies might persist for years.—Jas. 3:2. *w16.05* 4:3-5

Wednesday, June 6

Those whom Jehovah loves he disciplines, in fact, he scourges every one whom he receives as a son.

—Heb. 12:6.

You may have heard someone say something like this, ‘I never fully appreciated the discipline that I received from my parents until I had children of my own.’ When we gain more experience in life, we may see discipline in a new light and start to view it as Jehovah does, as a manifestation of love. (Heb. 12:5, 11) Yes, out of love for his children, Jehovah patiently molds us. He wants us to be wise and happy and to love him in return. (Prov. 23:15) He takes no pleasure in our suffering; nor does he want us to die as “children of wrath,” which is the prospect inherited from Adam. (Eph. 2: 2, 3) As “children of wrath,” we once displayed many qualities that displease God, perhaps even some beastlike traits! Yet, thanks to Jehovah’s molding, we changed; we became more like lambs.—Isa. 11: 6-8; Col. 3:9, 10. *w16.06* 1:7, 8

Thursday, June 7

Whoever will humble himself like this young child is the one who is the greatest in the Kingdom of the heavens.—Matt. 18:4.

Most young children are eager to learn, and they tend to be humble. (Matt. 18:1-3) Accordingly, wise parents can strive to inculcate knowledge of the truth and love for it in the minds and hearts of their little ones. (2 Tim. 3:14, 15) Of course, to succeed, the parents must first impress the truth *on their own hearts*, making the truth their way of life.

When parents do this, their children not only hear the truth but also experience it. Moreover, they learn to view parental discipline as an expression of love that reflects Jehovah’s love. When we humbly submit to Jehovah and make such submission our way of life, he will view us as very precious, just as he did the prophet Daniel. (Dan. 10: 11, 19) What is more, Jehovah will continue to mold us by means of his Word, spirit, and organization. *w16.06* 2:14, 17

Friday, June 8

I have found David the son of Jesse a man agreeable to my heart.

—Acts 13:22.

David was loved by Jehovah, who found him to be a man “agreeable to his heart.” (1 Sam. 13:13, 14) But David later committed adultery with Bath-sheba, and she became pregnant. That occurred while her husband, Uriah, was away serving in the army. When he came home temporarily, David tried to get him to have sexual relations with Bath-sheba so that it might appear that Uriah was the child’s father. Uriah would not do what the king suggested, so David arranged to have him killed in battle. David paid dearly for his crime—calamities came upon him and his household. (2 Sam. 12:9-12) Yet, God showed mercy to this man who overall walked before Jehovah “with integrity of heart.” (1 Ki. 9:4) If you had lived among God’s people back then, how would you have reacted? Would David’s wrong conduct have stumbled you? *w16.06* 4:7

Saturday, June 9

Keep looking, keep awake, for you do not know when the appointed time is.—Mark 13:33.

As Jehovah's Witnesses, we take seriously Jesus' warning. We know that we are living deep in "the time of the end" and that there cannot be much time left before the "great tribulation" begins! (Dan. 12:4; Matt. 24:21) We see distressing wars, increasing immorality and lawlessness, religious confusion, food shortages, pestilences, and earthquakes taking place around the world. We know that a phenomenal Kingdom-preaching work is being accomplished by Jehovah's people everywhere. (Matt. 24:7, 11, 12, 14; Luke 21:11) We eagerly anticipate what the Lord's coming will mean for us and for the accomplishment of God's purpose. (Mark 13:26, 27) However, try as hard as we might, we cannot pinpoint the exact year, much less day and hour, when the great tribulation will begin. *w16.07 2: 2-4*

Sunday, June 10

Approach the throne of undeserved kindness with freeness of speech.—Heb. 4:16.

Jehovah in his undeserved kindness grants us the blessing of approaching his heavenly throne in prayer. He has afforded us this privilege through his Son, "by means of whom we have this freeness of speech and free access with confidence through our faith in him." (Eph. 3:12) Free access to Jehovah in prayer is indeed a wonderful expression of his undeserved kindness. Paul encouraged us to ap-

proach Jehovah freely in prayer, "so that we may receive mercy and find undeserved kindness to help us at the right time." (Heb. 4:16b) At any time that we are plagued with trials or turmoil in our life, we can cry out to Jehovah for his merciful help. Undeserving as we are, he answers our call, often through fellow Christians, "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. 13:6. *w16.07 3:12, 13*

Monday, June 11

Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you have become her children.—1 Pet. 3:6.

Although Noah and his three sons each had only one wife, polygamy was practiced in patriarchal times. In many cultures, sexual immorality became a way of life, even being incorporated into religious rites. When Abram (Abraham) and his wife, Sarai (Sarah), obeyed God and moved to Canaan, that land was filled with practices that made a mockery of marriage. Jehovah therefore decreed that Sodom and Gomorrah be destroyed because inhabitants of those cities practiced or condoned gross sexual immorality. Abraham took the proper lead in his family, and Sarah set a fine example by submitting to her husband's headship. (1 Pet. 3:3-5) Abraham made sure that his son Isaac married a worshipper of Jehovah. Similar concern for true worship guided Isaac's son Jacob, whose sons became the forefathers of the 12 tribes of Israel. *w16.08 1:10*

Tuesday, June 12

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

Those prophetic words are undergoing fulfillment in these last days. Why, during the 2015 service year, 8,220,105 Kingdom publishers were active in the world field! The last part of that prophecy should affect all Christians personally, for our heavenly Father says: “I myself, Jehovah, will speed it up in its own time.” Like passengers in a vehicle gaining speed, we sense the increased momentum in the disciple-making work. How are we personally reacting to that acceleration? Are we doing all we can as zealous Kingdom publishers? Many brothers and sisters are applying to serve as regular or auxiliary pioneers. And do we not rejoice to see so many answer the call to serve where the need is greater or participate in other areas of theocratic activity? Whether we are brothers or sisters, we certainly have “plenty to do in the work of the Lord.”—1 Cor. 15:58. *w16.08* 3:1, 2

Wednesday, June 13

The hand of Jehovah is not too short to save.—Isa. 59:1.

Soon after the Israelites were miraculously released from slavery in Egypt, the Amalekites attacked them. Following Moses’ direction, courageous Joshua led the Israelites into battle. In the meantime, Moses took Aaron and Hur to a nearby hillside from which they could see the battlefield. Moses put into action a plan that proved to be the key to their success. Moses kept his hands and the rod of the

true God lifted up toward heaven. As long as Moses did that, Jehovah empowered the hands of the Israelites to fight successfully against the Amalekites. However, when Moses’ hands became heavy and began to drop down, the Amalekites started to win. Acting with decisiveness, Aaron and Hur “took a stone and put it under [Moses], and he sat on it. Then Aaron and Hur, one on each side, supported his hands, so that his hands remained steady until the sun set.” Yes, God’s mighty hand enabled the Israelites to win the battle.—Ex. 17:8-13. *w16.09* 1:5-7

Thursday, June 14

When I wish to do what is right, what is bad is present with me.—Rom. 7:21.

Paul had full confidence that he could win his internal battle by prayerfully relying on Jehovah and exercising faith in Jesus’ ransom sacrifice. What about us? As we struggle against giving in to our own fleshly weaknesses, we can succeed. How? By imitating Paul, by fully relying on Jehovah and not on our own strength, and by having faith in the ransom. There are times when God may allow us to demonstrate the depth of our concern about a matter. For instance, what if we (or a family member) were stricken by a serious illness or we were faced with some injustice? We would show our full trust in Jehovah by supplicating him in prayer to give us the strength to keep faithful and not lose our joy and spiritual balance. (Phil. 4:13) The experience of many, both in Paul’s day and in ours, proves that prayer can help us to renew our power and build up confidence to continue enduring. *w16.09* 2:14, 15

Friday, June 15

The Greek-speaking Jews began complaining against the Hebrew-speaking Jews.—Acts 6:1.

As the early Christian congregation grew, a situation that apparently involved discrimination arose. Greek-speaking Jews complained that their widows were not being treated fairly. To settle this issue, the apostles appointed seven men to make sure that nobody was neglected. These men all had Greek names, which seems to indicate that the apostles wanted to ease any tensions over background that might have existed among the early Christians. (Acts 6:2-6) Whether we realize it or not, we are all deeply influenced by our culture. (Rom. 12:2) Moreover, we likely hear neighbors, fellow workers, or schoolmates make derogatory remarks about those of another background, tribe, or skin color. How deeply are we affected by such biased views? And how do we react when someone makes fun of our nationality—maybe by exaggerating some feature of our culture? *w16.10* 1:7, 8

Saturday, June 16

[God's] invisible qualities are clearly seen . . . They are perceived by the things made.

—Rom. 1:20.

“To perceive” means to recognize something that may not be immediately visible or obvious. (Heb. 11:3) Perceptive people, therefore, use their mind, not just their eyes and ears. Jehovah’s organization has supplied many well-researched aids to help us. These can enable us ‘to see’ our Creator through our eyes of faith. (Heb. 11:27) These aids in-

clude the video *The Wonders of Creation Reveal God’s Glory*, the brochures *Was Life Created?* and *The Origin of Life—Five Questions Worth Asking*, and the book *Is There a Creator Who Cares About You? Awake!* has often presented interviews with scientists and others who have explained why they now believe in God. The series of articles called “Was It Designed?” has highlighted examples of the amazing design that we see in nature. Scientists often strive to imitate those wonderful designs. *w16.09* 4:4, 5

Sunday, June 17

They received a favorable witness because of their faith.

—Heb. 11:39.

Faithful ones mentioned in Hebrews chapter 11 died before the promised “offspring,” Jesus Christ, opened the way to heavenly life. (Gal. 3:16) Nevertheless, they will be resurrected to perfect human life in an earthly paradise. (Ps. 37:11; Isa. 26:19; Hos. 13:14) Hebrews 11:13 says of some who lived in pre-Christian times: “In faith all of these died, although they did not receive the fulfillment of the promises; but they saw them from a distance and welcomed them.” One of these was Abraham. Did he keep clear in mind the happy hope of life under the promised “offspring”? Jesus gave a clear answer to that question when he said to his opposers: “Abraham your father rejoiced greatly at the prospect of seeing my day, and he saw it and rejoiced.” (John 8:56) The same was true of Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, and many others who focused their hope on the future Kingdom, “whose designer and builder is God.”—Heb. 11:8-11. *w16.10* 3:4, 5

Monday, June 18

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

How grateful we should be that Jehovah used his holy spirit to reveal the truth to us and to enable us to exercise faith in the good news! (Luke 10:21) We should never cease thanking Jehovah for drawing us to himself through his Son, “the Chief Agent and Perfecter of our faith.” (Heb. 12:2) To show our appreciation for such undeserved kindness, we should keep strengthening our faith through prayer and study of God’s Word. (1 Pet. 2:2) We should keep exercising our faith in Jehovah’s promises. We must do this in ways that are clearly evident to others. For example, we keep on preaching about God’s Kingdom and sharing in the work of making disciples. We also keep working “what is good toward all, but especially toward those related to us in the faith.” (Gal. 6:10) And we work hard to “strip off the old personality with its practices.”—Col. 3:5, 8-10. *w16.10* 4:11, 12

Tuesday, June 19

[Jehovah] skillfully made the heavens.—Ps. 136:5.

The universe truly is a marvel of organization. Surely, then, we should expect that Jehovah wants his worshippers to be well-organized. In fact, to that end God has provided the Bible for our guidance. Living without the help of God’s organization and his standards would result in unhappiness and misery. The people of ancient Israel were a model of organization. Under the Mosaic Law, for exam-

ple, there were “women who were organized to serve at the entrance of the tent of meeting.” (Ex. 38:8) Later, King David organized the Levites and the priests into effective divisions. (1 Chron. 23:1-6; 24:1-3) The first-century Christian congregation was organized, and it benefited from the direction of the governing body, initially made up of the apostles. (Acts 6:1-6) Counsel and instructions were also provided by means of inspired letters.—1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9. *w16.11* 2:3, 6, 8, 9

Wednesday, June 20

Whoever is for the captivity, to the captivity!—Jer. 15:2.

In 607 B.C.E., a massive Babylonian army under the command of King Nebuchadnezzar II invaded the city of Jerusalem. Regarding the bloodbath that followed, the Bible says: “[Nebuchadnezzar] killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary; he felt no compassion for young man or virgin, old or infirm. . . . He burned down the house of the true God, tore down the wall of Jerusalem, burned all its fortified towers with fire, and destroyed everything of value.” (2 Chron. 36:17, 19) The destruction of Jerusalem should have come as no surprise to its inhabitants. For years, God’s prophets had warned the Jews that if they continued to disregard God’s Law, they would be delivered into the hands of the Babylonians. Many Jews would die by the edge of the sword; any who escaped death would likely have to spend the rest of their lives in exile in Babylon. *w16.11* 4:1, 2

Thursday, June 21

Through one man sin entered into the world.—Rom. 5:12.

Adam was the “one man” through whom sin and death “entered into the world.” Thus “by the trespass of the one man death ruled as king.” Paul added that “the abundance of [God’s] undeserved kindness” came about “through the one person, Jesus Christ.” (Rom. 5:12, 15, 17) And that undeserved kindness has resulted in good for all mankind. “Through the obedience of the one person [Jesus] many will be made righteous.” Actually, God’s undeserved kindness can lead to “everlasting life through Jesus Christ.” (Rom. 5:19, 21) Jehovah was not obliged to have his Son come to earth to provide the ransom. Moreover, imperfect, sinful humans did not of themselves merit, or deserve, what God and Jesus did in providing a ransom by which forgiveness was possible. So our being forgiven and offered the prospect of living forever is truly a kindness that is undeserved. We should highly value the gift of God’s undeserved kindness and let it affect our life daily. *w16.12 1:1, 6, 7*

Friday, June 22

Setting the mind on the flesh means enmity with God, for it is not in subjection to the law of God.

—Rom. 8:7.

Self-examination is important. Why? Paul wrote: “Setting the mind on the flesh means death.” (Rom. 8:6) That is serious—spiritual death now and physical death in the future. Still, Paul did not mean that if someone began to ‘set the mind on the flesh’ his end unavoidably would be death. Change is possible. Think

of the immoral man in Corinth who went after “the flesh” and had to be disfellowshipped. Yet, he could and did change. He ceased to walk after the flesh and returned to a straight path. (2 Cor. 2:6-8) If it was possible for that person to change, it is possible for a Christian today to change, especially one who has not gone after the flesh as far as the man in Corinth had. Certainly, Paul’s warning about the possible final outcome for someone who ‘sets his or her mind on the flesh’ should be a stimulus to Christians to make any needed changes! *w16.12 2:5, 12, 13*

Saturday, June 23

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

How comforting it is for us to ‘throw our burden on Jehovah,’ knowing that ‘he will sustain us’! We can have full confidence that God can do “more than superabundantly beyond all the things we ask or conceive.” (Eph. 3:20) Imagine that—not just abundantly and not superabundantly but “more than superabundantly”! To receive the reward, we need to exercise full faith in Jehovah and be obedient to his directions. Moses told the nation of Israel: “Jehovah will surely bless you in the land that Jehovah your God is giving you to possess as an inheritance, but only if you strictly obey the voice of Jehovah your God and carefully observe all this commandment that I am giving you today. For Jehovah your God will bless you just as he has promised you.” (Deut. 15:4-6) Do you have full confidence that Jehovah will bless you if you continue to serve him faithfully? You certainly have good reason for such confidence. *w16.12 4:8, 9*

Sunday, June 24

Jehovah . . . has chosen you to become his people, his special property.—Deut. 7:6.

This was not an arbitrary choice. Jehovah was being true to a promise that he had made centuries earlier to his friend Abraham. (Gen. 22:15-18) Furthermore, Jehovah always exercises his freedom in harmony with his attributes of love and justice. This is evident in the way he disciplined the Israelites, who repeatedly abandoned true worship. When they expressed heartfelt repentance, Jehovah willingly extended love and mercy, saying: "I will heal their unfaithfulness. I will love them of my own free will." (Hos. 14:4) What a fine example of using his freedom for the benefit of others! When Jehovah began his creative works, he lovingly chose to bestow free will on his intelligent creatures. The first one to receive this gift was his firstborn Son, "the image of the invisible God." (Col. 1:15) Even before coming to earth, Jesus chose to remain loyal to his Father and not join Satan in his rebellion. *w17.01* 2:3, 4

Monday, June 25

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

Our changing circumstances can expand or limit our sphere of operation. Are you young or up in years? Is your health good or fragile? Jehovah always considers how each of us might best be used in his service. He only expects from us what is reasonable, and he greatly appreciates whatever we do. Jesus found joy in every one of his assignments, and we can find joy in ours. (Prov. 8:30,

31) A modest person does not feel cramped by his current assignments or responsibilities in the congregation. He does not worry about gaining future privileges or about what others are achieving. Instead, he focuses his energies on finding purpose and enjoyment in his present role because he views it as coming from Jehovah. At the same time, he sincerely respects the role or place that Jehovah has given to others. Modesty helps us to enjoy giving others due honor and support.—Rom. 12:10. *w17.01* 3:13, 14

Tuesday, June 26

Like a child with a father he slaved with me to advance the good news.—Phil. 2:22.

Some younger ones may now be coordinating activities that include older brothers. Though such younger ones have a changed role, they would do well to benefit from the wisdom and experience of older ones before making decisions. Timothy, a younger man, worked alongside the apostle Paul for many years. Paul had written to the Corinthians: "I am sending Timothy to you, because he is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord. He will remind you of my methods in connection with Christ Jesus." (1 Cor. 4:17) This brief statement points to the close cooperation between Paul and Timothy. Paul had taken time to teach Timothy his "methods." Timothy learned well and had won Paul's affection, and Paul was confident that Timothy could care for the spiritual needs of those in Corinth. What a fine example for elders to imitate today as they train other men to take the lead in the congregation! *w17.01* 5:13, 14

Wednesday, June 27

There is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous.—Acts 24:15.

Jehovah wants people to live, not die. As the Source of life, he becomes the Father of everyone who is resurrected. (Ps. 36:9) How appropriate, therefore, that Jesus taught us to pray: “Our *Father* in the heavens.” (Matt. 6:9) Jehovah has given Jesus an important share in resurrecting the dead. (John 6:40, 44) In Paradise, Jesus will fulfill his role as “the resurrection and the life.” (John 11:25) Jehovah’s generosity is not limited to a few privileged people, for Jesus said: “*Whoever* does the will of God, this one is my brother and sister and mother.” (Mark 3:35) It is God’s will that a numberless “great crowd” from all nations and tribes and tongues become his worshippers. Those who exercise faith in Christ’s ransom and who do the will of God can be among those who shout: “Salvation we owe to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb.”—Rev. 7:9, 10. *w17.02* 2:10, 11

Thursday, June 28

Remember those who are taking the lead among you.
—*Heb. 13:7.*

To disseminate Bible truth in various languages, Zion’s Watch Tower Tract Society was legally incorporated in 1884, with Charles Taze Russell as president. He was an outstanding student of the Bible, and he fearlessly exposed as false such doctrines as the Trinity and the immortality of the soul. He discerned that Christ would return invisibly

and that “the appointed times of the nations” would end in 1914. (Luke 21:24) Brother Russell devoted his time, energy, and money unsparingly to share these truths with others. Clearly, at that pivotal time, Brother Russell was used by Jehovah and the head of the congregation. Brother Russell did not seek glory from humans. In 1896, he wrote: “We want no homage, no reverence, for ourselves or our writings; nor do we wish to be called Reverend or Rabbi. Nor do we wish that any should be called by our name.” He later stated: “This is not man’s work.” *w17.02* 4:8, 9

Friday, June 29

By wisdom the shrewd man understands the way he is going.
—*Prov. 14:8.*

We all have choices and decisions to make. Not every one of our decisions is a life-and-death matter. However, many of our decisions, the choices we make, can have a profound effect on us. Hence, the ability to make good decisions can help us to live a relatively smooth, peaceful life rather than one that is full of chaos, controversy, and disappointment. What will help us to make wise decisions? We certainly need faith in God, not doubting his willingness and ability to help us to be wise. We also need faith in Jehovah’s Word and in his way of doing things, trusting God’s inspired counsel. (Jas. 1:5-8) As we draw close to him and grow in love for his Word, we come to trust his judgment. Accordingly, we develop the habit of consulting God’s Word before making decisions. *w17.03* 2:2, 3

Saturday, June 30

Our eyes are toward you.

—2 Chron. 20:12.

Like his father, Asa, Jehoshaphat maintained his devotion to God even when threatened by an overwhelming enemy force. (2 Chron. 20:2-4) Jehoshaphat did become afraid! Yet, “he resolved to search for Jehovah.” In prayer, he humbly admitted that his people were “powerless before this large crowd” and that he and his people did not know what to do. He fully relied on Jehovah, saying the words of today’s text. Sometimes we, like Jehoshaphat, may not know what to do, even being afraid. (2 Cor. 4:8, 9) But remember that Jehoshaphat acknowledged in a public prayer how weak he and his people felt. (2 Chron. 20:5) Those who take the spiritual lead in the family can imitate Jehoshaphat by turning to Jehovah for guidance and strength to cope with the problem they face. Do not feel ashamed to let your family hear such supplications. They will sense your trust in Jehovah. God helped Jehoshaphat, and he will also help you. *w17.03* 3:12, 13

Sunday, July 1

Do to me as you have promised.

—Judg. 11:36.

Jephthah’s daughter sacrificed her natural desires for a husband and children in order to promote true worship. How might we imitate her self-sacrificing attitude? Thousands of young Christian men and women are willingly sacrificing marriage or are not having children—at least for now—in order to serve Jehovah to the full. Older ones too may be sacrificing the time they could

otherwise spend with their children and grandchildren in order to work on theocratic construction projects or to attend the School for Kingdom Evangelizers and to serve in areas where the need for Kingdom publishers is greater. Others set aside personal matters to share in service campaigns. Such wholehearted service brings deep joy to Jehovah, who will never forget their work and the love shown for him. (Heb. 6:10-12) Would it be possible for you to make additional sacrifices to serve Jehovah more fully? *w16.04* 1:16, 17

Monday, July 2

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

Jesus compared himself to a shepherd, and his followers to a flock of sheep. Consider: If two sheep are on a hill, two other sheep are in a valley, and still another sheep is grazing elsewhere, would we describe those five sheep as a flock? Generally, a flock of sheep stays together under the care of its shepherd. Similarly, we cannot follow our Shepherd if we deliberately isolate ourselves. We need to meet together with other Christians to be part of “one flock” under “one shepherd.” When we attend a meeting, we contribute to the unity of our brotherhood. (Ps. 133:1) Some of our fellow worshippers have been rejected by their parents and siblings. Yet, Jesus promised that he would give them a spiritual family to love them and care for them. (Mark 10:29, 30) When you attend meetings regularly, you may very well prove to be a father, mother, brother, or sister to one of these dear ones! Does that not motivate us to do our utmost to be at all the meetings? *w16.04* 3:9, 10

Tuesday, July 3

When you stand praying, forgive whatever you have against anyone, so that your Father who is in the heavens may also forgive you your trespasses.—Mark 11:25.

Our efforts to serve God—through prayers, meeting attendance, field service, and other aspects of our worship—are in vain if we refuse to make peace with others. We cannot be friends of God unless we are willing to forgive the shortcomings of others. (Luke 11:4; Eph. 4:32) Every Christian needs to think carefully and honestly about being forgiving and having peaceful relations with others. Do you forgive fellow believers freely? Are you happy to fellowship with them? Jehovah expects his servants to be forgiving. If your conscience tells you that you have improvements to make in this regard, prayerfully seek Jehovah's help in order to make them! Our heavenly Father will hear such humble prayers and answer them.—1 John 5:14, 15. *w16.05* 1:6, 7

Wednesday, July 4

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

How long would the foretold preaching work continue? Jesus said that this global work would continue right on through the last days, "and then the end [would] come." What other religious group has continued to preach the good news during these momentous last days? Some of those whom we meet in the ministry may say: "We have the holy spirit, but you people are doing the work." But is not the fact that we can endure in the work evidence that we have God's spirit?

(Acts 1:8; 1 Pet. 4:14) From time to time, certain religious groups have tried to do what Jehovah's Witnesses regularly accomplish, but those efforts usually result in failure. Others engage in so-called missionary activities for a limited time and then go back to their normal routine. Still others may even try to go from door to door, but what are they preaching? The answer to that question makes it clear that they are not carrying out the work that Christ began. *w16.05* 2:13, 16

Thursday, July 5

Brothers, continue to rejoice, to be readjusted, to be comforted, to think in agreement, to live peaceably.—2 Cor. 13:11.

Continued effort is required in order "to be readjusted" and manifest "the new personality." Paul reminded fellow believers: "You were taught to put away the old personality that conforms to your former course of conduct and that is being corrupted according to its deceptive desires. And you should continue to be made new in your dominant mental attitude, and should put on the new personality that was created according to God's will in true righteousness and loyalty." (Eph. 4:22-24) The expression "continue to be made new" indicates that putting on the new personality is an ongoing process. This is encouraging, for it assures us that regardless of how long we have been serving Jehovah, we can keep making progress in cultivating and refining the Christian qualities that make up the new personality. Yes, the Bible can continue to change our life. *w16.05* 4:8, 9

Friday, July 6

Those whom Jehovah loves he reproves.—Prov. 3:12.

The environment in which Jehovah is now molding us is viewed as a spiritual paradise that is presently taking shape. (Isa. 64:8) We feel safe and secure despite the wicked world around us. We have come to know Jehovah and now experience his fatherly love. (Jas. 4:8) In the new world, we will experience to the full the blessings of the spiritual paradise. Then, our spiritual paradise will have its perfect counterpart—a literal paradise under the rulership of God’s Kingdom. During that time of global restoration, Jehovah will continue to mold earth’s inhabitants, educating them to a degree that we might now find hard to imagine. (Isa. 11:9) Furthermore, God will make our minds and bodies perfect, so that we will be able to absorb his teaching and do his will flawlessly. So let us be determined to continue submitting to Jehovah, showing him that we view his molding as an expression of his love for us. *w16.06* 1:8, 9

Saturday, July 7

Listen, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah.—Deut. 6:4.

Those words are part of Moses’ parting speech to the nation of Israel gathered on the plains of Moab in the year 1473 B.C.E. The nation was about to cross the river Jordan to take possession of the Promised Land. (Deut. 6:1) Moses, their leader for the past 40 years, wanted the people to be courageous when facing the challenges ahead. They needed to trust in Jehovah and be faithful to him as their God. Mo-

ses’ final words would understandably have a profound effect on the people. After mentioning the Ten Commandments and other regulations that Jehovah had given the nation, Moses made the powerful declaration found at Deuteronomy 6:4, 5. Did the Israelites gathered there with Moses not know that Jehovah their God is “one Jehovah”? Of course, they did. Faithful Israelites knew and worshipped only one God—the God of their forefathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. *w16.06* 3:2, 3

Sunday, July 8

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

Jesus said those words while he was on earth. But Christ has been empowered in heaven to wage war against Satan’s world. (Rev. 19:11-16) Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that Jesus now knows when Armageddon will occur. We, however, do not know. It is imperative that we stay watchful until the tribulation occurs. Yet, the timing of that event has never been uncertain to Jehovah. He has determined exactly when the end will come. He is counting down the time to the start of the great tribulation, and its start “will not be late!” (Hab. 2:1-3) How can we be sure of this? Jehovah’s prophecies have always been fulfilled right on time! We can be certain that Jehovah’s promise of deliverance through the great tribulation will not fail us either. However, if we want to survive the destruction of this system, we must keep on the watch. *w16.07* 2:4-6

Monday, July 9

*Peter said to him: "Even if all the others are stumbled, I will not be."
—Mark 14:29.*

At a critical moment, the apostles abandoned Jesus. Peter had earlier stated that even if the others did that, he would not. (Mark 14:27-31, 50) Nevertheless, when Jesus was being taken into custody, *all* the apostles—including Peter—abandoned him. Peter repeatedly denied even knowing Jesus. (Mark 14:53, 54, 66-72) However, Peter showed remorse, and Jehovah continued to use him. Had you been a disciple then, would Peter's actions have affected your loyalty to Jehovah? Today, will you recognize that Jehovah may allow time for repentance on the part of wrongdoers and that he will ultimately correct the wrongs and act in a just way? On the other hand, sometimes those who have been guilty of serious sins reject Jehovah's mercy and are unrepentant. In such situations, will you have confidence that Jehovah will in time judge such wrongdoers, perhaps removing them from the congregation? *w16.06* 4:8, 9

Tuesday, July 10

*May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father . . . comfort your hearts and strengthen you.
—2 Thess. 2:16, 17, ftn.*

A great blessing that comes to us through Jehovah's undeserved kindness is comfort for a distressed heart. (Ps. 51:17) To Christians in Thessalonica, who were experiencing persecution, Paul wrote the words found in today's text. How comforting it is to be aware of the loving care that we receive from

Jehovah because of his generous kindness! As sinners, on our own we would have no hope. (Ps. 49:7, 8) But Jehovah provides us with a wonderful hope. Jesus promised his followers: "This is the will of my Father, that everyone who recognizes the Son and exercises faith in him should have everlasting life." (John 6:40) Yes, the hope of eternal life is a gift, a wonderful expression of God's undeserved kindness. Paul, who certainly appreciated that fact, said: "The undeserved kindness of God has been manifested, bringing salvation to all sorts of people."—Titus 2:11. *w16.07* 3:14, 15

Wednesday, July 11

Do not deal treacherously with the wife of your youth.—Mal. 2:15.

Today, marital treachery cannot be tolerated among Jehovah's people. But suppose a baptized married man or woman ran off with another person's mate and married that one after obtaining a divorce. If he is unrepentant, the wrongdoer would be disfellowshipped in order to maintain the spiritual purity of the congregation. (1 Cor. 5:11-13) He or she would have to "produce fruits that befit repentance" before being accepted back into the congregation. (Luke 3:8; 2 Cor. 2:5-10) Though no set time must pass before that person's reinstatement, such treachery, which seldom occurs among those associated with God's people, cannot be ignored. It might take quite some time—a year or more—for the sinner to give proof of true repentance. Even if the person is reinstated, he or she must still render an account "before the judgment seat of God."—Rom. 14:10-12. *w16.08* 1:12, 13

Thursday, July 12

If a man is reaching out to be an overseer, he is desirous of a fine work.—1 Tim. 3:1.

The Greek verb translated “reaching out” means stretching to grasp something, perhaps something beyond your normal reach. In using that word, the apostle Paul stressed that spiritual progress requires effort. Imagine a brother thinking about his future in the congregation. He may not now be serving as a ministerial servant, but he realizes that he needs to cultivate spiritual qualities. First, he strives to qualify as a ministerial servant. In time, he hopes to be spiritually qualified to serve as an overseer. In each case, he works hard to meet the qualifications needed to care for added responsibility in the congregation. In like manner, brothers and sisters who desire to serve as pioneers, as Bethelites, or as Kingdom Hall construction volunteers do well to stretch forward to attain their goals. *w16.08 3:3, 4*

Friday, July 13

They are your servants and your people, whom you redeemed by your great power and by your mighty hand.—Neh. 1:10.

Imagine how Nehemiah must have felt when he went to Jerusalem. The city was almost defenseless, and his fellow Jews were very discouraged. The threats from foreign opposers caused the Jews to slacken their hands, to cease rebuilding Jerusalem’s walls. Did Nehemiah allow that situation to cause him to drop his hands in discouragement too? No! Like Moses, Asa, and other faithful servants of Jehovah, Ne-

hemiah had already developed a pattern of relying on Jehovah in prayer. (Ex. 17:8-13; 2 Chron. 14:8-13) And this time was no different. In the face of what to the Jews might have seemed overwhelming obstacles, Jehovah responded to Nehemiah’s sincere plea for help. God used his “great power” and “mighty hand” to strengthen the Jews’ drooping hands. (Neh. 2:17-20; 6:9) Do you believe that Jehovah uses his “great power” and “mighty hand” to strengthen his servants today? *w16.09 1:9*

Saturday, July 14

*Do all things for God’s glory.
—1 Cor. 10:31.*

“You saw a lot of casual clothing, especially when it was hot,” reported a Dutch newspaper regarding a meeting of church leaders. “That is not the case at the convention of Jehovah’s Witnesses.” Indeed, Jehovah’s Witnesses are often commended for adorning “themselves in respectable dress, with modesty and good judgment . . . in the way that is proper for [those] professing devotion to God.” (1 Tim. 2:9, 10, ftn.) The apostle Paul was speaking about women, but the same basic standard applies to Christian men. Appropriate standards of dress are important to us as Jehovah’s people, and they are important to the God we worship. (Gen. 3:21) What the Scriptures say about dress and grooming leaves no doubt that the Sovereign of the universe has wholesome standards of attire for his true worshippers. Therefore, our choice of dress and grooming should take into account what is pleasing to the Sovereign Lord Jehovah. *w16.09 3:1, 2*

Sunday, July 15

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

Some have chosen study projects that involved studying Bible prophecy or the Bible's historical, archaeological, and scientific accuracy. One fascinating prophecy to consider is Genesis 3:15. That verse introduces the Bible's primary theme, which is the vindication of God's sovereignty and the sanctification of his name by means of the Kingdom. That one verse, using figurative language, sets out how Jehovah will solve all the suffering that humans have experienced since Eden. How might you study Genesis 3:15? One way would be to prepare a time line. It could list key scriptures that show how God bit by bit shed light on the individuals and arrangement referred to in this verse and that prove that the prophecy will be fulfilled. As you see the scriptures form a harmonious unit, you will surely conclude that the Bible prophets and writers must have been "moved by holy spirit."
w16.09 4:8

Monday, July 16

Who makes you different from another?—1 Cor. 4:7.

For a while, the apostle Peter harbored prejudice against non-Jews, but he gradually learned to eradicate negative views from his heart. (Acts 10:28, 34, 35; Gal. 2:11-14) Likewise, if we detect any trace of prejudice or racial pride in us, we should make a conscious effort to root it out of our heart. (1 Pet. 1:22) We might reflect on the fact that none of us deserve salvation; we are all

imperfect humans, regardless of our nationality. (Rom. 3:9, 10, 21-24) So why should we feel superior to anyone else? We should have a view like that of the apostle Paul, who admonished his fellow anointed Christians that they were "no longer strangers and foreigners, but . . . members of the household of God." (Eph. 2:19) Earnest effort to overcome prejudiced views regarding those who are of a different background will certainly help us to put on the new personality.—Col. 3:10, 11. *w16.10 1:9*

Tuesday, July 17

He reads His law in an undertone day and night.—Ps. 1:2.

To keep our faith strong, Jehovah has kindly provided us with his complete Word, the Bible. To be "happy" and to "succeed," we must regularly read God's Word, daily if possible. (Ps. 1:1-3; Acts 17:11) Then, like pre-Christian worshippers of Jehovah, we need to keep meditating on God's promises and be obedient to his requirements. Jehovah has also blessed us with an abundant supply of spiritual food provided through "the faithful and discreet slave." (Matt. 24:45) Thus, by cherishing what we learn from the spiritual provisions that Jehovah has made available, we will be like the ancient examples of faith who had an "assured expectation" of their Kingdom hope. (Heb. 11:1) Prayer also played a vital part in keeping the faith of pre-Christian witnesses strong. Their faith was strengthened as they experienced God's answers to their prayers.—Neh. 1:4, 11; Ps. 34:4, 15, 17; Dan. 9:19-21. *w16.10 3:7, 8*

Wednesday, July 18

If I have all the faith so as to move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.—1 Cor. 13:2.

Jesus emphasized the all-important quality of love for God when he answered the question: “Which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” (Matt. 22:35-40) Because of the importance of both faith and love, Christian Bible writers highlighted these qualities together multiple times, often in the same sentence or phrase. Paul urged his brothers to “put on the breastplate of *faith* and *love*.” (1 Thess. 5:8) John wrote: “This is [God’s] commandment: that we have *faith* in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and *love* one another.” (1 John 3:23) Although faith is essential, aspects of this quality will pass away when we see the fulfillment of God’s promises and experience the reality of our Christian hope. But the need to grow in love for God and for our neighbor will never cease. Thus, Paul could write: “Now, however, these three remain: faith, hope, love; but the greatest of these is love.”—1 Cor. 13:13. *w16.10* 4: 15-17

Thursday, July 19

The congregations continued to be made firm in the faith.—Acts 16:5.

Brothers traveling on behalf of the governing body shared “the decrees that had been decided on by the apostles and the elders who were in Jerusalem.” (Acts 16:4) As congregations observed those decrees, they “continued to be made firm in the faith and to increase in number day by day.” What should we do when we receive direction from God’s organi-

zation today? Jehovah’s own Book directs all of us to be obedient and submissive. (Deut. 30:16; Heb. 13:7, 17) A critical or rebellious spirit has no place in God’s organization, for such an attitude could disrupt our loving, peaceful, and united congregations. Of course, no loyal Christian would want to display a disrespectful and disloyal spirit like that of Diotrefes. (3 John 9, 10) We might well ask ourselves: ‘Do I contribute to the spirituality of those around me? Am I quick to accept and support the direction given by the brothers taking the lead?’ *w16.11* 2: 10, 11

Friday, July 20

Seek the peace of the city to which I have exiled you.—Jer. 29:7.

The Jewish exiles who submitted to the will of God lived a relatively normal life in Babylon. Their captors allowed them to administer their own affairs to some extent. The exiles even had freedom to move about the country. Babylon was a center of trade and commerce in the ancient world, and documents that have been unearthed indicate that many Jews learned the art of buying and selling there, while others became skilled craftsmen. Some Jews even became prosperous. Exile in Babylon was nothing like the slavery in Egypt that the Israelites had experienced centuries before. (Ex. 2: 23-25) But would the Israelites ever again be able to worship God in a completely acceptable way? At the time, it seemed most unlikely that they would. Babylon never released its captives. Yet, Jehovah had promised that his people would be liberated, and so they were. God’s word of promise never fails.—Isa. 55:11. *w16.11* 4:3, 5

Saturday, July 21

We died with reference to sin.

—Rom. 6:2.

Those Christians were still alive on earth, so how could that be said of them? God applied the ransom to Paul and others of his day. Thus Jehovah forgave their sins, anointed them with holy spirit, and called them to be his spiritual sons. Then they had the heavenly hope. If they proved faithful, they would live and rule with Christ in heaven. But Paul could speak of them while they were still alive and serving God on earth as having “died with reference to sin.” He used the example of Jesus, who died as a human and then was raised up as an immortal spirit in heaven. Death was no longer master over Jesus. It was similar with anointed Christians, who could consider themselves “dead with reference to sin but living with reference to God by Christ Jesus.” (Rom. 6:9, 11) Their way of life was not as it once was. They were no longer obeying the dictates or impulses of their sinful desires. They had died to that previous way of life. *w16.12 1:9, 10*

Sunday, July 22

Setting the mind on the spirit means life and peace.—Rom. 8:6.

This does not imply that a person needs to think and talk of nothing other than the Bible or his love for God and his hope for the future. Let us recall that Paul and others in the first century who pleased God were living rather normal lives in many respects. They consumed food and drink. Many married and enjoyed family life, working to support themselves. (Mark 6:3; 1 Thess. 2:9) However, those servants of

God did not allow such normal aspects of life to become the center of their lives. After showing that Paul worked as a tentmaker, the record reveals what his life was centered on: He regularly gave attention to the Christian preaching and teaching work. (Acts 18:2-4; 20:20, 21, 34, 35) And those were the activities that he recommended to his brothers and sisters in Rome. Yes, Paul's life centered on spiritual provisions and activities. The Romans needed to imitate him, and so do we.—Rom. 15:15, 16. *w16.12 2:5, 15, 16*

Monday, July 23

The one showing favor to the lowly is lending to Jehovah, and He will repay him for what he does.

—Prov. 19:17.

We can be sure that Jehovah appreciates every effort that we make to serve him. He understands any insecurities or self-doubts that we may have. He shows us compassion if financial burdens weigh us down or our health or emotions tend to limit our sacred service. And we can have full confidence in Jehovah's tender regard for what his servants do to stay faithful to him. (Heb. 6:10, 11) Bear in mind, too, that we can approach the “Hearer of prayer” with the confidence that he will give attention to our concerns. (Ps. 65:2) “The Father of tender mercies and the God of all comfort” will unstintingly give us the emotional and spiritual support that we need, perhaps doing so by means of our fellow worshippers. (2 Cor. 1:3) It touches Jehovah's heart when we show compassion toward others. (Matt. 6:3, 4) And he promises to reward that kindness. *w16.12 4:13, 14*

Tuesday, July 24

Where the spirit of Jehovah is, there is freedom.—2 Cor. 3:17.

When Jesus was on earth, he exercised his free will to reject the temptations of the great Adversary. (Matt. 4:10) In earnest prayer the night before his death, Jesus re-affirmed his determination to do the will of God. He said: "Father, if you want to, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, let, not my will, but yours take place." (Luke 22:42) May we imitate Jesus and use our free will to honor Jehovah and to do his will! Is that really possible? Yes, we can imitate the example of Jesus, for we too are made in God's image and likeness. (Gen. 1:26) However, we have limitations. We do not have the absolute freedom that Jehovah has. God's Word explains that our freedom has boundaries and that we must observe the limits Jehovah appropriately places on us. What is more, wives are to be in subjection to their husbands and children to their parents.—Eph. 5:22; 6:1. *w17.01* 2:4, 5

Wednesday, July 25

I tell everyone there among you not to think more of himself than it is necessary to think.—Rom. 12:3.

We live in exciting times. The earthly part of Jehovah's organization is growing in many ways, but growth necessitates change. As changes affect us personally, may we be humble, keeping an eye on Jehovah's interests and not on our own. Doing so promotes unity. To Christians in Rome, Paul wrote: "Just as we have in one body many members, but the members do not all have the same function, so we,

although many, are one body in union with Christ." (Rom. 12:4, 5) Whatever our circumstances, then, let all of us work to further the interests of Jehovah's magnificent Kingdom. You older ones, equip younger ones to do what you do. You younger brothers, accept responsibility, be modest, and maintain a respectful attitude toward the older ones. And you wives, imitate Aquila's wife, Priscilla, who accompanied and supported Aquila faithfully as their circumstances changed.—Acts 18:2. *w17.01* 5:15, 16

Thursday, July 26

I am the most insignificant.
—*Judg. 6:15.*

Gideon readily acknowledged his modest background and credentials. After he accepted Jehovah's assignment, Gideon made sure that he thoroughly understood what was required, and he looked to Jehovah for guidance. (Judg. 6:36-40) Gideon was bold and courageous. Yet, he acted with caution and shrewdness. (Judg. 6:11, 27) He did not seize upon his assignment to gain prominence. Rather, as soon as he could, he gladly returned to his former place. (Judg. 8:22, 23, 29) Being modest does not mean that we should never reach out for or accept additional privileges of service. The Scriptures encourage all of us to make advancement. (1 Tim. 4:13-15) Does this always require a change of assignment though? Not necessarily. With Jehovah's blessing, we can make spiritual progress in whatever role we are currently serving. We can continue to cultivate our God-given abilities and expand in doing good works. *w17.01* 3:15, 16

Friday, July 27

God sent his only-begotten Son into the world so that we might gain life through him.—1 John 4:9.

Jehovah provided the ransom at great cost to himself. (1 Pet. 1:19) He values humanity so highly that he was willing to let his only-begotten Son die in our behalf. In a sense, Jesus takes the place of our original human father, Adam. (1 Cor. 15:45) By doing so, Jesus restores more than life; he gives us the opportunity to return eventually to God's family. Yes, on the basis of Jesus' sacrifice, Jehovah can accept humans back into his family without compromising his righteousness. Is it not heartwarming to think of a time when all faithful humans will be brought to perfection? There will be complete unity between the heavenly and earthly parts of his family. In the fullest sense, we will all be children of God. (Rom. 8:21) Gratitude for the ransom should motivate us to do all we can to make others aware that they can benefit from that priceless gift. *w17.02* 1: 17, 19

Saturday, July 28

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

The July 15, 2013, issue of *The Watchtower* explained that "the faithful and discreet slave" is a small group of anointed brothers who make up the Governing Body. The Governing Body makes important decisions collectively. How so? The members meet weekly, which fosters close communication and unity. (Prov. 20:18) Each year, they rotate chairmanship at those meetings, since no member of the

Governing Body is considered to be more important than the other members. (1 Pet. 5:1) Each of the six committees of the Governing Body rotate chairmanship in the same way. And each member of that body views himself, not as the leader of his fellow brothers, but as one of the "domestics," fed by the faithful slave and subject to its oversight. The Governing Body is neither inspired nor infallible. Therefore, it can err in doctrinal matters or in organizational direction. *w17.02* 4: 10-12

Sunday, July 29

[God] did not even spare his own Son but handed him over for us all.—Rom. 8:32.

An important way in which we show gratitude for the ransom is by dedicating ourselves to Jehovah on the basis of our faith in the ransom and getting baptized. Our baptism shows that "we belong to Jehovah." (Rom. 14:8) Since everything Jehovah does is influenced by love, it is his will that all his worshippers display love as their dominant quality. (1 John 4:8-11) We prove that we desire to be "sons of [our] Father who is in the heavens" by loving our neighbor. (Matt. 5:43-48) The command to love our neighbor is second only to the command to love Jehovah. (Matt. 22:37-40) We can show such love for neighbor by obeying the command to preach the good news of God's Kingdom. As we show love for fellow humans, we reflect God's glory. In fact, love for God is "made perfect in us" when we obey the command to love others, especially our brothers.—1 John 4:12, 20. *w17.02* 2:13, 14

Monday, July 30

If Jehovah is the true God, follow him; but if Baal is, follow him!

—1 Ki. 18:21.

You might think that this was a simple choice because it is always wise and beneficial to serve Jehovah. In fact, no reasonable person should be attracted to or attached to Baal. Still, those Israelites were “limping between two different opinions.” Wisely, Elijah urged them to choose the superior way of worship—the worship of Jehovah. Why might it have been so difficult for those Israelites to make a wise decision? First, they had basically lost faith in Jehovah and refused to listen to his voice. They had not built a foundation of accurate knowledge or godly wisdom; nor did they trust in Jehovah. Acting in accord with accurate knowledge would have helped them to make wise decisions. (Ps. 25:12) Moreover, the people in the land who were not worshippers of Jehovah influenced the Israelites’ thinking, moving them to follow that pagan crowd. Jehovah had long before warned that such a thing could happen.—Ex. 23:2. *w17.03* 2:6, 7

Tuesday, July 31

[Hezekiah] crushed the copper serpent that Moses had made.

—2 Ki. 18:4.

Meditating on the example of Hezekiah, we may see a need to remove something that is hindering our relationship with God or diverting our attention from true worship. Clearly, we do not want to imitate those in the world who, using social media, treat humans as if they were idols. Of course, some Christians may find pleasure in communicating with family or close friends by

such means. But many in the world use social media excessively, following men or women whom they do not even know. Or they spend a great deal of time looking at pictures of or reading about such individuals. There is the danger of becoming consumed with what amounts to trivia. A Christian could even become puffed up with pride over how many like his postings, even taking offense if they cease to follow him. We can ask ourselves, ‘Do I avoid idolizing humans or using a great deal of valuable time on inconsequential matters?’—Eph. 5:15, 16. *w17.03* 3:14, 17

Wednesday, August 1

Let endurance complete its work, so that you may be complete and sound in all respects, not lacking in anything.—Jas. 1:4.

The battle was grueling. Israelite soldiers led by Judge Gideon had chased their enemies—the Midianite army and its allies—all night for a distance of some 20 miles (32 km)! The Israelites knew that this was no time to give up. So to eliminate the enemy, “they kept up the pursuit” and subdued Midian. (Judg. 7:22; 8:4, 10, 28) We too are fighting a relentless battle. Our enemies include Satan, his world, and our own imperfections. Some of us have battled for decades, and with Jehovah’s help, we gained victories. At times, though, we may get tired of battling our enemies and of waiting for the end of this system of things. Indeed, we have not yet won the complete victory. Jesus warned that we who live in the last days would face severe trials and cruel mistreatment, but he also said that gaining the victory would depend on our endurance.—Luke 21:19. *w16.04* 2:1, 2

Thursday, August 2

They continued devoting themselves to the teaching of the apostles, to associating together.

—Acts 2:42.

At our meetings, our Grand Instructor directs us through the pages of his Word, the Bible. (Isa. 30:20, 21) Even unbelievers who attend our meetings may conclude: “God is really among you.” (1 Cor. 14:23-25) Jehovah blesses meetings with his holy spirit and actively directs the Scriptural teaching program. At our meetings, then, we are listening to Jehovah’s voice and sensing his loving care. Consequently, we draw close to him. Jesus said: “Where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there I am in their midst.” (Matt. 18:20) As head of the congregation, Christ “walks among” the congregations of God’s people. (Rev. 1:20–2:1) Think of it! Jehovah and Jesus are actively involved in strengthening us at Christian meetings. How do you think Jehovah feels when he observes our eagerness to draw close to him and his Son? *w16.04* 3:13, 14

Friday, August 3

Do not be quick to take offense.

—Eccl. 7:9.

Two brothers were greeted by a certain sister in a way that one of them considered inappropriate. When the two brothers were alone, the offended brother began to criticize the sister for what she had said. However, the other brother reminded him that she had served Jehovah loyally in difficult circumstances for 40 years; he was sure that she meant no harm. After considering this for a moment, the first brother

responded, “You are right.” As a result, the issue went no further. What does this experience show? The way you react to situations that have the potential for causing offense lies in your own hands. A loving person covers over minor transgressions. (Prov. 10:12; 1 Pet. 4:8) Jehovah considers it “beauty” on your part “to overlook an offense.” (Prov. 19:11) So the first thing to ask yourself when somebody treats you in a way that could seem unkind or disrespectful is: ‘Can I overlook this? Do I really need to make an issue of it?’ *w16.05* 1:8, 9

Saturday, August 4

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

Who really are preaching the good news of the Kingdom today? With full confidence, we can say: “Jehovah’s Witnesses!” Why can we be so confident? Because we are preaching the *right message*, the good news of the Kingdom. By going to the people, we are also using the *correct methods*. Our preaching work is being done with the *right motive*—love, not financial gain. Our work has the *greatest scope*, reaching out to people of all nations and languages. And we will continue to do this work *without let-up*, year in and year out, until the end comes. We truly marvel at what is being accomplished by God’s people in these exciting times in which we live. But how is it possible for all of this to happen? The apostle Paul answers in today’s text. May all of us continue to be energized by our loving Father as we do our very best and fully accomplish our ministry. —2 Tim. 4:5. *w16.05* 2:17, 18

Sunday, August 5

Abhor what is wicked; cling to what is good.—Rom. 12:9.

By choosing to do God's will and by working hard to do so, we show our depth of love for Jehovah and our desire to please him. We also demonstrate our support of his sovereignty. Satan has challenged the rightfulness of Jehovah's sovereignty, so our voluntary and vigorous efforts to uphold it are undoubtedly of special value to our benevolent and appreciative heavenly Father. (Job 2:3-5; Prov. 27:11) However, if Jehovah completely relieved us of the need to exert ourselves to fight our imperfect tendencies so as to please him, any claim of loyalty and support of his sovereignty would be meaningless. Thus, Jehovah tells us to put forth "earnest effort" in developing godly qualities. (2 Pet. 1:5-7; Col. 3:12) He expects us to work hard to control our thoughts and feelings. (Rom. 8:5) Having made a genuine effort in this regard, we feel all the more satisfied when we realize that the Bible is still changing our life. *w16.05* 4:12, 13

Monday, August 6

O Jehovah, . . . you are our Potter.—Isa. 64:8.

Jehovah knows the type and quality of "the clay" that is before him, and he molds it accordingly. (Ps. 103:10-14) Indeed, he deals with us as individuals, taking into account our particular weaknesses, limitations, and level of spiritual growth. His attitude toward imperfect servants was demonstrated by his Son. Consider how Jesus dealt with his apostles' shortcomings, especially

their inclination to argue among themselves over position. If you had witnessed the apostles' heated disputes, would you have viewed these men as meek and malleable? Yet, Jesus did not adopt a negative view. He knew that his faithful apostles could be molded by kind, patient counsel and by their observing his example of humility. (Mark 9:33-37; 10:37, 41-45; Luke 22:24-27) After Jesus was resurrected and the holy spirit was poured out, the apostles focused, not on position or prominence, but on the work he had given them to do.—Acts 5:42. *w16.06* 1:10

Tuesday, August 7

Jehovah our God is one Jehovah.—Deut. 6:4.

There is no real or true God but Jehovah; no other god is like him. (2 Sam. 7:22) Thus, Moses was reminding the Israelites that their worship of Jehovah must be exclusive. They were not to follow the peoples around them, who worshipped various gods and goddesses. Some of those false gods were viewed as ruling over certain parts of nature. Others were separate forms of a particular deity. For example, the Egyptians worshipped the sun-god Ra, the sky-goddess Nut, the earth-god Geb, the Nile-god Hapi, and numerous sacred animals. Many of these false gods were dealt devastating blows by Jehovah through the Ten Plagues. The prominent Canaanite god was Baal, the god of fertility, who also appeared as the god of the sky, rain, and storm. In many places, Baal was the local patron deity as well. (Num. 25:3) The Israelites were to remember that their God, the "true God," is "one Jehovah."—Deut. 4:35, 39. *w16.06* 3:4, 5

Wednesday, August 8

[Teach] them to observe all the things I have commanded you. And look! I am with you all the days until the conclusion of the system of things.—Matt. 28:20.

Jesus' confidence in Jehovah and his people was well-founded and still is. Indeed, when we consider the things that Jehovah is accomplishing through his servants in these last days, it is simply amazing. No other people are preaching the truth globally, for others do not have Jehovah guiding them as does his united congregation today. Isaiah 65:14 describes the spiritual condition prevailing among God's people: "Look! My servants will shout joyfully because of the good condition of the heart." Jehovah's servants rejoice at the good things they can do because they are being guided by Jehovah. In contrast, the world under Satan's influence mourns, as it were, as conditions worsen. We need to maintain our loyalty to Jehovah and his arrangements. *w16.06 4:10-12*

Thursday, August 9

Keep on the watch.—Matt. 25:13.

We can learn a lesson from ancient times about the importance of being watchful. Back then, many larger cities—such as Jerusalem—were surrounded by high walls. The walls provided physical protection from invaders as well as elevated vantage points from which to watch the surrounding landscape. Day and night, watchmen were stationed on the walls and at the gates. They were to alert the city's inhabitants of any approaching danger. (Isa. 62:6) It was a life-and-death matter that the

watchmen remain awake and attentive at their posts. (Ezek. 33:6) Jewish historian Josephus relates that in 70 C.E., the Roman forces were able to take possession of the Tower of Antonia, adjoining the city wall of Jerusalem, because the guards at the gates were asleep! From there, the Romans rushed the temple and set fire to it, resulting in the finale of the greatest tribulation that Jerusalem and the Jewish nation had ever experienced. *w16.07 2:2, 7, 8*

Friday, August 10

Be on your guard so that you may not be led astray with them by the error of the lawless people and fall from your own steadfastness.

—2 Pet. 3:17.

While undeserved kindness from Jehovah provides us with many blessings, we should not presumptuously think that he condones all conduct. Among the early Christians, there were some who attempted to "turn the undeserved kindness of . . . God into an excuse for brazen conduct." (Jude 4) These unfaithful Christians apparently thought that they could sin and then count on Jehovah to forgive them. Worse still, they endeavored to entice their brothers to join them in their contemptuous ways. Even today, anyone doing that "has outraged the spirit of undeserved kindness." (Heb. 10:29) Today, Satan has misled some Christians into thinking that they can presume on God's mercy and commit sins with impunity. But while Jehovah is willing to forgive repentant sinners, he expects us to put up a strong fight against our sinful tendencies. *w16.07 3:16, 17*

Saturday, August 11

Whoever divorces his wife, except on the grounds of sexual immorality, and marries another commits adultery.—Matt. 19:9.

A legal divorce not based on sexual immorality would not free one to remarry. Of course, a person might choose to forgive an adulterous but repentant mate, even as the prophet Hosea apparently forgave his immoral wife, Gomer. Similarly, Jehovah extended mercy to repentant Israel after that nation's spiritual adultery. (Hos. 3:1-5) It might be added that if a person knows that his or her mate committed adultery and chooses to resume sexual relations with the guilty mate, such an action constitutes forgiveness and removes a Scriptural basis for divorce. After saying the words of today's text, Jesus spoke of "those who have the gift" of living a single life. He added: "Let the one who can make room for it make room for it." (Matt. 19:10-12) Many have chosen to remain single in order to serve Jehovah with an undivided mind. For doing so, they are to be commended. *w16.08* 1:15, 16

Sunday, August 12

Taste and see that Jehovah is good; happy is the man who takes refuge in him. . . . Those who fear him lack nothing.—Ps. 34:8, 9.

Young people have the strength needed to accomplish much in Jehovah's service. (Prov. 20:29) Some young brothers in Bethel service have a part in printing and binding Bibles and Bible literature. Many young brothers and sisters share in the work of building and maintaining Kingdom Halls. When natural disasters strike, young people join

more experienced Witnesses in carrying through with relief efforts. And many young pioneers help to take the good news to indigenous and foreign-language communities. The psalmist sang: "Those seeking Jehovah will lack nothing good." (Ps. 34:10) Indeed, Jehovah never disappoints those who zealously serve him. We personally "taste and see that Jehovah is good" as we do all we can in his service. And when we give God whole-souled worship, we experience happiness that has no equal. *w16.08* 3:5, 8

Monday, August 13

I will save you, and you will become a blessing. Do not be afraid! Let your hands be strong.—Zech. 8:13.

Jehovah is able and willing to give us strength by means of his holy spirit. (1 Chron. 29:12) It is vital that we draw on that spirit so that we can face any challenge that Satan and his wicked system thrust upon us. (Ps. 18:39; 1 Cor. 10:13) Also, we can be grateful that we have God's Word, which is a product of holy spirit. Think, too, about the spiritual food based on the Bible that we receive each month. The words of Zechariah 8:9, 13 were spoken while the temple in Jerusalem was being rebuilt, and those words are very fitting for us. We are also made stronger by divine education at our Christian meetings, assemblies, conventions, and in our theocratic schools. That training can help us to have the proper motivation, to set spiritual goals, and to fulfill our many Christian responsibilities. (Ps. 119:32) Do you eagerly seek to gain strength from that type of education? *w16.09* 1:10, 11

Tuesday, August 14

Prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

—*Rom. 12:2.*

God's Law to the Israelites showed Jehovah's strong feelings against clothing that does not make clear the distinction between male and female—what has been described in our day as unisex fashion. (Deut. 22:5) From God's stated direction about clothing, we clearly see that God is not pleased with styles of dress that feminize men, that make women look like men, or that make it hard to see the difference between men and women. God's Word contains principles that help Christians make good decisions about how to dress. That is so no matter where they live, what their culture is, or what the climate is. We do not need detailed lists saying which styles of dress are acceptable and which are objectionable. Rather, we are guided by Scriptural principles that allow room for personal preferences. *w16.09 3:3, 4*

Wednesday, August 15

They all abandoned him and fled.

—*Mark 14:50.*

Consider the courage and honesty of the men who wrote the Bible. Many ancient writers flattered their leaders and glorified their kingdoms. Jehovah's prophets, however, always spoke the truth. They were willing to point out the shortcomings of their own people, even their kings. (2 Chron. 16:9, 10; 24:18-22) And they made plain their own failings and those of other servants of God. (2 Sam. 12:1-14) Because

of the guiding principles found in the Bible, many are convinced that it was inspired by God. (Ps. 19:7-11) Bible principles protect us from sharing in false worship and from superstitions that enslave many people. (Ps. 115:3-8) Such teachings as evolution tend to make nature into a sort of god, giving it powers that belong only to Jehovah. Those who say that there is no God claim that our future is entirely in our own hands. They, however, offer no sure hope for a better future.—Ps. 146:3, 4. *w16.09 4:10, 11*

Thursday, August 16

Let her glean . . . , and do not mistreat her.—*Ruth 2:15.*

Boaz was clearly concerned about Ruth and her precarious situation as a foreigner. For one thing, he invited her to stay with his group of young women so that she would not be harassed by the men who were working in the field. He even made sure that she would get enough food and water, just like the hired workers. In addition, Boaz did not speak down to the poor foreign woman but, instead, reassured her. (Ruth 2:8-10, 13, 14) Not only was Boaz moved by Ruth's unselfish love for her mother-in-law, Naomi, but he was also impressed that she had become a worshipper of Jehovah. Boaz' kindness was actually an expression of Jehovah's loyal love toward a woman who had come to 'seek refuge under the wings of the God of Israel.' (Ruth 2:12, 20; Prov. 19:17) Similarly today, our kindly demeanor can help "all sorts of people" recognize the truth and sense how much Jehovah loves them.—1 Tim. 2:3, 4. *w16.10 1:10-12*

Friday, August 17

I inquired of Jehovah, and he answered me. He rescued me from all my fears.—Ps. 34:4.

We too can pour out our concerns to Jehovah, knowing that he will hear us and strengthen us to endure with joy. And when our prayers are answered, our faith gets stronger. (1 John 5:14, 15) Since faith is an aspect of the fruitage of the spirit, we need to “keep on asking” for God’s spirit, as Jesus urged us to do. (Luke 11:9, 13) Our prayers, though, should not be limited to asking God for personal help. “Too numerous to recount” are the “wonderful works” we can thank and praise Jehovah for daily! (Ps. 40:5) Also, our prayers should reflect that we “keep in mind those in prison, as though [we] were imprisoned with them.” And we should pray for our worldwide brotherhood, especially “those who are taking the lead among [us].” Our hearts are touched when we see how Jehovah answers our united prayers!—Heb. 13:3, 7. *w16.10* 3:8, 9

Saturday, August 18

You have been saved through faith, and this is not of your own doing; rather, it is God’s gift.—Eph. 2:8.

In our present day, Jehovah’s people have been exercising their faith in God’s established Kingdom. This has resulted in the development of a worldwide spiritual paradise that has over eight million inhabitants. It is a place that abounds with the fruitage of God’s spirit. (Gal. 5:22, 23) What a pow-

erful demonstration of true Christian faith and love! No human can take credit for this. It has been accomplished by our God. This wonderful work is bringing “fame to Jehovah, an everlasting sign that will never perish.” (Isa. 55:13) Our spiritual paradise will continue to grow and to flourish until the whole earth is filled with perfect, righteous, and happy humans to the eternal praise of Jehovah’s name. May we keep on exercising our faith in Jehovah’s promises! *w16.10* 4:18, 19

Sunday, August 19

Some are walking disorderly among you.—2 Thess. 3:11.

We need to follow the Bible-based direction we receive from the elders. Recall Paul’s counsel regarding disorderly ones in the congregation. Some individuals were ‘meddling with what did not concern them.’ They were evidently admonished by the elders but persisted in disregarding the counsel. How was the congregation to deal with such a person? Paul directed: “Keep this one marked and stop associating with him.” That counsel was balanced with the caution not to treat such a person as an enemy. (2 Thess. 3:11-15) Today, elders may give a warning talk about someone’s persisting in a course that reflects badly on the congregation, such as dating an unbeliever. (1 Cor. 7:39) How do you react to their counsel? If you are aware of the situation described in the talk, will you take care to avoid socializing with such an individual? Your loving concern and firm stand may move the person to abandon a disorderly course. *w16.11* 2:13

Monday, August 20

From among you yourselves men will rise and speak twisted things to draw away the disciples after themselves.—Acts 20:30.

At Pentecost 33 C.E., thousands of Jews and proselytes were anointed with holy spirit. These new Christians became “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for special possession.” (1 Pet. 2:9, 10) The apostles kept careful watch over the congregations of God’s people as long as they lived. However, especially after the death of the apostles, men arose who spoke “twisted things” in order to “draw away the disciples after themselves.” (2 Thess. 2:6-8) Many of these men had responsible positions in the congregations, serving as overseers and later as “bishops.” A clergy class was taking shape, although Jesus had said to his followers: “All of you are brothers.” (Matt. 23:8) Prominent men who were enamored of the philosophies of Aristotle and Plato introduced false religious ideas, gradually replacing the pure teachings of God’s Word. *w16.11 4:8*

Tuesday, August 21

Do not let sin continue to rule as king in your mortal bodies.—Rom. 6:12.

Before we became Christians, we often sinned, perhaps not realizing how wrong or bad our actions were in God’s eyes. We were like “slaves to uncleanness and lawlessness.” It could be said that we “were slaves of sin.” (Rom. 6:19, 20) Then we came to know Bible truth, made changes in our lives, dedicated ourselves to God, and got baptized. We

“were set free from sin,” and we “became slaves to righteousness.” (Rom. 6:17, 18) Yet, we could “let sin continue to rule” by doing whatever our imperfect body moves us to do. Because we can “let” sin rule or refuse to let it rule, the question is, What do we really want at heart? Ask yourself: ‘At times, do I let my imperfect body or mind point me in a bad direction and then go there? Or am I dead with reference to sin?’ It really comes down to how much we appreciate the undeserved kindness God has shown by forgiving us. *w16.12 1:11, 12*

Wednesday, August 22

Setting the mind on the spirit means . . . peace.—Rom. 8:6.

One aspect of having inner peace is that we strive to be at peace with those in our family and those in the congregation. We have the good sense to realize that both we and our brothers and sisters are imperfect. Because of this, problems may occasionally arise, and if that happens, we have been taught to follow Jesus’ advice: “Make your peace with your brother.” (Matt. 5:24) This is made easier when we recall that the other brother or sister is also serving “the God who gives peace.” (Rom. 15:33; 16:20) And there is another peace that is of incalculable value. By our “setting the mind on the spirit,” we enjoy peace with our Maker. Isaiah recorded words that applied in his day but have an even greater fulfillment now: “You [Jehovah] will safeguard those who fully lean on you; you will give them continuous peace, because it is in you that they trust.”—Isa. 26:3; Rom. 5:1. *w16.12 2:5, 18, 19*

Thursday, August 23

Always rejoice in the Lord.

—*Phil. 4:4.*

Even in these dark last days of Satan's wicked system of things, Jehovah is blessing his people. He makes sure that true worshippers flourish in their spiritual estate, which is unprecedented in its spiritual abundance. (Isa. 54:13) As Jesus promised, Jehovah rewards us *now* by letting us be part of a loving family of spiritual brothers and sisters, a family that is international in scope. (Mark 10:29, 30) Furthermore, those who earnestly seek God are rewarded with the incomparable blessings of peace of mind, contentment, and happiness. (Phil. 4:5-7) You can be certain that "after you have done the will of God, you [will] receive the fulfillment of the promise." (Heb. 10:35, 36) So let us now continue to strengthen our faith and to work whole-souled as to Jehovah. We can do this, knowing that it is from Jehovah that we will receive the due reward.—Col. 3:23, 24. *w16.12 4:17, 20*

Friday, August 24

Where the spirit of Jehovah is, there is freedom.—2 Cor. 3:17.

Is having free will with limits *real* freedom? Yes, it is! Why can we say that? Limitations put on people's freedom can protect them. For example, we may exercise our freedom of choice to drive to a distant city. However, would we feel safe traveling on highways where there were no traffic laws, where everyone was free to decide how fast or on which side of the road to drive? Obviously not. Limits are necessary in order for all to enjoy the

blessings of true freedom. To illustrate further the wisdom of using our free will within the boundaries set by Jehovah, consider the case of Adam. He chose to overstep his God-ordained boundaries by eating the forbidden fruit. This gross misuse of free will resulted in millenniums of suffering and pain for Adam's descendants. (Rom. 5:12) Knowing the consequences of Adam's decision should move us to use our freedom responsibly and within the limits set by Jehovah. *w17.01 2:6, 8*

Saturday, August 25

I tell everyone there among you not to think more of himself than it is necessary to think.

—*Rom. 12:3.*

When we face a new assignment, a prayerful and realistic analysis will help us to avoid overreaching our current abilities and limitations. Modesty may lead us to say no. However, when we do accept a new assignment, Gideon's example reminds us that we cannot succeed without Jehovah's direction and blessing. After all, we have been invited "to walk in modesty with [our] God." (Mic. 6:8) So any time we take on new responsibilities, we need to reflect prayerfully on whatever Jehovah tells us through his Word and his organization. We have to learn to adjust our unsteady steps to match Jehovah's steady lead. Let us remember that it is Jehovah's humility and not our own ability that 'makes us great.' (Ps. 18:35) Choosing to walk modestly with God will therefore help us to think neither too much nor too little of ourselves. *w17.01 3:17, 18*

Sunday, August 26

Your labor is not in vain in connection with the Lord.—1 Cor. 15:58.

Jesus knew that his earthly ministry would come to an end and that others would carry on his work. Though his disciples were imperfect, he had confidence in them and told them that they would do works greater than he did. (John 14: 12) He trained them thoroughly, and they spread the good news throughout the then-known world. (Col. 1: 23) After his sacrificial death, Jesus was resurrected to heaven where he was given more work to do with authority “far above every government and authority and power and lordship.” (Eph. 1:19-21) If we die faithful before Armageddon, we will be resurrected into a righteous new world, where there will be plenty of satisfying work for us to do. Now, though, there is vitally important work that all of us can participate in—preaching the good news and making disciples. May all of us, young or old, keep on “having plenty to do in the work of the Lord.” *w17.01* 5:17, 18

Monday, August 27

I am Jehovah; I do not change.
—*Mal. 3:6.*

The ransom has been paid permanently. (Heb. 9:24-26) It completely cancels the condemnation inherited from Adam. Thanks to Christ’s sacrifice, we are free from enslavement to this world under Satan’s control, and we no longer live in fear of death. (Heb. 2:14, 15) God’s promises are absolutely reliable. Just as his laws of creation never fail, Jehovah will never fail us. He does not change. Jehovah gives us far

more than just the gift of life. He gives us his love. “We have come to know and believe the love that God has for us. God is love.” (1 John 4: 16) The whole earth will be made a paradise of exquisite delight, and everyone on earth will reflect God’s love. May we join our voices with those of God’s faithful heavenly creatures in saying: “Let the praise and the glory and the wisdom and the thanksgiving and the honor and the power and the strength be to our God forever and ever. Amen.” —*Rev. 7:12. w17.02* 2:16, 17

Tuesday, August 28

Let us cleanse ourselves of every defilement of flesh and spirit.
—*2 Cor. 7:1.*

The June 1, 1973, issue of *The Watchtower* asked the question: “Do . . . persons who have not broken their addiction to tobacco qualify for baptism?” The answer was: “The Scriptural evidence points to the conclusion that they do not.” After citing several relevant scriptures, *The Watchtower* explained why an unrepentant smoker should be disfellowshipped. (1 Cor. 5:7) It said: “This represents no effort to act in an arbitrary, dictatorial manner. The strictness really proceeds from God, who expresses himself *through his written Word.*” A recent book on religion in the United States notes: “Christian leaders have regularly revised their teachings to match the beliefs and opinions gaining support among their members and in the larger society.” Has any religion other than Jehovah’s Witnesses been willing to rely fully on God’s Word, even when doing so presents a real challenge to some of its members? *w17.02* 4:15

Wednesday, August 29

Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

—Matt. 23:12.

As evidence of their humility, elders refuse to let themselves be treated as celebrities. In this they differ from many modern-day religious leaders and from those of the first century about whom Jesus said: “They like the most prominent place at evening meals and the front seats in the synagogues and the greetings in the market-places.” (Matt. 23:6, 7) Genuine Christian shepherds humbly obey Jesus’ words: “Do not you be called Rabbi, for one is your Teacher, and all of you are brothers. Moreover, do not call anyone your father on earth, for one is your Father, the heavenly One. Neither be called leaders, for your Leader is one, the Christ. But the greatest one among you must be your minister.” (Matt. 23:8-11) You can thus understand why elders in congregations around the globe earn their fellow Witnesses’ love, respect, and honor. *w17.03* 1:14, 15

Thursday, August 30

Each one will carry his own load of responsibility.—Gal. 6:5; *ftn.*

It is up to each of us to make decisions, and the wise, right choices are based on sound Scriptural knowledge. We should not give someone else the responsibility to make decisions for us. Rather, we should personally learn what is right in God’s eyes and choose to do it. How might we give in to the danger of letting others choose for us? Peer pressure could sway us to make a bad deci-

sion. (Prov. 1:10, 15) Still, no matter how others try to pressure us, it is our responsibility to follow our Bible-trained conscience. In many respects, if we let others make our decisions, we are essentially deciding to “follow them.” It is still a choice, but a potentially disastrous one. The apostle Paul clearly alerted the Galatians to the danger of letting others make personal decisions for them. (Gal. 4:17) Some in the congregation wanted to make personal choices for others in order to alienate them from the apostles. *w17.03* 2:8-10

Friday, August 31

While [Josiah] was still a boy, he started to search for the God of David his forefather; and in the 12th year, he started to cleanse Judah and Jerusalem of the high places and the sacred poles.

—2 Chron. 34:3.

Josiah was zealous in doing what pleased God. Like Josiah, young ones should start to seek Jehovah from an early age. Repentant King Manasseh may have taught Josiah about God’s mercy. Young ones, draw close to faithful older ones in your family and in the congregation and learn how good Jehovah has been to them. Also, remember that the reading of the Scriptures touched Josiah’s heart and moved him to take action. Your reading of the Word of God may move you to take action that will increase your happiness and strengthen your friendship with God as well as spur you on to help others to search for God. (2 Chron. 34:18, 19) A study of the Bible may also help you to notice ways that you can improve in your service to God. If you do, apply yourself, just as Josiah did. *w17.03* 3:18, 19

Saturday, September 1

Let endurance complete its work.

—*Jas. 1:4.*

In the Bible, enduring means more than simply putting up with trials or adversity. Endurance involves our mind and heart, or the *way* we react to hardships. A person who endures manifests courage, steadfastness, and patience. Endurance is “the spirit which can bear things, not simply with resignation, but with blazing hope,” says one reference work. “It is the quality which keeps a man on his feet with his face to the wind. It is the virtue which can transmute the hardest trial into glory because beyond the pain it sees the goal.” Christian endurance is motivated by love. (1 Cor. 13:4, 7) Love for Jehovah motivates us to endure anything that is in harmony with his will. (Luke 22:41, 42) Love for our brothers helps us to endure their imperfections. (1 Pet. 4:8) Love for our marriage mate enables us to endure “tribulation” that even happily married couples experience and to strengthen the marital bond. —1 Cor. 7:28. *w16.04* 2:3, 4

Sunday, September 2

They continued devoting themselves . . . to associating together.

—*Acts 2:42.*

The Greek word translated “devoting themselves” implies enduring or persevering in a course with intense effort. Under Roman rule and faced with opposition by the Jewish religious leaders, those early Christians did not find it easy to attend meetings. Nevertheless, they persevered. Many modern-day servants of Jehovah have shown deep appreciation for Christian meetings. George Gangas, who served on the Govern-

ing Body for over 22 years, stated: “To me, meeting with the brothers is one of life’s greatest pleasures and a source of encouragement.” He added: “My innermost thought and desire is to attend the meetings.” Do you feel the same way about gathering together to worship Jehovah? Then be determined to endure and persevere in your earnest efforts to attend meetings regularly. You will thus show that you agree with King David, who said: “Jehovah, I love the house where you dwell.” —Ps. 26:8. *w16.04* 3:16-18

Monday, September 3

First make your peace with your brother.—*Matt. 5:24.*

Suppose you learn that a brother was offended by something you said or did. What should you do? Talk with your brother. Note what your objective should be. It is not to cast part of the blame on your brother but to admit your fault and *make peace*. Being at peace with our fellow worshippers is of utmost importance. Consider Abraham and his nephew Lot. Both men possessed livestock, and their shepherds apparently quarreled about grazing land. Eager to eliminate tensions, Abraham offered Lot first choice of the areas where their respective households would settle. (Gen. 13:1, 2, 5-9) What a good example! Abraham sought peace, not his own interests. Did he lose out because of his generosity? Not at all. Immediately after this incident with Lot, Jehovah promised Abraham great blessings. (Gen. 13:14-17) God will never allow his servants to suffer lasting loss for acting in harmony with divine principles and settling differences in a spirit of love. *w16.05* 1:11, 12

Tuesday, September 4

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

Through his written Word, Jehovah has given us a number of specific commands. For example, he forbids sexual immorality, idolatry, stealing, and drunkenness. (1 Cor. 6:9, 10) Additionally, God's Son, Jesus Christ, gave his followers this challenging, though thrilling, command: "Go, . . . and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you. And look! I am with you all the days until the conclusion of the system of things." (Matt. 28:19, 20) What a protection divine laws and commandments have proved to be! Obeying them has increased our self-respect, contributed to good health, and enhanced family happiness. More important, our loyal adherence to Jehovah's commands, including the command to share in the preaching work, has brought us his approval and blessing. *w16.05 3:1*

Wednesday, September 5

Be transformed by making your mind over.—Rom. 12:2.

As we yield to the guidance of God's holy spirit and align our thinking with Jehovah's viewpoint as revealed in his Word, we will become more godly in our thoughts, words, and actions. (Luke 11:13; Gal. 5:22, 23) Even then, we will need to remain on guard against succumbing to our particular weaknesses. (Prov. 4:23) If your spiritual progress seems slow, remember that

such growth takes time. The cultivating of spiritual qualities is an ongoing process. We must be patient as we endeavor to let the Bible continue to produce positive changes in our life. At first, we may need to discipline ourselves to do what is Scripturally right. In time, though, thinking and acting in a godly way will likely become easier and more natural for us as our thoughts and actions progressively line up with those of Jehovah God.—Ps. 37:31; Prov. 23:12; Gal. 5:16, 17. *w16.05 4:14, 16*

Thursday, September 6

His delight is in the law of Jehovah, and he reads His law in an undertone day and night.

—Ps. 1:2.

Jehovah molds his servants today primarily by means of his Word, his holy spirit, and the Christian congregation. God's Word can mold us as we read it purposefully, meditate on it, and ask Jehovah to help us apply it. "I remember you while upon my bed," wrote David. "I meditate on you during the watches of the night." (Ps. 63:6) He also wrote: "I will praise Jehovah, who has given me advice. Even during the night, my innermost thoughts correct me." (Ps. 16:7) Yes, David allowed divine counsel to settle into the deepest parts of his being, to mold his innermost thoughts and feelings, even when the counsel was strong. (2 Sam. 12:1-13) What a fine example of humility and submissiveness David set for us! Do you too meditate on God's Word, allowing it to settle into your innermost parts? Should you do so even more?—Ps. 1:3. *w16.06 1:11*

Friday, September 7

Do not be quick to take offense.

—*Eccl. 7:9.*

We must consider that all of us are some 6,000 years removed from the human perfection that existed in Eden. Imperfect people are prone to make mistakes. Therefore, it would not be good to expect too much of fellow believers and to let their faults rob us of the joy that comes from being part of God's people in these last days. An even greater mistake would be to allow the faults of others to stumble us and cause us to leave Jehovah's organization. Were that to happen, we would lose not only the privilege of doing God's will but also the hope of life in God's new world. To maintain our deep joy and firm hope, we want to keep clearly in mind the comforting promise of Jehovah: "Look! I am creating new heavens and a new earth; and the former things will not be called to mind, nor will they come up into the heart." (Isa. 65:17; 2 Pet. 3:13) Do not let the faults of others prevent you from obtaining such blessings. *w16.06 4:13, 14*

Saturday, September 8

Jehovah our God is one Jehovah.

—*Deut. 6:4.*

The word "one" suggests unity and oneness of purpose and activity. Jehovah God is not divided or unpredictable. Rather, he is always faithful, consistent, loyal, and true. He promised Abraham that his descendants would inherit the Promised Land, and Jehovah performed mighty deeds to fulfill that promise. The passing of 430 years did not diminish Jehovah's deter-

mination to do so. (Gen. 12:1, 2, 7; Ex. 12:40, 41) Centuries later, when identifying the Israelites as his witnesses, Jehovah told them: "I am the same One. Before me no God was formed, and after me there has been none." Emphasizing his unchanging purpose, Jehovah added: "I am always the same One." (Isa. 43:10, 13; 44:6; 48:12) What an extraordinary privilege for the Israelites—and for us—to be servants of Jehovah, the God who is consistent and loyal in all his ways!—Mal. 3:6; Jas. 1:17. *w16.06 3:6, 7*

Sunday, September 9

Keep looking, keep awake, for you do not know when the appointed time is.—Mark 13:33.

Most nations today have "watchmen" in the form of border patrols and high-tech surveillance systems. They watch for intrusions into their territory and for enemies who pose a threat to national security. However, such "watchmen" can perceive only those threats that come from man-made governments or humans. They are unaware of the existence and activities of God's heavenly Kingdom government in the hands of Christ and the role it will play in the impending judgment on all the nations. (Isa. 9:6, 7, ftn.; 56:10; Dan. 2:44) On the other hand, by being alert and watchful spiritually, we will be ready whenever that day of judgment arrives. (Ps. 130:6) The closer we get to the end of this system of things, the greater the challenge for us to stay awake. How tragic it would be if we were to fail to keep on the watch! *w16.07 2:2, 9, 10*

Monday, September 10

[God's] undeserved kindness to me was not in vain.—1 Cor. 15:10.

Paul was very much aware that he had neither earned nor deserved God's great mercy, having been a former persecutor of Christians. Toward the end of his life, Paul wrote to his fellow worker Timothy: "I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord, who imparted power to me, because he considered me faithful by assigning me to a ministry." (1 Tim. 1:12-14) What was that ministry? Paul told the elders of the congregation in Ephesus what it included, stating: "I do not consider my own life of any importance to me, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, *to bear thorough witness to the good news of the undeserved kindness of God.*" (Acts 20:24) In his zeal to perform his ministry, Paul set an excellent example for modern-day Christians and demonstrated that God's undeserved kindness had not been shown to him "in vain." *w16.07 4:1-3*

Tuesday, September 11

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

Jehovah always supports his faithful servants, even though he may allow them to wait for privileges or a favorable change of circumstances. He promised Abraham a son, but the patriarch had to exercise faith and patience. (Heb. 6:12-15) Although he waited years for Isaac's birth, Abraham did not lose heart, and Jehovah did not disappoint him. (Gen. 15:3, 4; 21:5) Waiting is not easy. (Prov. 13:12) If we were to brood over disappoint-

ments, we could become very discouraged. Instead, it is wise to use our time to improve our spiritual qualifications. By reading God's Word and meditating on it, we can develop wisdom, insight, good judgment, knowledge, thinking ability, and soundness of mind. Daily, we face issues involving entertainment, dress and grooming, managing money, and getting along with others. By applying what we learn from the Bible, we can make decisions that please Jehovah. *w16.08 3:9-11*

Wednesday, September 12

God is the one who . . . energizes you.—Phil. 2:13.

Jehovah helped the Israelites to defeat the Amalekites and the Ethiopians, and he gave Nehemiah and his associates the power to complete the rebuilding work. God will similarly give us strength to stand firm against opposition, apathy, and anxiety so that we can carry out our preaching work. (1 Pet. 5:10) We do not expect Jehovah to perform miracles for us. Rather, we should do our part. That includes our reading God's Word daily, preparing for and attending the meetings weekly, feeding our mind and heart through personal study and family worship, and always relying on Jehovah in prayer. Let us never allow other pursuits and activities to interfere with the means that Jehovah uses to strengthen and encourage us. If you sense that your hands have dropped down in any of these areas, ask for God's help. Then see how his spirit "energizes you, giving you both the desire and the power to act." *w16.09 1:12*

Thursday, September 13

Because of the prevalence of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife and each woman have her own husband.—1 Cor. 7:2.

The apostle Paul recommended singleness; yet, he said the words above. Paul added: “If they do not have self-control, let them marry, for it is better to marry than to be inflamed with passion.” Getting married can help a person to avoid letting passion lead him to such a practice as masturbation or to sexual immorality. In addition, age is a factor to consider, for the apostle stated: “If anyone thinks he is behaving improperly by remaining unmarried, and if he is past the bloom of youth, then this is what should take place: Let him do what he wants; he does not sin. Let them marry.” (1 Cor. 7:9, 36; 1 Tim. 4:1-3) Nevertheless, a person should not be prompted to marry because of surges of passion that may come in youth. He may not be mature enough to take on the responsibilities of married life. *w16.08 1:17*

Friday, September 14

*In every way we recommend ourselves as God’s ministers.
—2 Cor. 6:4.*

Many people form impressions and opinions of us by “what appears to the eyes.” (1 Sam. 16:7) As God’s ministers, therefore, we understand that our getting dressed is not just a matter of putting on something comfortable that we like. The principles that we glean from God’s Word should move us to avoid wearing clothing that is tight-fitting, revealing, or sexually provocative. That would rule out wearing cloth-

ing that exposes or accentuates private parts of our anatomy. Nobody should feel uncomfortable or forced to look the other way when seeing how we are dressed. When we are neat, clean, modestly dressed, and well-groomed, people are more likely to respect us and to be attracted to the God we worship. Furthermore, our appropriate attire will reflect well on the organization we represent. As a result, others may be more likely to pay attention to our lifesaving message. *w16.09 3:5, 6*

Saturday, September 15

Be reasonable, displaying all mildness toward all men.—Titus 3:2.

Do not be quick to assume you know what others believe. Some people say that they believe in evolution, but they also feel that God exists. They think that God used evolution to create different forms of life. Others say that they believe in evolution because they feel that it would not be taught at school were it not a fact. And some stop believing in God because they are disappointed with religion. So when you discuss the origin of life with someone, it is usually wise to ask questions first. Find out what that person believes. If you are reasonable and willing to listen, he may be inclined to listen to you. If someone seems to be attacking your belief in creation, you might ask him to explain how life could have begun without a Creator. For the first life-form to continue, it had to be able to reproduce, to make copies of itself. One professor of chemistry said: “One is struck by the complexity of even the simplest form of life.” *w16.09 4:12, 13*

Sunday, September 16

They would not accept release by some ransom, in order that they might attain a better resurrection.

—*Heb. 11:35.*

Though we cannot be sure whom Paul had in mind, some, like Naboth and Zechariah, were stoned to death for obeying God and doing his will. (1 Ki. 21:3, 15; 2 Chron. 24:20, 21) Daniel and his companions clearly had the opportunity to “accept release” by compromising their integrity. Instead, their faith in God’s power enabled them, so to speak, to ‘stop the mouths of lions’ and ‘quench the force of fire.’ (Heb. 11:33, 34; Dan. 3:16-18, 20, 28; 6:13, 16, 21-23) Because of their faith, such prophets as Micaiah and Jeremiah “received their trial by mockings . . . and prisons.” Others, like Elijah, “wandered about in deserts and mountains and caves and dens of the earth.” All of them endured because they had an “assured expectation of what is hoped for.” —Heb. 11:1, 36-38; 1 Ki. 18:13; 22:24-27; Jer. 20:1, 2; 28:10, 11; 32:2. *w16.10* 3:10, 11

Monday, September 17

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

We can show kindness to newcomers from a foreign background by warmly greeting them at the Kingdom Hall. We may have noticed that new immigrants are sometimes shy and stay by themselves. Because of their upbringing or social status, they may feel inferior to those of another race or nationality. So we should take the initiative to show a warm and sincere in-

terest in them. If available in your language, the *JW Language* app can help you learn how to greet newcomers in their mother tongue. (Phil. 2:4) You may feel awkward about approaching those from another culture. To overcome such feelings, you might tell them something about yourself. You may soon realize that you have more things in common than you have differences—real or imagined—and that each culture has its own strengths and weaknesses. *w16.10* 1:13, 14

Tuesday, September 18

Sexual immorality is reported among you, and such immorality as is not even found among the nations.—*1 Cor. 5:1.*

We can contribute to the spiritual cleanness of the congregation by following the direction found in God’s Word. Consider the situation in ancient Corinth. Paul had poured himself out preaching in that city, and he loved his fellow “holy ones” there. (1 Cor. 1:1, 2) But how troubling it must have been for him to have to address the problem of sexual immorality that was being tolerated in that congregation! Paul directed the elders to hand the immoral man over to Satan—in other words, to disfellowship him. To preserve the congregation’s purity, the elders needed to clear out the “leaven.” (1 Cor. 5:5-7, 12) When we support the elders’ decision to disfellowship an unrepentant wrongdoer, we help to maintain the cleanness of the congregation and perhaps move the person to repent and seek Jehovah’s forgiveness. *w16.11* 2:14

Wednesday, September 19

If you have any word of encouragement for the people, tell it.

—Acts 13:15.

Encouragement is a power for good. “I have fought feelings of worthlessness for many years,” says Rubén. “But one time, I was preaching with an elder who realized that I was having a bad day. He listened with sympathy as I expressed my feelings. Then he reminded me of the good I was accomplishing. He also reminded me of Jesus’ words—that each of us is worth more than many sparrows. I often recall that scripture, and it still touches my heart. The elder’s words made a huge difference.” (Matt. 10:31) It should not surprise us that the Bible emphasizes the need for regular encouragement. The apostle Paul wrote to the Hebrew Christians: “Keep on encouraging one another *each day*, . . . so that none of you should become hardened by the deceptive power of sin.” (Heb. 3:13) You know how important the counsel to encourage one another is if you recall a time when words of encouragement lifted your spirits. *w16.11* 1:2, 3

Thursday, September 20

Men will rise and speak twisted things to draw away the disciples after themselves.—Acts 20:30.

In 313 C.E., “Christianity” was granted legal recognition by the pagan Roman Emperor Constantine. After the Council of Nicaea, Constantine, who was present at the council, ordered Arius, a dissenting priest, into exile because Arius refused to acknowledge Jesus as God. Later, under Emperor Theodosius I

(379-395 C.E.), the Catholic Church, as the contaminated form of Christianity came to be known, became the official religion of the Roman Empire. Historians refer to pagan Rome as having been “Christianized” in the fourth century. The truth is that by that time an apostate form of Christianity had joined the pagan religious organizations of the Roman Empire as members of Babylon the Great. Even so, a small number of anointed wheatlike Christians were doing their best to worship God.—Matt. 13:24, 25, 37-39. *w16.11* 4:8, 9

Friday, September 21

Throw all your anxiety on [Jehovah], because he cares for you.

—1 Pet. 5:7.

We live in very stressful times. Satan the Devil is bitterly angry and “walks about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone.” (1 Pet. 5:8; Rev. 12:17) Therefore, it is not surprising that at times even we, God’s servants, experience some feelings of anxiety. After all, on occasion, God-fearing servants of Jehovah in the past, such as King David, had “anxious concern.” (Ps. 13:2) Recall, too, that the apostle Paul experienced “anxiety for all the congregations.” (2 Cor. 11:28) But what can we do when we are overwhelmed by feelings of anxiety? Our loving heavenly Father came to the aid of his servants in the past, and today he makes it possible for us to gain considerable relief from distress or anxiety. How? By means of heartfelt prayer, by reading God’s Word and meditating on it, by tapping into Jehovah’s holy spirit, and by sharing our feelings with a trusted confidant. *w16.12* 3:1, 2

Saturday, September 22

The end of those things is death.

—Rom. 6:21.

Jehovah's people have turned their back on "the fruit that [they] used to produce" before they came to know, love, and serve God. Their past way of life may have included "things of which [they] are now ashamed" and that would have merited death. (Rom. 6:21) Then they changed. That was true of many in Corinth to whom Paul wrote. Some had been idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, thieves, drunkards, and the like. Yet, they were "washed clean" and "sanctified." (1 Cor. 6:9-11) That was likely also true of some in the Roman congregation. Paul was inspired to write to them: "Neither go on presenting your bodies to sin as weapons of unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, also your bodies to God as weapons of righteousness." (Rom. 6:13) Paul was sure that they could remain spiritually clean and thus continue to benefit from God's undeserved kindness. *w16.12* 1:13

Sunday, September 23

Trust in Jehovah.—Ps. 37:3.

Jehovah created humans with remarkable abilities. He gave us thinking ability to solve problems and plan for the future. (Prov. 2:11) He gave us power to carry out our plans, enabling us to work toward proper goals. (Phil. 2:13) He also created us with a conscience—an in-born sense of right and wrong—that can help us avoid wrongdoing and correct our mistakes when we fall short. (Rom. 2:15) Through his Word, Jehovah repeatedly admon-

ishes us to use our abilities for good. For example, in the Hebrew Scriptures, we read: "The plans of the diligent surely lead to success"; and "whatever your hand finds to do, do with all your might." (Prov. 21:5; Eccl. 9:10) In the Christian Greek Scriptures, we are told: "As long as we have the opportunity, let us work what is good toward all"; and "to the extent that each one has received a gift, use it in ministering to one another." (Gal. 6:10; 1 Pet. 4:10) Clearly, Jehovah wants us to do what we can to benefit ourselves and others. *w17.01* 1:1, 2

Monday, September 24

These things happened to them as examples, and they were written for a warning to us upon whom the ends of the systems of things have come.—1 Cor. 10:11.

The descendants of Adam and Eve inherited imperfection and death from their disobedient parents. However, they retained the right to exercise the gift of free will. This is evident in the way God dealt with the nation of Israel. Through his servant Moses, Jehovah gave the people the choice to accept or reject the privilege of becoming His special property. (Ex. 19:3-6) What was their response? They freely chose to carry out the conditions of becoming God's name people and unanimously declared: "All that Jehovah has spoken, we are willing to do." (Ex. 19:8) Sadly, in time the nation misused its freedom of choice and broke that promise. Let us heed this warning example and always treasure our gift of free will by continuing to stick close to Jehovah and obeying his righteous requirements. *w17.01* 2:9

Tuesday, September 25

Walk in modesty with your God!

—*Mic. 6:8.*

Sometime during King Jeroboam's reign, Jehovah sent a certain prophet from Judah to deliver a scathing judgment message to that apostate king of Israel. The humble prophet faithfully delivered God's message, and Jehovah protected his servant from Jeroboam's violent wrath. (1 Ki. 13:1-10) On his way home, the prophet unexpectedly met up with an old man from nearby Bethel. The man claimed to be a prophet of Jehovah. He deceived the younger man into disobeying Jehovah's strict instructions 'not to eat bread or drink water in Israel' and 'not to return by the way that he came.' Jehovah was not pleased. Later, on his way home, a lion came across Jehovah's prophet on the road and killed him. (1 Ki. 13:11-24) Why did the once modest prophet presumptuously go along with that deceitful older man? The Bible does not say. But it could be that he completely forgot that he was supposed to be 'walking modestly with God.' *w17.01 4:1-3*

Wednesday, September 26

I have spoken, and I will bring it about. I have purposed it, and I will also carry it out.—Isa. 46:11.

The very first words of the Bible make this simple but profound statement: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Gen. 1:1) It is true that we have only a little understanding of the many things God created, such as space, light, and gravity, and we have seen only a small fraction of the universe. (Eccl. 3:11) Yet, Jeho-

vah has revealed to us his purpose for the earth and for mankind. The earth was to be an ideal home for men and women created in God's image. (Gen. 1:26) They would be his children, and Jehovah would be their Father. As explained in the third chapter of Genesis, Jehovah's purpose encountered a challenge. (Gen. 3:1-7) However, that challenge was by no means insurmountable. No one can stand in Jehovah's way. (Isa. 46:10; 55:11) Therefore, we can be certain that Jehovah's original purpose will be fulfilled exactly on time! *w17.02 1:1, 2*

Thursday, September 27

Where is the One who put within [Moses] His holy spirit?—Isa. 63:11.

Since holy spirit is an invisible force, how could the Israelites discern that it was operating on Moses? Holy spirit enabled Moses to perform miracles and to declare God's name to Pharaoh. (Ex. 7:1-3) Holy spirit also produced in Moses beautiful qualities, such as love, meekness, and patience, that qualified him to lead the Israelites. The evidence was clear: Jehovah had selected Moses to be the leader of His people. Later, Jehovah's holy spirit empowered other men whom he appointed to lead his people. "Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom." (Deut. 34:9) "Jehovah's spirit came upon Gideon." (Judg. 6:34) And "the spirit of Jehovah began to empower David." (1 Sam. 16:13) All those men relied on God's spirit to help them, and that spirit empowered them to perform feats that they could not have done in their own strength.—Josh. 11:16, 17; Judg. 7:7, 22; 1 Sam. 17:37, 50. *w17.02 3:3-5*

Friday, September 28

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

—2 Cor. 1:24.

Paul set a fine example of respecting his brothers' right of free will to make decisions. Today, when giving counsel on matters involving personal choice, the elders should follow that pattern. They are happy to share Bible-based information with others in the flock. Still, the elders are careful to allow individual brothers and sisters to make their own decisions. That is logical because those individuals will bear the responsibility for the results. Here is an important lesson: We can show helpful interest in others and call attention to Scriptural principles or counsel. Still, others have a right and responsibility to make their own decisions. When they do this wisely, they benefit. Clearly, we should avoid any tendency to think that we are authorized to make decisions for other brothers and sisters. *w17.03 2:11*

Saturday, September 29

Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive.—Heb. 13:17.

The faithful slave has exercised outstanding faith by zealously promoting and spreading the Kingdom good news. Are you one of the other sheep who supports the anointed in this vital work? How happy you will feel when your Leader, Jesus, says: "To the extent that you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me." (Matt. 25:34-40) When Jesus returned to

heaven, he did not abandon his followers. (Matt. 28:20) He knew firsthand how much the holy spirit, the angels, and God's Word helped him to take the lead when he was on earth. Therefore, he has supplied the faithful slave today with the same assistance. As anointed Christians, the members of that slave "keep following the Lamb no matter where he goes." (Rev. 14:4) As we follow their direction, therefore, we follow our Leader, Jesus. Soon, he will lead us to everlasting life. (Rev. 7:14-17) And no human leader can promise that! *w17.02 4:17-19*

Sunday, September 30

Commit your way to Jehovah; rely on him, and he will act in your behalf.—Ps. 37:5.

When we face problems that seem too much for us to deal with, it may be easy to see the need to rely on Jehovah. But what do we do when we have to cope with smaller issues of daily life? Do we resort to human thinking by trying to solve them in our own way? Or do we look for Bible principles and try to apply them, thus showing that we rely on Jehovah's way to solve problems? For example, on occasion you may face some opposition from your family regarding attending meetings or an assembly. You ask Jehovah to direct you and help you discern the best way to handle the situation. Or what if you lose your job, and you are having difficulty finding another? When speaking with a prospective employer, would you still inform him that you will be attending weekday meetings regularly? Whatever the problem may be, we do well to heed the words of the psalmist who said the words of today's text. *w17.03 4:6*

Monday, October 1

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

—Ps. 145:19.

Jehovah is “the God who supplies endurance and comfort.” (Rom. 15:5) He alone fully understands not only the problems we face but also the way our environment, emotions, and even our genetic makeup affect us. He is thus the best one to equip us to endure. How will God answer our prayers for strength to endure? When we ask Jehovah to help us cope with trials, he will “make the way out.” (1 Cor. 10:13) Does Jehovah maneuver matters to remove the trial? Perhaps. Often, however, he makes the way out “so that [we] may be able to endure it.” Yes, Jehovah strengthens us so that we “may endure fully with patience and joy.” (Col. 1:11) And since he knows our physical, mental, and emotional limits so intimately, Jehovah will never allow a situation to develop to a point that we cannot remain faithful. *w16.04 2:5, 6*

Tuesday, October 2

Pay back, therefore, Caesar’s things to Caesar, but God’s things to God.—Matt. 22:21.

God’s Word tells us to be obedient to human governments, yet it also teaches that we must obey God rather than men. (Acts 5:29; Titus 3:1) Is this a contradiction? Not at all! The principle of relative subjection helps us to understand and obey these commands. Jesus summarized this principle when he said the words of today’s text. We submit to the authority of the government under which we live by

obeying its laws, respecting its officials, and paying the taxes it levies. (Rom. 13:7) However, if government authorities tell us to disobey God, we respectfully refuse to comply. We remain neutral in the world’s political affairs. (Isa. 2:4) Thus, we do not oppose human governments that Jehovah allows to function; nor do we promote patriotic or nationalistic activity. (Rom. 13:1, 2) We do not lobby, vote in political elections, run for government office, or try to change governments. *w16.04 4:1, 2*

Wednesday, October 3

Let him be to you just as a man of the nations.—Matt. 18:17.

Most differences between Christians can and should be resolved privately by the individuals concerned. However, Jesus noted that some situations might require congregation involvement. (Matt. 18:15-17) What would be the outcome if an offender refused to listen to his brother, to witnesses, and to the congregation? He should be treated “just as a man of the nations and as a tax collector.” Today, we would say that he should be disfellowshipped. The seriousness of this step indicates that the “sin” was not a small disagreement. Rather, it was (1) a sin that could be settled between the individuals concerned but it was also (2) a sin serious enough to merit disfellowshipping if not settled. Such sins might involve a measure of fraud or might include damaging a person’s reputation through slander. The three steps Jesus outlined, as recorded at Matthew 18:15-17, are applicable only where these conditions exist. *w16.05 1:14*

Thursday, October 4

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

There are numerous situations for which the Bible provides no specific command. For example, the Scriptures do not contain detailed rules regarding what kind of clothing is appropriate attire for Christians. How does this reflect Jehovah's wisdom? Styles and customs vary not only in different parts of the world but also from one decade to the next. If the Bible had provided a list of acceptable styles of dress and grooming, it would now be out-of-date in that regard. For similar reasons, God's inspired Word does not provide a lot of rules designed to govern a Christian's choice of employment, health care, and entertainment. What should we do in situations that do not involve a direct Bible command? Under such circumstances, it is our personal responsibility to examine the details and make a choice that is guided, not by mere personal preference, but by what Jehovah will approve of and bless.—Ps. 37:5. *w16.05* 3:2, 6

Friday, October 5

You accepted it not as the word of men but, just as it truthfully is, as the word of God.—1 Thess. 2:13.

No doubt all of us have our favorite portions of the Bible. Some especially enjoy the Gospels, which paint a beautiful picture of Jehovah's personality as reflected in his Son. (John 14:9) Others are fond of parts of the Bible containing prophecy—perhaps Revelation, with its preview of “the things that

must shortly take place.” (Rev. 1:1) And who among us has not found comfort in the Psalms or drawn practical lessons from the book of Proverbs? The Bible truly is a book for everyone. Because we love the Bible, we also love our Bible-based publications. For instance, we appreciate the spiritual food we receive in the form of books, brochures, magazines, and other literature. We know that these provisions from Jehovah help us to stay spiritually alert, well-fed, and “healthy in faith.”—Titus 2:2. *w16.05* 5:1-3

Saturday, October 6

The fruitage of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control. Against such things there is no law.—Gal. 5:22, 23.

Holy spirit is able to mold us in a number of ways. For instance, it can help us to develop a Christlike personality, which is characterized by the fruitage of God's spirit. An aspect of that fruitage is love. We love God and *want* to obey him and be molded by him, recognizing that his commandments are not burdensome. Holy spirit can also give us the strength to resist the molding influence of the world and its bad spirit. (Eph. 2:2) The apostle Paul, who as a young man was deeply influenced by the proud spirit of Jewish religious leaders, could later write: “For all things I have the strength through the one who gives me power.” (Phil. 4:13) So let us, like Paul, keep on asking for holy spirit. Jehovah will not ignore the sincere petitions of the meek.—Ps. 10:17. *w16.06* 1:12

Sunday, October 7

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

To have Jehovah as our one and only God, we should give him our exclusive devotion. Our worship of him cannot be divided or shared with any other gods nor tinged with ideas or practices from other forms of worship. We must bear in mind that Jehovah is not just one among many gods; nor is he even the highest and most powerful among them. Only Jehovah is to be worshipped. To give Jehovah exclusive devotion, we must be careful not to allow anything to take, or even to share, the place in our life that Jehovah alone should occupy. What might such things be? In the Ten Commandments, Jehovah made clear that his people must have no other gods besides him and that they must not practice any form of idolatry. (Deut. 5:6-10) Today, idolatry can take many forms, some of which might be hard to recognize. But Jehovah's requirements have not changed—he is still “one Jehovah.”—Mark 12:29. *w16.06* 3:10, 12

Monday, October 8

If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.—Matt. 6:14.

When Peter asked whether we should forgive “up to seven times,” Jesus replied: “I say to you, not up to seven times, but up to 77 times.” Clearly, Jesus meant that we should always be willing to forgive; this should be our first and predominant leaning. (Matt. 6:15; 18:21, 22) It is wise to remember that since we all have faults, we may be of-

fending others. If we discern that we have done so, the Bible's direction is to go to the one whom we have offended and try to reconcile matters. (Matt. 5:23, 24) We appreciate it when others do not hold our faults against us, so we should act the same way toward them. (1 Cor. 13:5; Col. 3:13) If we practice forgiving others, Jehovah will forgive us. Yes, when it comes to handling the faults of others, the Christian course is to imitate our merciful Father's dealings with us when we make mistakes.—Ps. 103:12-14. *w16.06* 4:15, 17

Tuesday, October 9

I am not ashamed of the good news; it is, in fact, God's power for salvation to everyone having faith.—Rom. 1:16.

In this time of the end, Jehovah's people have been commissioned to preach “this good news of the Kingdom . . . in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations.” (Matt. 24:14) The message we spread is also “the good news of the undeserved kindness of God” because all the blessings we hope to receive under Kingdom rule come to us through Jehovah's kindness expressed by means of Christ. (Acts 20:24; Eph. 1:3) Do we individually imitate Paul in showing gratitude for Jehovah's undeserved kindness by zealously sharing in the ministry? (Rom. 1:14, 15) As sinners, we benefit from Jehovah's undeserved kindness in many ways. We therefore owe it to all people to do our utmost to make known to them how Jehovah is expressing his love and how they can benefit from it personally. *w16.07* 4:4, 5

Wednesday, October 10

Keep ready, because at an hour that you do not think likely, the Son of man is coming.—Luke 12:40.

Shortly before his death, Jesus three times warned his disciples about “the ruler of this world.” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11) Jesus knew that the Devil would keep people in darkness mentally in order to undermine the sense of urgency that permeates God’s prophecies about the future. (Zeph. 1:14) Satan blinds people’s minds through the world empire of false religion. What have you detected in your conversations with others? Has the Devil not already “blinded the minds of the unbelievers” about the coming end of this system of things and the fact that Christ is now ruling God’s Kingdom? (2 Cor. 4:3-6) For the most part, people are apathetic when we try to tell them where this world is headed. Do not let the apathy of others discourage or dissuade you from keeping on the watch. You know better. *w16.07 2:11, 12*

Thursday, October 11

Each one of you must love his wife as he does himself; . . . the wife should have deep respect for her husband.—Eph. 5:33.

When a lovely bride appears before her handsome bridegroom on their wedding day, words can hardly describe their joy. God’s Word provides wise advice for all who choose to get married, for the loving Originator of marriage wants each couple to have a good measure of success and happiness in their married life. (Prov. 18:22) Yet, the Scriptures clearly tell us that im-

perfect humans who get married “will have tribulation in their flesh.” (1 Cor. 7:28) How can such tribulation be kept to a minimum? And what will make Christian marriage a success? The Bible emphasizes the importance of love. Tender affection (Greek, *phi-li’a*) is needed in a marriage. Romantic love (*e’ros*) brings delight, and love for family (*stor-ge’*) is vital when children enter the picture. However, it is love based on principle (*a-ga’pe*) that ensures the success of a marriage. *w16.08 2:1, 2*

Friday, October 12

Pay constant attention to yourself and to your teaching.—1 Tim. 4:16.

Timothy was already an experienced Kingdom proclaimer. Yet, his ministry would be effective only if he would “pay constant attention” to his teaching. He could not take for granted that people would respond to his usual approach. To continue reaching their hearts, he had to adapt his teaching methods to their needs. As Kingdom proclaimers, we need to do the same. We often find that people are not at home when we preach from door to door. In some areas, we cannot enter certain apartment buildings and gated communities. If that is true in your territory, why not consider different ways to preach the good news? Public witnessing is one excellent method of spreading the good news. Many Witnesses are having a very effective and rewarding share in such work. They set aside time to approach people at train and bus stations, in marketplaces and parks, and in other public areas. *w16.08 3:14-16*

Saturday, October 13

Strengthen the hands that hang down and the feeble knees.

—*Heb. 12:12.*

Jehovah gives us a worldwide brotherhood of caring worshippers who can offer us encouragement. (Heb. 12:12, 13) Many in the first century received that sort of spiritual strengthening. It is similar today. What can we do? Think of how Aaron and Hur literally supported Moses' hands during a battle. (Ex. 17: 8-13) We can look for ways to support and to give practical aid to others. To whom? To those battling the effects of old age, health limitations, opposition from their family, loneliness, or the loss of a loved one. We can also strengthen young ones who are facing pressure to share in wrongdoing or to seek "success" in this system of things, whether academically, financially, or professionally. (1 Thess. 3:1-3; 5:11, 14) Look for ways to show genuine interest in others at the Kingdom Hall, in the ministry, while enjoying a meal together, or as you converse on the telephone. *w16.09 1:13, 14*

Sunday, October 14

Do all things for God's glory.

—*1 Cor. 10:31.*

We owe it to our holy God, to our spiritual brothers and sisters, as well as to the people in our territory to wear clothing that dignifies the message we bear and that brings glory to Jehovah. (Rom. 13:8-10) This is especially so when we are engaging in Christian activities, such as when we attend meetings or when we share in the preaching work. We should dress "in the way that is proper for [people] professing devotion to God." (1 Tim. 2:10) Of course,

some clothing that is appropriate in one place may not be appropriate in another. Hence, Jehovah's people throughout the world take local customs into account so as not to cause offense. When we attend assemblies and conventions, our dress needs to be appropriate and modest rather than reflect the extreme styles that may be common in the world. Thus we will be proud to identify ourselves as Jehovah's Witnesses. Yes, and we will feel free to give a witness as we have an opportunity. *w16.09 3:7, 8*

Monday, October 15

Every house is constructed by someone, but the one who constructed all things is God.

—*Heb. 3:4.*

Paul's logic is very reasonable and effective! Yes, complex designs are the product of an intelligent mind. You can use the same basic reasoning when you talk with someone who has doubts about the Bible. Find out what he actually believes and what topics may interest him. (Prov. 18: 13) If he is interested in scientific things, he might respond when you mention points that show the Bible's scientific accuracy. Other people might be moved by examples showing that the Bible contains accurate prophecies and accurate history. Or you might point out the Bible's guiding principles, such as those found in the Sermon on the Mount. Remember, your goal should be to win hearts, not arguments. So be a good listener. Ask sincere questions, and express yourself with mildness and respect, especially when you talk with older ones. They will likely be more inclined to respect your views. *w16.09 4:14-16*

Tuesday, October 16

Welcome one another.

—*Rom. 15:7.*

To help others from a foreign background feel at home in the congregation, honestly ask yourself, ‘If I were in a foreign country, how would I want to be treated?’ (Matt. 7:12) Be patient with those who are adjusting to a new country. At first, we may not fully understand their way of thinking or reacting. But rather than expect them to embrace our culture, why not accept them just the way they are? If we learn about their homeland and culture, we may find it easier to interact with them. We might include time in our family worship to do research on peoples we are not acquainted with in our congregation or territory. Another way to draw closer to those from another background is to invite them for a meal in our home. Since Jehovah has “opened to the nations the door to faith,” could we not open our own door to strangers who are “related to us in the faith”?—Acts 14:27; Gal. 6:10; Job 31:32. *w16.10* 1:15, 16

Wednesday, October 17

Consider closely the one who has endured such hostile speech from sinners.—Heb. 12:3.

After describing various men and women of faith, Paul highlighted the most outstanding example of all—our Lord Jesus Christ. “For the joy that was set before him,” states Hebrews 12:2, “he endured a torture stake, despising shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Indeed, we should “consider closely” Jesus’ example of faith in the face of the severest

of trials. Like Jesus, early Christian martyrs, such as the disciple Antipas, refused to compromise their integrity. (Rev. 2:13) They would have the reward of a resurrection to heavenly life—surpassing the “better resurrection” that ancient men of faith looked forward to. (Heb. 11:35) Sometime after the Kingdom’s birth in 1914, all such faithful anointed ones, who were sleeping in death, were raised to spirit life in heaven to share with Jesus in his rulership over mankind.—Rev. 20:4. *w16.10* 3:12

Thursday, October 18

Keep on encouraging one another each day.—Heb. 3:13.

Some parents do not commend their children because their own parents never gave them any encouragement. Many employees are not being commended, so they complain that there is a chronic shortage of encouragement in the workplace. Encouragement often involves commending a person for something he or she did well. We can also be encouraging by reassuring others that they have good qualities or by speaking “consolingly to those who are discouraged.” (1 Thess. 5:14, ftn.) The Greek word usually translated “encouragement” literally means “a calling to one’s side.” As we serve alongside our brothers and sisters, we likely have opportunities to say something encouraging. (Eccl. 4:9, 10) Do we use suitable occasions to let others know why we love and appreciate them? Before answering that question, we would do well to think about this proverb: “A word spoken at the right time—how good it is!”—Prov. 15:23. *w16.11* 1:3-5

Friday, October 19

Look! How good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!—Ps. 133:1.

Foretelling the future condition of his people, God declared: “In unity I will place them, like sheep in the pen.” (Mic. 2:12) Moreover, Jehovah foretold through the prophet Zephaniah: “I will change the language of the peoples to a pure language [of Scriptural truth], so that all of them may call on the name of Jehovah, to serve him shoulder to shoulder [or, “worship him in unity,” ftn.].” (Zeph. 3:9) How grateful we are to have the privilege of worshipping Jehovah in unity! It is clear that the inspired counsel in God’s own Book helped first-century Christians in Corinth and elsewhere to maintain cleanness, peace, and unity in their congregations. (1 Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:11-13, ftn.; 1 Pet. 3:8) Today, knowledge of God’s wonderful purposes is being spread throughout the earth as a result of the efforts of those who are part of one united preaching organization. *w16.11 2:16, 18*

Saturday, October 20

You are . . . “a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for special possession, that you should declare abroad the excellencies” of the One who called you out of darkness.—1 Pet. 2:9.

For the first few centuries of our Common Era, many people could read the Bible in either Greek or Latin. They were thus in a position to compare the teachings of God’s Word with the dogmas of the church. On the basis of what they read in the Bible, some among them rejected the unscriptural creeds of

the church, but it was dangerous—even fatal—to express such opinions openly. In time, Bible languages fell into disuse by the masses, and the church opposed efforts to translate God’s Word into the common tongues. Any dissent from what the church taught was severely punished. Faithful anointed servants of God had to meet together in discreet groups—if they could meet at all. The anointed “royal priesthood” could not function in an organized way. Babylon the Great held the people in a viselike grip! *w16.11 4:8, 10, 11*

Sunday, October 21

Unrighteous people will not inherit God’s Kingdom.—1 Cor. 6:9.

We must certainly avoid choosing to practice the serious sins that some in Corinth had been guilty of. That is vital if we are to say that we have accepted God’s undeserved kindness and that ‘sin is not master over us.’ However, are we also determined to be “obedient from the heart” by doing our best to avoid sins that some would view as less serious? (Rom. 6:14, 17) Think of the apostle Paul. We can be sure that he was not sharing in the gross wrongs mentioned at 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. Nonetheless, he confessed that he was still guilty of sin. He wrote: “I am fleshly, sold under sin. For I do not understand what I am doing. For I do not practice what I wish, but I do what I hate.” (Rom. 7:14, 15) This shows that there were other things that Paul viewed as sins, and he was fighting against those wrongs too. (Rom. 7:21-23) May that also be true of us as we strive to be “obedient from the heart.” *w16.12 1:15, 16*

Monday, October 22

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

When you are confronted by situations that cause uneasiness, apprehension, or anxiety, pour out your heart to your loving heavenly Father. After you have done all you can to solve a problem, heartfelt prayer will certainly accomplish more than worry. (Ps. 94:18, 19) As shown at Philippians 4:6, 7, Jehovah can respond to our earnest, heartfelt, and persistent supplications. How? By giving us inner calm that can free our mind and heart of disturbing emotions. Many can testify to this, based on their own experience. In place of anxiety, a distressing sense of foreboding, God helped them to gain a profound sense of peace and tranquillity that actually surpassed human understanding. That can be your experience too. Thus “the peace of God” can triumph over any challenge you may face. You can fully trust Jehovah’s compassionate promise: “Do not be anxious, for I am your God. I will fortify you, yes, I will help you.” —Isa. 41:10. *w16.12* 3:3, 4

Tuesday, October 23

By faith Moses, when grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter.—Heb. 11:24.

Moses turned his back on the treasures of Egypt, “choosing to be mistreated with the people of God rather than to have the temporary enjoyment of sin.” (Heb. 11:25, 26) May we imitate the faith of loyal ancient ones, such as Moses, by treasuring our gift of free will and using it to do God’s will. While it might seem easier to have some-

one else make decisions for us, doing so would rob us of one of the great blessings of free will. That blessing is revealed at Deuteronomy 30:19, 20. Verse 19 describes the choice that God gave to the Israelites. In verse 20 we learn that Jehovah gave them the precious opportunity to show him what was in their hearts. We too can *choose* to worship Jehovah. We could have no greater motive than to use God’s gift of free will to express our love for him and to bring him honor and glory! *w17.01* 2:10, 11

Wednesday, October 24

Trust in Jehovah and do what is good . . . and act with faithfulness.—Ps. 37:3.

Jehovah expects us to put to good use the abilities with which he has endowed us. Why? Because he loves us, and he knows that it brings us satisfaction when we employ these gifts. At the same time, Jehovah knows that humans have limitations. On our own, we can never eliminate imperfection, sin, and death; neither can we control other people, for all have free will. (1 Ki. 8:46) And no matter how much knowledge or experience we gain, we will always be like children in comparison with Jehovah. (Isa. 55:9) In all circumstances, we need to lean on Jehovah for guidance, trusting in him to support us and do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. At the same time, we should do what we can, taking appropriate action to solve problems and help others. In short, we need both ‘to *trust* in Jehovah and to *do* what is good’; we need ‘to *act* with faithfulness.’ *w17.01* 1:2-4

Thursday, October 25

Cross over with me, and I will supply you with food in Jerusalem.

—2 Sam. 19:33.

Barzillai declined the offer. Why? Because of his advanced age, he told David that he did not want to become a burden to the king. So Barzillai recommended that Chimham, presumably one of his sons, take his place. (2 Sam. 19:31-37) Modesty helped Barzillai to make a reasonable decision. He did not turn down David's invitation because he felt inadequate to shoulder responsibility or because he wanted to enjoy a quiet life in retirement. He simply recognized and accepted his changing circumstances and his limitations. He did not want to take on more than he reasonably could. (Gal. 6:4, 5) If we focus on position, prominence, or recognition, it only provides a breeding ground for egotism, competition, and eventual disappointment. (Gal. 5:26) Modesty, however, helps all to focus their collective abilities and efforts on bringing glory to God and doing what is best to help others. —1 Cor. 10:31. *w17.01* 4:5, 6

Friday, October 26

God saw everything he had made, and look! it was very good.

—Gen. 1:31.

Jehovah is an awe-inspiring Creator. Everything he creates meets the highest standards. (Jer. 10:12) As is evident in creation, Jehovah lovingly set boundaries. He made both natural laws and moral laws to ensure that everything functions harmoniously. (Ps. 19:7-9) Hence, all things in the universe have an assigned place and function accord-

ing to their role in God's purpose. Jehovah sets the standard for how his creation should work together. Thus, the law of gravity holds the atmosphere close to the earth, regulates tides and oceans, and contributes to the physical order essential to life on earth. All creation, including humans, moves and functions within these boundaries. Clearly, the order in creation testifies that God has a purpose for earth and mankind. In our ministry, can we draw attention to the Cause of this impressive order?—Rev. 4:11. *w17.02* 1:4, 5

Saturday, October 27

Moses . . . is the very one God sent as both ruler and deliverer by means of the angel.—Acts 7:35.

After Moses' time, his successor, Joshua, was strengthened by "the prince of Jehovah's army" to lead God's people into battle against the Canaanites. (Josh. 5:13-15; 6:2, 21) Later, King Hezekiah faced an overwhelming force of Assyrian soldiers who threatened to invade Jerusalem. In one night, "the angel of Jehovah went out and struck down 185,000 men." (2 Ki. 19:35) Of course, while the angels are perfect, the men whom they assisted were not. Moses once failed to sanctify Jehovah. (Num. 20:12) Joshua neglected to seek God's guidance before concluding a covenant with the Gibeonites. (Josh. 9:14, 15) For a brief period, Hezekiah's "heart became haughty." (2 Chron. 32:25, 26) Nevertheless, despite the imperfections of these men, the Israelites were expected to follow their lead. Jehovah was supporting those men with his superhuman agents. Yes, Jehovah was leading his people. *w17.02* 3:7-9

Sunday, October 28

To the One sitting on the throne and to the Lamb be the blessing and the honor and the glory and the might forever.—Rev. 5:13.

To honor someone means to show him special attention as well as respect. Reasonably, we would expect that a person who is worthy of such attention and respect has done something to merit honor or that he serves in a special position. So we might well ask, Whom should we honor, and why is such honor merited? As Revelation 5:13 indicates, “the One sitting on the throne and . . . the Lamb” surely deserve to be honored. We note in chapter 4 of the same Bible book one reason why Jehovah deserves to be honored. Exalted creatures in the heavenly realm lift their voices in praise to Jehovah, “the One who lives forever and ever.” They declare: “You are worthy, Jehovah our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, because you created all things, and because of your will they came into existence and were created.”—Rev. 4:9-11. *w17.03* 1:1, 2

Monday, October 29

Whoever trusts in his own heart is stupid.—Prov. 28:26.

A popular philosophy or common adage is: Follow your heart. But doing that can be dangerous. And in a sense, doing so is unscriptural. The Bible warns us not to let our imperfect heart or mere sentiment rule when we are making decisions. And Bible accounts show the sad consequences of following one’s heart. The core problem is that in imperfect humans, “the heart is more treacherous than anything else and

is desperate.” (Jer. 3:17; 13:10; 17:9; 1 Ki. 11:9) So, what could it mean for us if we simply follow our heart and let our emotions dictate our thinking and actions? For example, what might happen if we make decisions when we are angry? The answer may be obvious if we have done this in times past. (Prov. 14:17; 29:22) Or is it likely that we will make sound decisions when we are discouraged? (Num. 32:6-12; Prov. 24:10) Clearly, we could easily be deceived by our emotions if we allow them to prevail when we are making important decisions. *w17.03* 2:12, 13

Tuesday, October 30

I have walked before you faithfully and with a complete heart.

—2 Ki. 20:3.

Being imperfect, we are prone to make mistakes. Thankfully, though, Jehovah does not deal with us “according to our sins,” provided that we are repentant and in faith approach him humbly on the basis of Jesus’ ransom sacrifice. (Ps. 103:10) Yet, as David told Solomon, for our daily worship to be acceptable to Jehovah, we have to “serve him with a complete heart.” (1 Chron. 28:9) Serving God with “a complete heart” involves full devotion that does not end. In the Bible, the word “heart” usually refers to a man’s inner self. It encompasses his desires, thinking, disposition, attitudes, abilities, motivations, and goals. So a person who serves Jehovah with his whole heart does not just go through the motions of worshipping Jehovah. What about us? Well, if we, though being imperfect humans, continue to be fully devoted to God without hypocrisy, we will be serving God with a complete heart.—2 Chron. 19:9. *w17.03* 3:1, 3

Wednesday, October 31

[Jehovah] takes note of the humble, but the haughty he knows only from a distance.—Ps. 138:6.

If we have accomplished something worthwhile, could it be that Jehovah is ‘leaving us alone to put us to the test,’ allowing what is in our heart to surface? For example, a brother may have worked hard to prepare a talk and give it before a large audience. Many praise him for what he has done. How will he react to the praise? When praised, we do well to apply Jesus’ words: “When you have done all the things assigned to you, say: ‘We are good-for-nothing slaves. What we have done is what we ought to have done.’” (Luke 17:10) We can learn from Hezekiah’s experience. A haughty attitude surfaced in that he “did not respond appreciatively to the good done to him.” (2 Chron. 32:24-27, 31) Our meditating on how much God has done for us will help us to avoid an attitude that Jehovah hates. We can speak appreciatively of Jehovah who loyally supports his people. *w17.03 4:12-14*

Thursday, November 1

Be wise, my son, and make my heart rejoice, so that I can make a reply to him who taunts me.
—*Prov. 27:11.*

According to Satan, no one serves Jehovah out of unselfish love. (Job 2:4, 5) Has Satan changed since he made that claim? Not at all! When he was ousted from heaven, Satan was still called “the accuser of our brothers . . . , who accuses them day and night before our God!” (Rev. 12:10) Satan has not forgotten the issue of integrity. He is eager to see us sur-

render to our trial and withdraw our support of God’s sovereignty. When you struggle with adversity, therefore, imagine this invisible scene. Satan and his demons are on one side, pointing to your struggles and alleging that you will buckle under the pressure and give up. On the other side are Jehovah, his reigning Son, the resurrected anointed ones, and myriads of angels. They are cheering you on, delighted by your endurance and support of Jehovah’s sovereignty. You can take personally Jehovah’s inspired request, mentioned in today’s text. *w16.04 2:8, 9*

Friday, November 2

Take along with you one or two more.—Matt. 18:16.

If you succeed in resolving the issue with their help, you will have “gained your brother.” A matter should be referred to the elders only when repeated efforts to help the wrongdoer have failed. Cases requiring that brothers go through all three steps outlined at Matthew 18:15-17 are rare. That is encouraging, for it means that a solution is usually found before the situation reaches the point where an unrepentant sinner must be removed from the congregation. Often, the wrongdoer sees his error and corrects matters. The offended person may see that he no longer has a real reason to find fault and may prefer to forgive. Whatever the case, Jesus’ words indicate that the congregation should not get involved in disagreements prematurely. The elders may intervene only if the preceding two steps have been taken and if solid evidence can be produced to show clearly what has happened. *w16.05 1:15, 16*

Saturday, November 3

They are no part of the world.

—*John 17:16.*

We must remain neutral in order to be loyal subjects of God's Kingdom. Otherwise, how could we have a clean conscience when we preach the good news that only God's Kingdom can solve mankind's problems? Additionally, unlike false religions that divide their members by meddling in politics, true worship preserves our international brotherhood by helping us to remain neutral. (1 Pet. 2:17) As Satan's system nears its end, we can expect the issue of neutrality to become more prominent. The world is filled with people who are "not open to any agreement" and "headstrong," so it will only become more divided and polarized. (2 Tim. 3:3, 4) In some countries, our brothers have already faced unexpected challenges to their neutrality because of a rapidly changing political environment. Do you see why we need to strengthen our resolve now to remain neutral? If we wait until we face a challenging situation, we might compromise and violate our neutral stand. *w16.04* 4:3, 4

Sunday, November 4

Whatever a person is sowing, this he will also reap.—Gal. 6:7.

Some may feel that it does not matter what we choose to do. To make wise decisions that please Jehovah, however, we must consider the laws and principles found in his written Word and comply with them. For instance, to have God's approval, we must act in harmony with his law on blood. (Gen. 9:4; Acts 15:28, 29) Prayer will help

us to make decisions that relate to Scriptural principles and laws. Weighty personal decisions can have quite a bearing on our spiritual health and welfare. Every choice we make will likely affect our relationship with Jehovah—either for good or for bad. A good decision will strengthen our relationship with God, whereas a bad one may damage it. Moreover, a poor decision could injure others spiritually by disturbing, or even stumbling, them or by disrupting the unity of the congregation. Indeed, our personal decisions do matter.—Rom. 14:19. *w16.05* 3:4, 5

Monday, November 5

I, Jehovah, am your God, the One teaching you to benefit yourself.

—*Isa. 48:17.*

Jehovah appreciates our efforts to make "the best use of [our] time" by engaging in regular Bible reading and personal study. (Eph. 5:15, 16) Realistically, we may not always be able to give equal attention to all the spiritual food available to us. However, we need to be aware of a subtle danger. What is it? There is a danger that we could miss out on some benefits because we assume that certain spiritual provisions do not apply to us. For example, what if a portion of the Bible does not seem relevant to our situation? Or what if we are not part of the primary audience for a certain publication? Do we tend to give such information superficial consideration or even skip it altogether? If so, we could be depriving ourselves of information that would be of great benefit to us. Each one of us should bear in mind that God is the Source of all our spiritual provisions. *w16.05* 5:5, 6

Tuesday, November 6

If a man takes a false step before he is aware of it, you who have spiritual qualifications try to readjust such a man in a spirit of mildness.—Gal. 6:1.

Jehovah uses the Christian congregation and its overseers to mold us on a personal level. For example, if the elders discern that we are having spiritual problems, they try to help us—but not on the basis of human wisdom. Rather, they humbly look to God, asking for insight and wisdom. With our situation in mind, they act on their prayers by doing research in God’s Word and in our Christian publications. This can equip them to render help tailored to our needs. Understanding how God may be molding us can help us in our relationships with fellow believers and in our attitude toward people in our territory, including our Bible students. God does not force individuals to make changes, but he reveals his righteous standards so that they can clean up their lives or make adjustments voluntarily. *w16.06* 1:13, 14

Wednesday, November 7

You are seeking great things for yourself. Stop seeking such things.—Jer. 45:5.

The apostle John warned that if anyone loves the things in the world —“the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the showy display of one’s means of life”—then “the love of the Father is not in him.” (1 John 2:15, 16) This means that we need to examine our heart constantly to see if it is being enticed by worldly entertainment, associations, and styles of dress

and grooming. Or the love of the world might involve efforts to attain “great things,” such as through the pursuit of higher education. We stand at the threshold of the promised new world. Thus, how important it is that we keep well in mind Moses’ powerful words at Deuteronomy 6:4! If we clearly understand and firmly believe that “Jehovah our God is one Jehovah,” we will do all we can to give him exclusive devotion, serving him as he approves. —Heb. 12:28, 29. *w16.06* 3:14

Thursday, November 8

Keep seeking [God’s] Kingdom, and these things will be added to you.—Luke 12:31.

It has been said that man’s necessities are few, but his wants are infinite. It seems that many cannot see the difference between material needs and wants. What is the difference? A “need” is something you must have because your life depends on it. Food, clothing, and shelter—these are legitimate necessities. A “want” is something you would like to have, but it is not essential for everyday living. What people want may vary considerably, depending on where they live. In developing countries, many may simply want to have enough money to buy a cell phone, a motorbike, or a small plot of land. In wealthier lands, the urge may be to acquire a lavish wardrobe, a bigger house, or a more expensive automobile. In any case, herein lies a real danger —becoming ensnared by materialism, wanting more and more things, whether we need them or not and whether we can afford them or not. —Heb. 13:5. *w16.07* 1:1-3

Friday, November 9

Do not be planning ahead for the desires of the flesh.—Rom. 13:14.

Many are so wrapped up in their mundane affairs of life that they are not “conscious of their spiritual need.” (Matt. 5:3) They are engrossed in the material attractions of the world that foster “the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes.” (1 John 2:16) Instead of the world’s spirit, we welcome in our life the influence of God’s spirit by which Jehovah has given us a clear understanding of the events that lie ahead of us. (1 Cor. 2:12) Yet, we realize that it does not take anything extraordinary to make a person spiritually drowsy—the ordinary things of life will do that if allowed to crowd out our spiritual activities. (Luke 21:34, 35) Others may ridicule us for keeping on the watch, but that is no reason for us to lose our sense of urgency. (2 Pet. 3:3-7) Instead, we must regularly associate with fellow Christians at our congregation meetings, where God’s spirit is present. *w16.07* 2:13, 14

Saturday, November 10

O Hearer of prayer, to you people of all sorts will come. . . . You cover over our transgressions.

—Ps. 65:2, 3.

Many people pray because it makes them feel good, but they do not really believe that God hears their prayers. They need to know that Jehovah is the “Hearer of prayer.” Jesus told his disciples: “If you ask anything in my name, I will do it.” (John 14:14) Obviously, “anything” means anything that is in harmony with Jeho-

vah’s will. John assures us: “This is the confidence that we have toward him, that no matter what we ask according to his will, he hears us.” (1 John 5:14) How good it is to teach others that far from being a mere psychological crutch, prayer is a wonderful means of approaching Jehovah’s “throne of undeserved kindness”! (Heb. 4:16) By teaching them to pray in the right way, to the right Person, and for the right things, we can help them draw close to Jehovah and find comfort during times of distress.—Ps. 4:1; 145:18. *w16.07* 4:11, 12

Sunday, November 11

Your loyal ones will praise you. They will proclaim the glory of your kingship and speak about your mightiness, to make known to men . . . the glorious splendor of your kingship.—Ps. 145:10-12.

Those words surely express the sentiments of all loyal Witnesses of Jehovah. But what if illness or advanced age somewhat limits your ministry? Always remember that as you share the good news with caregivers and others, your sacred service glorifies our wonderful God. If you are imprisoned because of your faith, you likely speak about the truth as circumstances permit, and that makes Jehovah’s heart rejoice. (Prov. 27:11) The same is true if you are in a religiously divided household but stick to your spiritual routine. (1 Pet. 3:1-4) Even under adverse circumstances, you can praise Jehovah and make spiritual progress. Jehovah will certainly bless you as you share God’s precious truth with those who are in need of hope. *w16.08* 3:19, 20

Monday, November 12

Let wives be in subjection to their husbands as to the Lord, because a husband is head of his wife just as the Christ is head of the congregation.—Eph. 5:22, 23.

This arrangement does not make a wife inferior to her husband. It actually helps her to fulfill the role God had in mind for a wife when he said: “It is not good for the man [Adam] to continue to be alone. I am going to make a helper for him, as a complement of him.” (Gen. 2:18) Just as Christ, the “head of the congregation,” displays love, a Christian husband is to exercise loving headship. When he does so, his wife feels secure and finds satisfaction in being respectful, supportive, and submissive. Imitating Jesus’ example requires that his followers love one another just as he loved them. (John 13:34, 35; 15:12, 13; Eph. 5:25) Marital love shown by Christians should therefore be so strong that either mate would be willing, if necessary, to die for the other. *w16.08* 2:3, 4

Tuesday, November 13

*A word spoken at the right time
—how good it is!—Prov. 15:23.*

Your positive words can deeply affect others. You can thus help them to serve Jehovah more fully. And at the meetings, never overlook the powerful effect you can have on others by raising your hand and offering upbuilding comments. With Jehovah’s backing, Nehemiah and those with him strengthened their hands for the work. They then completed Jerusalem’s walls in just 52 days! (Neh. 2:18, ftn.; 6:15,

16) Nehemiah did not simply oversee the work. He was personally involved in rebuilding Jerusalem’s walls. (Neh. 5:16) Similarly, many loving elders have been able to imitate Nehemiah by assisting on theatrical construction projects or by cleaning and maintaining their local Kingdom Hall. By working along with fellow publishers in the ministry and by making shepherding visits, they also strengthen the weak hands of those who are anxious at heart.—Isa. 35:3, 4. *w16.09* 1:15, 16

Wednesday, November 14

Love . . . does not behave indecently, does not look for its own interests.—1 Cor. 13:4, 5.

God’s people work hard to apply the Bible’s admonition: “Deaden, therefore, your body members that are on the earth as respects sexual immorality, uncleanness, uncontrolled sexual passion.” (Col. 3:2, 5) We would not want to make it difficult for fellow believers to heed that counsel. Brothers and sisters who have given up a sexually loose lifestyle may still be fighting sinful leanings. (1 Cor. 6:9, 10) We would not want to make their fight harder, would we? When we are around our spiritual brothers and sisters, our manner of dress should help to make the congregation a haven of moral chastity. We have the freedom to choose what to wear. Still, all of us have a responsibility to wear clothes that make it easier for others to remain chaste and to maintain God’s standards of holiness in thought, word, and conduct.—1 Pet. 1:15, 16. *w16.09* 3:9, 10

Thursday, November 15

*Young men and young women . . .
Let them praise the name of
Jehovah.—Ps. 148:12, 13.*

“We believe in Jehovah, but that does not necessarily mean that our children will believe,” said a married couple in France. They commented: “Faith is not something you inherit. Our children acquire it little by little.” An Australian brother wrote: “Helping to build faith in your child’s heart is probably the greatest challenge you will ever face. . . . You may feel that you have dealt with a question to your child’s satisfaction. Then you find that he raises the same question again later! The answers that satisfy your child’s curious mind today may not be enough for him tomorrow. You may need to revisit some subjects regularly.” If you are a parent, do you at times feel unequal to the responsibility of teaching and molding your children to become men and women who have faith? Really, in our own wisdom, none of us are up to the task! (Jer. 10:23) But we can succeed when we look to God for guidance. *w16.09* 5:1, 2

Friday, November 16

*Do not withhold good from those
to whom you should give it.
—Prov. 3:27.*

Immigrants face the challenge of adjusting to the culture of the new country. Ruth set a fine example in this regard. First, she showed respect for the customs of her new country by asking permission to glean. (Ruth 2:7) She did not take this right for granted as if others owed her something. Second, she readily expressed gratitude for the

kindnesses shown to her. (Ruth 2:13) When immigrants display such a fine attitude, they are more likely to gain the respect of local residents and fellow believers. We rejoice that Jehovah in his undeserved kindness has allowed people from all backgrounds to hear the good news. In their home country, they may not have been able to take advantage of a Bible study or to associate freely with Jehovah’s people. But now that they have the opportunity to associate with us, should we not help them so that they no longer feel like strangers in our midst? *w16.10* 1:17-19

Saturday, November 17

*For the joy that was set before him
he endured a torture stake.
—Heb. 12:2.*

Millions of modern-day worshippers of God are following the example of Jesus by keeping their hope in clear focus and not allowing trials to weaken their faith. Consider the example of Rudolf Graichen, who was born in Germany in 1925. He recalled pictures of Bible scenes that hung on the walls of his home. “One picture,” he wrote, “showed the wolf and the lamb, the kid and the leopard, the calf and the lion—all in peace, being led by a little boy. . . . Such pictures made a lasting impression on me.” (Isa. 11:6-9) Despite many years of cruel persecution, first by the Nazi Gestapo and later by the Communist *Stasi* of East Germany, Rudolf maintained his strong faith in an earthly paradise. Other severe trials faced by Rudolf were the loss of his beloved mother, who died of typhus in the Ravensbrück concentration camp, and seeing his father weaken in faith and renounce being one of Jehovah’s Witnesses. *w16.10* 3:12-14

Sunday, November 18

When you received God's word, . . . you accepted it . . . just as it truthfully is, as the word of God.

—1 Thess. 2:13.

Jehovah's servants highly esteem God's own holy book, the Bible. Being imperfect, we all receive Scriptural counsel at times. How will we respond to it? Consider the first-century Christians Euodia and Syntyche. Serious problems arose between these anointed women. The problems that existed between Euodia and Syntyche could have disrupted the peace of the whole congregation. The Bible does not tell us the outcome, but these sisters may have responded well to the apostle Paul's loving counsel. (Phil. 4: 2, 3) Similar situations sometimes cause difficulties in congregations of Jehovah's people today. However, such problems can be solved or even avoided if we apply the counsel found in God's Word, the Bible. And if we highly esteem Jehovah's own Book, we will live by its instructions.—Ps. 27:11. *w16.11* 3:1-3

Monday, November 19

If you become discouraged in the day of distress, your strength will be meager.—Prov. 24:10.

All of us need encouragement. That is especially true when we are growing up. "Children . . . need encouragement like plants need water," explains educator Timothy Evans. "With encouragement, a child feels worthwhile and appreciated." But we live in critical times. People are selfish, there is little natural affection, and encouragement is scarce. (2 Tim. 3: 1-5) Satan the Devil wants to dis-

courage us because he knows that discouragement can make us weak spiritually and in other ways. Satan used a combination of calamities and accusations in an effort to discourage righteous Job, but that cruel scheme failed. (Job 2:3; 22:3; 27:5) We can fight the works of the Devil by encouraging members of our family and of the congregation. This will help to make our home and the Kingdom Hall places where we feel happy and secure. *w16.11* 1:4, 6

Tuesday, November 20

[God] called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

—1 Pet. 2:9.

A few courageous men at the dawn of the 16th century began to translate God's Word into the languages spoken by the common people. And as the Bible became available, people did read it. As they read, they asked questions: 'Where in God's Word is there mention of purgatory? of paid masses for the dead? of popes and cardinals?' From the point of view of the church, this was an outrage. How dare the multitudes question church leaders! The church fought back. Men and women were condemned for heresy because they rejected teachings of the church. The church handed down the death sentence; the State carried it out. The goal was to discourage people from reading the Bible and questioning the church. For the most part, the scheme worked. Nevertheless, a few brave souls refused to be cowed by Babylon the Great. They had now had a taste of God's Word—and they wanted more! *w16.11* 4:13

Wednesday, November 21

A faithful witness will not lie.

—*Prov. 14:5.*

Honesty is basic to Christianity. (Eph. 4:25) Satan is “the father of the lie.” And Ananias and his wife lost their lives because of lying. We do not want to imitate such ones—we avoid lying. (John 8:44; Acts 5:1-11) Is that, though, as far as our honesty goes? Actually, our honesty should reflect our deep appreciation for God’s undeserved kindness. To lie is to say something untruthful. However, Jehovah wants his people to go beyond not telling outright lies. He urged the ancient Israelites: “You should be holy, because I, Jehovah your God, am holy.” Then he gave examples of being holy. In part, God said: “You must not steal, *you must not deceive*, and you must not deal falsely with one another.” (Lev. 19:2, 11) Sadly, a person who makes it a point never to tell outright lies might still resort to deceiving others, dealing falsely with them. *w16.12 1:17, 18*

Thursday, November 22

The peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus.—Phil. 4:7.

In God’s Word, we find Jesus’ soothing sayings. His words and teachings were a source of refreshment to his listeners. Multitudes were drawn to him because he calmed troubled hearts, strengthened the weak, and consoled the depressed. (Matt. 11:28-30) He showed loving consideration for others’ spiritual, emotional, and physical needs. (Mark 6:30-32) Jesus’ prom-

ise of support still applies. It can prove to be as true for you as it was for the apostles traveling with Jesus. You do not have to be in Jesus’ physical presence to benefit. As heavenly King, Jesus continues to have and show empathy. Thus, when you are anxious, he can mercifully ‘come to your aid’ and ‘help you at the right time.’ Yes, Jesus can help you to cope with distress, and he can fill your heart with hope and courage.—Heb. 2:17, 18; 4:16. *w16.12 3:4, 6*

Friday, November 23

I have decided to put an end to all flesh.—Gen. 6:13.

Noah lived in a world that was “filled with violence” and immorality. (Gen. 6:4, 9-12) Although Noah faithfully preached Jehovah’s warning message, he could not force wicked people around him to accept that message, nor could he make the Flood come any sooner. Noah had to trust that Jehovah would keep His promise to end wickedness, believing that God would do so at just the right time. (Gen. 6:17) We too live in a world filled with wickedness, which we know Jehovah has promised to destroy. (1 John 2:17) In the meantime, we cannot force people to accept the “good news of the Kingdom.” And we cannot do anything to speed up the start of the “great tribulation.” (Matt. 24:14, 21) Like Noah, we need strong faith, trusting that God will soon intervene. (Ps. 37:10, 11) We are convinced that Jehovah will not allow this wicked world to continue for even one day longer than his purpose requires. —Hab. 2:3. *w17.01 1:5-7*

Saturday, November 24

I, Jehovah, am . . . the One teaching you to benefit yourself, the One guiding you in the way you should walk.—Isa. 48:17.

Today, many people misuse their freedom to make choices in life even to the harm of others. Indeed, just as the Bible foretold, during “the last days” men would be “unthankful.” (2 Tim. 3:1, 2) May we never misuse this precious gift from Jehovah or take it for granted. How, though, can we avoid misusing our gift of free will? All of us have freedom of choice regarding associations, styles of dress and grooming, and entertainment. However, our freedom could become “a cover for doing wrong” if we chose to become slaves of our own fleshly desires or if we adopted the disgraceful fads and trends of the world. (1 Pet. 2:16) Instead of using our freedom “as an opportunity to pursue fleshly desires,” we want to be determined to make choices that help us to heed the admonition: “Do all things for God’s glory.”—Gal. 5:13; 1 Cor. 10:31. *w17.01 2:12-14*

Sunday, November 25

As soon as I heard these words, . . . I kept fasting and praying before the God of the heavens.
—Neh. 1:4.

Nehemiah’s example demonstrates how modesty can help us to keep from becoming self-reliant when we receive a change of assignment or additional responsibility. Relying just on his own experience, an elder could begin to care for congregation matters without first approaching Jehovah in prayer. Others might make a decision first and

then pray for Jehovah to bless their decision. Is that being modest, however? A modest person will always remember his place before God and his role in God’s arrangement. Our abilities are not the important thing. Especially when we are faced with a familiar situation or problem, we have to be careful not to rely on ourselves. (Prov. 3:5, 6) As members of God’s household, we learn to think in terms of fulfilling roles in a family or as part of a congregation rather than achieving a rank or climbing a corporate ladder.—1 Tim. 3:15. *w17.01 4:7, 8*

Monday, November 26

The earth he has given to the sons of men.—Ps. 115:16.

Jehovah’s original purpose was for mankind to live forever here on earth. (Gen. 1:28; Ps. 37:29) He generously gave Adam and Eve a variety of precious gifts that enabled them to enjoy life. (Jas. 1:17) Jehovah gave them free will, the ability to reason, and the capacity to love and to enjoy friendship. The Creator spoke to Adam and instructed him on how to show his obedience. Adam also learned how to take care of his needs and how to care for the animals and the land. (Gen. 2:15-17, 19, 20) Jehovah also created Adam and Eve with the senses of taste, touch, sight, sound, and smell. Thus they could enjoy to the full the beauty and bounty of their Paradise home. For the first human pair, the possibilities for satisfying work, accomplishment, and discovery were endless. Jehovah created Adam and Eve with the ability to have perfect children. Earth, with all its resources, was to become their permanent home. *w17.02 1:6, 7*

Tuesday, November 27

He must write for himself in a book a copy of this Law . . . and observe all the words of this Law.

—Deut. 17:18, 19.

What effect did God's Word have on the men who took the lead? Consider the example of King Josiah. After a document containing the Mosaic Law was found, Josiah's secretary began to read it to him. Guided by God's Word, Josiah began a vigorous campaign against idolatry and arranged an unprecedented celebration of the Passover. (2 Ki. 22:11; 23:1-23) Because Josiah and other faithful leaders were guided by God's Word, they were willing to adjust and clarify the direction they gave to God's people. Those changes brought God's ancient people into harmony with his will. However, not all the kings who ruled God's ancient people followed God's instructions. In some cases, Jehovah disciplined or replaced those leaders. (1 Sam. 13:13, 14) In his own due time, he appointed someone who would be superior to any of the men he had used thus far. *w17.02* 3:11, 12, 14

Wednesday, November 28

You made [man] a little lower than godlike ones, and you crowned him with glory and splendor.—Ps. 8:5.

Humans were created "in God's image." (Gen. 1:27) Thus, most of them exhibit some godly qualities, though to differing degrees. Humans are capable of showing one another love, kindness, and compassion. Having been created with a conscience, people normally have an inborn sense—albeit at times inaccurate or distorted—that alerts

them to what is right or wrong, honest or dishonest, appropriate or inappropriate. (Rom. 2:14, 15) Most people are drawn to things that are clean and beautiful. Generally, they want to live with others in peace. Whether they realize it or not, they reflect to some extent Jehovah's glory, and for this reason, they deserve a measure of honor and respect. However, balance is needed in determining what kind of honor should be rendered to other humans and to what extent. *w17.03* 1:5, 6

Thursday, November 29

[God] reconsidered the calamity that he said he would bring on them, and he did not bring it.

—Jonah 3:10.

God does not determine his course of action based on a momentary flare-up of anger, the type of emotional outburst that many humans display. Yet, after observing the Ninevites' repentant, changed attitude, Jehovah adjusted his decision. In doing so, he manifested reasonableness, humility, and compassion. Similarly, there may be occasions when it would be good for us to reconsider a choice or decision. It could be when the prevailing circumstances change. Jehovah altered his decision at times when circumstances changed. (1 Ki. 21:20, 21, 27-29; 2 Ki. 20:1-5) Or new information may provide us with a valid reason to adjust a decision. King David was given faulty information about Saul's grandson Mephibosheth. When David later received accurate information, he amended his decision.—2 Sam. 16:3, 4; 19:24-29. *w17.03* 2:14, 15

Friday, November 30

Let your reasonableness become known to all men.—Phil. 4:5.

If a problem arises, we ought to consider what Bible principles are involved and apply them in a balanced way. For example, a sister knows that she has the responsibility to preach the good news. (Acts 4:20) However, suppose she plans to go out in the field service on a certain day, but her unbelieving husband wants her to stay home. He says that they have not had much time together lately, and he would like them to do something as a couple. She might consider relevant Bible texts, such as obeying God and the command to make disciples. (Matt. 28:19, 20; Acts 5:29) But she also needs to think about wifely subjection and being reasonable. (Eph. 5:22-24) Is her husband completely opposed to her going out in service, or is he asking her to do something else just that one day? We need balance as we seek to do God's will and strive to have a good conscience. *w17.03 4:17*

Saturday, December 1

Take your stand against him, firm in the faith, knowing that the same kind of sufferings are being experienced by the entire association of your brothers in the world.

—1 Pet. 5:9.

The apostle Peter wrote those words to encourage Christians to endure the hardships heaped on them by Satan. The experiences of “those who have endured” teach us how to remain steadfast and remind us that our faithful course will be rewarded. (Jas. 5:11) Perhaps you face bitter opposition, even perse-

cution, from enemies of true worship. Or you are a congregation elder or a circuit overseer who feels the weight of your heavy responsibilities. Meditate on the example of Paul. He faced numerous “things of an external kind” by vicious persecutors, and he felt daily pressure on account of his anxiety for the congregations. (2 Cor. 11:23-29) Yet, he refused to give up, and his example strengthened others. (2 Cor. 1:6) When you endure hardship, remember that your example is likely encouraging others to endure. *w16.04 2:11, 14*

Sunday, December 2

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

Whether people agree with us or bitterly oppose us, few would deny that as a group Jehovah's Witnesses are well-known for their preaching activities. It may even be that you have met people in your ministry who have stated that while they disagree with our beliefs, they respect us for the work we do. As we know, Jesus foretold that the good news of the Kingdom would be preached in all the inhabited earth. (Matt. 24:14) Many religious groups feel that they are preaching the Gospel, or good news. However, their efforts are often limited to personal testimonies, church services, or programs broadcast through the media—whether by means of television or on the Internet. Others point to their charitable activities or their endeavors in the fields of medicine and education. How do these claims measure up when compared with what Jesus commanded his disciples to do? *w16.05 2:1, 2*

Monday, December 3

I appeal to Caesar!—Acts 25:11.

Since 1914, human governments have become rivals to God's Kingdom, which will soon execute judgment on the nations by destroying them. (Ps. 2:2, 7-9) God lets the world's political structure remain because it provides a measure of stability that, in turn, helps us to preach the good news of the Kingdom. (Rom. 13:3, 4) God even directs us to pray concerning those in authority, especially when their decisions might affect our worship. (1 Tim. 2:1, 2) We appeal to government authorities for fair treatment, as the apostle Paul did. Although the Bible teaches that God's adversary, Satan, has authority over political systems, it does not say that he directly controls each leader or official. (Luke 4:5, 6) We should therefore avoid implying that a particular official is controlled by the Devil. Instead, when dealing with "governments and authorities," we "speak injuriously of no one."—Titus 3:1, 2. *w16.04* 4:5, 6

Tuesday, December 4

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

You may wonder, 'How can we know what Jehovah approves of if his Word provides no specific command on the matter?' In the absence of a direct Bible law, how can we perceive the will of God? By praying to him and accepting his guidance by holy spirit. Consider how Jesus perceived what his Father wanted him to do. On two reported occasions, Jesus first

prayed and then miraculously provided food for large crowds. (Matt. 14:17-20; 15:34-37) Yet, he refused to turn stones into bread when he was hungry and was tempted by the Devil in the wilderness. (Matt. 4:2-4) Because he was familiar with his Father's thinking, Jesus knew that he should not turn the stones into bread. Yes, Jesus realized that it was not God's will that he use such power for his own personal benefit. By refusing to do so, he showed that he was relying on Jehovah for guidance and sustenance. *w16.05* 3:7, 8

Wednesday, December 5

All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial.—2 Tim. 3:16.

Some portions of the Bible were initially directed to one individual or group. That is why, before reading God's Word, we do well to pray for an open mind and for wisdom to discern the lessons that Jehovah wants us to learn. (Ezra 7:10; Jas. 1:5) As you read a Bible passage, take time to pause and ask yourself such questions as these: 'What does this tell me about Jehovah? How can I apply this information in my life? How can I use it to help others?' When we reflect on such questions, we will surely get more out of our Bible reading. As an example, think about the Scriptural qualifications for Christian elders. (1 Tim. 3:2-7) Since the majority of us do not serve as elders, we might initially think that this passage would have little application to our own life. However, this list of qualifications can benefit all of us in a number of ways. *w16.05* 5:7, 8

Thursday, December 6

Look! As the clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand.

—Jer. 18:6.

When the Jewish exiles entered ancient Babylon, they saw a city filled with idols and found a people enslaved to wicked spirits. Nevertheless, faithful Jews, such as Daniel and his three companions, refused to be molded by the world of Babylon. (Dan. 1:6, 8, 12; 3:16-18) Daniel and his companions were determined to give exclusive devotion to Jehovah as their Potter. And they succeeded! Daniel lived in Babylon nearly all his life; yet, God's angel said that he was a "very precious man." (Dan. 10:11, 19) In Bible times, a potter might press the clay into a mold so that it would take on the shape he desired. True worshippers today recognize Jehovah as the Universal Sovereign, the one having authority to mold peoples and nations. (Jer. 18:6) God also has the authority to mold us personally. However, he recognizes our free will and wants us to submit to him voluntarily. *w16.06* 2:1, 2

Friday, December 7

Let your way of life be free of the love of money.—Heb. 13:5.

Satan uses his world's commercial system to seduce us into believing that having material things beyond our actual needs is necessary for the enjoyment of life. He is adept at appealing to "the desire of the eyes." (1 John 2:15-17; Gen. 3:6; Prov. 27:20) The world offers every kind of material thing, from the superb to the absurd, some of which look very enticing. Have you ever purchased some-

thing, not because you needed it, but because it caught your eye in an advertisement or a store display? Did you later realize that you could have lived the rest of your life without it? Such nonessential things only complicate our life and weigh us down. They can ensnare us and distract us from our spiritual routine of studying the Bible, preparing for and attending meetings, and sharing regularly in the ministry. Remember, the apostle John warned: "The world is passing away and so is its desire." *w16.07* 1:3, 4

Saturday, December 8

Just as there are many "gods" . . . , there is actually to us one God.

—1 Cor. 8:5, 6.

The first-century Christian congregation was made up of Jews, Greeks, Romans, and people of other nationalities. They had different religious backgrounds, customs, and sensibilities. Because of that, some had difficulty accepting the new way of worship or fully relinquishing their former ways. The apostle Paul found it fitting to remind them that Christians have one God, Jehovah. What about the situation in the Christian congregation today? The prophet Isaiah foretold that "in the final part of the days," people of all nations would flock to Jehovah's elevated place of true worship. They would say: "[Jehovah] will instruct us about his ways, and we will walk in his paths." (Isa. 2:2, 3) How happy we are to see this prophecy undergoing fulfillment before our eyes! The result is that many congregations have become multiracial, multicultural, and multilingual, giving praise to Jehovah. *w16.06* 3:15, 16

Sunday, December 9

He raised us up together and seated us together in the heavenly places in union with Christ Jesus.

—Eph. 2:6.

It is difficult to imagine the wonders that Jehovah has in store for anointed Christians when they are seated on thrones to rule with Christ in heaven. (Luke 22:28-30; Phil. 3:20, 21; 1 John 3:2) They will make up “the New Jerusalem,” the bride of Christ. (Rev. 3:12; 17:14; 21:2, 9, 10) They will share with Jesus in “the healing of the nations,” directing obedient humans to the means to become free from the burden of sin and death and raising them to perfection. (Rev. 22:1, 2, 17) One of the greatest earthly demonstrations of Jehovah’s marvelous kindness will be the resurrection of humans from “the Grave.” (Job 14:13-15; John 5:28, 29) Faithful men and women of old who died before Christ’s sacrificial death, as well as all those “other sheep” who die faithful during the last days, will be brought back to life to continue serving Jehovah.—John 10:16. *w16.07 4:13-15*

Monday, December 10

At such a time as this, you are sleeping and resting!—Mark 14:41.

To “keep awake” spiritually means more than just having good intentions. A few days before the incident in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus told those same disciples to make supplication to Jehovah. (Luke 21:36) So to remain spiritually watchful, we too must stay alert in prayer. (1 Pet. 4:7, ftn.) Since Jesus said that the end will come “*at an hour*

that [we] do not think to be it,” this is no time to doze off spiritually, no time to pursue the illusions and fantasies that Satan and his world offer and that our flesh craves. (Matt. 24:44) Through the pages of the Bible, God and Christ tell us what they have in store for us in the immediate future and how we can keep on the watch. We have to pay attention to our spirituality, to our relationship with Jehovah, and to Kingdom priorities. We must be aware of time and events so that we can be ready for what is coming. (Rev. 22:20) Our life is at stake! *w16.07 2:15-17*

Tuesday, December 11

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

A solid marriage is made up of two people who make allowances for each other’s imperfections. They ‘continue putting up with each other and forgiving each other freely.’ Yes, both mates will make mistakes. When that happens, however, there are opportunities to learn from these errors, to be forgiving, and to let love have full sway as “a perfect bond of union.” (Col. 3:14) Moreover, “love is patient and kind. . . . It does not keep account of the injury.” (1 Cor. 13:4, 5) Misunderstandings should be cleared away as soon as possible. A Christian couple, therefore, should try to settle any issue between them before the day ends. (Eph. 4:26, 27) Sincerely saying “I am sorry for hurting you” takes humility and courage, but it goes a long way in solving problems and drawing marriage partners closer together. *w16.08 2:6*

Wednesday, December 12

I will give you good instruction.

—Prov. 4:2.

Declaring the good news of the Kingdom was Jesus' primary assignment. However, he took time to train others to be shepherds and teachers. (Matt. 10:5-7) Although Philip was busy as an evangelizer, he no doubt helped his four daughters to become effective in sharing Scriptural truths with others. (Acts 21:8, 9) How important is such training today? Worldwide, the number of people accepting the good news is growing. New ones who are not yet baptized need to grasp the importance of personal Bible study. They must also be taught to preach the good news to others and to teach them the truth. In our congregations, brothers need to be encouraged to work hard in order to qualify for appointment as ministerial servants and elders. By means of "good instruction," mature Christians can help new ones to make spiritual progress. *w16.08* 4:1, 2

Thursday, December 13

Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the knees that are shaking.—Isa. 35:3.

Serving shoulder to shoulder with our brothers and sisters promotes unity. It also builds lasting friendships and increases mutual confidence in the coming blessings under God's Kingdom. As we strengthen the hands of others, we help them to battle discouraging circumstances and to maintain a positive and hopeful view of the future. (Isa. 35:4) Moreover, doing that for others helps us to keep our

spiritual focus and to feel the reality of what God has in store for us. Yes, it strengthens our hands too. Seeing how Jehovah on different occasions supported and protected his faithful servants in the past should build our faith and trust in him today. So when you face pressures and problems, "do not let your hands drop down"! (Zeph. 3:16) Instead, reach out to Jehovah in prayer, and allow his mighty hand to strengthen you and lead you to Kingdom blessings.—Ps. 73:23, 24. *w16.09* 1:16-18

Friday, December 14

There is a time for every activity and every action.—Eccl. 3:17.

When making decisions about what to wear, God's servants take into account the above. It is understandable that different climates and the change of seasons influence what we wear. So do varying circumstances and living conditions. Jehovah's standards, however, do not fluctuate with the weather. (Mal. 3:6) In warmer climates, it can be particularly challenging to make sure that our style of dress is respectable and sensible and that it shows good judgment. Hence, our brothers and sisters appreciate it when we refrain from wearing clothes that are so tight or so loose that they are revealing. (Job 31:1) Also, when relaxing at the beach or at a swimming pool, the style of swimwear we use should be modest. (Prov. 11:2, 20) Even if many in the world wear revealing swimwear, we who serve Jehovah are concerned about being a credit to the holy God we love. *w16.09* 3:11, 12

Saturday, December 15

Who do you say I am?

—*Matt. 16:15.*

Jesus was not afraid to ask his followers what they believed. Imitate his example. It is best, in a relaxed setting, to invite your children to express their feelings. If a child is unsure about some teaching, try not to react too strongly or to respond as if you were on the defensive. Patiently help him to reason on the matter. It is helpful to view your child's sincere questions as an indication that he cares and wants to understand. Even at 12 years of age, Jesus asked serious questions. (Luke 2:46) Get to know your children well—their thinking, their feelings, their concerns. Never assume that they have faith simply because they attend Christian meetings and share in the field service with you. Include spiritual discussions in your daily activities. Pray with and for your children. Try to be aware of any tests to their faith, and help them to deal with these. *w16.09 5:3-5*

Sunday, December 16

Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need.—Matt. 5:3.

Thousands of Jehovah's Witnesses today are taking an active part in the fulfillment of the vision to declare the good news "to every nation and tribe and tongue and people." (Rev. 14:6) Are you among those who are learning another language? Are you perhaps serving as a missionary or a need-greater in a foreign land, or have you begun attending meetings in a foreign-language congregation in

your homeland? As God's servants, all of us need to give priority to our spiritual health and that of our family. At times, though, we may find it difficult to engage in meaningful personal study because of our busy routine. But those serving in a foreign field face yet other challenges. In addition to learning a new tongue, those serving in a foreign field also need to make sure that they regularly feed their heart with solid spiritual food.—1 Cor. 2:10. *w16.10 2:1-3*

Monday, December 17

Those who take up the sword will perish by the sword.—Matt. 26:52.

Jehovah's Witnesses continue to rejoice in their hope despite intense and ongoing persecution. For example, many of our brothers and sisters are imprisoned in Eritrea, Singapore, and South Korea, in most cases because of acting in harmony with Jesus' words not to take up the sword. Most of Jehovah's people have not had to endure severe persecution. Their tests of faith have been different. Many have had to endure poverty or have suffered during civil wars or natural disasters. Others are like Moses and the patriarchs in that they have given up a life of worldly ease or fame. They fight hard to resist being tempted to live a materialistic, self-centered lifestyle. What is it that enables them to do this? Their love for Jehovah and their strong faith in the promise that he will correct all injustices and reward his faithful servants with everlasting life in a new world of righteousness.—Ps. 37:5, 7, 9, 29. *w16.10 3:15, 16*

Tuesday, December 18

Jehovah is close to the broken-hearted; he saves those who are discouraged.—Ps. 34:18, ftn.

When Jeremiah was afraid and discouraged, Jehovah built up that faithful prophet's confidence. (Jer. 1:6-10) And just imagine how encouraged the elderly prophet Daniel was when God sent an angel to strengthen him. That angel called Daniel a "very precious," or "highly esteemed," man! (Dan. 10:8, 11, 18, 19; ftn.) Could you similarly encourage publishers, pioneers, and older brothers and sisters whose strength is failing? God did not feel that because he and his dear Son had worked together for ages, there was no need to commend and encourage Jesus when he was on earth. Instead, on two occasions Jesus heard his Father speak from heaven and say: "This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved." (Matt. 3:17; 17:5) God thus commended Jesus and assured him that he was doing well. Jehovah also sent an angel to strengthen Jesus when he was in anguish on the night before his death.—Luke 22:43. *w16.11* 1:7, 8

Wednesday, December 19

*Do not be quick to take offense.
—Eccl. 7:9.*

It is not easy to control our emotions when we feel that we have been slighted or treated unjustly. It can be devastating if we are mistreated because of our ethnic background, the color of our skin, or some other physical difference. How much greater the pain is if it is caused by a fellow Christian! How wise it is to apply the Bible's

counsel to control our temper and avoid being quick to take offense! (Prov. 16:32) No doubt all of us need to work at being less sensitive and more forgiving. Jehovah and Jesus take forgiveness very seriously. (Matt. 6:14, 15) Do you need to be more forgiving or to give attention to controlling your emotions? People who fail to control their emotions often become bitter. As a result, others may not want to be around them. A bitter individual can exert a bad influence in the congregation.—Lev. 19:17, 18. *w16.11* 3:4-6

Thursday, December 20

What fellowship do righteousness and lawlessness have? Or what sharing does light have with darkness?—2 Cor. 6:14.

Thirsting for Bible truth, Charles Taze Russell and a few associates began their systematic study of the Bible in the late 1800's. Initially, Brother Russell's goal was to ascertain which of the prevailing religions was teaching the truth. He had carefully compared the teachings of many different religions, even non-Christian religions, with what the Bible says. He soon realized that not one of those religions completely adhered to God's Word. At one point, he met with a number of local clergymen in hopes that these men would accept the truths that Russell and his associates had discovered from the Bible and teach them to members of their congregations. The clergymen were not interested. The Bible Students would have to face the facts: There could be no partnership with those determined to hold on to false religion. *w16.11* 4:14

Friday, December 21

Present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness.

—Rom. 6:19.

Our appreciation for God's undeserved kindness involves more than avoiding adultery, drunkenness, or other sins that some in Corinth had been guilty of. (1 Cor. 6:9-11) Accepting God's undeserved kindness means not only avoiding sexual immorality but also fighting any tendency to enjoy lewd entertainment. Presenting our members as slaves to righteousness will not only keep us from drunkenness but also move us to shun drinking to the point of almost being drunk. It may require considerable effort for us to fight against such wrong practices; still, it is a fight that we can win. Our goal should be to avoid gross sins as well as wrongs that are not as flagrant. We will not be able to do that perfectly. Nevertheless, we should strive to do so, even as Paul did. He urged his brothers: "Do not let sin continue to rule as king in your mortal bodies so that you should obey their desires."—Rom. 6:12; 7:18-20. *w16.12* 1:16, 19-21

Saturday, December 22

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

Jesus promised that our Father in heaven will not fail to give holy spirit to those asking Him. (Luke 11:10-13) The fruitage of the spirit, positive qualities that are produced by God's active force, reflects the very personality of the almighty

God. (Col. 3:10) As you cultivate the fruitage of that spirit, your relationship with others will improve. Thus, you will find that many situations that could otherwise cause anxiety do not arise. Admittedly, you will need humility to yield to "the mighty hand of God" and to "throw all your anxiety on him." (1 Pet. 5:6, 7) But as you cultivate humility, you will be on a path that results in God's favor and support. (Mic. 6:8) By maintaining a realistic estimate of your physical, mental, and emotional abilities, you will be less likely to become overwhelmed by anxiety, for you will be relying on God. *w16.12* 3:7, 12

Sunday, December 23

Noah [was] a preacher of righteousness.—2 Pet. 2:5.

As "a preacher of righteousness," Noah faithfully proclaimed the warning message he had been given. No doubt, doing so helped Noah keep his faith strong. In addition to preaching, he also used his physical and mental abilities to accomplish the God-assigned work of building an ark. (Heb. 11:7) Like Noah, we strive to have "plenty to do in the work of the Lord." (1 Cor. 15:58) Such work may include the construction and maintenance of facilities for worship, volunteering to assist at assemblies and conventions, or caring for assignments at a branch office or a remote translation office. Above all, we stay busy in the preaching work, knowing that this work strengthens our hope for the future. Indeed, sharing in the preaching work fortifies our resolve not to give up in the race for life.—1 Cor. 9:24. *w17.01* 1:8, 9

Monday, December 24

Each one will carry his own load.

—Gal. 6:5.

One of the limitations on our freedom is that we must respect the right that others have to make their own decisions in life. Why? Since we all have the gift of free will, no two Christians will always make exactly the same decision. This is true even in matters that involve our conduct and worship. When we recognize that each Christian must “carry his own load,” we will respect the right that others have to use their own gift of free will, including when making personal decisions in matters of lesser importance. (1 Cor. 10:32, 33) Jehovah has given us the gift of free will and with it true freedom. (2 Cor. 3:17) We treasure this gift because it allows us to make decisions that reveal to Jehovah how much we love him. May we continue to show our appreciation for this precious gift by using it in a way that honors God and by respecting the way that others choose to use their gift. *w17.01* 2:15, 17, 18

Tuesday, December 25

I do nothing of my own initiative; but just as the Father taught me, I speak these things.—John 8:28.

We win people’s hearts, not by boasting or drawing undue attention to ourselves, but by displaying a “quiet and mild spirit.” (1 Pet. 3: 3, 4; Jer. 9:23, 24) Vain sentiments in our hearts will eventually show up in our actions. We might drop hints, for example, implying that we enjoy special privileges, possess inside information, or have

special relationships with responsible brothers. Or we might explain things in such a way that only we get the credit for ideas or accomplishments that others also contributed to. Jesus set a wonderful example. A good portion of what he said was either a quotation from or an allusion to the Hebrew Scriptures. He modestly spoke that way so that his hearers would know that what he said was coming from Jehovah and was not the product of his own intellect or wisdom. *w17.01* 4:12

Wednesday, December 26

As for the tree of the knowledge of good and bad, you must not eat from it.—Gen. 2:17.

It was not hard for Adam and Eve to understand this law; nor was it a hardship for them to obey it. After all, they had more food available than they could eat. Satan the Devil, using a serpent, fooled Eve into disobeying her Father, Jehovah. (Gen. 3:1-5; Rev. 12:9) Satan made an issue of the fact that God’s human children were not allowed to eat “from every tree of the garden.” It was as if he were saying: “You mean you cannot do what you want?” Next, he told a blatant lie: “You certainly will not die.” Then he tried to convince Eve that she need not listen to God, saying: “God knows that in the very day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened.” Satan implied that Jehovah did not want them to eat the fruit because doing so would enlighten them. Further, Satan made this false promise: “You will be like God, knowing good and bad.” *w17.02* 1:8, 9

Thursday, December 27

Jehovah your God will raise up for you from among your brothers a prophet like me. You must listen to him.—Deut. 18:15.

Isaiah foretold that this One would become “a leader and commander.” (Isa. 55:4) And Daniel was inspired to write about the coming of “Messiah the Leader.” (Dan. 9:25) Finally, Jesus Christ identified himself as “the Leader” of God’s people. (Matt. 23:10) Jesus’ disciples followed him willingly, and they affirmed that he was Jehovah’s choice. (John 6:68, 69) What convinced them? At Jesus’ baptism, John the Baptizer saw “the heavens being parted and, like a dove, the spirit coming down upon him.” (Mark 1:10-12) For the rest of Jesus’ earthly ministry, God’s holy spirit empowered Jesus to perform miracles and to speak with divine authority. (Acts 10:38) In addition, holy spirit produced in Jesus perfect fruitage, including love, joy, and stalwart faith. (John 15:9; Heb. 12:2) No other leader provided such convincing evidence. Jesus was Jehovah’s choice. *w17.02* 3:15, 16

Friday, December 28

Remember those who are taking the lead among you.—Heb. 13:7.

At Pentecost 33 C.E., the apostles began to take the lead in the Christian congregation. On that occasion, “Peter stood up with the Eleven” and shared lifesaving truths with a large crowd of Jews and proselytes. (Acts 2:14, 15) Many of them became believers. Thereafter, these new Christians “continued devoting themselves to the teaching of the apostles.” (Acts 2:42) The

apostles managed the financial resources of the congregation. (Acts 4:34, 35) They cared for the spiritual needs of God’s people, stating: “We will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” (Acts 6:4) And they assigned experienced Christians to advance the evangelizing work in new territories. (Acts 8:14, 15) In time, other anointed elders joined the apostles in administering the affairs of the congregations. As a governing body, they gave direction to all the congregations.—Acts 15:2. *w17.02* 4:4

Saturday, December 29

Render to all their dues: . . . to the one who calls for honor, such honor.—Rom. 13:7.

Most imperfect humans are strongly influenced by the spirit of Satan’s world. That is why people tend to *idolize* certain men or women rather than just show them appropriate honor and respect. They place religious and political leaders, sports figures, entertainment stars, and other celebrities on pedestals, often considering them to be almost superhuman. Hence, young and old alike look to them as role models, perhaps imitating their mannerisms, dress, or conduct. True Christians refrain from such a distorted view of honoring humans. Christ is the only human who ever lived whom we can consider a perfect role model. (1 Pet. 2:21) God would not be pleased if we extended to humans more honor than they are due. We need to bear in mind this basic truth: “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Rom. 3:23) Truly, no human warrants the kind of honor that borders on idolatry. *w17.03* 1:6-8

Sunday, December 30

Asa's heart was complete with Jehovah all his life.—1 Ki. 15:14.

Each of us can examine his heart to see if it is fully devoted to God. Ask yourself, 'Am I determined to please Jehovah, to defend true worship, and to protect his people from any corrupting influence?' For example, what if someone close to you has to be disfellowshipped? Would you take decisive action by ceasing to associate with that person? What would your heart move you to do? Like Asa, you can show that you have a complete heart by fully relying on God when you are faced with opposition, even some that may seem insurmountable. You may be teased or ridiculed at school for taking a stand as one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Or colleagues at work may taunt you for taking days off for spiritual activities or for not often working overtime. In such situations, pray to God, just as Asa did. (2 Chron. 14:11) Remain firm for what you know is right and wise. Remember that God strengthened and helped Asa, and He will strengthen you. *w17.03 3:6-8*

Monday, December 31

All who are hasty surely head for poverty.—Prov. 21:5.

God's Word counsels us not to be hasty when we need to make an important decision. When we take the time to weigh carefully all the aspects or facts related to a decision, we will likely be more successful. (1 Thess. 5:21) Before determining a course of action, a family head ought to take the time to research the Scriptures and Christian publications, as well as to consider the opinions or views of others in his family. Recall that God urged Abraham to listen to what his wife had to say. (Gen. 21:9-12) Elders too should take time to do research. And if they are reasonable, modest men, they will not fear losing respect if new, relevant information comes to their attention that indicates a need to reconsider what they had already decided. They should be ready to adjust their thinking and decisions when appropriate, and all of us do well to follow that example. This can promote peace and order in the congregation.—Acts 6:1-4. *w17.03 2:16*