

***Examining
the Scriptures
Daily***

2019

Large-Print Edition



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the Scriptures
Daily***

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Yeartext

**“Do not be anxious, for
I am your God.”**

—Isaiah 41:10.

Name

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Examining the Scriptures Daily—2019—Large Print
November 2018 Printing
English (*eslp19-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

2019

JANUARY

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OUR CHRISTIAN LIFE AND MINISTRY BIBLE READING SCHEDULE FOR 2019

January

- 7 Acts 21-22
- 14 Acts 23-24
- 21 Acts 25-26
- 28 Acts 27-28

February

- 4 Romans 1-3
- 11 Romans 4-6
- 18 Romans 7-8
- 25 Romans 9-11

March

- 4 Romans 12-14
- 11 Romans 15-16
- 18 1 Corinthians 1-3
- 25 1 Corinthians 4-6

April

- 1 1 Corinthians 7-9
- 8 1 Corinthians 10-13
- 15 Memorial
- 22 1 Corinthians 14-16
- 29 2 Corinthians 1-3

May

- 6 2 Corinthians 4-6
- 13 2 Corinthians 7-10
- 20 2 Corinthians 11-13
- 27 Galatians 1-3

June

- 3 Galatians 4-6
- 10 Ephesians 1-3
- 17 Ephesians 4-6
- 24 Philippians 1-4

July

- 1 Colossians 1-4
- 8 1 Thessalonians 1-5
- 15 2 Thessalonians 1-3
- 22 1 Timothy 1-3
- 29 1 Timothy 4-6

August

- 5 2 Timothy 1-4
- 12 Titus 1–Philemon
- 19 Hebrews 1-3
- 26 Hebrews 4-6

September

- 2 Hebrews 7-8
- 9 Hebrews 9-10
- 16 Hebrews 11
- 23 Hebrews 12-13
- 30 James 1-2

October

- 7 James 3-5
- 14 1 Peter 1-2
- 21 1 Peter 3-5
- 28 2 Peter 1-3

November

- 4 1 John 1-5
- 11 2 John 1–Jude
- 18 Revelation 1-3
- 25 Revelation 4-6

December

- 2 Revelation 7-9
- 9 Revelation 10-12
- 16 Revelation 13-16
- 23 Revelation 17-19
- 30 Revelation 20-22

Tuesday, January 1

Evil men cannot understand justice.—Prov. 28:5.

As the last days near their end, the wicked continue to “sprout like weeds.” (Ps. 92:7) It comes as no surprise, therefore, that moral standards are being abandoned. In this environment, how can we “be young children as to badness” yet “full-grown in [our] understanding”? (1 Cor. 14:20) The answer is found in our text for today, which says in part: “Those who seek Jehovah can understand everything”—that is, everything necessary to please him. A similar thought is expressed at Proverbs 2:7, 9, which says that Jehovah “treasures up practical wisdom for the upright.” As a result, the upright are able to “understand what is righteous and just and fair, the entire course of what is good.” Noah, Daniel, and Job acquired that wisdom. (Ezek. 14:14) The same is true of God’s people today. What about you personally? Do you “understand everything” necessary to please Jehovah? The key is to have accurate knowledge of him. *w18.02 8 ¶1-3*

Wednesday, January 2

They got baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.—Acts 19:5.

No one should feel pressured by a parent, a Bible teacher, or anyone else in the congregation to get baptized. That is not Jehovah’s way. (1 John 4:8) Rather, as we teach such ones, we ought to emphasize the importance of building a personal relationship with God. It is the student’s heartfelt appreciation for the truth and his desire to shoulder the yoke of Christian discipleship

that will move him to get baptized. (2 Cor. 5:14, 15) There is no set age at which one should get baptized. Each student grows and matures at a different rate. The day of one’s baptism is a time for genuine rejoicing. It is also a time for sober reflection. Living up to one’s dedication involves hard work. That is why Jesus compared Christian discipleship to a yoke. Jesus’ disciples must “live no longer for themselves, but for him who died for them and was raised up.”—2 Cor. 5:15; Matt. 16:24. *w18.03 6-7 ¶14-17*

Thursday, January 3

Do not forget hospitality, for through it some unknowingly entertained angels.—Heb. 13:2.

Have you held back from offering hospitality? If so, you may have missed out on opportunities for delightful company and for forming lasting friendships. Hospitality is one of the finest antidotes to loneliness. But you may wonder, ‘Why would anyone hold back?’ There could be a number of reasons. One is that Jehovah’s servants are very busy and often have multiple commitments. Some may feel that they simply do not have the time or energy to show hospitality. If that is your situation, it may be that you need to examine your current schedule of activities. Could you make some adjustments so that you will have time and energy to accept or offer hospitality? The Scriptures urge Christians to extend hospitality. It is not wrong to make time for this; actually, it is the right thing to do. You may, of course, need to be willing to limit some optional activities. *w18.03 16 ¶13-14*

Friday, January 4

I must also declare the good news of the Kingdom of God to other cities, because for this I was sent.

—Luke 4:43.

Of all the people who have lived, who is the most outstanding example of a spiritual person? It is Jesus, of course. Throughout his life and ministry, he showed that he wanted to imitate his Father, Jehovah. He thought, felt, and acted like Jehovah and lived in harmony with God's will and standards. (John 8:29; 14:9; 15:10) Note, for example, how Jehovah's feelings of compassion are described by the prophet Isaiah, and compare that description with what the Gospel writer Mark reports about Jesus' feelings. (Isa. 63:9; Mark 6:34) Are we like Jesus, ever ready to show compassionate concern when we meet people who need help? In addition, Jesus devoted himself to the work of preaching and teaching the good news. All such feelings and actions are marks of a spiritual person. *w18.02 21 ¶12*

Saturday, January 5

[Bring up your children] in the discipline and admonition of Jehovah.—Eph. 6:4.

Raising children is a major undertaking, especially in today's world. (2 Tim. 3:1-5) Of course, children are not born knowing right from wrong. They are born with the faculty of conscience, but it needs to be educated, or disciplined. (Rom. 2:14, 15) One Bible reference work suggests that the Greek word translated "discipline" might be rendered "child development." Children who

are lovingly disciplined usually feel secure. They learn that freedom has boundaries and that decisions and conduct have consequences—good or bad. How important, then, that Christian parents look to Jehovah for guidance. Do not forget that ideas and methods vary from culture to culture and from generation to generation. When parents listen to God, successful child-rearing does not become a matter of guesswork; nor does it depend on human experience or human thinking. *w18.03 30 ¶8-9*

Sunday, January 6

Keep working out your own salvation with fear and trembling.—Phil. 2:12.

As a young baptized Christian, you are now responsible for your own salvation, even if you still live under your parents' roof. Why is it important to remember that? Because you will face new feelings and pressures as you enter and pass through adolescence. One teenage girl put it this way: "A child usually won't resent being one of Jehovah's Witnesses just because of not having a piece of birthday cake at school. But in a few years when the urge to have sex becomes stronger, he or she needs to be thoroughly convinced that obeying Jehovah's laws is always the best choice." Even those who got baptized as adults face many unanticipated tests of faith. Such tests may have to do with marriage, health issues, or employment. Really, everyone, regardless of his or her age, will encounter situations that require faithfulness to Jehovah.—Jas. 1:12-14. *w17.12 24 ¶4-5*

Monday, January 7

Be wrathful, but do not sin.

—Eph. 4:26.

Few people have been treated as badly as David was. Still, that friend of God did not allow resentment to gnaw away at him. Rather, he wrote: “Let go of anger and abandon rage; do not become upset and turn to doing evil.” (Ps. 37:8) The most important reason to “let go” of anger is to imitate Jehovah, who “has not dealt with us according to our sins.” (Ps. 103:10) But there are also practical benefits to ‘letting go’ of anger. Anger can cause such physical problems as high blood pressure and respiratory trouble. It can affect the liver and the pancreas, and it can cause digestive problems. When we are angry, we do not always think clearly. And at times a fit of anger may be followed by a prolonged period of depression. On the other hand, “a calm heart gives life to the body,” says the Bible. (Prov. 14:30) How, then, can we deal with hurt feelings and gain our brother? We can do so successfully by applying the Bible’s wise advice. *w18.01 10 ¶14-15*

Tuesday, January 8

*You will not leave me in the Grave.
You will not allow your loyal one
to see the pit.—Ps. 16:10.*

David was not saying that *he* would never die or be in the common grave of mankind. God’s Word is plain that David did grow old. After he died, he “was laid to rest with his forefathers and was buried in the City of David.” (1 Ki. 2:1, 10) What, then, is Psalm 16:10 saying? Weeks after Jesus died and was raised, Peter spoke to thousands of Jews and proselytes about Psalm 16:10. (Acts 2:29-32) He mentioned

that David had indeed died and been buried. Those listening to Peter knew that. And the record does not say that any of them disputed Peter’s statement that David “fore-saw and spoke about the resurrection” of the coming Messiah. Peter reinforced his point by quoting David’s statement at Psalm 110:1. (Acts 2:33-36) Peter’s reasoning helped to convince the large crowd that Jesus was “both Lord and Christ.” The people acknowledged that Psalm 16:10 was fulfilled when Jesus was resurrected from the dead. *w17.12 10 ¶10-12*

Wednesday, January 9

Everything was numbered and weighed, and all the weight was recorded.—Ezra 8:34.

With prayerful consideration, the Governing Body strives to be faithful and discreet with regard to how the organization’s funds are used. (Matt. 24:45) The funds that are received are budgeted and spent accordingly. (Luke 14:28) The apostle Paul collected funds as a relief ministration for the brothers in Judea. He took steps to ensure that those delivering the funds cared for “everything honestly, not only in the sight of Jehovah but also in the sight of men.” (2 Cor. 8:18-21) Imitating the examples of Ezra and Paul, our organization today follows strict procedures when it comes to handling and spending donated funds. (Ezra 8:24-33) In recent years, there have been many exciting new initiatives. The organization looks for ways to reduce expenses and simplify the work so as to be able to accomplish the most that it can with your generous donations. *w18.01 19-20 ¶12-13*

Thursday, January 10

Let the peace of the Christ rule in your hearts.—Col. 3:15.

Love and kindness can help us to be forgiving toward one another. For example, if we feel hurt by the words or actions of a fellow Christian, we can try to recall occasions when *we* spoke or acted unkindly. Do we not appreciate the love and kindness of the brothers and sisters who overlooked our errors? (Eccl. 7:21, 22) Especially are we thankful for Christ's kindness in gathering true worshippers into unity. We all love the same God, preach the same message, and face many of the same challenges. By kindly and lovingly forgiving one another, we contribute to Christian unity and keep our eyes on the prize of life. Warning examples in the Bible remind us that jealousy can deprive us of the prize. For instance, Cain became jealous of his brother Abel and killed him. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram became jealous of Moses and opposed him. Also, King Saul became jealous of David's success and tried to kill him. *w17.11 27 ¶9-10*

Friday, January 11

You should look into the matter, making a thorough investigation and inquiry.—Deut. 13:14.

When elders serve on judicial committees, they must carefully determine whether a Christian guilty of serious sin is repentant. Repentance—or the lack of it—is not always obvious. It involves a person's viewpoint, disposition, and heart condition. (Rev. 3:3) A sinner must be repentant if he is to receive mercy. Unlike Jehovah and Jesus, elders cannot read hearts. If

you are an elder, then, how can you meet the challenge of discerning heartfelt repentance? First, pray for wisdom and discernment. (1 Ki. 3:9) Second, consult God's Word and publications from the faithful slave to help you distinguish "sadness of the world" from "sadness in a godly way," genuine repentance. (2 Cor. 7:10, 11) See how the Scriptures portray both repentant and unrepentant ones. How does the Bible describe their feelings, their attitude, and their conduct? *w17.11 17 ¶16-17*

Saturday, January 12

[Children] will be . . . disobedient to parents.—2 Tim. 3:2.

While such behavior is sometimes accepted and even encouraged in books, movies, and television programs today, disobedience undermines the stability of the most important social unit in society—the family. This principle has long been understood. Interestingly, in ancient Greece, if a man struck his parents, he would lose all his civil rights; in Roman law, to strike a father was as serious as murder. Both the Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian Greek Scriptures admonish children to honor their parents. (Ex. 20:12; Eph. 6:1-3) Children can protect themselves from being infected with the spirit of disobedience by reflecting on what their parents have done for them. An appreciative attitude is bolstered by the understanding that obedience is required by God, the Father of us all. By speaking positively about their parents, young ones can help other youths view their own parents in a positive light. *w18.01 29 ¶8-9*

Sunday, January 13

Each one will be like a hiding place from the wind, a place of concealment from the rainstorm, like streams of water in a waterless land, like the shadow of a massive crag in a parched land.—Isa. 32:2.

Today, a Christian guilty of serious sin needs to seek the help of congregation elders to recover. Why is this so important? First, the arrangement for elders to handle cases of serious sin comes from Jehovah, as outlined in his Word. (Jas. 5:14-16) Second, this arrangement fortifies repentant wrongdoers to remain in God's care and to avoid a pattern of sin. (Gal. 6:1; Heb. 12:11) Third, elders are commissioned and trained to reassure repentant sinners, helping to ease their pain and guilt. Jehovah calls these older men "a refuge from the rainstorm." (Isa. 32:2, ftn.) Would you not agree that this arrangement is an expression of God's mercy? Many of God's servants have discovered the relief that comes from seeking and receiving help from the elders. *w17.11 10 ¶8-9*

Monday, January 14

Discipline . . . is painful.
—*Heb. 12:11.*

Despite our pain of heart, we must avoid normal contact with a disfellowshipped family member by telephone, text messages, letters, e-mails, or social media. Yet, maintain hope. Love "hopes all things," including that those who have left Jehovah will come back to him. (1 Cor. 13:7) If you see evidence that a close family member is having a change of heart, you could pray that he or she gain strength from the Scriptures and respond to Jehovah's appeal: "Return to me." (Isa.

44:22) Jesus said that if we were to put any human before him, we would not be worthy of him. Yet, he was confident that his disciples would have the courage to maintain their loyalty to him despite family opposition. If following Jesus has brought "a sword" into your family, rely on Jehovah to help you deal with the challenges successfully. (Isa. 41:10, 13) Find joy in knowing that Jehovah and Jesus are pleased with you and that they will reward your faithful course. *w17.10 16 ¶19-21*

Tuesday, January 15

Clothe yourselves with the tender affections of compassion.
—*Col. 3:12.*

When we see others experiencing the effects of Adamic sin, we are rightly moved to show compassion. We long to see sickness and aging brought to an end. So we pray for God's Kingdom to come. In the meantime, we do what we can to assist those in need. Consider what one author wrote about his elderly mother, who suffered from Alzheimer's disease. One day, she soiled her clothes. As she was trying to clean up, the doorbell rang. The visitors turned out to be two Witnesses who regularly called on the woman. The sisters asked if there was anything they could do to help. "It is embarrassing but yes," the woman replied. The visitors helped her to clean up. Then they made her a cup of tea and stayed for a chat. The son was most grateful. "Hats off to these Witnesses," he wrote. "They practice what they preach." Does your compassion for the sick and the elderly move you to do all *you* can to lessen their suffering? —Phil. 2:3, 4. *w17.09 9 ¶5; 12 ¶14*

Wednesday, January 16

We should love, not in word or with the tongue, but in deed and truth.—1 John 3:18.

We should be willing to perform acts of love for our brothers “in secret,” or out of the limelight, when this is possible. (Matt. 6:1-4) We should also take the lead in showing honor to others. (Rom. 12:10) Jesus set the pattern in honoring others by performing the lowliest of tasks. (John 13:3-5, 12-15) We may have to work hard to develop the humility needed to show honor to others in this way. Even the apostles could not fully understand Jesus’ actions until they received holy spirit. (John 13:7) We can show honor to others by not thinking too much of ourselves because of our education, material possessions, or privileges in Jehovah’s service. (Rom. 12:3) And rather than envying those who receive praise, we rejoice with them even if we feel that we deserve equal honor or a share of the credit for what was done. *w17.10 9 ¶9-10*

Thursday, January 17

I do all things for the sake of the good news, in order to share it with others.—1 Cor. 9:23.

Many have found that using God’s Word in the ministry can have a profound impact on those to whom they preach. Consider an example. A brother made a return visit on an elderly gentleman who had read our magazines for a number of years. Instead of simply presenting the latest issue of *The Watchtower*, the brother decided to read a scripture found in that issue. He

read 2 Corinthians 1:3, 4, which says: “The Father of tender mercies and the God of all comfort . . . comforts us in all our trials.” The householder was so moved by those words that he asked our brother to read the scripture a second time. The man mentioned how much he and his wife needed comfort, and he now showed interest in the Bible’s message. Would you not agree that God’s Word exerts power in our ministry?—Acts 19:20. *w17.09 26 ¶9-10*

Friday, January 18

Strike his bone and flesh, and he will surely curse you to your very face.—Job 2:5.

The Devil’s challenge no doubt aroused indignation, anger, and contempt among heavenly creatures loyal to God. Jehovah, however, did not react hastily. His response was measured and entirely fitting. He has been slow to anger and has been just in dealing with Satan’s revolt. (Ex. 34:6; Job 2:2-6) Why? Jehovah has allowed time to pass because he does not want anyone to be destroyed but “desires all to attain to repentance.” (2 Pet. 3:9) Jehovah’s exercise of self-control teaches us that we too ought to weigh our words and consider our steps carefully; we should not rush into things. When you face an important issue, give yourself the time you need to act wisely. Pray for wisdom to say or do the right thing. (Ps. 141:3) In the heat of the moment, it is all too easy to react emotionally. Many of us have lived to regret hasty words or rash actions!—Prov. 14:29; 15:28; 19:2. *w17.09 4 ¶6-7*

Saturday, January 19

Put [the crown] on the head of Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest.—Zech. 6:11.

Did the crowning of High Priest Joshua make him a king? No, Joshua was not from the royal line of David and thus did not qualify to be king. His crowning was prophetic, pointing to a future and eternal king and priest. The high priest who is made king is named Sprout. The Scriptures clearly indicate that Sprout is Jesus Christ. (Isa. 11:1; Matt. 2:23, ftn.) Acting as both King and High Priest, Jesus is the leader of Jehovah's heavenly army. As such, he works diligently so that God's people as a whole may dwell in security despite living in the midst of this hostile world. (Jer. 23:5, 6) In the near future, Christ will take the lead in conquering the nations in support of God's sovereignty and in defending Jehovah's people. (Rev. 17:12-14; 19:11, 14, 15) Before executing judgment, however, Sprout has a great work to accomplish. *w17.10* 29 ¶12-14

Sunday, January 20

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

What would you do if your clothing became dirty, perhaps even having a foul odor? You would strip off the soiled garment as soon as possible. Similarly, we need to act with urgency in obeying the command to strip off habits that are contrary to God's personality. We want to heed Paul's clear instruction to Christians in his day: "You must put them all away from you." One of the sinful practices listed by Paul is sexual immorality. (Col. 3:5-9) The meaning

of the original Bible word translated "sexual immorality" includes sexual relations between individuals who are not legally married to each other and homosexuality. Paul told fellow Christians to "deaden" their "body members"—that is, to eliminate any desires—"as respects sexual immorality." Paul's descriptive language clearly shows that strong measures are needed to wipe out such wrong desires. Yet, the fight against sinful desires can be won. *w17.08* 18 ¶5-6

Monday, January 21

I will show a waiting attitude for the God of my salvation.—Mic. 7:7.

The conditions we face today are similar to those in the days of the prophet Micah. He lived during the reign of wicked King Ahaz, a time when all sorts of corruption prevailed. In fact, the people had become "expert at doing what is bad." (Mic. 7:1-3) Micah realized that he could not personally change these conditions. If we have faith like that of Micah, we will be *willing* to wait for Jehovah. Our situation is not like that of a prisoner who is waiting in his cell for his execution. He is forced to wait, and he is not looking forward to the outcome. How different things are for us! We are willing to wait for Jehovah because we know that he will fulfill his promise to give us everlasting life at exactly the right time, the best time! So we "endure fully with patience and joy." (Col. 1:11, 12) To do otherwise—to wait while complaining and grumbling that Jehovah is not acting fast enough—would be displeasing to our God.—Col. 3:12. *w17.08* 4 ¶6-7

Tuesday, January 22

Jehovah raises up the meek.

—Ps. 147:6.

How can we benefit from Jehovah's readiness to act in our behalf? We have to have a good relationship with him. To have that, we need to cultivate meekness. (Zeph. 2:3) Meek ones wait on God to correct any wrongs and to undo the injuries inflicted on them. Jehovah looks on such ones with his smile of approval. On the other hand, God "hurls the wicked to the ground." (Ps. 147:6b) These are strong words! To benefit from Jehovah's loyal love and to avoid his wrath, we have to hate what he hates. (Ps. 97:10) For instance, we are to hate sexual immorality. This means that we have to stay away from anything that could lead us into such wrongdoing, including pornography. (Ps. 119:37; Matt. 5:28) This may be a hard fight, but having Jehovah's blessing is worth any effort we must put forth. In fighting this battle, we need to rely on Jehovah, not on ourselves. We must approach Jehovah, begging for his help. *w17.07* 19-20 ¶11-13

Wednesday, January 23

The one showing favor to the lowly is lending to Jehovah.

—Prov. 19:17.

Using material assets to advance Kingdom interests allows us to take advantage of our circumstances to help others. Those who have this world's means but cannot share in the full-time ministry or move abroad have the satisfaction of knowing that their donated funds support the ministry of others. Voluntary contributions help to supply literature and support the preach-

ing work in territories where poverty abounds but where there is great spiritual growth. For years, in such lands as Congo, Madagascar, and Rwanda, brothers often had to choose between having food for their families and having copies of the Bible, which sometimes cost the equivalent of a weekly or a monthly wage. Now, by means of the contributions of many and "an equalizing" of finances, Jehovah's organization has sponsored the translation and distribution of Bibles to each member of the family as well as to spiritually hungry Bible students. —2 Cor. 8:13-15. *w17.07* 9 ¶11

Thursday, January 24

Be wise, my son, and make my heart rejoice, so that I can make a reply to him who taunts me.

—Prov. 27:11.

Why is it comforting to reflect on the value of our faithfulness? Because it means that our trials serve a purpose. Far from indicating Jehovah's displeasure, they provide for us a means to show that we support God's sovereignty. Our endurance produces "an approved condition" and strengthens our hope. (Rom. 5:3-5) The record of Job bears out that "Jehovah is very tender in affection and merciful." (Jas. 5:11) So we can be sure that he will reward us and all who uphold his sovereignty. Knowing this helps us "endure fully with patience and joy." (Col. 1:11) Granted, keeping our eyes on the vindication of Jehovah's sovereignty can be challenging. Therefore, we do well to remind ourselves regularly of the importance of supporting God's sovereignty when we face difficult circumstances. *w17.06* 26 ¶15-16

Friday, January 25

Guard against every sort of greed.

—*Luke 12:15.*

Many today are obsessed with the latest fashions, electronic gadgets, and so forth. Therefore, each Christian regularly needs to examine his own desires by asking himself such questions as: ‘Have material things become so important to me that I spend more time researching and thinking about the latest cars or fashions than I do preparing for congregation meetings? Have I become so preoccupied with the everyday affairs of life that I spend less time praying or reading the Bible?’ If we realize that our love for material things is eclipsing our love for the Christ, we should reflect on Jesus’ words found in today’s text. Jesus stated that “no one can slave for two masters.” He added: “You cannot slave for God and for Riches.” That is because both “masters” require exclusive devotion. (Matt. 6:24) As imperfect people, all of us need to keep up our fight against “the desires of our flesh,” including materialism.—Eph. 2:3. *w17.05* 25-26 ¶15-16

Saturday, January 26

I do all things for the sake of the good news, in order to share it with others.—1 Cor. 9:23.

Although we are simply imperfect earthen vessels, the message we preach can bring everlasting life to us and to those who listen to us. The apostle Paul’s love for the ministry moved him to work hard at making disciples. (Rom. 1:14, 15; 2 Tim. 4:2) That helped him to endure severe opposition. (1 Thess. 2:2) How can we demonstrate such

love for the ministry? One way that Paul demonstrated appreciation for the ministry was by being alert to opportunities to speak to others. Like the apostles and early Christians, we preach informally, publicly, and from house to house. (Acts 5:42; 20:20) As our circumstances allow, we look for ways to expand our ministry, perhaps by serving as an auxiliary or a regular pioneer. We might also learn another language, move to another area in our own country, or even move to another land.—Acts 16:9, 10. *w17.06* 10-11 ¶8-9

Sunday, January 27

Every mountain and every island was removed from its place.

—*Rev. 6:14.*

Much of the evil that is done in this world is the work not of individuals but of organizations. Think of the religious organizations that deceive millions of people about the nature of God, the trustworthiness of the Bible, the future of the earth and mankind—and many other subjects. Or what about the governments that promote war and ethnic violence, that oppress the poor and defenseless, that thrive on bribery and favoritism? What about greedy corporations that pollute the environment, deplete natural resources, and exploit the gullibility of consumers in order to bring untold wealth to a few while millions struggle in poverty? God’s Word foretells that the governments of this old world and all their dependent organizations will be rocked from their foundations—destroyed—along with all those who side with them against God’s Kingdom.—Jer. 25:31-33. *w17.04* 11 ¶7-8

Monday, January 28

*I will not bring the calamity
during his lifetime.*

—1 Ki. 21:29.

Jehovah, “the examiner of hearts,” extended a measure of mercy to Ahab. (Prov. 17:3) How did this decision affect those who knew of Ahab’s terrible crime? This seeming reversal may have tested the faith of Naboth’s family and friends. If so, humility would have protected them, prompting them to continue faithful in their worship of Jehovah, confident that their God is incapable of injustice. (Deut. 32:3, 4) Naboth, his sons, and their families will experience perfect justice when Jehovah resurrects the righteous ones. (Job 14:14, 15; John 5:28, 29) Furthermore, a humble person remembers that “the true God will judge every deed, including every hidden thing, as to whether it is good or bad.” (Eccl. 12:14) Yes, when rendering judgment, Jehovah takes into consideration factors that are unknown to us. Thus, humility protects innocent ones from spiritual disaster. *w17.04 24 ¶8-9*

Tuesday, January 29

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

Because of world conditions, many of our brothers have become refugees. The transition can be overwhelming. Imagine trying to learn a new language and to adapt to new laws and expectations regarding manners, punctuality, taxes, bill paying, school attendance, and child discipline—all at once! Can you patiently and respectfully help brothers and sisters who face such challenges? (Phil. 2:3, 4)

Further, authorities have at times made it difficult for these brothers to contact the congregation. Some agencies have threatened to cut off assistance or deny our brothers asylum if they refuse to accept employment that requires them to miss meetings. Frightened and vulnerable, a few brothers have given in to such pressures. Therefore, it is urgent to meet our refugee brothers as soon as possible after their arrival. They need to see that we care about them. Our compassion and practical help can strengthen their faith.—Prov. 12:25. *w17.05 5 ¶9-10*

Wednesday, January 30

*The love of the greater number
will grow cold.—Matt. 24:12.*

One facet of the sign that Jesus gave regarding “the conclusion of the system of things” was that “the love of the greater number [would] grow cold.” (Matt. 24:3) In the first century, the Jews, who claimed to be God’s people, allowed their love for God to grow cold. On the other hand, most Christians at that time kept busy “declaring the good news about the Christ” and showing love for God, for fellow Christians, and for unbelievers. (Acts 2:44-47; 5:42) Nevertheless, some of Jesus’ followers in the first century did allow their love to grow cold. Speaking to first-century Christians living in Ephesus, the resurrected Jesus Christ said: “I hold this against you, that you have left the love you had at first.” (Rev. 2:4) What may have been one reason for this? These early disciples of Christ may have been influenced by the fleshly-minded world.—Eph. 2:2, 3. *w17.05 17 ¶1-3*

Thursday, January 31

You must pay your vows to Jehovah.—Matt. 5:33.

He was a valiant leader; she was a submissive wife. He was a brave warrior; she was a humble homemaker. Besides worshipping the same God, what could Judge Jephthah and Elkanah's wife Hannah possibly have in common? Each was under a vow to God, and they both faithfully paid their vow to him. They are excellent examples for men and women today who choose to make vows to Jehovah. As used in the Bible, a vow is a solemn promise that is made to God. A person promises to perform some act, to offer some gift, to enter some type of service, or to abstain from certain things. Vows are made voluntarily, of one's own free will. Nevertheless, they are sacred and binding in God's eyes because they carry the force of an oath—a sworn statement—that promises that a person will or will not do a certain thing.—Gen. 14:22, 23; Heb. 6:16, 17. *w17.04 3 ¶1-2*

Friday, February 1

Noah did according to all that God had commanded him. He did just so.—Gen. 6:22.

Noah had never built an ark before. So he had to rely on Jehovah, doing “just so”—that is, just as Jehovah directed. The result? Noah got it right the first time. Indeed, he had to! Noah also succeeded as a family man—and for basically the same reason; he trusted in God's wisdom. He thus taught his children well and set a fine example for them, which was a big

challenge during that wicked pre-Flood era. (Gen. 6:5) As parents, how can you do “just so” in God's eyes? Listen to Jehovah. Let him instruct you in child-rearing by means of his Word and the guidance we receive through his organization. However, despite the parents' best efforts, some children leave Jehovah. Nonetheless, parents who have tried their best to impress the truth on a child's heart have a good conscience. They can also hope that the wayward child will one day come “home” to Jehovah. *w18.03 30 ¶10-11*

Saturday, February 2

Be hospitable to one another.—1 Pet. 4:9.

Have you ever wanted to be hospitable but felt inadequate? Some are shy and fear that conversation would lag or that guests might not feel entertained. Others have limited income and believe that they could never offer what other members of the congregation could. Of prime importance about a home is, not that it is fancy, but that it is orderly, clean, and inviting. Let love motivate your hospitality, and you need not worry. Remember that showing personal interest in guests is always helpful. (Phil. 2:4) Nearly everyone enjoys sharing his experiences in life. Social occasions may be the only times others ask to hear about our experiences. One elder writes: “Having friends from the congregation to my home helps me to understand them better and gives me time to get to know them, especially how they came into the truth.” Loving interest can make any occasion a delight. *w18.03 17 ¶15-17*

Sunday, February 3

Why are you delaying? Rise, get baptized.—Acts 22:16.

Christian parents have an interest in helping their children make wise decisions. Postponing baptism or delaying it needlessly could invite spiritual problems. (Jas. 4:17) Wisely, however, parents want to be sure that *before* their children get baptized, they are ready to shoulder the responsibility of Christian discipleship. Some circuit overseers have expressed concern because they meet young ones in their late teens and early 20's who have grown up in Christian households but who have yet to get baptized. In most cases, these young ones attend congregation meetings and share in the ministry. They view themselves as Jehovah's Witnesses. Yet, for some reason they hold back from dedicating their lives to Jehovah and getting baptized. What could be the reason for this? In some cases, parents have encouraged them to delay baptism. *w18.03 8 ¶1-2*

Monday, February 4

Have . . . the same mental attitude that Christ Jesus had.—Rom. 15:5.

To be like Christ, we need to know his pattern of thinking and the full range of his personality. Then we need to follow in his footsteps. Jesus' mind is focused on his relationship with God. So being like Jesus makes us more like Jehovah. For these reasons, it becomes clear how important it is to learn to think as Jesus does. How can we do this? Jesus' disciples saw his miracles, heard his discourses, watched how he dealt with all kinds of people,

and observed how he applied godly principles. (Acts 10:39) We, however, cannot observe him directly. But Jehovah has lovingly provided the Gospel accounts that can make Jesus' personality come alive in our mind. By reading and meditating on the Bible books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, we expose our mind to Christ's mind. We thus can "follow his steps closely" and "arm [ourselves] with the same mental disposition" as Christ had.—1 Pet. 2:21; 4:1. *w18.02 22 ¶15-16*

Tuesday, February 5

Faith follows the thing heard.—Rom. 10:17.

Since early in human history, men and women of faith have learned about God in three primary ways: by observing the visible creation, from other God-fearing humans, and by experiencing the blessings of living in harmony with God's righteous standards and principles. (Isa. 48:18) By observing the physical creation, Noah would have seen abundant evidence not only of God's existence but also of his many invisible qualities, such as "his eternal power and Godship." (Rom. 1:20) As a result, Noah did more than believe in God; he developed strong faith in him. Noah no doubt learned much from his relatives. These included his father, Lamech, who was a man of faith and whose life overlapped Adam's. They also included his grandfather Methuselah and his great-great-grandfather Jared, whose life overlapped Noah's by 366 years. (Luke 3:36, 37) In any event, what Noah learned touched his heart, moving him to serve God.—Gen. 6:9. *w18.02 9 ¶4-5*

Wednesday, February 6

Do not let the sun set while you are still angry.—Eph. 4:26.

When a fellow believer or a family member says or does something that hurts us deeply, we may be devastated. Suppose we cannot simply forget the incident. Will we allow resentment to fester for years? Or will we follow the Bible's wise advice to settle matters quickly? The longer we put off dealing with the situation, the harder it will be for us to make peace with our brother. What positive steps can you take to make peace? First, approach Jehovah in earnest prayer. Ask him to help you to have an upbuilding conversation with your brother. Remember, he is one of Jehovah's friends. (Ps. 25:14) Jehovah treats his friends with kindness, and he expects no less from us. (Prov. 15:23; Matt. 7:12; Col. 4:6) Next, review in your mind what you are going to say. Do not assume that your brother set out deliberately to hurt you. And be open to the possibility that in some way you may have contributed to the rift. *w18.01* 29-30 ¶11-12

Thursday, February 7

Just as I have loved you, you also love one another.—John 13:34.

In contrast with the people who show the widespread lack of love today, those who worship Jehovah have genuine love for their fellow man. This has always been true. Jesus said that love of neighbor was the second most important commandment in the Mosaic Law, second only to love of God. (Matt. 22:38, 39) Jesus also said that love for one another would be the quality that would identify true Christians. (John 13:35) Such Christian love

would even be extended to one's enemies. (Matt. 5:43, 44) Jesus showed great love for others. He went from city to city, telling people the good news about the Kingdom of God. He cured the blind, the lame, the lepers, and the deaf. He raised the dead. (Luke 7:22) Jesus even gave his own life in behalf of mankind. Jesus' love perfectly reflected the love his Father shows. Throughout the earth, Jehovah's Witnesses express godly love toward others. *w18.01* 29-30 ¶11-12

Friday, February 8

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

You may have qualified for baptism at a young age. Yet, you cannot always predict what challenges you will face in the future. To help you stay faithful in any circumstance, never forget that your promise to Jehovah is unconditional. That means that you have told the Sovereign of the universe that you will continue to serve him even if your friends or parents stop doing so. (Ps. 27:10) In all situations, you can summon the strength—with Jehovah's help—to live up to your dedication. (Phil. 4:11, 12) Jehovah wants you to be his friend. But maintaining that friendship and working out your own salvation will require effort. In fact, Philippians 2:12 says: "Keep working out your own salvation with fear and trembling." So consider how you will maintain your friendship with Jehovah and remain faithful to him despite any challenges. You cannot become overconfident. Even some of God's longtime servants have gone astray. *w17.12* 24 ¶4, 6-7

Saturday, February 9

I have voluntarily offered all these things.—1 Chron. 29:17.

Jehovah dignifies us with the opportunity to support the grand work taking place today. He guarantees that we will receive blessings when we give in support of the Kingdom. (Mal. 3:10) Jehovah promises that the one who gives generously will prosper. (Prov. 11:24, 25) Giving also makes us happy, for “there is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving.” (Acts 20:35) By word and example, we have the privilege of training our children and new ones to appreciate how they can have a share and how they, as a result, can enjoy many blessings. Everything we have is from Jehovah. Giving back to him shows that we love him and appreciate all that he has done in our behalf. When donating for the construction of the temple, “the people rejoiced over making these voluntary offerings.” (1 Chron. 29:9) May we likewise continue to find joy and satisfaction in giving back to Jehovah what has come to us from his own hand. *w18.01 21 ¶18-19*

Sunday, February 10

Each one in his own proper order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who belong to the Christ during his presence.—1 Cor. 15:23.

The first resurrection would take place sometime after “the presence” of Christ began. Anointed ones who are alive during the great tribulation will be “caught away in clouds.” (1 Thess. 4:13-17; Matt. 24:31) They “will all be changed, in a moment, in the blink of an eye, dur-

ing the last trumpet.” (1 Cor. 15:51, 52) Today, most faithful Christians are not anointed and called to serve in heaven with Christ. Rather, they await the end of this wicked system of things during “Jehovah’s day.” No one can know the exact timing of that end, but evidence shows that it is close. (1 Thess. 5:1-3) Thereafter, a different type of resurrection will take place, a resurrection to life in an earthly paradise. Those raised will have the prospect of growing to human perfection and never having to die again. *w17.12 11 ¶15; 12 ¶18-19*

Monday, February 11

Wherever there are jealousy and contentiousness, there will also be disorder and every vile thing.

—Jas. 3:16.

If we cultivate love and kindness in our heart, we will not easily become jealous. God’s Word says: “Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous.” (1 Cor. 13:4) To prevent jealousy from taking root in our heart, we must strive to see things from God’s standpoint, viewing our brothers and sisters as members of the same Christian body. This will help us to show fellow feeling, in harmony with the inspired counsel: “If a member is glorified, all the other members rejoice with it.” (1 Cor. 12:16-18, 26) Thus, rather than feel jealous, we will be happy when others receive blessings. Consider the example of King Saul’s son Jonathan. He was not jealous when David was appointed heir to the throne. Rather, he encouraged David. (1 Sam. 23:16-18) Could we be as kind and loving as Jonathan? *w17.11 27 ¶10-11*

Tuesday, February 12

He will not judge by what appears to his eyes, nor reprove simply according to what his ears hear. He will judge the lowly with fairness, and with uprightness he will give reproof.—Isa. 11:3, 4.

Jehovah preserved the Law covenant for us in his Word, the Bible. He wants us, not to obsess over the details of the Law, but to discern and apply its “weightier matters,” the lofty principles that underpin its commandments. (Matt. 23:23) The Mosaic Law reflected a “framework of the knowledge and of the truth” about Jehovah and his righteous principles. (Rom. 2:20) The cities of refuge, for example, teach elders how to “judge with true justice,” and they teach all of us how to “deal with one another in loyal love and mercy.” (Zech. 7:9) We are no longer under the Law. Yet, Jehovah does not change, and the qualities of justice and mercy are still important to him. What a privilege to worship a God in whose image we are made, whose qualities we can imitate, and in whom we can take refuge! *w17.11* 13-14 ¶2-3; 17 ¶18-19

Wednesday, February 13

Happy is the man who finds wisdom and the man who acquires discernment.—Prov. 3:13.

Brothers who speak from the platform should make sure that the Scriptures form the backbone of their talk. (John 7:16) What does that involve? For one thing, be careful that nothing—experiences, illustrations, or even your manner of delivery—overshadows or draws attention away from the Bible verses you use. Also, remember that simply reading a number of scriptures does

not in itself constitute *teaching* from the Bible. In fact, using too many scriptures could result in none of them standing out in the mind of your listeners. So select your key scriptures carefully, and take time to read, explain, illustrate, and apply them well. (Neh. 8:8) Try to understand the connection between the statements in the outline and the cited scriptures. Above all, prayerfully ask for Jehovah’s help to convey the precious thoughts contained in his Word.—Ezra 7:10. *w17.09* 26 ¶11-12

Thursday, February 14

Return to me, . . . and I will return to you.—Zech. 1:3.

The year 537 B.C.E. was one of rejoicing for Jehovah’s dedicated people. After 70 long years of captivity, they were freed from Babylon and enthusiastically got to work on restoring true worship in Jerusalem. In 536 B.C.E., the foundation of the temple was laid. Sixteen years later, the building of Jehovah’s temple was at a standstill. God’s people needed to be reminded that they should return to Jehovah and stop putting their personal pursuits first. To help his people recall why they were freed from Babylon in the first place, God sent his prophet Zechariah in 520 B.C.E. The very name Zechariah, which means “Jehovah Has Remembered,” may have brought to mind a vital truth. Though they had forgotten Jehovah’s saving acts, God still remembered his people. (Zech. 1:3, 4) He lovingly assured them that he would help them to reestablish pure worship, but he also firmly warned them that he would not tolerate halfhearted worship. *w17.10* 21-22 ¶2-3

Friday, February 15

*Become kind to one another,
tenderly compassionate.
—Eph. 4:32.*

Mental-health experts say that practicing compassion can improve your health, well-being, and relationships. When you relieve the suffering of others, you will feel happier, more optimistic, less lonely, and less inclined to think negative thoughts. Yes, your showing compassion will benefit you. Christians who lovingly seek to help others are rewarded with a good conscience, knowing that they are acting in harmony with godly principles. Having such a disposition makes for a more caring parent, a better spouse, and a better friend. Those who are quick to show compassion are, in turn, more likely to receive help and support when they need it. (Matt. 5:7; Luke 6:38) Knowing that compassion is good for you should not be your main reason for wanting to cultivate it. The principal reason should be your desire to imitate and glorify the Source of love and compassion, Jehovah God. —Prov. 14:31. *w17.09* 12 ¶16-17

Saturday, February 16

He will sit down on his throne and rule, and he will also be a priest on his throne.—Zech. 6:13.

In addition to being commissioned King and High Priest, Jesus was assigned to “build the temple of Jehovah.” In modern times, Jesus’ building work involved liberating true worshippers from Babylon the Great and restoring the Christian congregation in 1919. He also appointed a “faithful and discreet

slave” to take the lead in directing the work in the earthly courtyards of the great spiritual temple. (Matt. 24:45) Jesus has also been busy refining God’s people and helping them to render worship that is clean. (Mal. 3:1-3) During the Thousand Year Reign, Jesus and his 144,000 associate kings and priests will bring faithful humans to perfection. When this is accomplished, only true worshippers of God will be left on the cleansed earth. Finally, true worship will be fully restored! *w17.10* 29 ¶15-16

Sunday, February 17

He must dwell in [his city of refuge] until the death of the high priest.—Num. 35:25.

An unintentional manslayer had to take action to receive mercy. He had to *flee* to the nearest city of refuge. (Josh. 20:4) We cannot imagine the fugitive being indifferent; his life depended on his reaching that city as soon as possible and remaining there! This meant sacrifice on his part. He had to leave behind his previous employment, the comforts of home, and the freedom to travel—until the death of the high priest. But such inconveniences were worth the effort. To benefit from God’s mercy, repentant wrongdoers today must likewise take action. We must completely abandon the sinful course, fleeing not only from serious sin but also from the lesser sins that often lead to gross wrongdoing. Earnest actions to abandon a sinful course show Jehovah that we are not complacent, that we have not presumed on his mercy.—2 Cor. 7:10, 11. *w17.11* 10-11 ¶10-11

Monday, February 18

Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.

—1 Pet. 4:9.

Jehovah commands us to be generous toward our brothers and sisters. (1 John 3:17) Yet, we must do so with a pure motive, avoiding any trace of selfishness. We can ask ourselves: ‘Do I offer hospitality primarily to close friends, prominent ones, or those who might be able to return a favor somehow? Or do I instead look for ways to be generous toward brothers and sisters whom I do not know well or who have nothing with which to repay me?’ (Luke 14:12-14) Or suppose a fellow Christian falls into need because of poor planning or fails to thank us for our hospitality. In such situations, we should apply the counsel given in today’s text. If you follow this advice, you will gain the reward of happiness that comes from giving with the right motive. —Acts 20:35. *w17.10* 9 ¶12

Tuesday, February 19

How could I commit this great badness and actually sin against God?

—Gen. 39:9.

Potiphar’s wife set her eyes on Joseph, who was “well-built and handsome,” and she tried to seduce him. Joseph, however, did not succumb to her repeated advances. And when the situation became critical, he fled from her. What does Joseph’s example teach us? One thing is that we may need to flee from the temptation to break one of God’s laws. (Prov. 1:10) In the past, some who are now Witnesses struggled with overeating, heavy drinking, smoking, drug abuse, sex-

ual immorality, and the like. Even after baptism, they may at times be tempted to return to their former practices. Still, if you are ever tempted to break one of Jehovah’s laws, strengthen yourself by taking time to ponder the disastrous spiritual consequences that you could face for failing to restrain sinful impulses. You can try to foresee situations in which temptations could likely present themselves and decide how you can avoid them. (Ps. 26:4, 5; Prov. 22:3) Should you ever face such a test, ask Jehovah to give you the wisdom and self-control to resist. *w17.09* 4-5 ¶8-9

Wednesday, February 20

Make friends for yourselves by means of the unrighteous riches, so that when such fail, they may receive you into the everlasting dwelling places.—Luke 16:9.

One way to gain friendship with Jehovah is by minimizing our involvement with the commercial world and using our circumstances to seek “true” riches. Abraham, a man of faith in ancient times, obediently left prosperous Ur in order to live in tents and pursue his friendship with Jehovah. (Heb. 11:8-10) He always looked to God as the Source of true wealth, never seeking material advantages that would indicate a lack of trust. (Gen. 14:22, 23) Jesus encouraged this sort of faith, telling a rich young man: “If you want to be perfect, go sell your belongings and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come be my follower.” (Matt. 19:21) That man lacked faith like that of Abraham, but others have shown implicit trust in God. *w17.07* 10 ¶12

Thursday, February 21

[Jehovah] promised to give [the land] to [Abraham] as a possession and after him to his offspring, though as yet he had no child.

—Acts 7:5.

It was not until 430 years after Abraham had crossed the Euphrates that his descendants were organized into a nation that would take possession of the land. (Ex. 12:40-42; Gal. 3:17) Abraham was willing to wait, because his patience was based on his faith in Jehovah. (Heb. 11:8-12) Abraham was happy to wait, even though he did not see the complete fulfillment of the promise in his day. But just imagine Abraham's joy when he is resurrected back to a paradise earth. He will be surprised to see how much of the Bible was used to record his personal story and that of his descendants. Just imagine how thrilled he will be to understand for the first time his vital role in the outworking of Jehovah's purpose with regard to the promised offspring! No doubt, he will feel that the long wait was worth it. *w17.08* 5-6 ¶10-11

Friday, February 22

Deaden . . . your body members that are on the earth as respects . . . uncleanness.—Col. 3:5.

The original Bible word translated “uncleanness” is a broad term that includes much more than sexual sins. It can refer to the harmful practice of smoking or the telling of obscene jokes. (2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 5:3, 4) It also applies to unclean activities practiced by an individual in private, such as reading sexually stimulating books or view-

ing pornography, which may lead to the unclean habit of masturbation. Those who habitually view pornography nurture “uncontrolled sexual passion,” which may result in their becoming addicted to sex. Research indicates that individuals who admitted to having an irresistible urge to watch pornography show the same signs of addiction as do alcoholics and drug addicts. No wonder the practice of viewing pornography has harmful results—such as deep feelings of shame, low productivity in the workplace, unhappy family life, divorce, and suicide. *w17.08* 19 ¶8-9

Saturday, February 23

He makes the bars of your city gates strong; he blesses your sons within you. He brings peace to your territory.—Ps. 147:13, 14.

In thinking about the restoration of Jerusalem, the psalmist sang the above about Jehovah. How reassuring it was for the psalmist to know that God would strengthen the city's gates to provide protection for his worshippers! You may face difficulties that cause you to become anxious. Jehovah can give you the wisdom to cope. The psalmist said of his God that “he sends his command to the earth; his word runs swiftly.” Then, referring to Jehovah as ‘sending the snow, scattering the frost, and hurling down the hailstones,’ the psalmist asks: “Who can withstand his cold?” He adds that Jehovah “sends out his word, and they melt.” (Ps. 147:15-18) Our all-wise, all-powerful God, the one who controls the hail and the snow, can help you to surmount any obstacles that you encounter. *w17.07* 20 ¶14-15

Sunday, February 24

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

God's sovereignty is right. It is the best rulership. And it deserves our wholehearted support. Why? Because Jehovah created all things. Therefore, he has full right to rule over humans as well as spirit creatures. Satan has created nothing. Consequently, he has no rightful claim to universal rulership. In rebelling against Jehovah's sovereignty, he and the first human couple acted arrogantly. (Jer. 10:23) True, as creatures with free will, they could choose independence from God. But did that give them the *right* to do so? No. Free will enables people to make many appropriate choices daily. However, it does not entitle them to rebel against their Creator and Life-Giver. Clearly, taking a stand against Jehovah is a *misuse* of free will. As humans, our place is under Jehovah's righteous rule. *w17.06 11-12 ¶11-12*

Monday, February 25

If only I may finish my course and the ministry.—Acts 20:24.

If we treasure our ministry, we will be like the apostle Paul, continuing to preach despite persecution. (Acts 14:19-22) During the 1930's and early 1940's, our brothers in the United States faced tremendous opposition. Yet, like Paul, they stood firm and continued preaching. To protect our right to do that, the brothers fought many legal battles. In 1943, Brother Nathan H. Knorr,

when commenting on one victory in the U.S. Supreme Court, stated: "The victories won are due to your fight. . . . It is this victory of the Lord's people standing firm that finally brings that decision." Yes, our love for the ministry can defeat persecution. When we view the ministry as a priceless treasure from Jehovah, we will never be content with simply "counting time." Rather, we will do everything in our power "to bear thorough witness to the good news."—2 Tim. 4:5. *w17.06 11-12 ¶11-12*

Tuesday, February 26

You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind.—Matt. 22:37.

Having deep love for God helps us to obey Jehovah's commandments, to endure, and to hate what is bad. (Ps. 97:10) However, Satan and his world strive to undermine our love for God. The world around us has a distorted view of love. Rather than direct love to the Creator, people are "lovers of themselves." (2 Tim. 3:2) This world ruled by Satan fosters "the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the showy display of one's means of life." (1 John 2:16) The apostle Paul warned fellow Christians against pleasing the flesh, saying: "Setting the mind on the flesh means death . . . because setting the mind on the flesh means enmity with God." (Rom. 8:6, 7) Indeed, those who have spent their lives on pursuing material things or gratifying sexual desires have ended up disappointed and deeply hurt.—1 Cor. 6:18; 1 Tim. 6:9, 10. *w17.05 18 ¶15-6*

Wednesday, February 27

If anyone does not want to work, neither let him eat.—2 Thess. 3:10.

When refugee brothers show gratitude, never demanding anything, they help their hosts to experience the joy of giving. Granted, living indefinitely on others' generosity may erode the self-respect of the refugees and may damage their relationships with other brothers. (2 Thess. 3:7-9) But they do need practical help. This requires, not a lot of money, but mainly our time and concern. It may be as simple as showing them how to use public transportation, how to shop for healthful but inexpensive foods, or how to obtain tools or equipment—such as a sewing machine or a lawn mower—in order to earn some income. More important, you can help them to become fully involved in their new congregation. If possible, offer them rides to meetings. Also explain how they might approach people with the Kingdom message in your territory. Take the refugee brothers and sisters along with you in the ministry. *w17.05 5 ¶11-12*

Thursday, February 28

Form a longing for the unadulterated milk of the word, so that by means of it you may grow to salvation.—1 Pet. 2:2.

Fleshly-minded people have difficulty cultivating a balanced view of material things. Why? Because their spiritual senses are dulled. (1 Cor. 2:14) Once their powers of discernment have become clouded, it becomes more difficult for them to distinguish right from wrong. (Heb. 5:11-14) As a result, some develop

an uncontrolled desire for material things—a desire that can never be fully satisfied. (Eccl. 5:10) Thankfully, there is an antidote to being poisoned by materialistic thinking: a healthy dose of God's Word, the Bible, taken on a regular basis. Just as meditating on divine truth fortified Jesus to reject temptation, so applying Bible principles helps us to fight against materialistic desires. (Matt. 4:8-10) By doing so, we show Jesus that we love him more than any material thing. *w17.05 26 ¶17*

Friday, March 1

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

Is there someone in your congregation who rubs you the wrong way? Your initial feelings about that person may be negative and can become long-lasting if nothing is done to improve them. To improve relationships, even with enemies, the Bible recommends hospitality. (Prov. 25:21, 22) Extending hospitality to someone can reduce friction and soften hard feelings. It can bring to the surface lovable aspects of our guest's personality, aspects that Jehovah saw when he drew that one to the truth. (John 6:44) If extended with love, an unexpected invitation can be the start of a completely changed relationship. How can you make sure that love is your honest motive? One way is by following the encouragement given in our day's text. Finding ways that our brothers or sisters *are* superior to us—be it their faith, endurance, fearlessness, or some other Christian quality—will deepen our love for them and open the way for genuine and healing hospitality. *w18.03 17 ¶18-19*

Saturday, March 2

[Jehovah] does not desire anyone to be destroyed.—2 Pet. 3:9.

One of the greatest tests of obedience that some parents have involves their relationship with a disfellowshipped child. Consider the example of a mother whose disfellowshipped daughter left home. The mother admits: “I looked for loopholes in our publications so that I could spend time with my daughter and my granddaughter.” She adds: “But my husband kindly helped me to see that our child was now out of our hands and that we must not interfere.” Some years later, the daughter was reinstated. “She deeply respects my husband and me because she knows that we obeyed God,” the mother says. If you have a disfellowshipped child, will you “trust in Jehovah with all your heart [and] not rely on your own understanding”? (Prov. 3:5, 6) Have faith, then, in Jehovah’s discipline and direction. Do so even when it pains you, the parent, to do what Jehovah says. Yes, work with God’s discipline, not against it. *w18.03 31 ¶12-13*

Sunday, March 3

Go . . . and make disciples of people.—Matt. 28:19.

The Bible does not specify an age at which a person should get baptized. The Greek word translated “make disciples” at Matthew 28:19 has the sense of teaching with the *intent* of making pupils, or disciples. A disciple is one who learns and understands Jesus’ teachings and who is determined to observe them. Thus, the goal of all Christian parents should be to teach their children from infancy with the intention

of helping them become baptized disciples of Christ. Granted, an infant would not qualify for baptism. However, the Bible shows that even relatively young children can grasp and appreciate Bible truths. For example, Timothy was a disciple who made the truth his own at a young age. His faith was unshakable. (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14, 15) By the time he was in his late teens or early 20’s, Timothy was a Christian disciple who could be considered for special privileges in the congregation. —Acts 16:1-3. *w18.03 9 ¶4-5*

Monday, March 4

Continue to be made new in your dominant mental attitude.

—Eph. 4:23.

When we became servants of God, we made a transformation. This change affected every area of our life. And it was not over when we got baptized. Since we are not perfect, we all need to continue making changes. (Phil. 3:12, 13) Whether we are young or old, we can ask ourselves these questions: ‘Do I notice changes in myself that indicate that I am moving toward becoming a spiritually-minded person? Is my personality becoming Christlike? What do my disposition and conduct at Christian meetings reveal about the depth of my spirituality? What do my conversations show about my desires? What do my study habits, dress and grooming, or reaction to counsel reveal about me? How do I react when faced with temptations? Have I progressed beyond basics to maturity, becoming full-grown as a Christian?’ (Eph. 4:13) Thinking about our answers to these questions can help us measure our spiritual progress. *w18.02 24 ¶4-5*

Tuesday, March 5

Happy is the people whose God is Jehovah!—Ps. 144:15.

We live in a time of human history that is truly unique. As the Bible foretold, Jehovah is gathering “a great crowd . . . out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues.” Those gathered constitute “a mighty nation” of more than eight million happy people who “are rendering [God] sacred service day and night.” (Rev. 7:9, 15; Isa. 60:22) Never before have there been so many who have come to love both God and their fellow man. Yet, the inspired Scriptures also foretold that in our day, a misdirected kind of love characterized by selfishness would be shown by people who are alienated from God. The apostle Paul wrote: “In the last days . . . , men will be *lovers of themselves, lovers of money, . . . lovers of pleasures* rather than lovers of God.” (2 Tim. 3:1-4) This self-centered kind of love is inconsistent with Christian love; it stands in contrast with it. Indeed, such love fosters a selfish world that is “hard to deal with.”
w18.01 22 ¶1-2

Wednesday, March 6

*Those who seek Jehovah can understand everything.
—Prov. 28:5.*

Accurate knowledge gave Noah faith and godly wisdom, which protected him from harm, especially spiritual harm. For instance, because Noah “walked with the true God,” he did not walk, or associate, with the ungodly. He was not fooled by the materialized demons, who surely impressed faithless, gullible humans with their superhuman

abilities—perhaps even to the point of becoming objects of idolatry. (Gen. 6:1-4, 9) Also, Noah knew that *humans* were told to reproduce and fill the earth. (Gen. 1:27, 28) Hence, he must have known that sexual unions between women and materialized spirits were both unnatural and wrong. That conclusion was no doubt confirmed when those unions produced abnormal offspring. In time, God warned Noah that He was going to bring a flood upon the earth. Noah’s faith in that warning moved him to build the ark, thus saving his household.—Heb. 11:7.
w18.02 9 ¶8

Thursday, March 7

By God’s undeserved kindness I am what I am.—1 Cor. 15:10.

If you have sinned seriously, Jehovah is ready to *help you* recover. But you must accept the help he provides through the congregation. (Prov. 24:16; Jas. 5:13-15) Do not delay—your everlasting future is at stake! But suppose that long after a transgression was forgiven, you still have pangs of conscience over past mistakes? There were evidently times when the apostle Paul was distressed over past misdeeds. He acknowledged: “I am the least of the apostles, and I am not worthy of being called an apostle, because I persecuted the congregation of God.” (1 Cor. 15:9) Jehovah accepted Paul for what he was, and He expected Paul to realize that about himself. If you are sincerely repentant of past sins and have confessed them to the extent necessary, you can rest assured that Jehovah will be merciful. So take Jehovah at his word, and accept his forgiveness!—Isa. 55:6, 7.
w18.01 11 ¶17-18

Friday, March 8

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

Friendship with Jehovah involves two-way communication—listening and talking. Personal study of the Bible is the prime way we *listen* to Jehovah. That includes taking in knowledge by reading and meditating on God’s Word and Bible-based publications. As you do that, remember that study of the Bible is not a mere academic exercise. It should not be as if you were memorizing facts just to pass a school exam. Fruitful study is more like an expedition on which you can explore and discover new aspects of Jehovah’s personality. This will help you to draw close to God, and then he will draw close to you. Jehovah’s organization has provided a number of tools to help you put together an effective study program. For example, on jw.org, the study guides “What Does the Bible Really Teach?” can help you to build your conviction about your beliefs.—Ps. 119:105. *w17.12 25 ¶8-9*

Saturday, March 9

They will not cause any harm or any ruin in all my holy mountain.—Isa. 11:9.

Notice that this tranquil state of affairs will prevail “because the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah.” Since animals cannot learn about Jehovah, the spiritual fulfillment of this prophecy applies to people. (Isa. 11: 6, 7) There are many who were once as fierce as wolves but who now live in peace with others. You can read some of their experiences in the series “The Bible Changes Lives,”

found on jw.org. Formerly fierce people have “put on the new personality that was created according to God’s will in true righteousness and loyalty.” (Eph. 4:23, 24) As people learn about God, they see the need to conform to his standards. They are then moved to make changes in their beliefs, attitudes, and conduct. Such changes are not easy but can be made because God’s spirit will help those who sincerely desire to do God’s will. *w18.01 31 ¶15-16*

Sunday, March 10

Each one [will be made alive] in his own proper order.—1 Cor. 15:23.

Speaking of the heavenly resurrection, the Bible says that those who will experience that will be raised “each one in his own proper order.” We can trust that the earthly resurrection will likewise proceed in an orderly manner. That is an intriguing prospect. Will those who died recently be raised near the start of Christ’s Thousand Year Reign and be welcomed by loved ones who know them? Will faithful men of old with leadership abilities come back early to help organize God’s people in the new world? What about people who never served Jehovah? When and where will they be raised? Many questions could be asked. But, frankly, is there any real need to ponder those issues now? Is it not better just to wait and see how Jehovah handles those matters? In the meantime, we should bolster our faith in Jehovah, who through Jesus assured us that the dead in God’s memory will rise.—John 5:28, 29; 11:23. *w17.12 12 ¶20-21*

Monday, March 11

You wives, be in subjection to your husbands, as it is becoming in the Lord. You husbands, keep on loving your wives and do not be bitterly angry with them. You children, be obedient to your parents in everything.—Col. 3:18-20.

No doubt you will agree that applying Paul's inspired counsel will still benefit husbands, wives, and children. Husbands are told: "Keep on loving your wives and do not be bitterly angry with them." A loving husband honors his wife by listening to her opinions and by assuring her that he values what she says. (1 Pet. 3:7) Although he cannot always do as she asks, he often arrives at a more balanced decision by consulting her. (Prov. 15:22) A loving husband tries to gain his wife's respect by earning it rather than demanding it. A husband who loves his wife and children is more likely to have a family that happily serves Jehovah and wins the prize of life. *w17.11 28 ¶12; 29 ¶15*

Tuesday, March 12

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

The apostle Paul wrote his letter to Christians in Colossae evidently at the end of his first confinement in Rome, or about 60-61 C.E. He mentioned to them the importance of acquiring "spiritual comprehension." (Col. 1:9) Paul further stated: "I am saying this so that no one may delude you with persuasive arguments. Look out that no one takes you captive by means of

the philosophy and empty deception according to human tradition, according to the elementary things of the world and not according to Christ." (Col. 2:4, 8) Paul went on to explain why some popular ideas were wrong and why worldly thinking may be appealing to imperfect people. For example, it may make a person feel wise and superior to others. The letter was aimed at helping the brothers to reject worldly thinking and wrong practices.—Col. 2:16, 17, 23. *w17.11 20 ¶1*

Wednesday, March 13

*If . . . your hand or your foot makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it away from you.
—Matt. 18:8.*

What might a Christian need to give up in order to continue to receive divine mercy? He must be prepared to give up even what is dear to him if it would put him in danger of falling into sin. (Matt. 18:9) If certain friends influence you to do things that displease Jehovah, will you cut off association with them? If you struggle to be moderate in your use of alcoholic beverages, are you willing to steer clear of situations that might tempt you to overdrink? If you battle sexually immoral desires, are you avoiding any movies, websites, or activities that may trigger unclean thoughts? Remember, any sacrifice we make to keep our integrity to Jehovah is worth it. Nothing stings more than feeling abandoned by him. At the same time, nothing is more satisfying than feeling his "everlasting loyal love."—Isa. 54:7, 8. *w17.11 11 ¶12*

Thursday, March 14

This is the curse that is going out . . . , because everyone who steals . . . has gone unpunished.

—Zech. 5:3.

Did you notice at Zechariah 5:4 that “the curse . . . [would] enter into the house of the thief . . . and it [would] remain inside that house and consume it”? Jehovah’s adverse judgment cannot be kept out by bars and locks. It can penetrate any hiding place to uncover wrongdoing among Jehovah’s people. Even if a person is able to conceal thievery from authorities, employers, elders, or parents, he cannot hide it from God, who guarantees that every theft will be exposed. (Heb. 4:13) How refreshing it is to associate with people who are ever conscious of being honest “in all things”! (Heb. 13:18) All forms of stealing are offensive to Jehovah. We view it as an honor to live up to Jehovah’s high moral standard, maintaining conduct that in no way brings reproach on his name. Thus, we may succeed in escaping Jehovah’s judgment against those who deliberately violate his law. *w17.10 22 ¶6-7*

Friday, March 15

Earnestly [endeavor] to maintain the oneness of the spirit in the uniting bond of peace.—Eph. 4:3.

We do everything in our power to maintain peace with our brothers, even when we feel that we have been misunderstood or treated unfairly. (Rom. 12:17, 18) An apology can help to repair hurt feelings, but it must be sincere. Peace is especially vital in a marriage. A husband and a wife should not pretend to love each other in public

but then use the silent treatment, cruel words, or physical violence to hurt each other in private. We must also be ready to forgive freely. We forgive by pardoning someone who has offended us and by letting go of our resentment toward him. For our forgiveness to be genuine, we must control our thinking so that we do “not keep account of the injury.” (1 Cor. 13:4, 5) If we were to harbor resentment or hold a grudge, we would risk permanently damaging our relationship not only with our brother or sister but also with Jehovah.—Matt. 6:14, 15. *w17.10 10 ¶14-15*

Saturday, March 16

You will have to know that Jehovah of armies has sent me to you.

—Zech.6:15.

How did Zechariah’s message affect the Jews in his day? Jehovah had guaranteed stability and protection for their work. His assurance that the temple would be built must have brought hope to their tired hearts. But how would just a few accomplish so much work? Zechariah’s next words remove any remaining fear or doubt. In addition to the support of faithful ones like Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah, God tells of many others who would “come and take part in building the temple of Jehovah.” Confident of divine backing, the Jews quickly swing into action, resuming their building work despite the ban by the Persian king. Soon Jehovah removes the mountainlike obstacle of the official ban, and the temple is completed in 515 B.C.E. (Ezra 6:22; Zech. 4:6, 7) The words of Jehovah, however, describe things far greater for our day. *w17.10 29 ¶17*

Sunday, March 17

Be courageous . . . and go to work.—1 Chron. 28:20.

Solomon was instructed to oversee one of the most important construction projects of all time—that of the temple in Jerusalem. The building was to be “exceedingly magnificent, so that its fame and beauty [would] be known in all lands.” More important, the temple would be “the house of Jehovah the true God.” Jehovah directed that Solomon be the overseer of this project. (1 Chron. 22:1, 5, 9-11) King David was confident of God’s support, but Solomon was “young and inexperienced.” Would he have the courage to take on the task of building the temple? Would his youth and inexperience be an obstacle? To succeed, Solomon would need to be courageous and go to work. If Solomon did not prove to be courageous, fear could paralyze him, and inactivity would be worse than failure. Like Solomon, we need help from Jehovah to be courageous and complete the work. *w17.09 28 ¶1-2; 29 ¶4-5*

Monday, March 18

The word of our God endures forever.—Isa. 40:8.

Can you imagine what your life would be like without the Bible? You would have no reliable advice for day-to-day living. You would not have satisfying answers to questions about God, life, and the future. And you would not know of Jehovah’s past dealings with the human family. Thankfully, we do not face such a bleak situation. Jehovah has provided us with his

Word, the Bible. And he has guaranteed that its message will endure forever. The apostle Peter quoted Isaiah 40:8. That verse does not specifically refer to the Bible as we know it; yet, the inspired words apply by extension to the Bible’s message. (1 Pet. 1:24, 25) Although it has not always been easy, over the centuries sincere individuals have persevered in translating and distributing the Scriptures. Their desire was in harmony with God’s will that “all sorts of people should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth.”—1 Tim. 2:3, 4. *w17.09 18 ¶1-2*

Tuesday, March 19

*You are his wife. So how could I commit this great badness and actually sin against God?
—Gen. 39:9.*

Many young Christians face a trial like Joseph’s. (Gen. 39:7) Consider Kim. Most of her classmates were sexually active, and after a typical weekend, they boasted of their latest sexual encounters. Kim had no such stories to tell. She admits that being different at times made her feel “abandoned and alone” and that her peers considered her stupid because she did not date. Yet, Kim was wise enough to know that among many youths the temptation to engage in sex is great. (2 Tim. 2:22) Schoolmates often asked whether she was still a virgin. That gave her the opportunity to explain why she would not engage in sex. We are proud of young Christians who are determined to resist pressure to share in sexual immorality, and Jehovah is proud of them too! *w17.09 4 ¶8; 5 ¶10*

Wednesday, March 20

Do not become upset and turn to doing evil.—Ps. 37:8.

People who are quick-tempered often express their anger with abusive speech. Obviously, this old personality trait cannot contribute to a happy family life. For good reason, the Bible warns against anger, abusive speech, and screaming. (Eph. 4:31) Sadly, such conduct often escalates into violence. The world may view angry behavior as normal, but it dishonors our Creator. Many had to strip off these harmful ways before being able to clothe themselves with the new personality. (Col. 3:8-10) The practice of lying is also a trait of the old personality. For example, it is common for people to lie on tax returns or to lie to avoid taking responsibility for their sins. By contrast, Jehovah is “the God of truth.” (Ps. 31:5) Therefore, he requires that “each one” of his worshippers “speak truth with his neighbor” and “not lie.” (Eph. 4:25; Col. 3:9) Thus, we must tell the truth even if it may be embarrassing or inconvenient.—Prov. 6:16-19. *w17.08* 18 ¶3, 5; 20 ¶12-13, 15

Thursday, March 21

His word runs swiftly.—Ps. 147:15.

Today, Jehovah guides us with his Word, the Bible. And “his word runs swiftly” in that he readily gives us spiritual direction when we need it. Think about how you benefit from reading the Bible, examining the publications of “the faithful and discreet slave,” watching JW Broadcasting, visiting jw.org, talking with the elders, and associating with fellow Christians. (Matt. 24:45) Have you not seen that Jehovah is swift to provide you with his guidance?

The psalmist knew how favored God’s ancient people were. They were the only nation given God’s “word” and “his regulations and judgments.” (Ps. 147:19, 20) Today, we are blessed to be the only ones on earth called by God’s name. Knowing Jehovah and having his Word at work in our lives, we have come to enjoy a privileged relationship with him. Like the writer of Psalm 147, do you not have many good reasons to cry out “Praise Jah!” and to encourage others to do the same? *w17.07* 20 ¶15-16; 21 ¶18

Friday, March 22

No man serving as a soldier involves himself in the commercial businesses of life, in order to gain the approval of the one who enrolled him as a soldier.—2 Tim. 2:4.

Jesus’ followers today, including an army of over one million full-time ministers, apply Paul’s counsel above to the extent that their circumstances allow. Resisting the pressures of advertising and the world around them, they remember the principle: “The borrower is a slave to the lender.” (Prov. 22:7) Satan would like nothing better than to have us spend all our time and energy as slaves to his commercial world. Some decisions could keep us in financial bondage for years. Huge home mortgages, lingering student loans, expensive car payments, even extravagant weddings can result in great financial pressure. We demonstrate practical wisdom when we simplify our life and reduce debt and expenses, setting ourselves free to slave for God rather than for today’s commercial system.—1 Tim. 6:10. *w17.07* 10 ¶13

Saturday, March 23

I consider every instruction from you to be right; I hate every false path.—Ps. 119:128.

Jehovah is the rightful Sovereign of the universe. He exercises his authority with perfect justice. He declares: “I am Jehovah, the One showing loyal love, justice, and righteousness in the earth, for in these things I take delight.” (Jer. 9: 24) He does not look to any written code of laws made by imperfect men as a basis for determining what is just and fair. His perfect sense of justice emanates from his own being, and on that basis, he provided written laws for humans. “Righteousness and justice are the foundation of [his] throne,” so we can be confident that all of his laws, principles, and decisions are righteous. (Ps. 89:14) In contrast, despite his allegation that Jehovah’s sovereignty is deficient, Satan has been unable to produce a world wherein justice always prevails. *w17.06 28 ¶5*

Sunday, March 24

*O Sovereign Lord Jehovah,
... your words are truth.
—2 Sam. 7:28.*

Jehovah is the God of truth. (Ps. 31:5) As a generous Father, he shares divine truths with those who fear him. From the time that we first heard the truth, we have had the opportunity to collect truths from his Word, the Bible, from our Christian publications, and from our conventions, assemblies, and weekly meetings. Over time, we develop what Jesus described as a “treasure store” of old and new

truths. (Matt. 13:52) Jehovah will help us to collect precious new truths into our “treasure store” if we search for them as for hidden treasures. (Prov. 2:4-7) How do we do that? We must develop good personal study habits and do careful research in God’s Word and in our publications. This will help us to discover truths that may be “new” in the sense that we did not know them before. (Josh. 1:8, 9; Ps. 1:2, 3) Yes, we must be eager to enrich our own treasure store of divine truths. *w17.06 12 ¶13-14*

Monday, March 25

You will call me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.—Jer. 29:12.

A young single brother, whom we will call Eduardo, spoke of his concerns with Stephen, an older married elder. Eduardo had been thinking about what we read at 1 Corinthians 7:28: “Those who [marry] will have tribulation in their flesh.” He asked, “What is this ‘tribulation,’ and how would I deal with it if I marry?” Before addressing that question, Stephen asked Eduardo to consider something else that the apostle Paul wrote, namely, that Jehovah is “the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our trials [“tribulation,” *ftn.*]” (2 Cor. 1: 3, 4) Jehovah is indeed a loving Father, and he comforts us when we face difficulties. You may personally have had experiences in which God provided you with support and guidance, often through his Word. We can be sure that he wants the best for us, as he did for his servants in the past.—Jer. 29:11. *w17.06 4 ¶1-2*

Tuesday, March 26

Jehovah is protecting the foreign residents.—Ps. 146:9.

More than material assistance, our refugee brothers need spiritual and emotional support. (Matt. 4:4) Elders can help by obtaining literature in their language and by helping them contact brothers who speak their language. Many refugees have been torn away from their tight-knit extended families, communities, and congregations. They need to sense Jehovah's love and compassion among their fellow Christians. Otherwise, they may be drawn to unbelieving relatives or compatriots who can relate to their culture and experiences. (1 Cor. 15:33) By making them feel fully accepted in the congregation, we have the privilege to share with Jehovah in "protecting the foreign residents." Refugees may not have the option of returning to their homeland as long as their oppressors remain in power. Also, many have been traumatized by what they have experienced. Ask yourself, 'If I were in their position, how would I like to be treated?'—Matt. 7:12. *w17.05 6 ¶15-16*

Wednesday, March 27

The love of the greater number will grow cold.—Matt. 24:12.

Succumbing to discouragement can weaken our faith and cause our love for God to grow cold. In this wicked system controlled by Satan, all of us at times face discouraging circumstances. (1 John 5:19) Perhaps we are presently confronted with problems caused by old age, poor health, or economic pressures. Or we may be struggling with feelings of inadequacy, with unful-

filled expectations, or with personal failings. Yet, we should never allow such circumstances or feelings to convince us that Jehovah has left us. Instead, we should meditate on reassuring words about Jehovah's enduring love for us. We find such words at Psalm 136:23, which states: "He remembered us when we were low, for his loyal love endures forever." Indeed, Jehovah's loyal love for his servants is constant. Therefore, we can be sure that he hears our "pleas for help" and responds to them.—Ps. 116:1; 136:24-26. *w17.05 18 ¶8*

Thursday, March 28

If you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

—Matt. 6:15.

As shown at Galatians 2:11-14, Peter gave in to the snare of fear of man. (Prov. 29:25) Despite his firsthand knowledge of Jehovah's thinking on the matter, Peter feared the opinion of the circumcised Jewish members of the congregation in Jerusalem. The apostle Paul confronted Peter in Antioch and exposed his hypocrisy. (Acts 15:12; Gal. 2:13, ftn.) Evidently, Peter humbly accepted Paul's corrective counsel. There is no indication in the Scriptures that he lost his privileges. In fact, Peter was later inspired to write two letters that became part of the Bible. Jesus, who is head of the congregation, continued to use him. (Eph. 1:22) Members of the congregation thus had an opportunity to imitate Jesus and his Father by extending forgiveness. It is to be hoped that no one allowed himself to be stumbled by an imperfect man's mistake. *w17.04 27 ¶16-18*

Friday, March 29

By reducing the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes, [God] condemned them, setting a pattern for ungodly people of things to come.—2 Pet. 2:6.

When Jehovah brought destruction on that entire region, he was doing more than just putting an end to the wrongdoing there. He was “setting a pattern for ungodly people of things to come.” Just as Jehovah put an end to all the immoral activities back then, so he will put an end to similar wrongdoing today when he brings judgment against this present system of things. What will replace wrong activities? The Paradise earth will be bustling with happy activity. Think of the thrilling work of turning this planet into a paradise or of building homes for ourselves and our loved ones. Consider the prospect of welcoming back millions from the dead and helping to educate them about Jehovah’s ways as well as the history of his dealings with mankind. (Isa. 65:21, 22; Acts 24:15) Our lives will be full of activity that will contribute to our joy and to Jehovah’s praise! *w17.04 12 ¶11-12*

Saturday, March 30

Whoever comes out of the door of my house . . . will become Jehovah’s.—Judg. 11:31.

When making this vow, Jephthah might well have known that his daughter could be the one who would come out of his house to meet him. Even so, it was an emotionally difficult situation for father and daughter—a real sacrifice for both of them. When he saw her, Jephthah “ripped his garments” and said that his heart was broken. His daughter ‘wept over her virginity.’ Why?

Jephthah had no son, and his only daughter would never be able to marry and bear him grandchildren. There would be no way to pass on the family name and legacy. That was not the most important consideration, though. Jephthah said: “I have opened my mouth to Jehovah, and I am unable to turn back.” And his daughter replied: “Do to me as you have promised.” (Judg. 11:35-39) These were loyal individuals who would never have thought of breaking a vow that was made to the Most High God—no matter what it cost them personally.—Deut. 23:21, 23; Ps. 15:4. *w17.04 4 ¶5-6*

Sunday, March 31

I will wait patiently.—Mic. 7:7, ftn.

Joseph was the victim of some outrageous injustices. First, his brothers sold him into slavery when he was about 17 years old. Then, he was falsely accused of trying to rape his master’s wife and ended up in irons in prison. (Gen. 39:11-20; Ps. 105:17, 18) For his righteous actions, he seemed to be punished rather than blessed. But after 13 years, everything changed very quickly. He was released from prison and promoted to the second-highest position in Egypt. (Gen. 41:14, 37-43; Acts 7:9, 10) Did the injustices make Joseph bitter? Did he lose confidence in his God, Jehovah? No. What helped Joseph to wait patiently? It was his faith in Jehovah. He saw Jehovah’s hand in matters. Notice how this is reflected in what he told his brothers: “Although you meant to harm me, God intended it to turn out well and to preserve many people alive, as he is doing today.” (Gen. 50:19, 20) Ultimately, Joseph realized that the wait was worth it. *w17.08 4 ¶6; 6 ¶12-13*

Monday, April 1

He gave gifts in men.

—*Eph. 4:8.*

How can we benefit from those precious gifts? One way is to imitate the faith of the elders as well as their fine example. Another way is to heed their Scriptural counsel. (Heb. 13:7, 17) Remember, the elders love us and want us to grow spiritually. For instance, if they notice that we are missing meetings or that our zeal is cooling off, they will no doubt quickly come to our aid. They will listen to us and then try to build us up with warm encouragement and appropriate Scriptural counsel. Do you view such help as an expression of Jehovah's love for you? Keep in mind that elders may find that it is not easy to approach us with needed counsel. So how can you ease the load for the elders in your congregation? Be humble, approachable, and thankful. See their help as an expression of God's love for you. This will not only benefit you but also add much joy to their work. *w18.03 31 ¶15-16*

Tuesday, April 2

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

Each child is unique; not all children become mature at the same rate or at the same point in life. Some have a good measure of mental and emotional maturity at a young age and express a desire to get baptized. Others may not be ready for baptism until they are a bit older. Thus, discerning parents do not pressure their children

to get baptized. Rather, they assist each child to make spiritual advancement in keeping with his or her own growth and progress. Parents can rejoice when a child takes to heart the thought behind today's text. However, they should never lose sight of their goal—to have their children become Christian disciples. With that in mind, parents will want to consider the question, 'Does my child have sufficient knowledge to make a dedication to God and get baptized?' *w18.03 9 ¶6*

Wednesday, April 3

He does not go back on his promise, even when it is bad for him.

—*Ps. 15:4.*

If we accept an invitation, we should not cancel frivolously. Our host may well have made preparations, and all his effort may be for nothing if we cancel. (Matt. 5:37) Some have at times canceled a previous invitation in order to accept a seemingly better one. Would that be loving and respectful? Rather, we should accept hospitality with genuine appreciation for whatever our hosts have to offer. (Luke 10:7) And if truly unavoidable circumstances force us to cancel, it would be loving and considerate to let our hosts know as soon as possible. It is also important to respect local customs. In some cultures, unexpected guests are welcome; in others, prior arrangements are preferred. And in some cultures, it is expected that guests politely decline the first invitation or two; in others, to decline comes across as unappreciative. Let us do our utmost to make our hosts happy that they invited us. *w18.03 18 ¶20-21*

Thursday, April 4

Press on to maturity.—Heb. 6:1.

Keep in mind that having knowledge of the Bible is not enough to become a spiritually-minded person. (1 Ki. 4:29, 30; 11:4-6) So in addition to Bible knowledge, what is needed? We need to continue to make spiritual progress. (Col. 2:6, 7) One important step is to study the publication *“Keep Yourselves in God’s Love.”* Completing your study of that book will help you to see how to apply Bible principles in your life. If you have already finished studying that book, can you move on to other study materials that can help you to stabilize your faith? (Col. 1:23) Do you prayerfully meditate on how you can apply in your life what you are studying? Keep in mind that as we study and meditate, we should do so with the goal of developing a heartfelt desire to please Jehovah and obey his laws. (Ps. 40:8; 119:97) At the same time, we work to reject things that will hinder our spiritual growth.—Titus 2:11, 12. *w18.02* 24-25 ¶7-9

Friday, April 5

*[Noah] became an heir of the righteousness that results from faith.
—Heb. 11:7.*

To cultivate faith like Noah’s, we need to be good students of God’s Word, to take to heart what we learn, and to let that knowledge mold us and guide us. (1 Pet. 1:13-15) Then faith and godly wisdom will protect us from Satan’s clever designs and from the world’s evil spirit. (2 Cor. 2:11) That spirit fosters a love for violence and immorality. And it impels people to focus on fleshly desires. (1 John 2:15, 16) It may even move the spiritually weak to ignore the evidence

of the closeness of God’s great day. Note that when Jesus compared our time with Noah’s, he focused, not on violence or immorality, but on the dangers of spiritual apathy. (Matt. 24:36-39) Ask yourself: ‘Does my way of life indicate that I truly know Jehovah? Does my faith impel me not only to live in harmony with God’s righteous standards but also to proclaim them?’ May your answers show that you too ‘walk with the true God.’—Gen. 6:9. *w18.02* 9-10 ¶8-10

Saturday, April 6

From these turn away.—2 Tim. 3:5.

We cannot completely avoid people with ungodly traits. We might have to work with them, go to school with them, or live with them. But we can avoid being drawn into their thinking and imitating their characteristics. We do this by strengthening our spirituality through Bible study and close association with those who are determined to serve Jehovah. We should also strive to help others spiritually. Look for opportunities to witness, asking Jehovah to help you say the right thing at the right time. We should let others know that we are Jehovah’s Witnesses. That way, our fine conduct will bring glory to God and not to us. We have been trained “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 2:11-14) If we conduct ourselves in a godly way, others will observe us, and some may even say: “We want to go with you, for we have heard that God is with you people.”—Zech. 8:23. *w18.01* 31 ¶17-18

Sunday, April 7

Men will be lovers of themselves.

—2 Tim. 3:2.

Is it wrong for us to love ourselves? No, it is normal, even necessary, to have a healthy love of self. Jehovah designed us that way. Jesus said: “You must love your neighbor *as yourself*.” (Mark 12:31) If we do not love ourselves, we cannot love our neighbor. We also read in the Scriptures: “Husbands should love their wives *as their own bodies*. A man who loves his wife loves *himself*, for no man ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cherishes it.” (Eph. 5:28, 29) So a proper love of self is desirable. The love of self mentioned at 2 Timothy 3:2 is a distorted, selfish love. People who love themselves excessively think more of themselves than it is necessary for them to think. (Rom. 12:3) Their main interest in life is themselves. They care little about others. When things go wrong, they tend to blame others rather than accept responsibility. Such self-centered people are not truly happy. *w18.01* 23 ¶4-5

Monday, April 8

Show yourselves thankful.

—Col. 3:15.

While personal study is one way we listen to Jehovah, prayer is a way in which we speak to him. A Christian should not view prayer as a meaningless ritual; nor is it a ‘good luck charm’ to increase the chances of success at some endeavor. Rather, prayer is real communication with our Creator. Jehovah *wants* to hear from you. (Phil. 4:6) When you experience any kind of anxiety, the Bible’s wise advice is

to “throw your burden on Jehovah.” (Ps. 55:22) Do you really believe that? There are millions of brothers and sisters who can assure you that it has helped them. It can help you too! Prayer offers you the opportunity to do more than simply ask Jehovah for help. Sometimes we can become so consumed by our problems that we overlook the many blessings we have. Why not determine that each day you will think of at least three things for which you can be thankful? Then thank Jehovah in prayer for those blessings. *w17.12* 25-26 ¶10-11

Tuesday, April 9

From infancy you have known the holy writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation.

—2 Tim. 3:15.

Thousands of Bible students make their dedication to Jehovah and get baptized. Many are young people who have been raised in the truth and who have chosen the best way of life. (Ps. 1:1-3) If you are a Christian parent, you no doubt look forward to the day when your son or daughter will get baptized. (Compare 3 John 4.) As a Christian parent, you want your child to know the holy writings, which today include the Hebrew Scriptures as well as the Christian Greek Scriptures. Depending on their ability, even very young children can gain a basic education about the people and events of the Bible. Jehovah’s organization has provided a number of tools that parents can use to help their children. Remember, knowledge of the Scriptures is the foundation on which a strong relationship with Jehovah is built. *w17.12* 18 ¶1; 19 ¶4

Wednesday, April 10

A husband is head of his wife.

—Eph. 5:23.

What if you are a wife and you feel that your unbelieving husband does not treat you properly? Would you improve the situation by arguing about his behavior? Even if you succeed in making him do what you want, will you win him over to the truth? Not likely. But if you show respect for your husband's headship, you can contribute to peace in the family, you will praise Jehovah, and you may even win your husband over to true worship; thus you both may gain the prize. (1 Pet. 3:1, 2) What if you are a husband and you feel that your unbelieving wife does not respect you? Would you move her to show you more respect if you were to shout at her to show her who is boss? Absolutely not! God expects you to exercise headship lovingly, in imitation of Jesus. Jesus exercises his headship over his congregation with loving patience. (Luke 9:46-48) By imitating Jesus' example, a husband may win his wife over to true worship. *w17.11* 28-29 ¶13-14

Thursday, April 11

The one who constructed all things is God.—Heb. 3:4.

Worldly thinking ignores or belittles Jehovah's guidelines, and its influence could gradually weaken our faith. Today, we all are exposed to worldly thinking. It is promoted on television, on the Internet, at work, or at school. In many countries, it is not unusual to hear people say that they do not believe in God; they consider themselves to be nonreligious.

They may not have examined the question of God's existence carefully, but they are drawn to the idea of being free to do as they please. (Ps. 10:4) Others may feel worldly-wise when they say, "I can have high principles without believing in God." Is the claim of unbelievers that there is no Creator based on logical reasoning? When looking to science to determine whether life was created, a person can easily get lost in a fog of information. But in reality, the answer is simple. If a building needs someone to construct it, how much more so do living things! *w17.11* 20-21 ¶2-4

Friday, April 12

A book of remembrance was written before him for those fearing Jehovah and for those meditating on his name.—Mal. 3:16.

Reflect on the importance of attending the Memorial. Remember, congregation meetings are part of our worship. Surely Jehovah and Jesus take note of who makes the effort to attend this most important meeting of the year. Frankly, we want them to see that unless it is physically or circumstantially impossible, we will be present at the Memorial. When we show by our actions that meetings for worship are important to us, we give Jehovah added reason to keep our name in his "book of remembrance"—"the book of life"—in which the names of those who are in line to attain to everlasting life are inscribed. (Rev. 20:15) In the days leading up to the Memorial, we can set aside time to examine prayerfully and carefully our personal relationship with Jehovah.—2 Cor. 13:5. *w18.01* 13 ¶4-5

Saturday, April 13

He must flee to one of these cities.

—Josh. 20:4.

Once inside a city of refuge, the fugitive was safe. Regarding those cities, Jehovah said: “They will serve as a refuge for you.” (Josh. 20:2, 3) Jehovah did not require the manslayer to be judged again for the same case; nor was the avenger of blood permitted to enter the city and take the fugitive’s life. The fugitive thus never had to fear reprisal. While in the city, he was safe and secure under Jehovah’s protection. This was not a *prison* of refuge. The city offered him an opportunity to work, to help others, and to serve Jehovah in peace. Yes, a happy and fulfilling life was possible! Some of God’s people who sinned grievously but who repented have felt “imprisoned” by their guilt, even feeling that Jehovah will forever view them as tainted by gross wrongdoing. If you feel that way, please be assured that when Jehovah forgives you, you can feel secure in his mercy! *w17.11 9 ¶6; 11 ¶13-14*

Sunday, April 14

*How good and how pleasant it is
... to dwell together in unity!*

—Ps. 133:1.

One way we can promote unity is by reflecting on the meaning of the emblems used at the Memorial. Prior to that special night—and especially on that night—give serious thought to the significance of the unleavened bread and the red wine. (1 Cor. 11:23-25) The bread represents the sinless body of Jesus offered in sacrifice, and the wine pictures his shed blood. Remember that the ransom sacrifice of Christ involved the two

greatest expressions of love—the love that Jehovah showed in giving his Son in our behalf, and the love that Jesus showed by willingly offering up his life for us. Reflecting on their love should move us to love them in return. And the love for Jehovah that we and our fellow worshippers share is like a cord that ties us together and strengthens our bond of unity. *w18.01 14 ¶11*

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

Monday, April 15

By this the love of God was revealed in our case, that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world so that we might gain life through him.—1 John 4:9.

Jehovah deeply loves and values mankind. He was willing to use the blood of his Son to make possible our eternal salvation. (John 3:16) Were Jehovah to fail to fulfill his promises, the Devil would have an excuse to call God a liar who withholds good and thus rules in an unfair way. It would also vindicate opposers who mockingly ask: “Where is this promised presence of his? Why, from the day our forefathers fell asleep in death, all things are continuing exactly as they were from creation’s beginning.” (2 Pet. 3:3, 4) Hence, Jehovah will see to it that the vindication of his sovereignty includes the salvation of obedient humans! (Isa. 55:10, 11) Furthermore, Jehovah’s love characterizes his sovereignty. So we can be sure that he will always love, value, and appreciate his loyal servants.—Ex. 34:6. *w17.06 23 ¶7*

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

Tuesday, April 16

[God] loved us and sent his Son as a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins.—1 John 4:10.

From the moment that Jehovah promised a future Savior, as recorded at Genesis 3:15, He viewed this sacrifice as already made. Then, some 4,000 years later, Jehovah at great personal cost sacrificed his only-begotten Son for the world of mankind. (John 3:16) How grateful we are for Jehovah's unselfish love! We are able to show unselfish love because God created us in his image. Abel showed love for God by unselfishly offering the best of what he had. (Gen. 4:3, 4) Noah displayed unselfish love for his fellow man by preaching God's message for decades despite not seeing any response from the people. (2 Pet. 2:5) Abraham put his love for God ahead of his own feelings when he was commanded to offer up his son Isaac. (Jas. 2:21) Like those faithful men, we want to show love, despite the challenges we face. *w17.10* 7-8 ¶3-4

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

Wednesday, April 17

We do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tested in all respects as we have, but without sin.—Heb. 4:15.

The services of our High Priest, Jesus, reassure us that our sins can be forgiven and that "we may receive mercy and find undeserved kindness to help us at the right time." (Heb. 4:16) Therefore, exercise faith in Jesus' sacrifice. Have faith that the ransom applies to

you. (Gal. 2:20, 21) Have faith that the ransom is the basis for forgiving *your* sins. Have faith that the ransom offers *you* the hope of eternal life. Jesus' sacrifice is Jehovah's gift to *you*. And once Jehovah has forgiven our sins, we do not need to fear that he is looking for a reason to bring up those sins again or to judge us for them. (Ps. 103:8-12) Yes, we can be completely confident of Jehovah's forgiveness. *w17.11* 11-12 ¶14-17

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

Thursday, April 18

I make request . . . concerning those putting faith in me through their word, so that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in union with me.—John 17:20, 21.

On the night of the first Lord's Evening Meal, Jesus prayed that his followers would all be united and that they would enjoy the same unity that he and his Father treasure. Jehovah has indeed answered that prayer of his dear Son, and now millions believe that Jehovah sent his Son. The Memorial, like no other meeting of God's people, provides undeniable evidence of the unity of Jehovah's Witnesses. In some areas, the gathering of different races at a religious meeting is unheard of or is looked down on by others. But such unity is beautiful in the eyes of Jehovah and Jesus! As Jehovah's people, we are not surprised at the unity we enjoy. Jehovah, in fact, foretold it.—Ezek. 37:15-17; Zech. 8:23. *w18.01* 14 ¶7-9

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

MEMORIAL DATE
After Sundown
Friday, April 19

The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.—Ps. 118:22.

“The builders,” the Jewish leaders, rejected the Messiah. Their rejection was far more than just turning their backs on Jesus or refusing to accept him as the Christ. Many Jews rejected him to the point of clamoring for his death. (Luke 23:18-23) Yes, they contributed to Jesus’ being killed. If Jesus was rejected and killed, how could he become “the chief cornerstone”? That could come about only by his being resurrected to life again. The apostle Peter spoke of “Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom *you executed* on a stake but whom *God raised up from the dead.*” (Acts 3:15; 4:5-11; 1 Pet. 2:5-7) This resurrected Son thus became the only one whose name was “given among men by which we must get saved.”—Acts 4:12; Eph. 1:20. *w17.12* 9-10 ¶6-9

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

Saturday, April 20

Keep proclaiming the death of the Lord, until he comes.
—1 Cor. 11:26.

Regarding the great tribulation just ahead of us, Jesus said: “They will see *the Son of man coming* on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And [Jesus] will send out his angels with a great trumpet sound, and they will gather his chosen ones together.” (Matt. 24:29-31) This ‘gathering of chosen ones’

refers to the time when all anointed Christians who still remain on earth will receive their heavenly reward. It will happen after the initial part of the great tribulation has passed but before the battle of Armageddon. Then all of the 144,000 will share with Jesus in conquering the kings of the earth. (Rev. 17:12-14) The last Memorial that is observed prior to this gathering of the anointed to heaven will be the final one, for Jesus will have ‘come.’ *w18.01* 16 ¶15

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

Sunday, April 21

God resurrected this Jesus.
—Acts 2:32.

In heaven, Jesus lives “forever and ever,” never seeing corruption. (Rev. 1:5, 18; Rom. 6:9; Col. 1:18; 1 Pet. 3:18) He had assured his faithful apostles that they would rule with him in heaven. (Luke 22:28-30) Paul wrote that “Christ has been raised from the dead, the *firstfruits* of those who have fallen asleep in death.” Paul went on to indicate that there would be others raised to heavenly life, adding: “Each one in his own proper order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who belong to the Christ *during his presence.*” (1 Cor. 15:20, 23) Since 1914 we have been living during Jesus’ promised “presence.” It is still continuing, and the end of this wicked system of things is now very near. *w17.12* 10 ¶11; 11 ¶14-16

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

Monday, April 22

I myself am the One comforting you.—Isa. 51:12.

Our Father of tender mercies has himself experienced the loss of loved ones, such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and King David. (Num. 12:6-8; Matt. 22:31, 32; Acts 13:22) God's Word assures us that Jehovah has eagerly anticipated—has had an earnest longing for—the time when he will bring them back to life. (Job 14:14, 15) They will be happy and in vibrant health. Consider, too, that God's dearly beloved Son—"the one he was especially fond of"—died an agonizing death. (Prov. 8:22, 30) Words cannot express the pain Jehovah must have suffered. (John 5:20; 10:17) We can have unwavering confidence that Jehovah will act in our behalf. We should therefore not hesitate to pour out our hearts to him in prayer concerning our personal grief. How comforting it is to know that Jehovah understands our pain and provides the comfort that we so sorely need!—2 Cor. 1:3, 4. *w17.07* 13 ¶3-5

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

Tuesday, April 23

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

Today, millions are moved from the heart to contribute their "valuable things," which include their time, energy, and resources in support of Jehovah's great spiritual temple. (Prov. 3:9) The work and the love we show for Jehovah will never be forgotten by him. All that has been accomplished for true

worship in these last days is tangible evidence of Jehovah's blessing and Christ's leadership. We are part of a stable, secure, and everlasting organization. Cherish your place among Jehovah's people, and "do not fail to listen to the voice of Jehovah your God." (Zech. 6:15) Then you can remain under the protection of our King and High Priest. Have as full a share as possible in supporting true worship. As you do so, you can be certain that Jehovah of armies will keep you safe and secure during the remainder of this system of things—and for eternity!
w17.10 30 ¶18-19

Wednesday, April 24

Make friends for yourselves by means of the unrighteous riches, so that when such fail, they may receive you into the everlasting dwelling places.—Luke 16:9.

In the near future, Satan's entire system—political, religious, and commercial—is destined to fail. The prophets Ezekiel and Zephaniah foretold that gold and silver, staples of the commercial world through the centuries, will become worthless. (Ezek. 7:19; Zeph. 1:18) How would we feel if we reached the end of our life in this world and realized that we had sacrificed true riches for a vast store of this world's "unrighteous riches"? We could feel like a man who has worked all his life for a pile of money, only to learn that it is counterfeit. (Prov. 18:11) Yes, such riches *will* ultimately fail, so do not lose the opportunity to use them to "make friends" in heaven. Whatever we do to advance the interests of Jehovah's Kingdom makes us spiritually rich. *w17.07* 11 ¶16

Thursday, April 25

Become imitators of God, as beloved children, and go on walking in love, just as the Christ also loved us and gave himself for us.
—Eph. 5:1, 2.

Some Christians who have committed a serious sin try to cover it over in order to avoid embarrassing themselves or disappointing others. (Prov. 28:13) Yet, such a course is unloving, for it harms not only the sinner but also others. It can hinder the flow of God's spirit and threaten the peace of the entire congregation. (Eph. 4:30) Genuine love moves Christians who have committed serious sins to speak to the elders so that the elders can provide the needed help. (Jas. 5:14, 15) Love is the greatest of all qualities. (1 Cor. 13:13) It identifies us as Jesus' followers and as imitators of Jehovah, the Source of love. "If I . . . do not have love," wrote Paul, "I am nothing." (1 Cor. 13:2) May we continue to show our love not just "in word" but also "in deed and truth."
—1 John 3:18. *w17.10* 11 ¶17-18

Friday, April 26

We must obey God as ruler rather than men.—Acts 5:29.

Consider the courage Joseph showed when Potiphar's wife tempted him to commit sexual immorality. He must have known that he could face severe consequences if he refused her. Even so, rather than give in, he showed courage and took decisive action. (Gen. 39:10, 12) Rahab is another example of courage. When Israelite spies went to her home in Jericho, she courageously hid the two men and helped them to get away safely.

(Josh. 2:4, 5, 9, 12-16) When opposed by the Sadducees, the faithful apostles, who had seen the courage that Jesus displayed, would not stop teaching on the basis of Jesus' name. (Acts 5:17, 18, 27-29) Joseph, Rahab, Jesus, and the apostles displayed an inner strength that motivated them to perform good works. Their courage was not overconfidence. It came from reliance on Jehovah. We too face circumstances that require courage. Rather than rely on ourselves, we must rely on Jehovah.—2 Tim. 1:7. *w17.09* 29 ¶6-9

Saturday, April 27

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

Stripping off old personality traits cannot be done in one's own strength. Often, individuals who did so had to fight hard to put away their bad practices. They gained the victory by opening their mind and heart to the power of God's Word and his holy spirit. (Luke 11:13; Heb. 4:12) To benefit from that power, we must read the Bible daily, meditate on it, and pray constantly for the wisdom and strength to apply Bible counsel. (Josh. 1:8; Ps. 119:97; 1 Thess. 5:17) We also benefit from God's Word and his holy spirit when we prepare for and attend congregation meetings. (Heb. 10:24, 25) In addition, we want to make good use of the various means by which spiritual food is now made available to God's people worldwide. (Luke 12:42) While Christians must strip off the old personality, that is not all that is required to gain God's approval. We must also clothe ourselves with the new personality.—Col. 3:10. *w17.08* 21 ¶16-17

Sunday, April 28

As for me, I trust in your loyal love; my heart will rejoice in your acts of salvation.—Ps. 13:5.

King David was the victim of many injustices. Although anointed by Jehovah at an early age to be the future king of Israel, David had to wait some 15 years before he was made king over his own tribe. (2 Sam. 2:3, 4) During part of this time, unfaithful King Saul pursued David, seeking to kill him. As a result, David had to live as a fugitive, at times in a foreign country and at other times in caves in the wilderness. Even when Saul was eventually killed in battle, David still had to wait about seven more years before he was given the kingship over the whole nation of Israel. (2 Sam. 5: 4, 5) Why was David willing to wait patiently? He trusted in Jehovah's loyal love. He joyfully looked forward to deliverance, and he reflected on how Jehovah had dealt rewardingly with him. (Ps. 13:6) Yes, David felt that the wait would be worth it. *w17.08 6 ¶14-15*

Monday, April 29

*God is not partial.
—Acts 10:34.*

Over time, languages tend to change. Words and expressions may come to mean something completely different. The same is true of Hebrew and Greek, the languages that most of the Bible was written in. Modern Hebrew and Greek are quite different from those languages back in Bible times. So virtually everyone who wants to understand God's Word must read a translation of it—even those who know modern-day Hebrew or

Greek. Some have felt that they should learn ancient Hebrew and Greek so that they could read the Bible in the original languages. That, however, may not be as profitable as they imagine. Thankfully, the Bible or portions of it have now been translated into nearly 3,000 languages. Clearly, Jehovah wants people of "every nation and tribe and language" to have the opportunity to benefit from his Word. (Rev. 14:6, ftn.) Does that not draw you even closer to our loving and impartial God? *w17.09 19 ¶4*

Tuesday, April 30

A man of knowledge restrains his words, and a discerning man will remain calm.—Prov. 17:27.

If you have disfellowshipped relatives, you may need to control your feelings in order to avoid unnecessary contact with them. Self-restraint in such situations is easier if we realize that our actions are in line with God's example and in harmony with his counsel. A notable example is King David. He wielded great power but refrained from using it out of anger when provoked by Saul and Shimei. (1 Sam. 26:9-11; 2 Sam. 16:5-10) That is not to say that David always controlled himself, as we know from his sin with Bath-sheba and his initial reaction to Nabal's greed. (1 Sam. 25:10-13; 2 Sam. 11:2-4) Nevertheless, we can learn valuable lessons from David. First, overseers among God's people need to be especially careful to exercise self-control so that they do not abuse their authority. Second, no one can be complacent, thinking that he is safe from temptation. —1 Cor. 10:12. *w17.09 5-6 ¶12-13*

Wednesday, May 1

Hold on to discipline; do not let it go. Safeguard it, for it means your life.—Prov. 4:13.

While discipline may be painful, there is something that is even more painful—the harm that may result from rejecting discipline. (Heb. 12:11) Consider the example of Cain. When Cain developed a murderous hatred toward Abel, God admonished Cain: “Why are you so angry and dejected? If you turn to doing good, will you not be restored to favor? But if you do not turn to doing good, sin is crouching at the door, and its craving is to dominate you; but will you get the mastery over it?” (Gen. 4:6, 7) Cain did not listen. Then sin overwhelmed him. What needless pain and suffering Cain brought on himself! (Gen. 4:11, 12) The pain of Jehovah’s reprimand would have been mild by comparison. How Jehovah wants to spare us from such needless suffering! (Isa. 48:17, 18) So let us “listen to discipline and become wise.”—Prov. 8:33. *w18.03 32 ¶18-20*

Thursday, May 2

I, Daniel, discerned by the books the number of years.—Dan. 9:2.

How did Daniel come to know Jehovah? He was evidently well-instructed by his parents, who taught him to love Jehovah and his written Word. Moreover, that love stayed with Daniel all his life. Even in his old age, we find him poring over the Scriptures. Daniel’s intimate knowledge of God, including God’s dealings with Israel, is beautifully reflected in the prophet’s heartfelt and contrite prayer record-

ed at Daniel 9:3-19. Why not take a few moments to read that prayer and meditate on it? For a faithful Jew, life in pagan Babylon presented big challenges. For instance, Jehovah told the Jews: “Seek the peace of the city to which I have exiled you.” (Jer. 29:7) Yet, at the same time, he required their exclusive devotion. (Ex. 34:14) What enabled Daniel to balance the two requirements? Godly wisdom helped him to grasp the principle of relative subjection to secular authorities. Centuries later, Jesus taught the very same principle.—Luke 20:25. *w18.02 10 ¶11-12*

Friday, May 3

Put a mark on the foreheads of the men.—Ezek. 9:4.

Are you dealing with trials, such as ill health, financial problems, or persecution? Do you at times find it hard to maintain your joy in Jehovah’s service? If so, take courage from the examples of Noah, Daniel, and Job. They were imperfect, and they faced many of the challenges we face, including some that were life threatening. Yet, they held on to their integrity, becoming models of faith and obedience in the eyes of God. (Ezek. 14:12-14) Ezekiel wrote the words of our text in Babylonia in 612 B.C.E. (Ezek. 1:1; 8:1) Apostate Jerusalem was nearing its foretold destruction, which occurred in 607 B.C.E. Only relatively few individuals reflected the qualities of Noah, Daniel, and Job and were thus marked for survival. (Ezek. 9:1-5) Likewise today, only those whom Jehovah considers blameless like them will be marked for survival when the present system of things comes to an end.—Rev. 7:9, 14. *w18.02 3-4 ¶1-3*

Saturday, May 4

*Remember . . . your Grand Creator
in the days of your youth.*

—Eccl. 12:1.

As a youth, ask yourself: ‘Am I participating in spiritual activities just because my parents expect me to? Am I drawing closer to God by nurturing a personal relationship with him?’ Of course, the counsel to have spiritual goals applies not just to youths. Having such goals will help all of us as Jehovah’s servants to deepen our spirituality. (Eccl. 12:13) Once we have identified areas for improvement, we need to take positive steps that will help us move forward. Becoming a spiritual person is very important. In fact, it is a life-and-death matter. (Rom. 8:6-8) However, for us to be spiritually mature does not mean to be perfect. Jehovah’s spirit can help us to make the needed progress. Still, we do need to put forth effort. Although Bible study can be enjoyable, we should not expect the Bible to read like a novel that is written just to entertain. We need to work at finding spiritual gems that will help us. *w18.02 25 ¶10-11*

Sunday, May 5

*Why are you delaying? Rise, get
baptized.—Acts 22:16.*

An exhaustive knowledge is not required before a person can make a dedication to God and get baptized. After baptism, all disciples should keep on growing in accurate knowledge. (Col. 1:9, 10) So how much knowledge is initially required? The experience of a family in the first century offers us some insight. (Acts 16:25-33) While on his second missionary tour, about 50 C.E., Paul

visited Philippi. While there, he and his companion Silas were arrested on false charges and thrown in jail. During the night, an earthquake shook the foundations of the jail and opened all the doors. The jailer, fearing that the prisoners had escaped, was on the verge of committing suicide when Paul called out to him. Paul and Silas were able to give a fine witness to the jailer and his family. Their appreciation for the truths they were learning about Jesus prompted them to take what step? They got baptized without delay. *w18.03 10 ¶7-8*

Monday, May 6

*Happy is the people whose God
is Jehovah!—Ps. 144:15.*

Jehovah is a happy God, and his people reflect that quality. Furthermore, unlike those who are lovers of themselves and who are interested only in receiving, Jehovah’s servants find delight in giving of themselves for the welfare of others. (Acts 20:35; 2 Tim. 3:2) How can we determine if our love of God is being eclipsed by love of self? Consider the admonition found at Philipians 2:3, 4: “Do nothing out of contentiousness or out of egotism, but with humility consider others superior to you, as you look out not only for your own interests, but also for the interests of others.” We might ask ourselves: ‘Do I apply that counsel in my life? Do I reach out to help others, both in the congregation and in the field ministry?’ Giving of ourselves is not always easy. It requires effort and self-sacrifice. But what could make us happier than knowing that we have the approval of the Sovereign of the universe? *w18.01 23 ¶6-7*

Tuesday, May 7

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

To do that, we do well to ask ourselves: ‘Do I really believe that I am part of the only organization that Jehovah has approved to accomplish his will? Am I doing my utmost to preach and teach the good news of the Kingdom? Do my actions show that I truly believe that these are the last days and that the end of Satan’s rule is near? Do I have the same confidence in Jehovah and Jesus now that I had when I dedicated my life to Jehovah God?’ (Matt. 24:14; 2 Tim. 3:1; Heb. 3:14) Pondering the answers to such questions will help us to keep proving what we ourselves are. Read and meditate on Scriptural material that discusses the significance of the Memorial. (John 3:16; 17:3) The only path to everlasting life involves “coming to know” Jehovah and “exercising faith” in Jesus, His only-begotten Son. To prepare for the Memorial, why not choose some study projects that will help you to draw closer to Jehovah and Jesus?
w18.01 13 ¶5-6

Wednesday, May 8

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

When you read the Bible and our publications and when you attend Christian meetings, you hear encouraging experiences of how God has helped others to stay faithful. But as you grow spiritually, you need to see Jehovah’s hand in your own life. How have you personally tasted Jehovah’s goodness? There is one way that all Christians

have tasted Jehovah’s goodness. It is by being invited to draw close to God and his Son. A youth might reason, ‘Jehovah drew *my parents*, and I merely followed.’ But when you dedicated yourself to Jehovah and got baptized, you showed that you had come into a privileged relationship with him. Now you are truly known by him. The Bible assures us: “If anyone loves God, this one is known by him.” (1 Cor. 8:3) Try always to treasure, to appreciate, your place in Jehovah’s organization. *w17.12 26 ¶12-13*

Thursday, May 9

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

The word “discipline” may make you think of punishment, but much more is involved. In the Bible, discipline is often presented in an appealing light, at times alongside knowledge, wisdom, love, and life. (Prov. 1:2-7; 4:11-13) That is because God’s discipline is an expression of his love for us and of his desire that we gain everlasting life. (Heb. 12:6) While his discipline may include chastisement, it is never abusive or cruel. Indeed, the meaning behind “discipline” primarily relates to education, such as that involved in raising a beloved child. As members of the Christian congregation, we are part of God’s household. (1 Tim. 3:15) We therefore respect Jehovah’s right both to set standards and to give loving discipline when we violate them. Moreover, if our actions caused unpleasant consequences, his discipline would remind us of just how important it is to listen to our heavenly Father.—Gal. 6:7. *w18.03 23 ¶1; 24 ¶3*

Friday, May 10

A man of knowledge restrains his words, and a discerning man will remain calm.—Prov. 17:27.

What if you are a teenager and feel misunderstood and restricted by your Christian parents? Your frustration might even make you doubt that serving Jehovah is the best way of life. But if you allow frustration to make you give up serving Jehovah, you would soon discover that no one else cares for you more genuinely than your God-fearing parents and your congregation. If your parents never corrected you, would you not wonder if they really cared about you? (Heb. 12:8) But perhaps it is the *way* your parents discipline you that upsets you. Rather than fret over the manner of discipline, try to recognize that there may be a reason for the way they act. So keep calm and do your best to avoid overreacting to criticism. Make it your goal to become a mature person who can take counsel calmly and benefit from it without worrying excessively about how it was given.—Prov. 1:8. *w17.11* 29 ¶16-17

Saturday, May 11

You have left the love you had at first.—Rev. 2:4.

Perhaps you have seen some youths get baptized but later question the wisdom of living by God's standards. A number have even left the way of the truth. Hence, you might worry that your child will start out on the Christian course but then change and lose that original love of the truth. How can you try to avoid such an outcome and help your child to "grow to sal-

vation"? (1 Pet. 2:2) The answer lies in what Paul wrote to Timothy: "Continue in the things that you learned and were persuaded to believe, knowing from whom you learned them and that from infancy you have known the holy writings [the Hebrew Scriptures], which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. 3:14, 15) Note that Paul mentions (1) *knowing* the holy writings, (2) *being persuaded to believe* the things learned, and (3) *becoming wise for salvation* through faith in Christ Jesus. *w17.12* 18-19 ¶2-3

Sunday, May 12

My servants will shout joyfully because of the good condition of the heart, but you will cry out because of the pain of heart.—Isa. 65:14.

Many religions turn people away from God by teaching hellfire, collecting tithes, or preaching politics. No wonder an increasing number of people feel that they can be happy without religion! Certainly an individual can be happy without *false* religion, but a person cannot be truly happy unless he has a relationship with Jehovah, who is described as "the happy God." (1 Tim. 1:11) Everything God does benefits others. His servants are happy because they focus on helping others. (Acts 20:35) For example, consider how true worship promotes family happiness. True worship teaches us to honor and respect our spouse, to treat marriage vows as sacred, to avoid adultery, to raise respectful children, and to practice true love. As a result, such worship unites people in happy congregations and a happy worldwide brotherhood. *w17.11* 21 ¶6-7

Monday, May 13

Miserable man that I am!

—Rom. 7:24.

Many of God's faithful servants have echoed those words of the apostle Paul. We all suffer from inherited sin, and when our actions do not reflect our keen desire to please Jehovah, we may feel miserable. Some Christians who have committed a serious sin have even felt that they are beyond God's forgiveness. Nevertheless, the Scriptures assure us that those who take refuge in Jehovah do not need to feel overwhelmed by guilt. (Ps. 34:22) After Paul expressed his misery for failing to obey Jehovah perfectly, he exclaimed: "Thanks to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Rom. 7:25) Yes, despite his struggle with sin and his past wrongdoing—for which he had repented—Paul was confident in God's forgiveness through Jesus. As our Ransomer, Jesus cleanses our consciences and gives us inner peace. (Heb. 9:13, 14) As our High Priest, "he is able also to save completely those who are approaching God through him, because he is always alive to plead for them."—Heb. 7:24, 25. *w17.11* 8 ¶1-2; 12 ¶15

Tuesday, May 14

Make your vows to Jehovah your God and pay them.—Ps. 76:11.

How can we prove true to our dedication vow? Our stand during tests both large and small should show that we take seriously our pledge to praise Jehovah "day after day." (Ps. 61:8) For example, when someone on the job or at school flirts with us, do we see this as an opportunity to "take pleasure in [Jehovah's] ways" by rejecting such advances? (Prov. 23:26) If we live in a divided

household, do we ask Jehovah for his help to maintain the Christian personality even when no one else around us is making such an effort? Do we daily approach our loving heavenly Father in prayer, thanking him for bringing us under his rulership and for loving us? Are we making time to read the Bible daily? Did we not, in effect, promise that we would do such things? It is a matter of obedience. Our full share in worship reveals that we love Jehovah and are truly dedicated to him. Our worship is a way of life, not a mere formality. *w17.10* 23 ¶11-12

Wednesday, May 15

It is good to sing praises to our God.—Ps. 147:1.

A popular lyricist once said: "Words make you think thoughts. Music makes you feel a feeling. But a song makes you feel a thought." What better thoughts could we "feel" than those that express praise and love for our heavenly Father, Jehovah? It is no wonder that singing is a prominent aspect of pure worship, whether we are alone when we sing or we are with the congregation of God's people. How, though, do you feel about singing aloud with the congregation? Do you find it embarrassing? In some cultures, men may feel uncomfortable singing in public. This view can affect the whole congregation, especially if those taking the lead find reasons to hold back or to engage in other activities while the rest of the congregation is singing. (Ps. 30:12) If we truly consider singing as part of our worship, we certainly will not want to walk out on or be absent from that part of the meeting program. *w17.11* 3 ¶1-3

Thursday, May 16

Do not think I came to bring peace to the earth; I came to bring, not peace, but a sword.

—Matt. 10:34.

We all want peaceful lives, free from anxiety. How thankful we are that Jehovah grants us “the peace of God,” an inner calm that can protect us from disturbing thoughts and feelings! (Phil. 4:6, 7) Because of our dedication to Jehovah, we also enjoy “peace *with* God,” a good relationship with him. (Rom. 5:1) However, God’s time to bring about complete peace has not yet come. These critical last days are filled with conflict, and countless people have contentious attitudes. (2 Tim. 3:1-4) As Christians, we must wage a spiritual war against Satan and the false teachings that he promotes. (2 Cor. 10:4, 5) But the greatest threat to our peace may come from unbelieving relatives. Some might ridicule our beliefs, accuse us of dividing the family, or threaten to disown us unless we give up our faith. *w17.10 12 ¶1-2*

Friday, May 17

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

The reality that languages change over time also applies to the languages into which the Bible has been translated. A Bible translation that was easily understood when first produced may later become less effective. Consider an example involving a Bible translation into English. The *King James Version* was first produced in 1611. It became one of the most popular English Bibles, and it would come to

have a significant impact on the English language. Even so, much of the wording in the *King James Version* became archaic over the centuries. The same is true of early Bible translations in other languages. Are we not grateful, then, to have the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*? This translation is available in whole or in part in over 150 languages, thus being available to a vast part of the population today. Its clear wording allows the message of God’s Word to reach our heart. *w17.09 19 ¶5-6*

Saturday, May 18

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

Christian youths have important decisions to make. The wise decisions they make about good associations, wholesome entertainment, moral cleanness, and baptism all call for courage. That is because such young ones are going against the will of Satan, the one who taunts God. One important decision young ones must make involves their goals. In some lands, young ones are pressured to set goals that center on higher education and a well-paying job. In other lands, economic conditions may make young ones feel that they must focus on helping to provide materially for their families. Jehovah will bless young ones who courageously work at setting spiritual goals and putting Kingdom interests first in their lives. He will help them provide for the needs of their families. In the first century, the young man Timothy focused on spiritual goals, and you can too. —Phil. 2:19-22. *w17.09 29-30 ¶10-12*

Sunday, May 19

This book of the Law should not depart from your mouth . . . Observe carefully all that is written in it; for then your way will be successful and then you will act wisely.—Josh. 1:8.

Diligent and conscientious Bible study can help Christians to develop self-control. How so? The Scriptures contain accounts that vividly illustrate both the benefits and the consequences of our actions. Jehovah had these accounts recorded for a purpose. (Rom. 15:4) How wise it is to read them, meditate on them, and study them! Try to grasp how they apply to you and your family. Ask Jehovah to help you to apply his Word. If you discern that you are deficient in some aspect of self-control, admit it. Then pray about it, and strive to see how you can improve. (Jas. 1:5) No doubt, research in our Christian publications can help you to locate relevant material that will further help you. *w17.09 6 ¶15-16*

Monday, May 20

Clothe yourselves with the new personality.—Col. 3:10.

“The new personality” refers to a personality that is “created according to God’s will.” (Eph. 4:24) Developing such a new personality is within our reach. Why? Because Jehovah created humans in his image and thus made it possible for us to reflect his beautiful qualities. (Gen. 1:26, 27; Eph. 5:1) After exhorting us to put on the new personality, Paul goes on to describe *impartiality* as one striking characteristic of the new personality. He

stated: “There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, foreigner, Scythian, slave, or freeman.” In the congregation, why should there be no distinction based on race, nationality, or social status? Because true followers of Christ “are all one.” (Col. 3:11; Gal. 3:28) Those clothed with the new personality treat fellow believers and outsiders with dignity, regardless of their social or racial background.—Rom. 2:11. *w17.08 22 ¶1; 23 ¶3-4*

Tuesday, May 21

Jehovah is waiting patiently.—Isa. 30:18.

Jehovah does not expect us to do something that he is not willing to do himself. He has set the supreme example of being willing to wait. (2 Pet. 3:9) Jehovah has been waiting patiently for thousands of years so that the moral issues raised in the garden of Eden could eventually be settled beyond a doubt. He is “waiting patiently” and “keeping in expectation” of the time when his name will be fully sanctified. This will result in unimaginable blessings for those who are “eagerly waiting for him.” (Isa. 30:18; ftn.) Jesus likewise has been willing to wait. Although he passed the test of integrity here on earth and presented the value of his ransom sacrifice in 33 C.E., he had to wait until 1914 before commencing his rule. (Acts 2:33-35; Heb. 10:12, 13) It will not be until the end of his Thousand Year Reign that all his enemies will be completely destroyed. (1 Cor. 15:25) But we can be sure that the wait will be worth it. *w17.08 7 ¶16-17*

Wednesday, May 22

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

“For almost a year after the death of our son, we felt deep and excruciating pain,” said Susi. Another Christian said that when his wife died suddenly, he experienced “indescribable physical pain.” Sadly, countless others experience this kind of agony. Many in the Christian congregation may not have expected their loved ones to die this side of Armageddon. Whether you have personally lost a loved one in death or know someone who is bereaved, you may wonder, ‘How can grieving ones be helped to deal with their heartache?’ Perhaps you have heard it said that time is a great healer. However, does it really follow that time by itself will heal a broken heart? One widow observed, “I have found it more accurate to say that it is what one does with one’s time that helps one to heal.” Yes, like a physical wound, the pain of an emotional wound may gradually ease over time if it is given tender care. *w17.07 12-13 ¶1-3*

Thursday, May 23

Find exquisite delight in Jehovah, and he will grant you the desires of your heart.—Ps. 37:4.

What plans does Jehovah recommend for you? He created humans to find happiness by knowing him and by serving him faithfully. (Ps. 128:1; Matt. 5:3) This is in sharp contrast with the animals he created, which are content merely to eat, drink, and produce offspring. God wants you to find happiness by planning for things other than those

that satisfy animals. Your Creator is “the God of love,” “the happy God,” who made humans “in his image.” (2 Cor. 13:11; 1 Tim. 1:11; Gen. 1:27) You will be happy when you imitate our loving God. Have you ever experienced the truth of the scripture that says: “There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving”? (Acts 20:35) That is a basic truth about human life. Therefore, Jehovah desires that your plans focus on demonstrating love for others and for God.—Matt. 22:36-39. *w17.07 23 ¶3*

Friday, May 24

Jehovah will not hold back anything good from those walking in integrity.—Ps. 84:11.

God treats his human servants with dignity and respect. He cares for us better than we can care for ourselves. Jehovah’s concern extends beyond the welfare of his people as a whole. He also shows keen interest in each individual. Consider, for example, the three centuries during which Jehovah was raising up and empowering judges to deliver the nation of Israel from their oppressors. During that turbulent period, he did not fail to notice one non-Israelite named Ruth. At considerable sacrifice, she converted to true worship. Jehovah blessed Ruth with a husband and a son. But that is not all. When she is resurrected, Ruth will learn that her son was part of the line that led to the Messiah. And imagine how moved she will be to discover that her life story was preserved in a Bible book bearing her name!—Ruth 4:13; Matt. 1:5, 16. *w17.06 28-29 ¶8-9*

Saturday, May 25

The holy spirit . . . will . . . bring back to your minds all the things I told you.—John 14:26.

In 1970, a brother named Peter was 19 years old and had recently begun serving at Bethel in Britain. While preaching from door to door, he met a bearded middle-aged man. Peter asked the man if he would like to understand the Bible. Somewhat shocked, the man responded that this was a house of Jewish rabbis. To test Peter, the rabbi asked, "So, my boy, what language was the book of Daniel written in?" Peter replied, "Part of it was written in Aramaic." "The rabbi," Peter recalls, "was surprised that I knew the answer—but not as surprised as I was! How did I know the answer? When I went home and checked the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines from the previous months, I found an article explaining that Daniel was written in Aramaic." (Dan. 2:4, ftn.) Yes, the holy spirit can bring back to our mind thoughts we previously read.—Luke 12:11, 12; 21:13-15. *w17.06* 4 13 ¶17

Sunday, May 26

Those who [marry] will have tribulation in their flesh.—1 Cor. 7:28.

New anxieties often surface after a wife announces to her husband, "We are going to have a baby." Usually, a couple's joy over their prospective child is tinged with some apprehension about medical issues that may arise during the pregnancy or later. And there will be an economic impact to consider, both immediate and long-term. More adjustments become necessary when the baby arrives. The new moth-

er's time and attention may be focused on caring for her child. Many a husband has felt left out because his wife is occupied with her duties toward their baby. On the other hand, a new father has new responsibilities to shoulder. His duties increase because he has a new family member to care for and provide for. A different sort of tribulation confronts some married couples. They desperately want children but remain childless. When the wife does not become pregnant, she may feel much emotional distress. *w17.06* 4 ¶1; 5 ¶5-6

Monday, May 27

How sweet your sayings are to my palate, more so than honey to my mouth!—Ps. 119:103.

As Christians, we cherish and embrace truth. God's Word is the ultimate source of truth. In prayer to his Father, Jesus said: "Your word is truth." (John 17:17) Therefore, love for truth starts with gaining an accurate knowledge of God's Word. (Col. 1:10) However, more is involved than simply acquiring head knowledge. Note how the inspired writer of Psalm 119 helps us to understand what it means to love Bible truth. (Ps. 119:97-100) Do we take the time to ponder, or dwell on, Scriptural passages throughout the day? Our appreciation for Bible truth will grow when we meditate on ways we benefit from applying it in our lives. Also, we can savor the tasty Bible-based spiritual food that we receive from God's organization. We can allow it to linger on our figurative palate so that we can recall the "delightful words" of truth and use them to help others.—Eccl. 12:10. *w17.05* 19-20 ¶11-12

Tuesday, May 28

God is really among you.

—1 Cor. 14:25.

We want to help suffering people, including those who are not Witnesses. (Luke 10:33-37) The best way to do so is by sharing the good news with them. “It is important to make clear right away that we are Jehovah’s Witnesses and that our primary mission is to help them spiritually, not materially,” notes an elder who has helped many refugees. “Otherwise, some may associate with us only for personal advantage.” Showing Christian love to “foreign residents” brings good results. (Ps. 146:9) A Christian sister related that her family fled the persecution in Eritrea. After four of her children made an exhausting eight-day journey across the desert, they arrived in Sudan. She said: “The brothers there treated them like close relatives, providing food, clothes, shelter, and transportation. Who else would welcome strangers into their home just because they worship the same God? Only Jehovah’s Witnesses!”—John 13:35. *w17.05* 7 ¶17, 19-20

Wednesday, May 29

You have not spoken the truth

about me as my servant

Job has.—Job 42:8.

“Can a man be of use to God? Can anyone with insight be of benefit to him? Does the Almighty care that you are righteous, or does he gain anything because you follow the course of integrity?” (Job 22:1-3) Have you ever wondered about the answers to questions such as these? When Eliphaz the Temanite first posed them to Job, Eliphaz no doubt believed that the answer was no. His associate, Bildad the Shuhite, even

argued that a righteous standing before God is not possible for humans. (Job 25:4) These false comforters claimed that our efforts to serve Jehovah loyally are of no benefit to him at all, that our value to God is no more than that of a moth, a maggot, or a worm. (Job 4:19; 25:6) Jehovah made his feelings known when he reproved Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar for speaking falsehood but took delight in Job, referring to him as “my servant.” (Job 42:7) Thus, a person can indeed “be of use to God.” *w17.04* 28 ¶1-2

Thursday, May 30

*They will find exquisite delight
in the abundance of peace.*

—Ps. 37:11.

We have lived in this old world so long that we may have stopped noticing how much stress we feel over world conditions. Similarly, people who live near a busy train station may no longer notice the noise, and those who live near a garbage dump may no longer notice the smell. Ah, but take away all those negative factors—what relief! What will replace the stresses we feel now? Note the promise found in today’s text. Do not those words touch your heart? That is what Jehovah wants for you. By all means, then, do everything in your power to stay close to Jehovah God and his organization during these stressful last days! Cherish your hope, ponder over it, make it real in your mind and heart—and share it generously with others! (1 Tim. 4:15, 16; 1 Pet. 3:15) That way, you can be sure that you will not pass away with this condemned old world. On the contrary, you will remain—alive and joyful—for all eternity! *w17.04* 13 ¶16-17

Friday, May 31

We all make mistakes many times.

—*Jas. 3:2, ftn.*

We may readily acknowledge this fact, but the challenge is when we are personally affected by the imperfections of a brother. In such a situation, will we reflect Jehovah's view of justice? For example, how will you respond if an elder makes a remark that hints at a degree of prejudice? Will you allow yourself to be stumbled if an elder thoughtlessly makes a statement that offends or hurts you? Rather than quickly concluding that the brother no longer qualifies as an elder, will you patiently wait on Jesus, the head of the congregation? Will you put forth the effort to see the bigger picture, perhaps reflecting on the brother's many years of faithful service? If a brother who sins against you continues to serve as an elder or even receives additional privileges, will you rejoice with him? Your willingness to forgive may well reflect Jehovah's view of justice.—Matt. 6:14, 15. *w17.04 27 ¶18*

Saturday, June 1

God is love.—1 John 4:16.

Motivated by love, Jehovah corrects, educates, and trains us so that we can remain in his love and on the path to life. At times, though, discipline may involve more than counsel or oral correction. If more serious sins are involved, it may include a loss of privileges in the congregation. Even when that is the case, such discipline reflects God's love for us. A loss of privileges, for example, can help a person realize how important it is for him to focus

more on personal Bible study, meditation, and prayer. He can thus be strengthened spiritually. (Ps. 19:7) In time, privileges may be restored. Even disfellowshipping reflects Jehovah's love, for it protects the congregation from bad influences. (1 Cor. 5:6, 7, 11) And because God disciplines to the proper degree, disfellowshipping can impress on the wrongdoer the seriousness of his sin and move him to repentance.—Acts 3:19. *w18.03 24 ¶5-6*

Sunday, June 2

He and his entire household were baptized without delay.

—*Acts 16:33.*

The jailer was not familiar with the Scriptures. So to gain a solid foundation of Scriptural knowledge, he needed to learn basic Bible truths, understand what it means to be one of God's servants, and be determined to obey Jesus' teachings. In a relatively brief time, his knowledge of basic Scriptural truths and his appreciation of them prompted him to get baptized. (Acts 16:25-33) No doubt he continued to add to his knowledge after his baptism. With this example in mind, what can you do when your child expresses a heartfelt appreciation for basic Scriptural teachings, including the meaning and significance of dedication and baptism? You Christian parents may conclude that he can contact the congregation elders to see if he meets the qualifications to get baptized. Like other baptized disciples, he will continue to increase in knowledge of Jehovah's purpose throughout his life, even for all eternity.—Rom. 11:33, 34. *w18.03 10 ¶8-9*

Monday, June 3

Have . . . the same mental attitude that Christ Jesus had.—Rom. 15:5.

As we work at cultivating spirituality, holy spirit will give us the power to transform our mind. With the spirit's help, we can gradually begin to think more and more as Christ did. Additionally, it will help us root out fleshly desires and cultivate qualities pleasing to God. Our Christlike thinking will influence our speech, our conduct at work or in school, and the decisions we make each day. Those decisions will reveal that we strive to be followers of Christ. As spiritual people, we want nothing to jeopardize our relationship with our heavenly Father. When we are confronted with temptations, our Christlike attitude will move us to push them away. When making decisions, we will stop and ponder over these questions: 'What Bible principles will help me decide? What would Christ do in this situation? What decision will please Jehovah?' *w18.02 25 ¶12; 26 ¶14*

Tuesday, June 4

Noah found favor in the eyes of Jehovah.—Gen. 6:8.

By the time of Noah's great-grandfather Enoch, people had become very ungodly. They were even saying "shocking things" against Jehovah. (Jude 14, 15) Violence was increasing. In fact, in Noah's day, "the earth was filled with violence." Wicked angels materialized as humans, took wives, and produced brutal, hybrid offspring. (Gen. 6:2-4, 11, 12) But Noah stood out as different. "He proved him-

self faultless among his contemporaries. Noah walked with the true God." (Gen. 6:9) Consider what those words say about that righteous man. For one thing, Noah did not walk with God in that wicked pre-Flood world for a mere 70 or 80 years—the life span of many today. He lived in that world for almost 600 years! (Gen. 7:11) And unlike us today, he did not have a congregation of fellow worshippers—evidently not even his siblings—to turn to for spiritual support. *w18.02 4 ¶4-5*

Wednesday, June 5

Men will be . . . lovers of money.—2 Tim. 3:2.

People who love money will always want more, and striving to amass it, they will bring on themselves "many pains." (1 Tim. 6:9, 10; Eccl. 5:10) We all need money, of course. It provides a measure of protection. (Eccl. 7:12) But can a person be truly happy if he has only enough for his basic needs? Absolutely! (Eccl. 5:12) Agur son of Jakeh wrote: "Give me neither poverty nor riches. Just let me consume my portion of food." We can readily understand his reason for not wanting to be extremely poor. As he went on to explain, he did not want to be tempted to steal because theft would dishonor God. But why did he pray not to have riches? He wrote: "So that I do not become satisfied and deny you and say, 'Who is Jehovah?'" (Prov. 30:8, 9) Jesus said: "No one can slave for two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will stick to the one and despise the other. You cannot slave for God and for Riches."—Matt. 6:24. *w18.01 24 ¶9-11*

Thursday, June 6

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

We promote unity by freely forgiving others. When we forgive those who have offended us, we show that we appreciate the forgiveness of our own sins made possible by Christ's ransom sacrifice. Consider one of Jesus' illustrations as recorded at Matthew 18:23-34. Ask yourself: 'Am I moved to apply what Jesus taught? Do I show patience and understanding to my fellow servants? Am I ready to forgive those who sin against me personally?' Granted, there are degrees of sin, and some offenses are very hard for imperfect humans to forgive. Yet, this illustration teaches us what Jehovah expects. Jesus makes it clear that Jehovah will not forgive us if we do not forgive our brothers when there is a sound basis for doing so. What a sobering thought! We protect and preserve our precious unity when we forgive others as Jesus taught us to do. *w18.01 15 ¶12*

Friday, June 7

For 30 days whoever makes a petition to any god or man except to you, O king, should be thrown into the lions' pit.—Dan. 6:7.

While it meant risking his life, Daniel decided not to give even the impression that he was compromising in his worship. Jehovah blessed Daniel's conscientious and courageous decision by miraculously sparing him a cruel death. In fact, the outcome resulted in a marvelous witness for Jehovah that

reached the farthest parts of the Medo-Persian Empire! (Dan. 6:25-27) How can we cultivate faith like Daniel's? The key to strong faith is not simply to read God's Word but to 'get the sense' of it. (Matt. 13:23) We want Jehovah's mind on matters, which includes grasping Bible principles. Hence, we need to meditate on what we read. Also important is regular heartfelt prayer, especially when we face trials or other challenging situations. When we pray in faith for wisdom and strength, Jehovah will generously give them to us.—Jas. 1:5. *w18.02 10-11 ¶13-15*

Saturday, June 8

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

Even as a young baptized servant of God, you can taste Jehovah's goodness by experiencing his support as you share your faith with others. You can do that in the ministry as well as at school. Some find it difficult to preach to their peers at school. You likely can understand why. You have no idea how they will react. It can be especially challenging when speaking to a large group rather than to a classmate one-on-one. What can help you? First, think about why you are convinced of your beliefs. Are the study guides found on jw.org available in your language? If you are not sure, take the time to look for them. They are designed to help you reflect on what you believe, why you believe it, and how you can explain your beliefs to others. When your conviction is strong and you are well-prepared, you will feel impelled to give a witness for Jehovah's name.—Jer. 20:8, 9. *w17.12 26 ¶12, 14-15*

Sunday, June 9

Continue in the things that you learned and were persuaded to believe.—2 Tim. 3:14.

More is involved in imparting spiritual education to children than simply teaching them about the people and events of the Bible. Timothy was also “persuaded to believe.” In the original language, that phrase means “to be assured of” or “to be convinced and certain of the truth of something.” Timothy knew the Hebrew Scriptures from infancy. But at some point he was convinced by compelling evidence that Jesus was the Messiah. How can you help build conviction in your children so that they are persuaded to believe, as Timothy was? First, be patient. Conviction does not come about overnight; nor does it pass from you to your offspring simply because *you* have been persuaded to believe. Each child needs to use his or her own “power of reason” to develop conviction about Bible truth. (Rom. 12:1) You as a parent play an important role in that process, especially when your child asks questions. *w17.12 19 ¶3, 5-6*

Monday, June 10

I know he will rise in the resurrection on the last day.—John 11:24.

Jesus’ close friend and disciple Martha was grieving. Her brother, Lazarus, had died. Could anything ease her sorrow? Yes. Jesus assured her: “Your brother will rise.” (John 11:20-23) Martha was sure that would occur in the future. Jesus then performed a miracle. He brought Lazarus back to life that very day. We have no basis to expect that Jesus or his Father will now

perform such a miracle for us. Are you, though, just as sure as Martha was of a *future* resurrection for a loved one? Maybe it is your deceased mate, your mother, your father, or a beloved grandparent. Or you may be grieving over the loss of a child. You long to hug, to speak with, and to laugh with that dear one. Happily, like Martha, you have good reason to say, ‘I know that my loved one will rise in the resurrection.’ Still, it will do each Christian good to reflect on why that is a valid conviction. *w17.12 3 ¶1-2*

Tuesday, June 11

To do your will, O my God, is my delight, and your law is deep within me.—Ps. 40:8.

Jesus loved the Mosaic Law. And no wonder! That Law came from the most important Person in Jesus’ life—his Father, Jehovah. Jesus’ deep affection for the law of God was prophetically expressed in today’s text. By word and deed, Jesus affirmed that God’s Law was perfect, beneficial, and sure to be fulfilled. (Matt. 5:17-19) How pained Jesus must have been, then, when he saw the scribes and Pharisees misrepresent his Father’s Law! They meticulously obeyed some of its smallest details, for Jesus acknowledged: “You give the tenth of the mint and the dill and the cumin.” So, what was the problem? He added: “But you have disregarded the weightier matters of the Law, namely, justice and mercy and faithfulness.” (Matt. 23:23) Unlike those self-righteous Pharisees, Jesus grasped the spirit behind the Law, the divine qualities reflected in each commandment. *w17.11 13 ¶1-2*

Wednesday, June 12

This is the will of God, that you should be holy and abstain from sexual immorality.—1 Thess. 4:3.

People may say to us: “Life is to be enjoyed. Why condemn having sex outside marriage?” The suggestion that a Christian should tolerate sexual immorality is wrong. Why? Because God’s Word forbids sexual immorality. (1 Thess. 4:4-8) Jehovah has the right to make laws for us because he created us. The law of God that permits sexual relations only between a man and a woman who are married to each other is part of what defines the marriage arrangement. God gives us laws because he loves us. They benefit us. Families who obey them enjoy love, respect, and security. God does not tolerate willful disobedience to his law. (Heb. 13:4) God’s Word teaches us how to keep far away from sexual immorality. An important way to do so is by controlling what we look at. (Matt. 5:28, 29) Therefore, a Christian will avoid looking at pornography or listening to music with immoral lyrics.—Eph. 5:3-5. *w17.11 22 ¶9-10*

Thursday, June 13

It is good to sing praises to our God.—Ps. 147:1.

Faithful worshippers of Jehovah have long used music as a way to praise Jehovah. It is noteworthy that when the ancient Israelites were faithfully serving Jehovah, singing was prominent in their worship. For example, in preparation for service at the temple, King David organized 4,000 Levites to provide music of praise. Among these, 288 were “trained in song to Je-

hovah, all experts.” (1 Chron. 23:5; 25:7) At the inauguration of the temple, music and singing played a prominent role. The account tells us: “At the moment when the trumpeters and the singers were praising and thanking Jehovah in unison, and as the sound ascended from the trumpets, the cymbals, and the other musical instruments as they were praising Jehovah, . . . the glory of Jehovah filled the house of the true God.” What a faith-strengthening occasion that must have been!—2 Chron. 5:13, 14; 7:6. *w17.11 4 ¶4-5*

Friday, June 14

Do not think I came to bring peace to the earth; I came to bring, not peace, but a sword.—Matt. 10:34.

Jesus knew that his teachings would divide people and that those who follow him would need courage to do so in the face of opposition. Jesus’ motive was to proclaim God’s message of truth, not to damage relationships. (John 18:37) Still, holding faithfully to Christ’s teachings would be challenging if one’s close friends or family members rejected the truth. In order to prove worthy of the Christ, his disciples have had to endure ridicule or even alienation from their families. Yet, they have gained far more than they have lost. (Mark 10:29, 30) Even when our relatives oppose our efforts to worship Jehovah, we continue to love them, but we must remember that our love for God and Christ comes first. (Matt. 10:37) We must also realize that Satan will try to use our affection for our family to break our integrity. *w17.10 13 ¶3-6*

Saturday, June 15

He threw [Wickedness] back into the ephah container, after which he thrust the lead weight over its mouth.—Zech. 5:8.

This part of the vision highlights that Jehovah will not tolerate wickedness of any kind among his people. He will see to it that it is contained and speedily removed. (1 Cor. 5:13) The angel assures us of this by thrusting the lead lid back over the container. What a relief this vision must have brought to the Israelites of Zechariah's day—a guarantee that Jehovah would keep pure worship clean! However, the vision also reminded the Jews of their responsibility to maintain the purity of their worship. Wickedness cannot and will not be allowed to creep into and dwell among Jehovah's people. After we have been brought into the protective and loving care of God's clean organization, we have the responsibility to help maintain it. Are we moved to keep our "house" clean? Wickedness in any form does not belong in our spiritual paradise. *w17.10* 24 ¶14-15; 25 ¶17-18

Sunday, June 16

I love your law.—Ps. 119:163.

The first 39 books of the Bible were written by Israelites, or the Jews. They were the people initially "entrusted with the sacred pronouncements of God." (Rom. 3:1, 2) However, by the third century B.C.E., many Jews no longer understood Hebrew. Why not? Because Alexander the Great had expanded the Grecian Empire by means of his conquests. (Dan. 8:5-7, 20, 21) As that empire spread, Greek

became the common language of many of its subjects, including Jews who were scattered over a vast area. But as many Jews became Greek-speaking, understanding the Hebrew Scriptures became more difficult for most. What was the solution? Translation of the Bible from Hebrew into Greek, which was completed in the second century B.C.E. The resulting collection of Bible books came to be known as the Greek *Septuagint*. The *Septuagint* is the first known written translation of the entire Hebrew Scriptures. *w17.09* 20 ¶7-9

Monday, June 17

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

Your employer may regularly ask you to work overtime on evenings and weekends—times that you have set aside for family worship, field service, and Christian meetings. Courage is required to turn down such regular requests and set the right example for your children. We also show courage when we help our children to set and reach spiritual goals. For instance, some parents may hesitate to encourage their child to pursue a career of pioneering, to serve where the need is greater, to enter Bethel service, or to work on theocratic construction projects. The parents may fear that their child will not be able to care for them when they are old. However, wise parents show courage and put faith in Jehovah's promises. (Ps. 37:25) Then an added way that you can demonstrate courage and reliance on Jehovah is by helping your child to do the same.—1 Sam. 1:27, 28; 2 Tim. 3:14, 15. *w17.09* 30 ¶14-15

Tuesday, June 18

The fruitage of the spirit is . . . self-control.—Gal. 5:22, 23.

How can you help your children to develop self-control? Parents know that this quality does not come naturally to young people. And as is the case with all qualities that their children need to learn, parents should set the example. (Eph. 6:4) So if you see that your children are struggling to control their impulses, ask yourself whether you are setting a fine example. Do not minimize the good effect of your being regular in the field service, in attending meetings, and in conducting family worship. Do not be afraid to say no to your children's requests if need be! Jehovah set limits for Adam and Eve—limits that could have instilled in them a proper regard for his authority. Similarly, parental discipline and example have the goal of teaching children self-control. Love for God's authority and respect for his standards are among the most precious things that you can cultivate in your children.—Prov. 1:5, 7, 8. *w17.09 7 ¶17*

Wednesday, June 19

There should be no division in the body, but its members should have mutual concern for one another.—1 Cor. 12:25.

Until Satan's world comes to an end, we will continue to experience trials. We deal with unemployment, serious illnesses, persecution, natural disasters, loss of possessions because of crime, or other hardships. To support one another in our suffering or adversity, we need to have genuine compassion. Feeling *tender compassion* will move us to

acts of *kindness*. (Eph. 4:32) These aspects of the new personality will help us to imitate God and be of comfort to others. (2 Cor. 1:3, 4) How can we show even greater consideration toward foreigners or disadvantaged ones in our congregation? We need to befriend such individuals and help them to see that they are a valuable part of the congregation. (1 Cor. 12:22) Also, out of compassion for immigrants, many Witnesses endeavor to learn a new language. (1 Cor. 9:23) This has led to rich blessings. *w17.08 23-24 ¶7-9*

Thursday, June 20

Jehovah is my share . . . That is why I will show a waiting attitude for him.—Lam. 3:24.

Each one of us needs to be willing to wait, to show a patient attitude. But what will help us to do this? Pray for God's spirit. Remember, patience is an aspect of the fruitage of the spirit. (Eph. 3:16; 6:18; 1 Thess. 5:17-19) Plead with Jehovah to help you to endure patiently. Remember, too, what helped Abraham, Joseph, and David to wait patiently for the fulfillment of Jehovah's promises. It was their faith in Jehovah and their trust in his dealings with them. They did not focus just on themselves and their personal comfort. As we contemplate how well things worked out for them, we too will be encouraged to show a waiting attitude. So even though we face tests and trials, we are determined to show "a waiting attitude." Yes, at times we might cry out: "How long, O Jehovah?" (Isa. 6:11) But with the strengthening power of God's holy spirit, we can echo the words of Jeremiah in today's text. *w17.08 7 ¶18-20*

Friday, June 21

*To do your will, O my God,
is my delight.—Ps. 40:8.*

As a child, Jesus no doubt played and had fun. God’s Word says that there is “a time to laugh . . . and a time to dance.” (Eccl. 3:4) Jesus also drew close to Jehovah by studying the Scriptures. When he was 12 years old, the teachers at the temple were amazed at “his understanding and his answers” regarding spiritual matters. (Luke 2:42, 46, 47) Jesus grew up to be a happy adult. What made him happy? He knew that, among other things, God wanted him “to declare good news to the poor . . . and a recovery of sight to the blind.” (Luke 4:18) Doing what God asked him to do made Jesus happy. He enjoyed teaching people about his heavenly Father. (Luke 10:21) Once, after teaching a woman about true worship, Jesus said to his disciples: “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.” (John 4:31-34) Showing love for God and for others made Jesus happy. It can make you happy too. *w17.07 23 ¶4-5*

Saturday, June 22

*The peace of God . . . will guard
your hearts and your mental pow-
ers by means of Christ Jesus.
—Phil. 4:7.*

Jehovah’s tender empathy was perfectly expressed in the words and actions of his compassionate Son, Jesus, when he was on earth. (John 5:19) Jesus was sent to provide comfort for “the brokenhearted” and “all who mourn.” (Isa. 61:1, 2; Luke 4:17-21) Hence, he was characterized by deep compassion

—a sympathetic awareness of people’s suffering and a heartfelt desire to alleviate their suffering. (Heb. 2:17) The Scriptures reassure us that “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, and forever.” (Heb. 13:8) Since “the Chief Agent of life” personally understands what it is like to feel grief, “he is able to come to the aid of those who are being put to the test.” (Acts 3:15; Heb. 2:10, 18) Christ continues to be moved by the anguish of others, to understand their grief, and to provide them consolation “at the right time.”—Heb. 4:15, 16. *w17.07 13 ¶6-7; 14 ¶10*

Sunday, June 23

*Where your treasure is, there your
hearts will be also.—Luke 12:34.*

Satan and his world are constantly seeking to weaken or destroy our appreciation for the spiritual treasures that Jehovah has given us. We are not immune to these tactics. We could easily be enticed by promises of a lucrative career, dreams of a lavish lifestyle, or the desire for a showy display of material riches. The apostle John reminds us that this world is passing away and so is its desire. (1 John 2:15-17) Therefore, we must work hard to safeguard our affections and protect our love and appreciation for spiritual riches. Be willing to give up anything that could replace your wholehearted love for God’s Kingdom. Continue to preach zealously, never losing appreciation for our lifesaving ministry. Earnestly continue to search for divine truths. As you do this, you will build up “treasure in the heavens, where no thief gets near and no moth consumes.”—Luke 12:33. *w17.06 13 ¶19-20*

Monday, June 24

A day in your courtyards is better than a thousand anywhere else!

—Ps. 84:10.

Jehovah's way of ruling is neither oppressive nor rigid. It allows for freedom and promotes joy. (2 Cor. 3:17) David expressed it this way: "In his [God's] presence are majesty and splendor; strength and joy are in his dwelling place." (1 Chron. 16: 7, 27) Similarly, the psalmist Ethan wrote: "Happy are the people who know the joyful shouting. O Jehovah, they walk in the light of your face. They rejoice in your name all day long, and in your righteousness they are exalted." (Ps. 89:15, 16) Frequent meditation on Jehovah's goodness can strengthen our conviction that his rulership is best. How could it be otherwise? As our loving Designer and Creator, Jehovah knows what we need in order to be truly happy, and he fills that need abundantly. Whatever he requires of us is for our benefit and ultimately results in our greatest joy. That is so even if his requirements involve our making some sacrifices. —Isa. 48:17. *w17.06* 29 ¶10-11

Tuesday, June 25

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

Consider the case of a sister in England who very much wanted a child but whose hopes in that regard had not been fulfilled. Then she entered the change of life. She admitted that she felt devastated, for she realized that her desire would not be satisfied in this system of things. She and her husband decided to adopt a child. Nonetheless, she said: "I still went through

a sort of grieving process. I knew that adoption would not be exactly the same as giving birth to my own child." The Bible does mention a Christian woman's being "kept safe through childbearing." (1 Tim. 2:15) But this does not mean that giving birth or having children results in gaining everlasting life. Rather, it refers to the fact that a woman's having children to tend to, along with the other aspects of caring for a household, may keep her from falling into a pattern of gossiping and meddling in others' affairs. —1 Tim. 5:13. *w17.06* 5-6 ¶6-8

Wednesday, June 26

What do you give [God]; what does he receive from you?—Job 35:7.

Was Elihu suggesting that our efforts in God's service are pointless? No. He was saying that Jehovah does not depend on our worship. Jehovah is complete. We cannot make him richer or stronger. On the contrary, any goodness, talent, or strength that we possess is a trust from God, and he takes note of how we use it. Jehovah considers acts of loyal love expressed toward his servants as being rendered to him personally. "The one showing favor to the lowly is lending to Jehovah, and He will repay him for what he does," says Proverbs 19:17. Is this scripture implying that Jehovah takes note of every act of kindness performed in behalf of lowly ones? Can we conclude that the Creator of the universe considers himself to be indebted to mere humans who perform deeds of mercy and that he views such giving as loans that he repays with favor and blessings? Yes, and this was verified by God's own Son. —Luke 14:13, 14. *w17.04* 29 ¶3-4

Thursday, June 27

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

Besides reading the Bible and our Bible-based publications, how else can we develop a deep love for Bible truth? We can enhance our love for Bible truth by regularly attending congregation meetings. The weekly study of the Bible with the help of *The Watchtower* is a principal means by which we are taught. To get the sense of the subject that is considered, we need to prepare well for each *Watchtower* Study. One way we can do so is by looking up each of the cited Bible texts. Nowadays, *The Watchtower* can be downloaded from the jw.org website or viewed on the *JW Library* app in many languages. Some electronic formats allow us to access quickly the cited texts from each study article. But whatever method we use, reading these scriptures carefully and meditating on them will deepen our love for Bible truth. *w17.05 20 ¶14*

Friday, June 28

Each of us will render an account for himself to God.—Rom. 14:12.

After baptism, we want to continue living up to our dedication in faithful service to God. There is no way to undo a dedication vow, taking back what we promised God. If a person tires of serving Jehovah or of living a Christian way of life, he cannot claim that he was never really dedicated and that his baptism was invalid. To all intents and purposes, he presented himself as one who was wholly dedicated to

God. He will be accountable before Jehovah and the congregation for any serious sins that he may commit. May it never be said of us that ‘we left the love we had at first.’ Instead, we want Jesus to be able to say of us: “I know your deeds, and your love and faith and ministry and endurance, and that your deeds of late are more than those you did at first.” (Rev. 2:4, 19) May we zealously continue to live up to our dedication vow—to Jehovah’s delight. *w17.04 6-7 ¶12-13*

Saturday, June 29

The Rock, perfect is his activity, for all his ways are justice.—Deut. 32:4.

“Will the Judge of all the earth not do what is right?” (Gen. 18:25) With that question, Abraham expressed confidence that Jehovah would render perfect justice in the case of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham was convinced that Jehovah would never act unjustly by “putting the righteous man to death with the wicked one.” Such an act was “unthinkable” to Abraham. He could express such confidence because Jehovah is the greatest example of justice and righteousness. In fact, the Hebrew words rendered “justice” and “righteousness” often appear together in the Hebrew Scriptures. Basically, there is no distinction between what is just and what is right. Logically, since Jehovah is the ultimate standard of righteousness, his view of matters will always be just. Further, according to his own written Word, “he loves righteousness and justice.” —Ps. 33:5. *w17.04 18 ¶1-2*

Sunday, June 30

No greater joy do I have than this: that I should hear that my children go on walking in the truth.

—3 John 4.

Parents, your example is essential to start your children on the path to endless life. When your children see you “seeking first the Kingdom,” they learn to depend on Jehovah for their daily needs. (Matt. 6:33, 34) So live modestly. Sacrifice material things for spiritual benefits—not the other way around. Strive to stay out of debt. Seek “treasure in heaven”—Jehovah’s approval—and not riches or “the glory of men.” (Mark 10:21, 22; John 12:43) Never get so busy that you do not have time for your children. Let them know that you are proud of them when they decide to put Jehovah first instead of seeking prestige or riches—for themselves or for you. Avoid the unchristian view that children should provide their parents with a life of ease. Remember, “children are not expected to save up for their parents, but the parents for their children.”—2 Cor. 12:14. *w17.05* 8-9 ¶3-4

Monday, July 1

Humble yourselves . . . under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time.

—1 Pet. 5:6.

As the steward “in charge of the house”—presumably that of Hezekiah—Shebna had considerable authority. (Isa. 22:15) Sadly, though, he became proud, seeking his own glory. (Isa. 22:16-18) Because Shebna pursued glory for himself, God ‘threw him out of his office’ and replaced him with Eliakim. (Isa. 22:19-21) This change occurred when As-

syrian King Sennacherib was intending to attack Jerusalem. Some time later, that king sent high officials to Jerusalem, along with a large army, to demoralize the Jews and intimidate Hezekiah into surrendering. (2 Ki. 18:17-25) Eliakim was sent to speak to the officials, but he was not alone. He was accompanied by two others, one of whom was Shebna, now serving as secretary. Might this not suggest that Shebna did not give way to bitterness and resentment but instead humbly accepted his lesser responsibilities? *w18.03* 25 ¶7-8, 10

Tuesday, July 2

Keep walking by spirit and you will carry out no fleshly desire at all.

—Gal. 5:16.

If we find that our mind pushes us toward materialistic thinking or fleshly desires, we should not give up. Keep asking for the spirit, and Jehovah will help you to re-direct your mental attitude to focus on proper things. (Luke 11:13) Remember the apostle Peter. Several times in his life, he did not respond as a spiritual man should. (Matt. 16:22, 23; Luke 22:34, 54-62; Gal. 2:11-14) But he did not give up. Gradually, with Jehovah’s help, Peter developed Christlike thinking. We can do the same. Peter, in fact, later spelled out specific things we can work on. (2 Pet. 1:5-8) As we “put forth all earnest effort” to develop such qualities as self-control, endurance, and brotherly affection, we will be helped to continue to move ahead as spiritually-minded individuals. Each day, why not ask yourself, ‘What can I work on today to progress spiritually?’ *w18.02* 25-26 ¶12-13

Wednesday, July 3

I have treasured up his sayings even more than what was required of me.—Job 23:12.

Job had outstanding insight into godly principles. He truly knew Jehovah, and he acted on that knowledge. Consider: Job knew that he could not profess to love God and at the same time be unkind to his fellow man. (Job 6:14) He did not elevate himself above others but showed brotherly concern for all, rich and poor. “Did not the One who made me in the womb also make them?” he said. (Job 31:13-22) Clearly, Job had not allowed his earlier prestige and wealth to warp his view of himself or others. What a contrast to many of the powerful and wealthy in the world! Job rejected all forms of idolatry—even in his heart. He knew that false worship, including devotion to material riches, would be a denial of “the true God above.” (Job 31:24-28) He viewed marriage as a sacred bond between a man and a woman. He even made a covenant with his eyes not to look immorally at a virgin.—Job 31:1. *w18.02 11 ¶16; 12 ¶18-19*

Thursday, July 4

[Noah] proved himself faultless among his contemporaries. Noah walked with the true God.

—Gen. 6:9.

Noah was not content just to lead a good life. He also became a bold “preacher of righteousness,” publicly confessing his faith in Jehovah. (2 Pet. 2:5) “Through this faith he condemned the world,” wrote the apostle Paul. (Heb. 11:7) It stands to reason, therefore, that Noah faced ridicule and opposi-

tion, perhaps even threats of violence. But he was not “trembling at men.” (Prov. 29:25) Rather, he had the courage that Jehovah gives to his faithful servants. After Noah had walked with God for more than five centuries, Jehovah told him to build an ark for the saving of human and animal life. (Gen. 5:32; 6:14) How difficult that project must have seemed—and not just from the construction point of view! Noah surely knew that it would bring on even more ridicule and opposition. Still, he obediently went ahead in faith. “He did just so.”—Gen. 6:22. *w18.02 4 ¶4, 6-7*

Friday, July 5

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

An important way to promote unity is by showing love in imitation of Jehovah, the God of love. (1 John 4:8) Never would we want to say regarding fellow worshippers, “I may have to love them, but I do not have to like them!” To think that way is contrary to Paul’s counsel that we should be “putting up with one another in love.” (Eph. 4:2) Note that he did not simply say that we should be “putting up with one another.” He added that we should do so “in love.” There is a difference. In our congregations are found all sorts of people whom Jehovah has drawn to him. (John 6:44) Since Jehovah has drawn them to him, he must find them lovable. How, then, could any of us judge a fellow worshipper as being unworthy of our love? We must not hold back the love that Jehovah commands us to display!—1 John 4:20, 21. *w18.01 16 ¶14*

Saturday, July 6

*Remember . . . your Grand Creator
in the days of your youth.*

—*Eccl. 12:1.*

Some parents have concluded that it would be best for their son or daughter to delay baptism in order first to obtain some advanced education and become secure in a career. Such reasoning may be well-intentioned, but will it help their child to achieve genuine success? More important, is it in harmony with the Scriptures? It is important to remember that this world and all its components are opposed to Jehovah's interests and thinking. (Jas. 4:7, 8; 1 John 2:15-17; 5:19) A close relationship with Jehovah is a child's best defense against Satan, his world, and its ungodly thinking. For a parent to place high priority on secular pursuits could confuse a child and jeopardize his best interests. Would loving Christian parents really want this world to shape their child's view of success? The fact is, we find true joy and success only when we give Jehovah first place in our lives.—Ps. 1:2, 3. *w18.03* 10-11 ¶10-11

Sunday, July 7

*[Seek] first the Kingdom and his
righteousness.—Matt. 6:33.*

Many have found that living a simple life not only makes them happier but also gives them more time to serve Jehovah. Jack sold his large home and business because he knew that doing so would make it possible for him to pioneer with his wife. He reflects: "For years, I would come home frustrated because of problems at work. My wife, a regular pioneer, was al-

ways so happy. She would say, 'I have the greatest boss ever!' Now that I too am pioneering, we both work for the same Person, Jehovah." To analyze our view of money, we might honestly consider how we would answer these questions: 'Do I really believe and live in harmony with what the Bible says about money? Does making money come first in my life? Do I value material things more than my relationship with Jehovah and with people? Do I really trust in Jehovah to care for my needs?' We can be sure that he will never disappoint those hoping in him. *w18.01* 25 ¶12-13

Monday, July 8

*Just as you have always obeyed,
. . . keep working out your own
salvation with fear and trembling.*
—*Phil. 2:12.*

Working out your own salvation is a serious responsibility. Some of the things involved are reading God's Word and meditating on it, praying to Jehovah, and thinking of ways that Jehovah has blessed you as an individual. Applying yourself in those aspects will boost your confidence in your privilege of having a friendship with Jehovah. That, in turn, will move you to speak up about your beliefs. (Ps. 73:28) Jesus said: "If anyone wants to come after me, let him disown himself and pick up his torture stake and keep following me." (Matt. 16:24) Clearly, discipleship—including dedication and baptism—is an obligation for you as a Christian. Yet, it opens the door to countless blessings now and to everlasting life in God's new world. You have every reason, then, to keep working out your own salvation! *w17.12* 27 ¶18-19

Tuesday, July 9

*Clothe yourselves with . . .
patience.—Col. 3:12.*

With patient teaching from their parents, children will be able gradually to begin to grasp “the breadth and length and height and depth” of faith. (Eph. 3:18) We can look for what is appropriate to their age and ability. As they become convinced of what they learn, they will increasingly be able to defend their beliefs before others, including schoolmates. (1 Pet. 3:15) For example, can your children explain from the Bible what happens at death? Does the Bible’s explanation make sense to them? Yes, inculcating God’s Word in your child will require patience, but it is worth the effort. (Deut. 6: 6, 7) Of course, your example is also important when it comes to building conviction. Stephanie, the mother of three daughters, says: “I ask myself, ‘Do I talk to my children about why I am convinced of Jehovah’s existence, his love, and the rightness of his ways?’ I can’t expect my children to be persuaded unless I am.”
w17.12 20 ¶8-10

Wednesday, July 10

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

Why could Martha be certain that her brother would be resurrected? She was convinced because of miracles that she likely learned about even before Jesus’ ministry began. She had learned of these as a youth at home and at the synagogue. Three accounts recorded in the inspired Scriptures may come to mind. Consider the first resurrection. It occurred at a time when God was empowering his prophet

Elijah to work miracles. Up in Zarephath, a Phoenician coastal town, a poor widow showed hospitality to the prophet. God then miraculously maintained her supply of flour and oil, so that she and her son stayed alive. (1 Ki. 17:8-16) Later, her son got sick and died. Elijah came to her aid. While touching the corpse, Elijah prayed: “God, please, let this child’s life come back into him.” And it happened! God heard Elijah, and the child came back to life. That was the first resurrection of Bible record. (1 Ki. 17:17-24) Martha had certainly learned of that remarkable event. *w17.12 3 ¶1; 4 ¶3, 5-6*

Thursday, July 11

*You cannot slave for God and
for Riches.—Matt. 6:24.*

Many people urge us to pursue a secular career as our goal in life. Such a career may promise status, authority, and wealth. Because many make pursuing a career their main goal in life, a Christian might adopt the same way of thinking. Is it true that succeeding in a secular career that offers power and prestige leads to lasting happiness? No. Remember that the craving to control others and the longing to be admired are the desires that enticed Satan, but he is angry, not happy. (Matt. 4:8, 9; Rev. 12:12) Compared to the lasting joy that comes from helping people to benefit from God’s wisdom so that they can gain everlasting life, a secular career can provide only limited satisfaction. Moreover, the spirit of this world is intensely competitive. It pushes people to outdo one another, breeds jealousy, and in the end, proves to be “a chasing after the wind.”—Eccl. 4:4. *w17.11 23 ¶11-13*

Friday, July 12

After singing praises, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

—Matt. 26:30.

With the establishment of the Christian congregation, music continued to be a prominent feature of true worship. On the most important night in human history, Jesus included the singing of songs after the institution of the Lord's Evening Meal. First-century Christians set a pattern of praising God together in song. Even though they often met in private homes, the modest surroundings for worship did not diminish their zeal for singing to Jehovah. Under inspiration, the apostle Paul directed his Christian brothers: "Keep on teaching and encouraging one another with psalms, praises to God, spiritual songs sung with gratitude, singing in your hearts to Jehovah." (Col. 3:16) The songs in our songbook are truly "spiritual songs [to be] sung with gratitude." They are a part of the spiritual food provided by "the faithful and discreet slave."—Matt. 24:45. *w17.11 4 ¶7-8*

Saturday, July 13

Choose cities convenient for yourselves to serve as cities of refuge.

—Num. 35:11.

The six cities of refuge were easy to access. Jehovah commanded Israel to distribute the cities evenly on both sides of the Jordan River. Why? So that any fugitive could find refuge quickly and conveniently. (Num. 35:12-14) Roads leading to the cities of refuge were kept in good repair. (Deut. 19:3) According to Jewish tradition, guideposts were erected to direct fugitives to

the cities. Since the cities of refuge were available, an unintentional manslayer was not forced to flee to a foreign land, where he might be tempted to take up false worship. Think of it: Jehovah—the very One who had mandated capital punishment for willful murderers—gave unintentional manslaughterers ample opportunity to receive compassion and protection! "Every thing was made as plain, as simple, and as easy as possible," wrote one commentator. Jehovah is not a heartless judge who is eager to punish his servants. Rather, he is "rich in mercy."—Eph. 2:4. *w17.11 14 ¶4-5*

Sunday, July 14

Return to me, . . . and I will return to you.—Zech. 1:3.

A flying scroll, a woman sealed inside a container, and two women soaring in the wind with wings like those of storks—such dramatic images are found in the book of Zechariah. (Zech. 5:1, 7-9) Why did Jehovah give these striking visions to his prophet? Zechariah's sixth and seventh visions are a sober warning to those who persist in dishonest ways, a reminder that Jehovah does not tolerate wrongdoing. On the part of his sincere worshippers, there must be a genuine hatred of wickedness. These accounts are also a loving reassurance from our heavenly Father. If we diligently work to be the sort of people who have God's approval and protection, we will not have to face a death-dealing curse. Rather, Jehovah will gladly bless us. All our struggles to remain clean in a world full of wickedness will be worthwhile. We can be sure that we can succeed with Jehovah's help! *w17.10 21 ¶1; 25 ¶19*

Monday, July 15

Let the older women be reverent in behavior, . . . so that they may advise the younger women.

—Titus 2:3, 4.

Single sisters now have many opportunities to expand their ministry by pioneering, moving to where the need is greater, working with the Local Design/Construction program, and applying for the School for Kingdom Evangelizers. Some are even able to attend Gilead School. Older women, though unable to do many of those things, are also a blessing to the congregation. How we love these dear sisters! Some may not be able to do as much as they once did in God's service, but they can still show courage and go to work. For example, an older sister needs courage if she is asked to talk to a younger sister about modest dress. She will not scold the sister about her choice of clothing, but she may be able to encourage the younger one to consider how her choice of clothing may affect others. (1 Tim. 2:9, 10) Such loving expressions of concern may have a positive effect. *w17.09 31-32 ¶17-18*

Tuesday, July 16

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

At times, very powerful forces have tried to keep the Bible from the common people. However, sincere individuals have stood up to such opposition. For example, consider a 14th-century theologian named John Wycliffe. He strongly believed that everyone should be able to benefit from God's Word. But in his time, the common people in England had virtually no access

to the Bible. In 1382, the English translation later known as the Wycliffe Bible was produced. Desiring to get God's Word into the mind and heart of ordinary people, itinerant preachers, known as the Lollards, traveled on foot from village to village throughout England. Often the Lollards read portions of the Wycliffe Bible to those whom they met, and they left handwritten copies behind. In the centuries that followed, many in Europe and other parts of the world began to promote translation and distribution of the Bible for the benefit of the common people. *w17.09 20-21 ¶10-12*

Wednesday, July 17

Those who [marry] will have tribulation in their flesh.—1 Cor. 7:28.

An unfulfilled desire for children is in its own way a 'tribulation in the flesh.' (Prov. 13:12) In Bible times, barrenness often carried a stigma. Rachel, Jacob's wife, expressed anguish at seeing her sister have children. (Gen. 30:1, 2) When referring to tribulations associated with marriage, there is one that may not readily come to mind. The death of a loved one. Yes, a distinct trial that many have faced is that of losing a beloved marriage mate in death. This is a trial that the survivor may not have expected to face in this system of things. Christians firmly believe Jesus' promise of a coming resurrection. (John 5:28, 29) What does that prospect do for the surviving mate? It offers a considerable amount of comfort. This is another way that our loving Father, through his Word, offers support and comfort to those experiencing tribulation. *w17.06 4 ¶1; 5 ¶6; 6 ¶9*

Thursday, July 18

Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and compassionate.—Ex. 34:6.

On one occasion, God revealed himself to Moses by declaring His own name and qualities. The first ones that he listed were mercy and compassion. (Ex. 34:5-7) Jehovah could have stressed his power or his wisdom. Yet, to Moses, who was seeking reassurance of God's backing, Jehovah emphasized instead qualities that underscore his willingness to help his servants. (Ex. 33:13) While humans were created to be compassionate, our imperfection as descendants of Adam inclines us toward self-interest. Sometimes we may find that it is not easy to decide whether we will help others or concentrate on ourselves. For some, this is an ongoing conflict, or a balancing act. What can help you to develop and maintain your interest in others? First, take time to examine how Jehovah has shown compassion and how others have shown it. Second, consider how you can imitate God's example and how your doing so is truly beneficial. *w17.09 8 ¶1; 9 ¶3*

Friday, July 19

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

Our motive for clothing ourselves with the new personality must be to honor Jehovah, not to win praise from men. Remember that even a once perfect spirit creature sinned because he allowed himself to become filled with pride. (Compare Ezekiel 28:17.) How much more difficult it is for sinful humans to avoid improper pride and haughti-

ness! Still, it is possible to clothe ourselves with *humility*. What will help us to do so? To remain humble, we need to set aside time to meditate daily on what we read in God's Word. (Deut. 17:18-20) In particular, we do well to reflect on Jesus' teachings and his wonderful example of humble service. (Matt. 20:28) Jesus even washed the feet of his apostles. (John 13:12-17) We also need to pray frequently for God's spirit to help us fight any tendency of feeling superior to others.—Gal. 6:3, 4. *w17.08 25 ¶11-12*

Saturday, July 20

Let your petitions be made known to God; and the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your mental powers.—Phil. 4:6, 7.

Perhaps there have been times in our life when we felt that we were following the leadings of God's holy spirit, but then things did not turn out the way we expected. We came face-to-face with challenges or new circumstances that required massive changes in our life. (Eccl. 9:11) What can help us not to be anxious over anything and to experience "the peace of God"? Paul's words to the Philippians show us that the antidote to worry is prayer. So when we are anxious, we need to turn our worries into prayers. (1 Pet. 5:6, 7) Pray to Jehovah in full faith, knowing that he cares for you. Pray to him "with thanksgiving," remembering your blessings. Our confidence in him will be strengthened when we keep in mind that he can "do more than superabundantly beyond all the things we ask or conceive."—Eph. 3:20. *w17.08 9 ¶4, 6; 10 ¶10*

Sunday, July 21

Plans fail when there is no consultation, but there is accomplishment through many advisers.

—Prov. 15:22.

Many Christians experienced happiness in their youth by serving as pioneers. If you are young, why not discuss your plans with some of them? Such spiritual people may tell you that the full-time ministry provides an education that benefits you throughout life. After having been instructed by his Father in heaven, Jesus continued to learn during his earthly ministry. For example, he learned the joy of reaching hearts with the good news and also the joy of keeping integrity under test. (Isa. 50:4; Heb. 5:8; 12:2) Jesus said: “Go . . . make disciples of people . . . teaching them.” (Matt. 28:19, 20) If you plan to be a disciplinarian, you will be choosing a most satisfying career, one that glorifies God. As with any career, you need time to become skilled. *w17.07 23 ¶6-7*

Monday, July 22

I will keep comforting you.

—Isa. 66:13.

Without a doubt, the primary source of consolation is our compassionate heavenly Father, Jehovah. (2 Cor. 1:3, 4) Another source of comfort to grieving ones is the Christian congregation. (1 Thess. 5:11) How can you strengthen and console those who have “a crushed spirit”? (Prov. 17:22) Bear in mind that there is “a time to be silent and a time to speak.” (Eccl. 3:7) A widow named Dalene explains:

“Bereaved ones need to express their thoughts and feelings. Therefore, the most important thing you can do for a bereaved person is to listen—without interrupting.” Junia, whose brother took his own life, adds: “Even though you may not be able to grasp their grief completely, what counts is that you *want* to understand how they feel.” Remember, too, that not everyone experiences and expresses grief in the same way. *w17.07 13 ¶3; 14 ¶11-13*

Tuesday, July 23

May people know that you, whose name is Jehovah, you alone are the Most High over all the earth.

—Ps. 83:18.

For many people today, money is the big issue. They are focused on accumulating wealth or on holding on to what they have. Others consider their big issue to be family, health, or personal accomplishments. However, a very big issue facing all of us is the vindication of Jehovah’s sovereignty. We need to guard against losing sight of this vital issue. How could that happen? We could become so absorbed in the demands of our day-to-day life that we forget just how important the vindication of God’s sovereignty really is. Or we could allow the weight of our personal trials to eclipse that great issue. On the other hand, the keener our appreciation for the vindication of Jehovah’s sovereignty, the better equipped we are to meet challenges in our daily lives. And such appreciation will draw us closer to Jehovah. *w17.06 22 ¶1-2*

Wednesday, July 24

Become imitators of me, just as I am of Christ.—1 Cor. 11:1.

Jehovah exercises authority in a loving manner. In harmony with that, family heads and elders who love his sovereignty will not be demanding, as if exercising a small sovereignty of their own. Instead, they will imitate Jehovah. Paul was just such an imitator of God and his Son. Paul did not embarrass others or pressure them into taking a desired course of action. Rather, he *appealed* to them. (Rom. 12:1; Eph. 4:1; Philem. 8-10) That is Jehovah's way of handling matters. Thus, that should be the way of all who love and uphold his way of ruling. What is our response to divinely authorized headship? By our respectful cooperation, we show our support for Jehovah's sovereignty. Even if we do not fully understand or agree with a decision, we will still want to support theocratic order. That is quite different from the way of the world, but it is the way of life under Jehovah's rulership.—Eph. 5:22, 23; 6:1-3; Heb. 13:17. *w17.06* 30 ¶14-15

Thursday, July 25

You . . . are taught by God to love one another.—1 Thess. 4:9.

Whether young or old, brothers and sisters who are discouraged or depressed or who face other trials need our attention, encouragement, and comfort. (Prov. 12:25; Col. 4:11) We give proof that we truly love our brothers when we show by words and deeds that we have deep concern for "those related to us in the faith." (Gal. 6:10) The Bible foretold that "the last days" of this

wicked system of things would be marked by a spirit of selfishness and greed. (2 Tim. 3:1, 2) As Christians, we must therefore work hard to grow in our love for God, for Bible truth, and for one another. True, we may at times have minor disagreements with fellow believers. However, what a blessing it is for all in the congregation when love motivates us to settle any differences in a loving manner! (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:14) Therefore, may we continue to have intense love for Jehovah, his Word, and our brothers. *w17.05* 21 ¶17-18

Friday, July 26

If we make the statement, "We have no sin," we are misleading ourselves.—1 John 1:8.

Christians expect to experience some injustice outside the Christian congregation. However, our faith may be put to the test if we observe or experience what seems to be an injustice inside the congregation. How will you react if you believe that you have experienced some wrong in the congregation or in your dealings with a fellow Christian? Will you allow that to be a cause for stumbling? Because all of us are imperfect and subject to sin, we realize that there is a possibility that we could either experience injustice ourselves or be the cause of it for someone else in the congregation. Although such instances are rare, faithful Christians are not surprised or stumbled when injustices do occur. For good reason, Jehovah has provided practical advice in his Word to assist us to maintain our integrity, even if we experience wrongs at the hands of fellow believers.—Ps. 55:12-14. *w17.04* 19 ¶4-5

Saturday, July 27

Those who [marry] will have tribulation in their flesh.—1 Cor. 7:28.

If you have an unbelieving mate, you may experience more than the usual stress and anxiety in your marriage. Nevertheless, your mate's present unwillingness to follow Christ is not in itself a valid reason for separation or divorce. (1 Cor. 7:12-16) Although an unbelieving husband may not take the lead in spiritual matters, he should be respected because of his position as the head of the family. Likewise, an unbelieving wife should be shown self-sacrificing love and tender affection by her Christian husband. (Eph. 5:22, 23, 28, 29) What if your spouse tries to limit your worship? For example, one sister was told by her husband to share in the field ministry only on certain days of the week. If you face a similar situation, ask yourself: 'Is my spouse demanding that I stop worshipping my God? If not, can I yield to the request?' Being reasonable can help you to avoid needless marital conflict.—Phil. 4:5. *w17.10* 13 ¶7-8

Sunday, July 28

You must inculcate them in your sons.—Deut. 6:7.

As foretold, people "out of all the languages of the nations" are flocking to Jehovah's organization. (Zech. 8:23) But a language barrier can make it difficult for you to teach your children the truth. Your children are the most important Bible students you will ever have, and their "coming to know" Jehovah means their eternal life. (John 17:3) In order for your children to learn Jehovah's teachings, you

must "speak of them" on all appropriate occasions. (Deut. 6:6, 7) Your children will likely learn the local language at school and in their environment, but they learn your language primarily by *frequently* interacting with you in your language. Besides enabling your children to have heart-to-heart conversations with you, knowing your language gives them other advantages. Being bilingual sharpens your children's thinking ability and enhances their social skills. *w17.05* 9 ¶5-6

Monday, July 29

Go and march to Mount Tabor . . . I will bring to you Sisera, . . . and I will give him into your hand.—Judg. 4:6, 7.

The Israelites were ill-equipped, having neither offensive weapons nor defensive armor, whereas their enemies had 900 war chariots with iron scythes. (Judg. 4:1-3, 13; 5:6-8) Nevertheless, Jehovah gave Barak the command stated above. Barak wasted no time in following Jehovah's instructions. (Judg. 4:14-16) During the main battle in Taanach, a sudden cloudburst turned the surroundings into a marsh. Barak chased Sisera's army all the way to Harosheth—a 15-mile (24 km) route. At some point along the way, Sisera abandoned his once frightening but now useless chariot and ran to Zaananim, perhaps near Kedesh. He sought refuge in the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, and was welcomed by Jael. Exhausted from battle, he fell asleep. Sisera was now vulnerable to Jael's decisive act of courage to put him to death. (Judg. 4:17-21) Israel's enemy was defeated! *w17.04* 29-30 ¶6-8

Tuesday, July 30

Jehovah has a controversy with the nations. . . . He will put the wicked to the sword.—Jer. 25:31.

After Armageddon, will there be any organization on earth? The Bible tells us: “There are new heavens and a new earth that we are awaiting according to his promise, and in these righteousness is to dwell.” (2 Pet. 3:13) The old heavens and earth, the corrupt governments and the earthly society under their control, will be gone. They will be replaced by what? The expression “new heavens and a new earth” means that there will be a new government and a new earthly society over which that government rules. The Kingdom under Jesus Christ will perfectly reflect the personality of Jehovah God, who is a God of order. (1 Cor. 14:33) So the “new earth” will be organized. There will be good men to care for matters. (Ps. 45:16) They will be directed by Christ and his 144,000 co-rulers. Imagine a time when all corrupt organizations will be replaced by a single, unified, and incorruptible organization! *w17.04 11 ¶8-9*

Wednesday, July 31

*They will become one flesh.
—Gen. 2:24.*

Marriage is sacred. Before God and eyewitnesses, the bride and groom exchange their marriage vows. They usually promise that they will love, cherish, and respect each other and that they will do so “for as long as [they] both shall live together on earth according to God’s marital arrangement.” Others may not have said these exact words, but they still made a vow before

God. They are then pronounced husband and wife, and their marriage is meant to be a lifelong bond. (1 Cor. 7:39) “Therefore,” to use Jesus’ words, “what God has yoked together, let no man put apart”—neither the husband nor the wife nor anyone else. Thus, couples entering marriage must have the view that divorce is not an option. (Mark 10:9) Of course, there has never been a perfect marriage. Each marriage is made up of two imperfect people. That is why the Bible says that married people “will have tribulation” at times. —1 Cor. 7:28. *w17.04 7 ¶14-15*

Thursday, August 1

*Not as I will, but as you will.
—Matt. 26:39.*

To be good teachers, we first have to be good students. (1 Tim. 4:15, 16) Likewise, those divinely authorized to give discipline must themselves continue to submit willingly to Jehovah’s guidance. Such humble submission earns them respect and gives them freeness of speech when training or correcting others. Consider Jesus’ example. Jesus always listened obediently to his Father, even when doing so was very difficult. And he gave his Father the credit for his teachings and wisdom. (John 5:19, 30) Jesus’ humility and obedience drew people of honest heart to him and helped to make him a compassionate and gracious teacher. (Matt. 11:29) His kind words heartened those who were figuratively like a bruised reed or the wick of an oil lamp about to go out. (Matt. 12:20) Even when his patience was tested, Jesus was kind and loving. This was evident when he corrected his apostles for showing a selfish, ambitious spirit.—Mark 9:33-37; Luke 22:24-27. *w18.03 26 ¶15-16*

Friday, August 2

Baptism, which corresponds to this, is also now saving you.

—1 Pet. 3:21.

Peter was referring to Noah's constructing of the ark. The ark provided undeniable visible evidence that Noah was devoted to the doing of God's will. Noah faithfully fulfilled the work assignment that Jehovah had given him. Yes, visible acts of faith led to the preservation of Noah and his family through the Flood. Just as the ark amounted to evidence of Noah's faith, baptism before onlookers provides visible evidence. It shows that a Christian disciple has dedicated himself to Jehovah on the basis of faith in Christ. Like Noah, dedicated disciples obediently carry on in the work that God has assigned them to do. Just as Noah was preserved through the Flood, loyal baptized ones will be preserved when the present wicked world meets its end. (Mark 13:10; Rev. 7:9, 10) This makes dedication and baptism very important. A person who needlessly delays getting baptized endangers his prospects for everlasting life. *w18.03 4 ¶3-4*

Saturday, August 3

Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a boy.—Prov. 22:15.

Some parents may conclude, 'As long as my child is not baptized, he cannot be disfellowshipped.' Why is this deceptive reasoning? (Jas. 1:22) Understandably, Christian parents would not want their child to get baptized before being mature enough to make a valid dedication. However, it would be a mistake to conclude that by not being baptized, a child is not accountable to Jehovah. Why is that? Accountability to

Jehovah is not founded on the act of getting baptized. Rather, a child is accountable to God when the child knows what is right and what is wrong in Jehovah's eyes. (Jas. 4:17) Thus, rather than discourage a child from getting baptized, wise parents work hard to set the right example. They want to cultivate in their child from infancy a heartfelt appreciation for Jehovah's elevated moral standards. (Luke 6:40) Such appreciation is the best protection, for your child will be motivated to hold to Jehovah's righteous way.—Isa. 35:8. *w18.03 11 ¶12-13*

Sunday, August 4

Noah walked with the true God.

—Gen. 6:9.

Noah continued to do so for another 350 years after the Flood. (Gen. 9:28) What a fine example of faith and obedience! We can imitate Noah's faith and obedience by upholding God's righteousness, by being no part of Satan's world, and by keeping Kingdom interests in first place. (Matt. 6:33; John 15:19) To be sure, our way of life does not win us the world's approval. Indeed, even now, our firm stand for God's laws, such as those concerning marriage and sexual morality, has led to negative publicity in some lands. (Mal. 3:17, 18) Like Noah, however, we fear Jehovah, not men. We know that he alone gives everlasting life. (Luke 12:4, 5) But what about you personally? Will you keep 'walking with God,' even when others mock or criticize you or when economic pressures test your faith in your Provider? If you imitate the faith and obedience of Noah, you can be confident that Jehovah will care for you.—Phil. 4:6, 7. *w18.02 4 ¶4, 8; 5 ¶9-10*

Monday, August 5

A physical man does not accept the things of the spirit of God.

—1 Cor. 2:14.

The world has a predominant attitude that centers on the flesh. Paul describes it as “the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience.” (Eph. 2:2) This spirit influences most humans to adopt a common attitude—simply follow the crowd. As a result, the majority of them do what feels right in their own eyes and make no effort to live up to God’s standards. A physical person is often excessively concerned about prestige and material pursuits or about defending what he feels are his rights. People who engage in any of “the works of the flesh” fall into that category. (Gal. 5:19-21) A fleshly attitude includes: promoting divisions, taking sides, fostering dissensions, taking one another to court, showing a lack of appreciation for headship, and being self-indulgent in food and drink. When confronted with temptation, the fleshly-minded person weakens and gives in.—Prov. 7:21, 22. *w18.02* 19 ¶3-5

Tuesday, August 6

Men will be . . . lovers of pleasures.—2 Tim. 3:2, 4.

There is nothing wrong with a balanced view of pleasures. Jehovah does not want us to practice severe self-denial or to abstain from wholesome activities that bring enjoyment. The Bible encourages faithful ones: “Go, eat your food with rejoicing, and drink your wine with a cheerful heart.” (Eccl. 9:7) Second Timothy 3:4 refers to a pursuit of pleasures that excludes God. Notice

that the verse does not say that people would love pleasures *more* than God, implying that they would have some love for him. It says ‘rather than God.’ One scholar wrote: “This [verse] definitely does not mean that they also love God to some extent. It means that they do not love God at all.” What a sobering warning to those who are nurturing an inordinate love of pleasures! The phrase “lovers of pleasures” aptly describes those who are “carried away by . . . pleasures of this life.”—Luke 8:14. *w18.01* 25 ¶14-15

Wednesday, August 7

Honor Jehovah with your valuable things.—Prov. 3:9.

Jehovah is a generous God. Everything we have is from him. Jehovah owns all the gold and silver along with all other natural resources of the earth, and he uses them to provide what is needed to sustain life. (Ps. 104:13-15; Hag. 2:8) For 40 years, Jehovah supplied manna and water for the nation of Israel while they were in the wilderness. (Ex. 16:35; Neh. 9:20, 21) Through the prophet Elisha, Jehovah performed the miracle of multiplying the small quantity of oil for a faithful widow. God’s gift enabled her to pay off her debts and after that to have enough money for her and her sons to live on. (2 Ki. 4:1-7) With Jehovah’s support, Jesus miraculously provided food and even money when needed. (Matt. 15:35-38; 17:27) Jehovah has access to unlimited resources that can sustain his earthly creation. However, he still invites his servants to use their material things to support the work of his organization.—Ex. 36:3-7. *w18.01* 17 ¶1-3

Thursday, August 8

O Jehovah, take my life away.

—1 Ki. 19:4.

The Bible reveals that faithful servants in the past often felt that they could not go on. (Job 7:7) However, rather than give up, they looked to Jehovah for strength. They were not disappointed, for our God “gives power to the tired one.” (Isa. 40:29) Sadly, some of God’s people in our day have concluded that the best way to cope with the pressures of life is to ‘take a break from the truth,’ as they say, as if our Christian activities were a burden rather than a blessing. So they stop reading God’s Word, attending congregation meetings, and engaging in the field ministry—just as Satan hopes they will do. The Devil well knows that our being fully engaged in Christian activities can strengthen us, and he does not want us to be strong. When you feel physically and emotionally drained, then, do not cut yourself off from Jehovah. Draw ever closer to him, for “he will make you firm, he will make you strong.”—1 Pet. 5:10; Jas. 4:8. *w18.01* 7-8 ¶2-3

Friday, August 9

Jehovah . . . brings down to the Grave, and he raises up.

—1 Sam. 2:6.

The second resurrection related in the Scriptures was performed by the prophet Elisha. A prominent Israelite woman in Shunem showed Elisha exceptional hospitality. Through the prophet, God rewarded this childless woman and her elderly husband with a son. Some years later, the boy died. Imagine the mother’s crushing grief. With

her husband’s permission, she traveled about 19 miles (30 km) to Elisha at Mount Carmel. The prophet sent his attendant Gehazi back to Shunem ahead of them. Gehazi was not able to bring the dead boy back to life. Then the grieving mother arrived with Elisha. (2 Ki. 4:8-31) There by the body at the house in Shunem, Elisha prayed. Miraculously, the dead boy came to life and was reunited with his now elated mother! (2 Ki. 4:32-37) Clearly, God in a very literal way raised up the boy in Shunem, proving His ability to resurrect. *w17.12* 4 ¶7-8

Saturday, August 10

Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child.—Prov. 22:15, ftn.

Logically, then, wisdom—the opposite of foolishness—would be one evidence of maturity. Spiritual maturity is not determined primarily by age but by a person’s healthy fear of Jehovah and readiness to obey his commands. (Ps. 111:10) Young ones who are reasonably mature spiritually are not “tossed about as by waves and carried here and there” by their desires or by pressure from their peers. (Eph. 4:14) Rather, they are making progress in having “their powers of discernment trained to distinguish both right and wrong.” (Heb. 5:14) They demonstrate that they are progressing toward maturity by making wise decisions. That kind of wisdom is necessary for salvation. (Prov. 24:14) Therefore, make sure that you clearly state your Bible-based values to your children. By your words and by your example, let them know that the values found in God’s Word are also your values.—Rom. 2:21-23. *w17.12* 20-21 ¶12-13

Sunday, August 11

Go on walking in wisdom toward those on the outside . . . Know how you should answer each person.

—Col. 4:5, 6.

The idea that humans can solve their own problems may sound appealing to many people. Why? If it were true, it would mean that man does not need God’s guidance and that man can do as he pleases. Also, that idea may sound convincing because—according to some studies—war, crime, disease, and poverty are all decreasing. One report states: “The reason humanity is getting better is because humans have decided to make the world a better place.” If you hear a worldly idea that seems to challenge your faith, research what God’s Word says on the subject and discuss the matter with an experienced fellow believer. Consider why the idea may sound appealing, why such thinking is faulty, and how you can refute it. Indeed, all of us can protect ourselves against worldly thinking by following the admonition that Paul gave in today’s text. *w17.11* 24 ¶14, 17

Monday, August 12

O God, I thank you that I am not like everyone else.—Luke 18:11.

Why were the Pharisees so unwilling to show mercy? The Bible says that they “considered others as nothing.” (Luke 18:9-14) Imitate Jehovah, not the Pharisees. Show compassion. (Col. 3:13) One way to do so is to make it easy for others to seek your forgiveness. (Luke 17:3, 4) Ask yourself: ‘Is my forgiveness within reach of people who have wronged me, even repeated-

ly? Am I *eager* to restore peace with someone who has offended me or who has hurt me?’ Forgiveness is really a test of humility. The Pharisees failed that test because they considered others to be inferior. As Christians, however, we must humbly “consider others superior” to us, as worthy of our forgiveness. (Phil. 2:3) Will you imitate Jehovah and pass the test of humility? Keep the “road” to your forgiveness open and in good repair. Be quick to extend mercy and slow to take offense.—Eccl. 7:8, 9. *w17.11* 14-15 ¶6-8

Tuesday, August 13

It is good to sing praises to our God.—Ps. 147:1.

You may feel embarrassed when comparing your voice with others. That, however, should not interfere with your responsibility to sing praises to Jehovah. Rather, hold your songbook up high, lift your head, and sing with heartfelt expression! (Ezra 3:11) Today, in many Kingdom Halls, the words of the songs are shown on screens, which helps us to sing out. It is also of interest that the singing of Kingdom songs has been made part of the Kingdom Ministry School curriculum for elders. This emphasizes the need for elders to take the lead in congregation singing. One factor that keeps many from singing with a full voice is fear. It may be fear of possibly sounding unpleasant to others. However, we should keep in mind that when we speak, “we all stumble many times.” (Jas. 3:2) Yet, that does not stop us from speaking. So why should we let our imperfect singing voices stop us from praising Jehovah in song? *w17.11* 4-5 ¶9-10

Wednesday, August 14

It will occur—if you do not fail to listen to the voice of Jehovah your God.—Zech. 6:15.

As Zechariah's seventh vision closes, the prophet has much to think about. Jehovah had guaranteed that he would hold dishonest people accountable for their wicked deeds. This promise surely strengthened Zechariah. Yet, nothing had really changed. Dishonesty and other wicked practices were still present, and the rebuilding of Jehovah's temple in Jerusalem was far from complete. How could the Jews have abandoned their divinely appointed task so quickly? Had they returned to their homeland simply to further their own interests? Jehovah knew what his people needed. God gave Zechariah a final vision to assure the Jews of His love and appreciation for all that they had done so far and to guarantee protection for them if they would return to His work. In connection with rebuilding the temple, Jehovah made a promise—the words of today's text. *w17.10 26 ¶1; 27 ¶5*

Thursday, August 15

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

Courageous men who are willing to take on more responsibility are a blessing to a congregation. (1 Tim. 3:1) However, some may be reluctant to reach out. Perhaps a brother has made mistakes in the past, and now he feels that he is not worthy of being a ministerial servant or an elder. Another brother might have feelings of inadequacy about fulfilling an assignment. If you feel

that way, Jehovah can help you develop courage. (Phil. 4:13) Remember, at one point, Moses did not feel qualified for an assignment. (Ex. 3:11) Yet, Jehovah helped him, and in time, Moses developed courage to accomplish the work. A baptized brother can develop similar courage by seeking God's help in earnest prayer and by daily reading the Bible. Meditating on accounts of courage will also help. He can humbly ask the elders for training and make himself available to help in whatever way is needed. *w17.09 32 ¶19*

Friday, August 16

The word of our God endures forever.—Isa. 40:8.

Christians today need not think that the work of translating the *Septuagint*, Wycliffe's Bible, the *King James Version*, or any other translation was inspired by God. Nevertheless, when we review the history of these and many other translations that have been published, it gives support to this fact: Just as Jehovah promised, his Word has endured. Does that not strengthen your faith that all the other promises Jehovah has made will likewise come true? (Josh. 23:14) Besides strengthening our faith, reviewing how the Bible has endured through the ages deepens our love for Jehovah. After all, why did he provide his Word in the first place? And why did he guarantee that it would survive? Because he loves us, and he wants to teach us how to benefit ourselves. (Isa. 48:17, 18) Naturally, it is fitting that we respond to Jehovah's love by loving him in return and by obeying his commandments.—1 John 4:19; 5:3. *w17.09 21-22 ¶13-14*

Saturday, August 17

Honor your father and your mother.—Eph. 6:2.

Training children to follow this command can be especially challenging if you have an unbelieving mate. Set the example by honoring your mate. Focus on his or her good qualities, and express appreciation for your mate. Avoid saying negative things about your mate in front of your children. Instead, explain to them that each person must choose whether to serve Jehovah. The children's good conduct might help to draw the unbelieving parent to true worship. Some husbands may forbid the Christian wife to teach the children from the Bible or to take them with her to Christian meetings. Even so, a Christian wife does what she can to teach the children Bible truth. (Acts 16:1; 2 Tim. 3:14, 15) While respecting his decisions, she can still express her faith in the presence of her children as opportunities arise, thus giving them moral training and knowledge about Jehovah.—Acts 4:19, 20. *w17.10* 14 ¶9-10

Sunday, August 18

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

Humans were made in God's image. Accordingly, because Jehovah is compassionate, interest in others' well-being is rooted in human nature. Even those who do not know the true God often show compassion. (Gen. 1:27) We find many accounts in the Bible where a sense of compassion shines through. Recall the account of the two prostitutes who argued before Solomon over which one of them was the actual mother of a child. When Solomon

put them to the test by ordering that the baby be cut in half, the real mother's compassion was stirred. That moved her to act, even at the cost of giving the child up to the other woman. (1 Ki. 3:23-27) Or recall Pharaoh's daughter who saved baby Moses' life. Though she realized that the infant she had found was a child of the Hebrews and should not be kept alive, "she felt compassion for him" and decided to raise the child as her own.—Ex. 2:5, 6. *w17.09* 8-9 ¶2-3

Monday, August 19

*[Jehovah] is patient with you.
—2 Pet. 3:9.*

Humility is required of all true worshippers and brings great rewards. (Prov. 22:4) Being humble will help us to promote peace and unity in the congregation. Developing and strengthening humility will also make us recipients of God's undeserved kindness. The apostle Peter stated: "All of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because God opposes the haughty ones, but he gives undeserved kindness to the humble ones." (1 Pet. 5:5) In today's world, people who are mild and patient are often considered weak. How far such reasoning is from the truth! These beautiful qualities originate from the most powerful Person in the universe. Jehovah God is the best example of showing *mildness* and *patience*. Consider how he responded through his angelic representatives when Abraham and Lot questioned him. (Gen. 18:22-33; 19:18-21) Also, for over 1,500 years, Jehovah put up with the wayward nation of Israel.—Ezek. 33:11. *w17.08* 25 ¶13-14

Tuesday, August 20

The peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts.—Phil. 4:7.

Pray, and then you will receive the peace of God. But notice that “the peace of God . . . surpasses all understanding.” What does that mean? Some translators render this expression “surpasses all our dreams” or “excels all human planning.” Paul was, in effect, saying that “the peace of God” is more wonderful than can be imagined. So although from a human viewpoint we may not see a way out of our problems, Jehovah does, and he can do the unexpected. (2 Pet. 2:9) How can we face challenges and still retain “the peace of God”? It is by maintaining a good relationship with our God, Jehovah. Such a relationship is possible only “by means of Christ Jesus,” who offered his life as a ransom sacrifice. The provision of that ransom is yet another one of the amazing works of our Father. Jehovah uses the ransom to cover our sins, enabling us to have a clean conscience and draw close to him.—John 14:6; Jas. 4:8; 1 Pet. 3:21. *w17.08* 10 ¶7; 12 ¶15

Wednesday, August 21

The heart knows its own bitterness, and no outsider can share in its joy.—Prov. 14:10.

At times, only a bereaved person’s own heart grasps the full depth of the emotional pain, and it may be difficult for him to voice his innermost feelings. Even when someone does express how he feels, it is not always easy for others to understand what he is trying to say. Understandably, then, it can be difficult to know what to say to someone who is overwhelmed by grief.

Often, the most helpful thing you can do is to “weep with those who weep.” (Rom. 12:15) If you find it difficult to say something in person, it may be easier to provide consolation by means of a sympathy card, an e-mail, a text message, or a letter. You could simply quote a comforting scripture, recall some memorable characteristic or quality of the deceased, or share a happy memory that you cherish. And do not underestimate the value of your prayers with and for a bereaved fellow Christian. *w17.07* 14-16 ¶13-16

Thursday, August 22

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

What if married life proves to be more challenging than expected? Suppose that it even seems disappointing. Reflect on Jehovah’s dealings with Israel. He referred to himself as being like a husband to that ancient nation. (Isa. 54:5; 62:4) What a difficult “marriage” that proved to be! Yet, Jehovah was not quick to give up on it. He repeatedly showed mercy toward the nation and loyalty to his covenant with them. (Ps. 106:43-45) Are we not drawn to Jehovah by such loyal love? Accordingly, married couples who love Jehovah’s ways imitate him. They do not seek an unscriptural way out of a difficult marriage. They realize that Jehovah has yoked them together and that he wants them to “stick” to each other. The only Scriptural ground for divorce that might free one to remarry is sexual immorality. (Matt. 19:5, 9) By making the best of their situation and even seeking to improve it, they uphold Jehovah’s righteous way of ruling. *w17.06* 31 ¶17-18

Friday, August 23

Your eyes will be opened and you will be like God.—Gen. 3:5.

Satan the Devil has raised the question of the rightfulness of Jehovah's sovereignty. He contends that God's rulership is corrupt and that Jehovah withholds the best from his creatures. According to the Devil, humans would be far happier and better off ruling themselves. (Gen. 3:1-4) Satan has also implied that under sufficient pressure, anyone will reject Jehovah's rulership. (Job 2:4, 5) Jehovah is allowing time for human experience to reveal the unsavory truth about life outside of God's righteous rule. Of course, Jehovah knows that the Devil's allegations are false. So why has God chosen to allow the issue to go on, giving Satan time to try to prove his point? The answer involves all intelligent creatures. (Ps. 83:18) After all, the first human couple rejected Jehovah's rulership, and so have many others since then. This could lead some to wonder whether there might be validity to the Devil's claim. *w17.06 22-23 ¶3-4*

Saturday, August 24

*Go . . . make disciples of people.
—Matt. 28:19.*

Disciple-making is an educational experience that teaches you good work habits, communication skills, confidence, and tact. (Prov. 21:5; 2 Tim. 2:24, ftn.) But making disciples is especially joyful because it helps you to become more familiar with the Scriptural basis for your faith. You also learn how to work closely with Jehovah. (1 Cor. 3:9) You can enjoy making disciples even if few people in your terri-

tory respond to the good news. Making disciples is teamwork. The whole congregation searches for sincere ones. Although only one brother or sister may find the person who eventually becomes a disciple, all shared in the search and all can share in the joy. For example, Brandon spent nine years pioneering in unresponsive territory. He says: "It's true that I have never found anyone in the territory who progressed to baptism, but others have. I'm glad I planned to share fully in the disciple-making work." —Eccl. 11:6. *w17.07 23 ¶7; 24 ¶9-10*

Sunday, August 25

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

Hannah remained barren while Elkanah's other wife, Peninnah, produced offspring. (1 Sam. 1:4-7) Hannah was taunted by Peninnah "year after year." That caused Hannah great anguish and distress. She sought relief by taking the matter to Jehovah in prayer. (1 Sam. 1:12) She trusted that Jehovah would either put an end to her barrenness or fill the lack in some other way. Trials and tribulations will continue as long as we are imperfect and are in this system under Satan's control. (1 John 5:19) How good it is to know, though, that Jehovah is "the God of all comfort"! (2 Cor. 1:3) One way that we can receive help to deal with our personal trials or tribulations is through prayer. Hannah poured out her heart to Jehovah. Similarly, in the face of tribulation, we need to do more than simply *mention* to Jehovah how we feel. We need to *supplicate him*, yes, to convey our feelings by praying intensely from the heart.—Phil. 4:6, 7. *w17.06 6 ¶10-11*

Monday, August 26

Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?—John 21:15.

The resurrected Jesus, knowing that his disciples had not caught anything while fishing, said to them: “‘Cast the net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.’ So they cast it, but they were not able to haul it in because of the large number of fish.” (John 21:1-6) After serving them breakfast, Jesus turned to Simon Peter and said the words of today’s text. To what was Jesus referring? Peter was quite attached to fishing. So it seems that Jesus was asking him where his true affection lay. Did he have greater affection for the fish and the fishing business than for Jesus and the things that he taught? In answer, Peter said: “Yes, Lord, you know I have affection for you.” (John 21:15) Peter certainly lived up to his word. From that point forward, he proved his love for Christ by busying himself in the disciple-making work, becoming a pillar in the first-century Christian congregation. *w17.05 22 ¶1-2*

Tuesday, August 27

Jehovah is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me? —Heb. 13:6.

That firm confidence in Jehovah’s loving care helped Paul to grapple with life’s problems. He did not allow negative circumstances to weigh him down. What gave him the strength to do so? He kept leaning on “the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our trials.” (2 Cor. 1:3, 4) Communication through prayer is the foundation of a close relationship with

God. (Ps. 86:3; 1 Thess. 5:17; Rom. 12:12) When we take sufficient time to express to Jehovah our deepest thoughts and innermost feelings, we cannot help but be drawn closer to our heavenly Father, the “Hearer of prayer.” (Ps. 65:2) In addition, when we discern that Jehovah answers our prayers, our love for him grows. We come to realize ever more that “Jehovah is near to all those calling on him.” (Ps. 145:18) That confidence in Jehovah’s loving support will help us to cope with further tests of faith. *w17.05 19 ¶9-10*

Wednesday, August 28

Jehovah sees into the heart. —1 Sam. 16:7.

How will you respond if the elders make a decision that you do not understand or perhaps do not agree with? Such a situation can test our faith in Jehovah and in his organizational arrangement. How will humility protect you if you face such a test? Consider two ways. First, humility will move us to acknowledge that we do not have all the facts. No matter how much we know of a situation, only Jehovah can read a person’s figurative heart. Our awareness of this undeniable truth will prompt us to be humble, to recognize our limitations, and to adjust our view of the matter. Second, humility will help us to be submissive and patient as we wait on Jehovah to correct any true injustice. It is as the wise man wrote: “It will not turn out well for the wicked one, nor will he prolong his days.” (Eccl. 8:12, 13) Certainly, a humble response is in the best spiritual interests of all concerned.—1 Pet. 5:5. *w17.04 25-26 ¶10-11*

Thursday, August 29

I was, in fact, kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews, and I have not done anything here for which they should put me in prison.

—Gen. 40:15.

Clearly, Joseph was the victim of injustice. He also stated that he was not guilty of the crime for which he was imprisoned. On that basis, he asked the cupbearer to mention him to Pharaoh. Why? He explained his goal: “In order to get me out of this place.” (Gen. 40:14) Were Joseph’s words those of a man who passively accepted his situation? Certainly not. He was keenly aware that he was the victim of many injustices. He clearly explained the facts to the cupbearer, who perhaps would be in a position to assist him. Note, however, that there is nothing in the Scriptures to indicate that Joseph ever told anyone—not even Pharaoh—that his brothers were his kidnappers. In fact, when his brothers came to Egypt and were reconciled with Joseph, Pharaoh welcomed them and invited them to make their home in Egypt and to enjoy “the best of all the land.”—Gen. 45:16-20.
w17.04 20-21 ¶12-13

Friday, August 30

O the depth of God’s riches and wisdom and knowledge! How unsearchable his judgments are and beyond tracing out his ways are!

—Rom. 11:33.

One reason why Jehovah is the rightful Sovereign is because he has the knowledge and wisdom needed to care for the universe. Consider, for example, the fact that God enabled his Son to heal diseases that doctors could not cure.

(Matt. 4:23, 24; Mark 5:25-29) From Jehovah’s standpoint, this was no miracle. He understands the processes involved and has the ability to undo any damage. The same is true with regard to his ability to raise the dead and prevent natural disasters. The world under Satan’s influence is still searching for a way to settle national and international disputes. Jehovah alone has the wisdom to bring about world peace. (Isa. 2:3, 4; 54:13) As we learn of Jehovah’s knowledge and wisdom, we feel as did the apostle Paul, who wrote under inspiration the words of today’s text. *w17.06 28 ¶6-7*

Saturday, August 31

What God has yoked together, let no man put apart.—Mark 10:9.

Many individuals in this world have a casual attitude toward marriage. When the relationship becomes strained, they just give up and walk out on their marriage mate. That, however, is not the Christian way. (1 Cor. 7:27) Breaking one’s marriage vow is equivalent to lying to God, and God hates liars! (Lev. 19:12; Prov. 6:16-19) Jehovah also hates a treacherous divorce. (Mal. 2:13-16) Jesus taught that the only Scriptural ground for dissolving a marriage vow is when an innocent mate chooses not to forgive an adulterous partner. (Matt. 19:9; Heb. 13:4) What, then, about separation? The Bible is clear on this too. (1 Cor. 7:10, 11) The Bible does not set out grounds for marital separation. However, some married Christians have viewed certain situations as a reason for separation, such as the *extreme* endangerment of one’s life or spirituality by an abusive or apostate spouse.
w17.04 7 ¶14-16

Sunday, September 1

[Bring your children] up in the discipline and admonition of Jehovah.—Eph. 6:4.

Bringing up a child in “the discipline and admonition of Jehovah” is one of the greatest privileges a Christian parent can have. (Ps. 127:3) Unlike children in the ancient nation of Israel, the children of Christian parents are not born as part of a people dedicated to Jehovah. Moreover, love for God and for truth is not inherited. From the day of their child’s birth, parents should have the intent to make a disciple, assisting their child to become a dedicated, baptized servant of Jehovah. What could be more important? After all, it is each individual’s dedication, baptism, and faithful service to God that will bring him in line for being marked for salvation during the coming great tribulation. (Matt. 24:13) May you parents experience the joy and satisfaction that result from seeing your children become dedicated, baptized servants of Jehovah. *w18.03 12 ¶16-17*

Monday, September 2

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

All who are authorized to give Scriptural discipline—in the family or in the congregation—are wise when they imitate Christ’s example. Indeed, their doing so reflects their desire to be molded by God and his Son. It would be difficult to enumerate all the blessings that result from accepting divine discipline and from imitating Jehovah and Jesus when disciplining oth-

ers. At the very least, families and congregations become havens of peace. Individuals also feel truly loved, valued, and secure—a foretaste of the blessings to come. (Ps. 72:7) Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that Jehovah’s discipline teaches us how to live together forever in peace and harmony as a family under his fatherly care. (Isa. 11:9) When we view divine discipline in that light, we will be more likely to appreciate it for what it truly is: beautiful evidence of God’s unmatched love for us. *w18.03 26 ¶15; 27 ¶17, 19*

Tuesday, September 3

They were baptized by him in the Jordan River, openly confessing their sins.—Matt. 3:6.

Those submitting to John’s baptism did so as evidence of their repentance over sins against the Mosaic Law. (Matt. 3:1-6) It is noteworthy, however, that the most important baptism that John performed had nothing to do with repentance. John had the unique privilege of baptizing Jesus, the perfect human Son of God. (Matt. 3:13-17) Jesus was without sin, so he did not need to repent. (1 Pet. 2:22) His baptism symbolized the presenting of himself to do God’s will. (Heb. 10:7) During the course of Jesus’ earthly ministry, his disciples also performed baptisms. (John 3:22; 4:1, 2) Like those performed by John, these baptisms symbolized the individuals’ repentance over sins against the Mosaic Law. However, after Jesus’ death and resurrection, baptism would take on a much different meaning for his followers. *w18.03 5 ¶6-7*

Wednesday, September 4

The spiritual man examines all things.—1 Cor. 2:15.

What does it mean to be a “spiritual man”? A spiritual person is inclined toward God, the opposite of the physical person. Spiritually-minded individuals strive to “become imitators of God.” (Eph. 5:1) This means that they make an effort to have Jehovah’s thinking on matters and to look at things from his point of view. God is very real to them. In contrast with fleshly-minded individuals, they try to bring all their ways into harmony with Jehovah’s standards. (Ps. 119:33; 143:10) Rather than focus on fleshly works, the spiritually-minded person endeavors to show “the fruitage of the spirit.” (Gal. 5: 22, 23) To clarify the expression “spiritually-minded” further, think of this comparison: An individual who is skillful in commercial affairs is said to be business-minded. Similarly, someone who keenly values spiritual or religious interests is called spiritually-minded. *w18.02 19 ¶3, 6*

Thursday, September 5

O Daniel, you very precious man.—Dan. 10:11.

Daniel lived as a captive in Babylon, a city filled with idolatry and spiritism. Moreover, the Babylonians looked down on the Jews, mocking both them and their God, Jehovah. (Ps. 137:1, 3) How this must have hurt faithful Jews like Daniel! Food and drink soon became an issue because Daniel did not want to “defile himself with the king’s delicacies.” (Dan. 1:5-8, 14-17) A more subtle challenge for Daniel

could have involved his exceptional abilities, which led to his receiving special privileges. (Dan. 1:19, 20) But instead of becoming arrogant and opinionated, he remained humble and modest, always giving due credit to Jehovah. (Dan. 2:30) In fact, it was while Daniel was still a young man that Jehovah counted him worthy of being mentioned as an example of righteousness, along with Noah and Job. (Ezek. 14: 14) Was God’s confidence in Daniel misplaced? Not at all! Daniel stayed faithful and obedient to the very end of his life. *w18.02 5 ¶11-12*

Friday, September 6

Levi spread a big reception feast for [Jesus] in his house.—Luke 5:29.

Jesus displayed a perfectly balanced view of pleasures. He attended “a marriage feast” and “a big reception feast.” (John 2:1-10) At the wedding, he miraculously changed water into wine, adding to the supply, which had run short. Yet, Jesus did not immerse himself in a life of pleasure. He put Jehovah first and expended himself tirelessly in behalf of others. So that many might live, he willingly endured a painful death on a stake. Addressing those who would follow in his footsteps, Jesus said: “Happy are you when people reproach you and persecute you and lyingly say every sort of wicked thing against you for my sake. Rejoice and be overjoyed, since your reward is great in the heavens.” (Matt. 5:11, 12) If we truly love God, we will be careful to avoid not only the things we know will displease him but also the things we merely suspect may displease him. —Matt. 22:37, 38. *w18.01 26 ¶16-18*

Saturday, September 7

If a servant is pampered from his youth, he will become thankless later on.—Prov. 29:21.

We give to Jehovah because of our love and appreciation for him. We are overwhelmed when we consider all that Jehovah has done in our behalf. King David acknowledged that everything we receive comes from Jehovah and that whatever we give to Jehovah is from what he has already given us. (1 Chron. 29:11-14) Giving is good for us. It is healthy for us to be generous givers and not just receivers. We may think of a child who gives a gift to his parents from the small allowance they have given him. How the parents appreciate this gift! A son or a daughter who may be pioneering and living at home may rightly give the parents some funds to assist with household expenses. Though the parents may not expect this, they may accept these gifts because it is a way for the child to show appreciation for all that they do for him. Likewise, Jehovah realizes that giving from our valuable things is good for us. *w18.01* 18 ¶4, 6

Sunday, September 8

Choose life so that you may live, you and your descendants.—Deut. 30:19.

More is involved than simply *telling* your children what is right and what is wrong. You would also do well to help them reason on such questions as: ‘Why does the Bible forbid things that can be appealing to the flesh? What convinces me that Bible standards are always for my own good?’ (Isa. 48:17, 18) A child who expresses interest in

getting baptized should be helped to reason on yet another matter—how he or she feels about the responsibilities that come with being a Christian. What are the benefits? What are the costs? How do the benefits greatly outweigh the costs? (Mark 10:29, 30) Those are issues that one is likely to face after baptism. Therefore, it is crucial to think these matters through before taking that serious step. When children are helped to consider these things deeply, they are more likely to develop a personal conviction. Which one? That Bible standards are *always* in their best interests. *w17.12* 21 ¶14-15

Monday, September 9

He calls them all by name.—Isa. 40:26.

Many of you dear brothers and sisters are coping with serious illness. Others, although well along in years themselves, are caring for elderly relatives. Still others are struggling to provide, not luxury items, but just the basic necessities for their families. And we know that many are dealing with, not one, but several of such problems all at once! If Jehovah takes a personal interest in his inanimate creation, imagine how he feels about you who serve him, not because you have been programmed to do so, but because you love him! (Ps. 19:1, 3, 14) Our dear Father knows you through and through. “Even the hairs of your head are all numbered” by him. (Matt. 10:30) And the psalmist assures us: “Jehovah is aware of what the blameless go through.” (Ps. 37:18) Yes, he takes notice of the trials you face, and he can give you the strength to endure each one of them. *w18.01* 7 ¶1; 8 ¶4

Tuesday, September 10

Tabitha, rise!—Acts 9:40.

Peter's resurrection of Tabitha was so convincing that "many became believers in the Lord." They could testify both in general about the Lord and specifically about Jehovah's ability to raise the dead. (Acts 9:36-42) Others became eye-witnesses to another resurrection. One time, the apostle Paul was at a meeting in an upper room in Troas, in what is now northwest Turkey. Paul spoke till midnight. A young man named Eutychus was listening, seated at a window. But he dozed off and fell from the third story to the ground below. Perhaps the physician Luke was the first to reach Eutychus, and Luke made a medical assessment: Eutychus was not merely injured and unconscious—he was dead! Paul came downstairs and embraced the corpse, and then he made the dramatic announcement: "He is alive." What a profound impact that would have had on eye-witnesses! Knowing the facts and grasping that a resurrection had occurred, they "were comforted beyond measure."—Acts 20:7-12. *w17.12* 5 ¶10-11

Wednesday, September 11

Come and witness the activities of Jehovah.—Ps. 46:8.

Is mankind coming to grips with the problems that have plagued him for so long? Certainly, they have not learned to avoid war. Crimes, such as cybercrime, domestic violence, and terrorism, are increasing at an alarming rate. And death-dealing diseases still run rampant. The present economic and political systems are powered by selfish forces. Clearly, such forces cannot eliminate war,

crime, disease, and poverty—only God's Kingdom can. Consider what Jehovah will do for mankind. *War:* God's Kingdom will eliminate such deep-seated causes of war as selfishness, corruption, patriotism, false religion, and Satan himself. (Ps. 46:9) *Crime:* God's Kingdom is already teaching millions to love and trust one another as no other government can. (Isa. 11:9) *Disease:* Jehovah will bless his people with perfect health. (Isa. 35:5, 6) *Poverty:* Jehovah will eliminate it and will provide his people with spiritual and physical prosperity.—Ps. 72:12, 13. *w17.11* 24 ¶14-16

Thursday, September 12

*No bloodguilt will come upon you.
—Deut. 19:10.*

A key purpose of the cities of refuge was to protect the Israelites from bloodguilt. Jehovah loves life, and he hates murderous "hands that shed innocent blood." (Prov. 6:16, 17) A just and holy God, he could not ignore even accidental bloodshed. Unlike Jehovah, the scribes and Pharisees showed a careless disregard for life. How so? "You took away the key of knowledge," Jesus told them. "You yourselves did not go in, and you hinder those going in!" (Luke 11:52) They were supposed to unlock the meaning of God's Word and help others to walk on the road to eternal life. Instead, they directed people away from "the Chief Agent of life," Jesus, leading them toward a course that could end in eternal destruction. (Acts 3:15) Proud and selfish, the scribes and Pharisees cared little for the life and welfare of their fellow humans. How cruel and unmerciful! *w17.11* 15 ¶9-10

Friday, September 13

Whoever becomes ashamed of me . . . , the Son of man will also be ashamed of him.—Mark 8:38.

At first, we may not have told our family about our association with Jehovah's Witnesses. As our faith grew, though, we saw the need to be open about our beliefs. If your courageous stand has resulted in a problem between you and your non-Witness relatives, endeavor to have empathy for them. While we may be overjoyed about the Bible truths we have learned, our relatives may mistakenly believe that we have been tricked or have become part of a cult. They may think that we no longer love them because we do not celebrate holidays with them. They may even fear for our eternal welfare. We should show empathy by trying to see things from their viewpoint and by listening carefully to discern their real concerns. (Prov. 20:5) The apostle Paul endeavored to understand "people of all sorts" in order to share the good news with them, and a similar approach can help us as well.—1 Cor. 9:19-23. *w17.10* 15 ¶11-12

Saturday, September 14

Sing praises to [Jehovah].
—Ps. 33:2.

Perhaps we are apprehensive about singing because we are unsure of *how* to sing. Yet, we can improve our singing by applying some basic suggestions. You can learn to sing with power and volume by *breathing* properly. Much as electricity powers a light bulb, breathing energizes your voice when you speak or sing. You should sing as loud as you speak or even louder than that. In fact, within the context of singing praises, the Scrip-

tures sometimes direct Jehovah's worshippers to "shout joyfully." (Ps. 33:1-3) Try the following: Choose one of your favorite songs from our songbook. Read the lyrics out loud in a strong, confident voice. Next, using the same volume, say all the words from a single phrase of the song *in one breath*. Then sing the phrase, using the same vibrant voice. (Isa. 24:14) Your singing voice will become fuller, and that is a good thing. Do not let it scare you or embarrass you! *w17.11* 5-6 ¶11-13

Sunday, September 15

Everyone whose spirit the true God had stirred—prepared to go up and rebuild the house of Jehovah, which was in Jerusalem.—Ezra 1:5.

As the Jews traveled along, they no doubt spent many hours thinking about their new home. They had heard how beautiful the city of Jerusalem once was. The oldest ones among them had seen the former glory of the temple. (Ezra 3:12) If you had traveled with them, how would you have felt when you first caught sight of Jerusalem, your new home? Would you have been saddened when you saw the ruined buildings overgrown with weeds? Would you have compared the massive double walls of Babylon with Jerusalem's broken-down walls, with large gaps where gates and watchtowers once stood? Yet, the people took heart. They had already seen Jehovah's saving hand in their behalf throughout their long trip homeward. The first thing they did upon arriving was set up an altar on the site of the former temple, and they began to offer daily sacrifices to Jehovah.—Ezra 3:1, 2. *w17.10* 26-27 ¶12-3

Monday, September 16

*Do not be afraid or be terrified,
for Jehovah . . . is with you.*

—1 Chron. 28:20.

Solomon likely learned much about courage from his own father. David displayed tremendous courage when he confronted a battle-hardened giant. Yes, with God's help and a smooth stone, David defeated Goliath. (1 Sam. 17:45, 49, 50) How appropriate it was later for David to urge Solomon to be courageous and construct the temple! Jehovah would be with him until the work of building the temple was finished. With his father's words impressed on his mind and heart, Solomon did not allow his youth and inexperience to become an obstacle. He showed great courage, went to work, and with Jehovah's help completed the magnificent temple in seven and a half years. As Jehovah helped Solomon, he can help us to be courageous and to accomplish our work, both in our family and in the congregation. (Isa. 41:10, 13) When we show courage in our worship of Jehovah, we can be confident of his blessing now and in the future. *w17.09 28 ¶3; 29 ¶4; 32 ¶20-21*

Tuesday, September 17

*The word of God is alive and
exerts power.—Heb. 4:12.*

As Jehovah's people, we have no doubt that God's word, his message to humans, "is alive and exerts power." Many of us are living proof of the Bible's power to change lives. Some of our brothers and sisters were formerly thieves, drug addicts, or sexually immoral. Others enjoyed a measure of success in

this system of things but felt that something was missing in their life. (Eccl. 2:3-11) Time and again, individuals who seemed hopelessly lost found their way to the path of life by means of the Bible's transforming power. You have likely read and greatly enjoyed a number of these experiences as published in *The Watchtower* in the series "The Bible Changes Lives." And you have seen that even after accepting the truth, Christians continue to make spiritual progress with the help of the Scriptures. *w17.09 23 ¶1*

Wednesday, September 18

*Because of Jehovah's compassion
for him, . . . they brought him out
and stationed him outside the city.*

—Gen. 19:16.

Does not that incident in Lot's life demonstrate that Jehovah is fully aware of the difficult situations in which his faithful people sometimes find themselves? (Isa. 63:7-9; Jas. 5:11, ftn.; 2 Pet. 2:9) He has also taught his people the need to display compassion. Consider the law given to Israel regarding the seizing of a man's garment as security for a loan. (Ex. 22:26, 27) A hard-hearted lender might have been tempted to seize the debtor's garment, leaving him without a covering in which to sleep. Yet, Jehovah taught his people to avoid such an unfeeling attitude and course. His people were to be compassionate. Does not the principle reflected in that particular law move us to action? Would we want to leave our brothers out in the cold, so to speak, if there is something that we can do to relieve their suffering?—Col. 3:12; Jas. 2:15, 16; 1 John 3:17. *w17.09 9 ¶4-5*

Thursday, September 19

Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.

—Luke 23:34.

Jesus prayed that his Father forgive his executioners. What an outstanding example of mildness and patience under painful and stressful circumstances! (1 Pet. 2:21-23) How can we show mildness and patience? Paul mentioned one way when he wrote to fellow believers: “Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely even if anyone has a cause for complaint against another. Just as Jehovah freely forgave you, you must also do the same.” (Col. 3:13) Indeed, it takes mildness and patience on our part to obey this command. But by being forgiving, we promote and preserve the unity in the congregation. Being clothed with mildness and patience is not optional for a Christian. It is an essential requirement for our salvation. (Matt. 5:5; Jas. 1:21) More important, by means of these qualities, we honor Jehovah and help others to heed the Bible’s counsel. —Gal. 6:1; 2 Tim. 2:24, 25. *w17.08* 25-26 ¶15-17

Friday, September 20

Jehovah knows how to rescue people of godly devotion out of trial.

—2 Pet. 2:9.

As we search the Scriptures, time and again we find examples of Jehovah doing the unexpected. King Hezekiah lived at a time when King Sennacherib of Assyria invaded Judah and captured all the fortified cities, with the exception of Jerusalem. (2 Ki. 18:1-3, 13) Then, Sennacherib turned his attention to

Jerusalem. What did King Hezekiah do when faced with this imminent threat? He approached Jehovah in prayer and turned to Jehovah’s prophet Isaiah for advice. (2 Ki. 19:5, 15-20) Hezekiah also tried to show his reasonableness by paying the fine that Sennacherib imposed on him. (2 Ki. 18:14, 15) In time, Hezekiah made preparations for a long siege. (2 Chron. 32:2-4) But how was the situation resolved? Jehovah sent an angel to destroy 185,000 of Sennacherib’s soldiers in one night. Truly, not even Hezekiah expected that to happen!—2 Ki. 19:35. *w17.08* 10 ¶7; 11 ¶12

Saturday, September 21

Make disciples of people . . . , teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you.

—Matt. 28:19, 20.

How can you plan to be a full-time Christian minister? More than anything, spiritual qualities will help you to be successful in serving Jehovah fully. So be diligent in your study of God’s Word, meditate deeply on its meaning, and look for ways to express your faith at congregation meetings. During your school years, you can acquire experience and skill as a preacher of the good news. Learn to be interested in people by tactfully asking their opinion and listening to their response. Also, you can offer to do things in the congregation, such as helping to clean and maintain the Kingdom Hall. Jehovah is pleased to use those who have a humble, willing spirit. (Ps. 110:3; Acts 6:1-3) The apostle Paul invited Timothy into missionary service because “he was well-reported-on by the brothers.” —Acts 16:1-5. *w17.07* 23 ¶7; 26 ¶14

Sunday, September 22

*To me every knee will bend,
every tongue will swear
loyalty.—Isa. 45:23.*

As long as the question of the rightfulness of Jehovah's sovereignty remains unsettled in the minds of humans or angels, discord among nations, races, tribes, families, and individuals will exist. But after Jehovah's sovereignty is vindicated, all will submit everlastingly to his righteous rule. Universal peace will be restored. (Eph. 1: 9, 10) The rightfulness of God's sovereignty will be vindicated and rule by Satan and humans will utterly fail and be removed. Rule by God through his Messianic Kingdom will succeed, and integrity-keepers will have proved that humans can take their stand for God's rulership. (Isa. 45:24) Do you want to be among those who go on record as integrity-keeping supporters of Jehovah's sovereignty? No doubt you do. To be integrity-keepers, we need to fix our eyes on that big issue and comprehend how important it really is. *w17.06 23 ¶4-5*

Monday, September 23

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

The grieving process can vary greatly from person to person. Therefore, make yourself available, not just for the first few days when many friends and relatives are present, but in subsequent months when others have returned to their normal routine. Fellow Christians can be a source of profound comfort for someone for as long as it takes him or her to deal with grief.

(1 Thess. 3:7) Remember that bereaved ones may experience pangs of grief triggered by anniversaries, certain music, photographs, activities, or even a specific smell, sound, or season of the year. Many things a bereaved marriage mate does alone for the first time—such as attending an assembly or the Memorial—can be particularly painful. Bear in mind, though, that bereaved ones need encouragement not only on special occasions. *w17.07 16 ¶17-19*

Tuesday, September 24

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

Interestingly, when we show loving personal interest in others, we may actually let go of some of our own negative feelings. Sisters, married or unmarried, know for a fact that they find great joy in sharing the good news as fellow workers with God. Their goal is to honor God by doing his will. Some even view their participation in the ministry as therapy. Certainly, all of us contribute to a close bond in the congregation when we show concern for others, those in our territory and those in the congregation. The apostle Paul was a fine example. He became like “a nursing mother” to those in the Thessalonian congregation; he was also like a spiritual father. (1 Thess. 2:7, 11, 12) Young ones who learn to love the true God and to follow his counsel can become a source of comfort in a family. They can do so by showing respect for their parents and by helping in material ways. They can also make a valuable spiritual contribution. *w17.06 7 ¶13-14; 8 ¶17*

Wednesday, September 25

Make friends for yourselves by means of the unrighteous riches.—Luke 16:9.

No one disputes that billions of people are desperately poor, while others have enough wealth to last for many lifetimes. Jesus understood that the current economic system would not change until God's Kingdom comes. Along with the political and religious elements, the greedy commercial system, represented by "the merchants" of Revelation 18:3, constitutes part of Satan's world. Unlike the complete separation that God's people maintain from politics and false religion, most cannot separate themselves completely from the commercial part of Satan's world. As Christians, we do well to examine our view of today's commercial system by asking ourselves such questions as these: 'How can I use my material possessions to show faithfulness to God? How can I minimize involvement with the commercial world? What experiences show that God's people fully trust in him in this challenging environment?' *w17.07 7-8 ¶1-3*

Thursday, September 26

Pay attention to yourselves that your hearts never become weighed down with overeating and heavy drinking and anxieties of life.—Luke 21:34.

Jesus was keenly aware of the pressures associated with the anxieties of this system of things. In his illustration of the sower, Jesus said that some would accept "the word of the Kingdom" and make initial progress but that "the anxiety of

this system of things and the deceptive power of riches" would "choke the word." (Matt. 13:19-22; Mark 4:19) Indeed, if we are not careful, the everyday concerns of life could entice our heart and cause us to slow down spiritually. We prove the depth of our love for Christ by putting the work he has given us to do in first place. How can we make sure that we continue to do so? From time to time, we need to ask ourselves, 'Where does my true affection lie? Does most of my joy come from engaging in mundane activities or in spiritual activities?' *w17.05 23 ¶3-4*

Friday, September 27

Use speech that is easily understood.—1 Cor. 14:9.

When "foreign residents" live far from other Witnesses who speak their language, they need to associate with a local-language congregation. (Ps. 146:9) But if there is a congregation nearby that uses your mother tongue, the question arises: Which language congregation is best for your family? After careful thought and prayer and consultation with his mate and children, a family head must decide. (1 Cor. 11:3) Parents must evaluate their children's needs realistically. Of course—regardless of language—to gain a firm grasp of the truth, a child needs much more than just a few hours of spiritual education each week at meetings. But consider this: At meetings conducted in the language they understand best, children may absorb instruction simply by being present, perhaps learning more than their parents realize. That may not be the case when children do not fully understand the language.—1 Cor. 14:11. *w17.05 10 ¶10-11*

Saturday, September 28

Because of the people's volunteering, praise Jehovah!—Judg. 5:2.

Each of us does well to ask himself: 'Do I have the faith and courage to use whatever is at my disposal to carry out the clear command of Jehovah? If I am contemplating a major move to another city or country for perceived economic advantages, do I give prayerful consideration to the effect this would have on my family and on the congregation?' Jehovah dignifies us by allowing us to share in supporting his sovereignty. Since the Devil first enticed humans to support his rival sovereignty, your siding with Jehovah's rulership sends Satan a message that is loud and clear. The faith and integrity that motivate your volunteer spirit are pleasing to Jehovah. (Prov. 23:15, 16) He uses your display of support to make a reply to the taunts of Satan. (Prov. 27:11) Thus, by your loyal obedience, you are, in effect, giving Jehovah something that he considers precious, and he finds profound joy in this. *w17.04 32 ¶15-16*

Sunday, September 29

Whenever you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it, for he finds no pleasure in the stupid ones. What you vow, pay.—Eccl. 5:4.

The Mosaic Law stated: "If a man makes a vow to Jehovah or swears an oath to impose on himself a vow . . . , he must not violate his word. He should do everything he vowed he would do." (Num. 30:2) Later, Solomon was inspired to write the words of today's text. Jesus confirmed the seriousness of making vows when he stated: "It was said

to those of ancient times: 'You must not swear without performing, but you must pay your vows to Jehovah.'" (Matt. 5:33) It is clear, then, that it is a very serious matter to make promises to God. The way we treat our vows affects our relationship with Jehovah. David wrote: "Who may ascend to the mountain of Jehovah, and who may stand up in his holy place? Anyone . . . who has not sworn a false oath by My [Jehovah's] life, nor taken an oath deceitfully."—Ps. 24:3, 4; ftn. *w17.04 4 ¶3-4*

Monday, September 30

He does not slander with his tongue.—Ps. 15:3.

When a Christian believes that he is the victim of injustice, he should be careful not to engage in harmful gossip. Of course, it is entirely proper to seek assistance from the elders and to inform them if a member of the congregation is guilty of a serious wrong. (Lev. 5:1) However, in many cases that do not involve serious wrongdoing, it may be possible to resolve a difference without involving anyone else, not even the elders. (Matt. 5:23, 24; 18:15) May we loyally handle such matters in line with Bible principles. In some cases, we may come to realize that we were not the victim of an injustice after all. How grateful we would be that we did not make a situation worse by slandering a fellow Christian! Remember, whether we are right or wrong, engaging in hurtful speech will never improve a situation. Loyalty to Jehovah and to our brothers will protect us from making such a mistake. *w17.04 21 ¶14*

Tuesday, October 1

If any one of you is lacking in wisdom, let him keep asking God, for he gives generously to all and without reproaching.—Jas. 1:5.

Jehovah is the Source of wisdom, and he generously shares his wisdom with others. One way that we acquire wisdom from God is by accepting his discipline. And that wisdom can safeguard us from moral and spiritual harm. (Prov. 2:10-12) As a result, we “keep [ourselves] in God’s love . . . with everlasting life in view.” (Jude 21) However, our sinful leanings, our upbringing, and other factors make it a challenge to accept discipline or to view it in the right light. We build appreciation for discipline when we experience its benefits, which confirm God’s love for us. “My son, do not reject the discipline of Jehovah, . . . for those whom Jehovah loves he reproveth,” says Proverbs 3:11, 12. Yes, let us never forget that Jehovah has our best interests at heart. (Heb. 12:5-11) Because God fully knows us, his discipline is always appropriate and properly measured. *w18.03 28 ¶1-2*

Wednesday, October 2

*Be hospitable to one another.
—1 Pet. 4:9.*

The apostle Peter wrote the above to the culturally diverse congregations in Asia Minor. They were facing “fiery trials.” What could help Christians everywhere to get through those stressful times? (1 Pet. 1:1; 4: 4, 7, 12) Note that Peter urged his Christian brothers and sisters to be hospitable “to one another,” to those whom they already knew and associ-

ated with. How would being hospitable help them? It would draw them together. Consider your own experience. Have you had the pleasure of being invited to someone’s home? Did that occasion not leave you with warm memories? When you entertained some from your congregation, was your friendship not deepened? By extending hospitality, we get to know our brothers and sisters in a more personal way than we can in other settings. Christians in Peter’s day needed to draw ever closer as conditions grew worse. The same is true for Christians in these “last days.”—2 Tim. 3:1. *w18.03 14-15 ¶1-3*

Thursday, October 3

*Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need, since the Kingdom of the heavens belongs to them.
—Matt. 5:3.*

The Bible speaks highly of spiritually-minded people. Romans 8:6 shows the advantage of being spiritually-minded, saying: “Setting the mind on the flesh means death, but setting the mind on the spirit means life and peace.” By focusing on spiritual things, we gain peace with God and with ourselves now and the prospect of everlasting life in the future. However, we live in a dangerous environment. Since fleshly attitudes are all around us, we need to put forth real effort to develop spirituality and to guard it once we have it. If a person loses his spirituality, he creates a moral vacuum and the polluted “air” of this world will rush in. Jude spoke of those who would deteriorate even to the point of “not having spirituality.”—Jude 18, 19. *w18.02 19 ¶5, 7; 20 ¶8*

Friday, October 4

Wicked men and impostors will advance from bad to worse.

—2 Tim. 3:13.

Many health-care professionals work among those infected with contagious diseases. They care for their patients because they want to help them. In doing so, however, they need to protect themselves so that they do not become infected with the disease they are seeking to treat. Likewise, many of us live and work with those who are infected with attitudes and characteristics that run counter to godly qualities. This presents a challenge for us. These last days are a time of moral chaos. The apostle Paul's second letter to Timothy describes the characteristics of people who are alienated from God. (2 Tim. 3:1-5) Though we may be shocked by the prevalence of such qualities, we could be influenced by the behavior and attitudes of those who display them. (Prov. 13:20) Therefore, we must protect ourselves from being infected with negative traits while at the same time helping others spiritually. *w18.01 27 ¶1-2*

Saturday, October 5

Make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them.

—Matt. 28:19.

In 33 C.E., the resurrected Jesus appeared to a crowd of more than 500 men, women, and possibly even children. It may have been on that occasion that he said the above. (1 Cor. 15:6) Yes, it seems that hundreds of his followers were present when Jesus gave the commission to make disciples. Jesus thus revealed that baptism would be a requirement for those who accept the yoke

of Christian discipleship. (Matt. 11:29, 30) Anyone who wished to serve God acceptably would have to acknowledge and accept Jesus' role in the outworking of Jehovah's purpose. After doing so, that person could get baptized. This would be the only water baptism having God's approval. The Bible record provides abundant evidence that in the first century, new disciples of Christ understood the significance of baptism. And they did not unnecessarily delay getting baptized.—Acts 2:41; 9:18; 16:14, 15, 32, 33. *w18.03 5 ¶8*

Sunday, October 6

O Daniel, you very precious man.

—Dan. 10:11.

Today, we live in a world that has been morally and spiritually corrupted by Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion, "a dwelling place of demons." (Rev. 18:2) Hence, we stand out as different, even becoming targets for ridicule. (Mark 13:13) Like Daniel, therefore, let us draw close to Jehovah, our God. When we humbly and obediently trust in him, we too will be precious in his eyes. (Hag. 2:7) Parents can learn from the example of Daniel's parents. How so? Despite the wickedness that prevailed in Judah during Daniel's early childhood, the boy grew to love God. This reflected good parental training. (Prov. 22:6) Even Daniel's name, which means "My Judge Is God," points to God-fearing parents. (Dan. 1:6, ftn.) So parents, do not give up on your children, but teach them patiently. (Eph. 6:4) Also, pray with them and for them. When you strive to impress Bible truth on their hearts, you invite Jehovah's rich blessing.—Ps. 37:5. *w18.02 5 ¶12; 6 ¶14-15*

Monday, October 7

Everything is from you, and we have given to you what comes from your own hand.

—1 Chron. 29:14.

Giving is an expression of our worship of Jehovah. In vision, the apostle John heard Jehovah's servants in heaven say: "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. 4:11) Would you not agree that Jehovah is worthy of all the glory and honor that we can give him by offering the best that we have? Through Moses, Jehovah commanded the nation of Israel to appear before Jehovah at three annual festivals. As part of their worship at those festivals, the Israelites were not to "appear before Jehovah empty-handed." (Deut. 16:16) Likewise today, unselfish giving in appreciation for and in support of the work of the earthly part of Jehovah's organization is a fundamental aspect of worship. *w18.01 18 ¶4-5*

Tuesday, October 8

I will refresh you.

—Matt. 11:28.

Jesus added: "Take my yoke upon you . . . For my yoke is kindly, and my load is light." (Matt. 11:29, 30) How true that statement is! At times, we may feel exhausted when we leave home to attend a congregation meeting or to engage in the field ministry. But how do we feel when we return? Refreshed—and better prepared to deal with life's trials. Jesus' yoke is kindly indeed! A sister whom we will call Kayla has had to battle with chronic fa-

tigue syndrome, depression, and migraine headaches. Understandably, she has sometimes found it difficult to attend congregation meetings. However, after she made the effort to attend a public meeting, she wrote: "The talk was about discouragement. The information was presented in such an empathetic and concerned way that I was moved to tears. I was reminded that the meetings are where I need to be." How happy she was that she made the effort to attend! *w18.01 8-9 ¶6-7*

Wednesday, October 9

My feet had almost strayed.

—Ps. 73:2.

What if your son or daughter begins to express doubts at some point after baptism? For example, a baptized adolescent may seem attracted to the things of the world or may begin to question the wisdom of living by Bible principles. (Ps. 73:1, 3, 12, 13) As a parent, realize that how you handle such questioning on the part of your son or daughter may influence whether your child will choose to draw closer to your faith or he will draw away from it. Be determined not to declare war with your child over this issue, whether he is still quite young or he is now an adolescent. Your goal should be to provide loving support and help in a winning way. Of course, a youth who is baptized has made a solemn dedication to Jehovah. That dedication is a promise to love God and to put his will above everything else. (Mark 12:30) Jehovah does not take that promise lightly, and it should not be taken lightly by anyone who has made it. —Eccl. 5:4, 5. *w17.12 22 ¶16-17*

Thursday, October 10

I know [my brother] will rise in the resurrection on the last day.—John 11:24.

As did Martha, Jehovah's loyal servants knew that a future time of resurrection was in store. Think of what God told Abraham to do with Isaac, the long-awaited heir. Jehovah said: "Take, please, your son, your only son whom you so love, Isaac, and . . . offer him up . . . as a burnt offering." (Gen. 22:2) Imagine the feelings that such a command would stir up. Jehovah had promised that through Abraham's offspring all nations would be blessed. (Gen. 13:14-16; 18:18; Rom. 4:17, 18) Also, Jehovah said that the blessing would come "through Isaac." (Gen. 21:12) But how could that occur if Abraham put Isaac to death as a sacrifice? Paul was inspired to explain that Abraham believed that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead. (Heb. 11:17-19) Abraham could not know when his son would be raised to life again. But he trusted that Jehovah would resurrect Isaac. *w17.12 5-6 ¶12-14*

Friday, October 11

I am clean from the blood of all men.—Acts 20:26.

Like Paul, we should strive to cultivate a godly view of life. Jehovah "desires all to attain to repentance." (2 Pet. 3:9) Do you? You may find that kindling a merciful attitude in your heart will motivate you to increase your zeal in the ministry and fill you with more joy as you do so. We also share Jehovah's view of life by cultivating a proper attitude toward safety. We must drive and work safely, even when we

are building, maintaining, or traveling to places of worship. Never put production, finances, or schedules ahead of safety and health. Our just God *always* does what is right and proper. We want to be like him. Elders in particular strive to be conscious of both their own safety and the safety of those working around them. (Prov. 22:3) If an elder reminds you of safety rules and standards, therefore, accept his counsel. (Gal. 6:1) View life as Jehovah views it, and "no bloodguilt will come upon you."—Deut. 19:10. *w17.11 16 ¶11-12*

Saturday, October 12

Let no man deprive you of the prize.—Col. 2:18.

Like the apostle Paul, spirit-anointed Christians today have the precious prospect of receiving "the prize of the upward call of God." (Phil. 3:14) They look forward to serving with Jesus Christ in his heavenly Kingdom and sharing with him in bringing mankind to perfection. (Rev. 20:6) What a wonderful goal such ones have been invited by God to pursue! The other sheep have a different hope. They look forward to gaining the prize of everlasting life on earth—and what a happy prospect that is! (2 Pet. 3:13) To help fellow anointed Christians to stay faithful and attain the prize, Paul urged them: "Keep your minds fixed on the things above." (Col. 3:2) They were to keep in mind the precious hope of receiving their heavenly inheritance. (Col. 1:4, 5) Indeed, contemplating the blessings that Jehovah sets before his people helps all of God's servants to keep their eyes on the prize.—1 Cor. 9:24. *w17.11 25 ¶1-2*

Sunday, October 13

Sing to Jehovah!

—Ps. 96:1.

Many of the songs from “*Sing Out Joyfully*” to Jehovah are in the form of a prayer. With these songs, you can express your personal feelings to Jehovah. Other songs will help “to incite [us] to love and fine works.” (Heb. 10:24) Surely we want to become familiar with the melodies, rhythms, and lyrics of our songs. You can do so by listening to the vocal renditions available on jw.org. By practicing the songs at home, you can learn to sing them with confidence and heartfelt expression. Remember that singing is an important feature of our worship. It is a powerful way to show our love and appreciation for Jehovah. (Isa. 12:5) When you sing out joyfully, you will also encourage others to sing with confidence. Indeed, all in the congregation—young, old, and newly interested ones—can join in this form of direct worship of Jehovah. So do not hold back in expressing yourself in song. Yes, make a joyful sound! *w17.11 7 ¶18-19*

Monday, October 14

Prove yourselves cautious as serpents and yet innocent as doves.

—Matt. 10:16.

Many of today’s refugees come from countries where our preaching work is restricted. Thanks to zealous Witnesses in the lands receiving refugees, thousands of refugees are hearing “the word of the Kingdom” for the first time. (Matt. 13:19, 23) Many who are “loaded down” are finding spiritual refreshment at our meetings and quickly

acknowledge: “God is really among you.” (Matt. 11:28-30; 1 Cor. 14:25) Those who preach to refugees need to be “cautious” and even “shrewd.” (Prov. 22:3) Listen patiently to their concerns, but do not discuss politics. Follow directions from the branch office and from local authorities; never put yourself or others at risk. Learn and respect refugees’ religious and cultural sensitivities. For instance, people from some lands have strong feelings about proper dress for women. Therefore, when preaching to refugees, dress so as not to cause needless offense. *w17.05 7 ¶17-18*

Tuesday, October 15

Let your words always be gracious.—Col. 4:6.

We can ask Jehovah for his holy spirit so that we can display its fruitage when speaking with our unbelieving relatives. We should not try to argue about all their false religious ideas. If they hurt us by their speech or actions, we can imitate the example of the apostles. Paul wrote: “When insulted, we bless; when persecuted, we patiently endure; when slandered, we answer mildly.” (1 Cor. 4:12, 13) Although mild speech is helpful in dealing with opposing relatives, our good conduct can speak even louder. (1 Pet. 3:1, 2, 16) By your example, let your relatives see that Jehovah’s Witnesses enjoy happy marriages, look after their children, and live a clean, moral, and fulfilling life. Even if our relatives never accept the truth, we can have the joy that comes from pleasing Jehovah by our faithful course. *w17.10 15 ¶13-14*

Wednesday, October 16

*Present yourself approved
to God.—2 Tim. 2:15.*

Should we be surprised that many in modern times have made remarkable changes as a result of studying God's Word? Not at all! Such experiences remind us of our first-century brothers and sisters, who had the heavenly hope. (1 Cor. 6:9-11) After listing a number of types of people who will not inherit God's Kingdom, the apostle Paul added: "That is what some of you *were*." But they had changed with the help of the Scriptures and of God's holy spirit. Even after accepting the truth, some had to overcome serious spiritual problems. The Bible mentions one anointed Christian in the first century who had to be disfellowshipped; later, he was reinstated. (1 Cor. 5:1-5; 2 Cor. 2:5-8) Do we not find it encouraging to consider the range of problems that our fellow believers have faced and that they have overcome by means of God's Word? We surely want to make the best use of it. *w17.09 23-24 ¶2-3*

Thursday, October 17

*We should love, not in word or
with the tongue, but in deed and
truth.—1 John 3:18.*

Love based on right principles (*a-ga'pe*) is a gift from Jehovah. He is its Source. (1 John 4:7) This kind of love is the highest form of love. While it can include affection and warmth, it is primarily identified by unselfish actions for the good of others. According to one reference work, *a-ga'pe* "can be known only from the actions it prompts." When we show or are shown unselfish love, our lives are enriched, be-

ing filled with joy and meaning. Jehovah showed love for humans even before he created Adam and Eve. He made the earth to be man's everlasting home, a place where man does not just survive but enjoys life to the full. Jehovah did this solely for our benefit, not for personal gain. He further showed unselfish love by blessing his children on earth with the prospect of living forever in the Paradise that he had prepared for them. *w17.10 7 ¶1-2*

Friday, October 18

*You must love your neighbor
as yourself.—Jas. 2:8.*

James added: "If you continue showing favoritism, you are committing sin." (Jas. 2:9) In contrast, love will move us to avoid any discrimination based on education, race, or social status. Indeed, impartiality needs to be more than a veneer. It must be a genuine part of our personality. Love is also "patient and kind" and "does not get puffed up." (1 Cor. 13:4) It truly takes patience, kindness, and humility to continue sharing the Kingdom message with our neighbors. (Matt. 28:19) These same qualities make it easier for us to get along with *all* the brothers and sisters in the congregation. What is the reward for showing such love? It produces united congregations that reflect well on Jehovah and that attract newly interested ones. Fittingly, the Bible's description of the new personality concludes with this powerful truth: "Besides all these things, clothe yourselves with love, for it is a perfect bond of union."—Col. 3:14. *w17.08 26 ¶18-19*

Saturday, October 19

Jehovah [warned] them again and again, because he felt compassion for his people.—2 Chron. 36:15.

Should we not feel similar compassion for people who could potentially repent over a sinful life course and gain God's favor? Jehovah does not want any to be destroyed in the coming judgment. (2 Pet. 3:9) So until God acts to destroy the wicked, let us continue to proclaim his compassionate warning message. We can learn a lesson from Jesus. He felt compassion for the crowds he met, for "they were skinned and thrown about like sheep without a shepherd." How did he react to their pitiful state? "He started to teach them many things." (Matt. 9:36; Mark 6:34) His attitude was in stark contrast to that of the Pharisees, who had no desire to help the common people. (Matt. 12:9-14; 23:4; John 7:49) Do you not feel a yearning, similar to what Jesus had, to feed spiritually famished people? *w17.09* 9 ¶6; 10 ¶9

Sunday, October 20

*When I act, who can prevent it?
—Isa. 43:13.*

While in a prison hole in Egypt, did Joseph have any idea that he would be appointed to the second-highest position in the land or that he would be used by Jehovah to save his family from starvation? (Gen. 40:15, ftn.; 41:39-43; 50:20) No doubt Jehovah's actions exceeded all of Joseph's expectations. Did aged Sarah expect that Jehovah would allow her to give birth to a son? The birth of Isaac certainly exceeded all that Sarah could ever have imagined. (Gen. 21:1-3, 6, 7)

Granted, we do not expect that Jehovah will miraculously take away all our problems before the promised new world; nor do we demand that spectacular things occur in our lives. But we do know that the God who helped his servants in amazing ways is our God, Jehovah. (Isa. 43:10-12) We know that he can do whatever is needed to empower us to accomplish his will fully. (2 Cor. 4:7-9) Yes, Jehovah can help us to conquer the seemingly unconquerable if we remain faithful to him. *w17.08* 11-12 ¶13-14

Monday, October 21

*Commit to Jehovah whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.
—Prov. 16:3.*

Full-time service brings you into contact with fellow full-time servants and helps you to mature as a Christian. Many have found that serving Jehovah fully during youth also helped them to have a more successful marriage. Often, those who pioneered before marriage have been able to continue in that service together as a married couple. (Rom. 16:3, 4) Planning involves your heart. Psalm 20:4 says of Jehovah: "May he grant you the desires of your heart and give success to all your plans." So think about what you want to do with your life. Consider what Jehovah is doing in our time and how you can have a share in his service. Then plan to do what is pleasing to him. Serving Jehovah fully will bring you deep satisfaction because it is the way of life that honors God. Yes, "find exquisite delight in Jehovah, and he will grant you the desires of your heart."—Ps. 37:4. *w17.07* 26 ¶15-18

Tuesday, October 22

Praise Jah! . . . How pleasant and fitting it is to praise him!

—Ps. 147:1.

When someone has done well at an assigned task or has displayed a remarkable Christian quality, he deserves praise. If that is true of humans, how much more do we have reason to praise Jehovah God! We can praise him because of his immense power, as seen in the wonders of his creation, or because of his warm dealings with humankind, as evidenced by his provision of the ransom sacrifice of his own Son. The writer of the 147th Psalm was moved to praise Jehovah. He also encouraged others to join him in giving God praise. (Ps. 147:7, 12) We do not know who wrote this psalm, but the psalmist apparently lived about the time when Jehovah restored the Israelites to Jerusalem from Babylonian exile. (Ps. 147:2) The restoration of God's people to their place of true worship would certainly have moved the psalmist to praise Jehovah. What reasons do you have to cry out "Hallelujah!" in your own life?—Ps. 147:1, ftn. *w17.07* 17 ¶1-3

Wednesday, October 23

Make friends for yourselves by means of the unrighteous riches, so that when such fail, they may receive you into the everlasting dwelling places.—Luke 16:9.

Jesus knew that most of his followers would need to make a living in this unjust commercial world. Although Jesus does not explain why he calls riches "unrighteous," the Bible makes clear that commercialism was not part of God's pur-

pose. Jehovah provided abundantly for Adam and Eve's needs in Eden. (Gen. 2:15, 16) Later, when holy spirit operated on the first-century congregation of anointed ones, "not even one of them would say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common." (Acts 4:32) The prophet Isaiah pointed to the time when all humans would freely enjoy earth's material resources. (Isa. 25:6-9; 65:21, 22) But in the meantime, Jesus' followers would need "practical wisdom" to make a living, using the "unrighteous riches" of today's world while seeking to please God.—Luke 16:8. *w17.07* 8 ¶4-6

Thursday, October 24

Everything that he has is in your hand.—Job 1:12.

In the book of Job, one of the earliest Bible books to be written, we learn of Satan's contention that if subjected to intense suffering, Job would reject God. Satan suggested that God personally afflict Job. Jehovah did not do that, but he allowed Satan to test Job. In a short time, Job lost his servants, his means of livelihood, and his ten beloved children. Satan accomplished this in a way that made it appear as if *God himself* had been the cause of Job's troubles. (Job 1:13-19) Satan next afflicted Job with a painful and repulsive illness. (Job 2:7) His despair was deepened further by the disheartening words of his wife and of three companions who acted as if they were his friends. (Job 2:9; 3:11; 16:2) The result? Satan's claim was shown to be completely false. Job refused to turn his back on God.—Job 27:5. *w17.06* 24 ¶9-10

Friday, October 25

If anyone does not provide for those . . . who are members of his household, he has disowned the faith.—1 Tim. 5:8.

Family heads today recognize that they have a Scriptural responsibility to provide for their family's material needs. They must work hard to fulfill this obligation. However, in these last days, secular work is often a source of anxiety. As a result of fierce competition for a limited number of jobs, many employees feel compelled to work more hours, sometimes for less pay. Also, the constant push for increased production takes a heavy toll on people physically, mentally, and emotionally. Employees who are unwilling to make such sacrifices for their company risk losing their jobs. As Christians, we owe our primary loyalty to Jehovah God, not to our employer. (Luke 10:27) Secular work is simply a means to an end. We work to provide our basic material needs and to support our ministry. If we are not careful, however, secular work could interfere with our worship. *w17.05 23 ¶5-7*

Saturday, October 26

Listen to your father who caused your birth, and do not despise your mother just because she has grown old.—Prov. 23:22.

On occasion, new ones ask mature publishers to help them teach their children the truth. If a parent decides to have someone study with the children, the one who does so should not try to take over the role of the parents. (Eph. 6:1-4) There have been instances when a Witness was asked to study with children

whose parents were not interested in the truth. The Witness needs to bear in mind, though, that in providing spiritual help, he or she does not become the children's parent. And if such a study is conducted, it would be wise to do so either in the children's home with the parents or another mature Witness around or in a suitable public area. Thus no one would have a basis to misconstrue what is occurring. It is to be hoped that the parents will, in time, fulfill their God-given responsibility to care spiritually for their children. *w17.06 8 ¶15-16*

Sunday, October 27

*If I do not understand . . . the one speaking, . . . the one speaking will be a foreigner to me.
—1 Cor. 14:11.*

If children do not identify with their parents' culture, they may resist learning their parents' language—and their faith. Christian parents put their children's spiritual well-being ahead of personal preferences. (1 Cor. 10:24) A brother named Samuel relates: "My wife and I observed our children to see in which language they thrived spiritually, and we prayed for wisdom. . . . When we saw that they were getting little benefit from the meetings in our language, we decided to move to the local-language congregation. Together, we regularly attended meetings and shared in the ministry. We also invited local friends to join us for meals and excursions. All of this helped our children to get to know the brothers and to get to know Jehovah, not only as their God but also as their Father and Friend. We considered this to be much more important than their mastering our language." *w17.05 10 ¶11-13*

Monday, October 28

Praise Jehovah!—Judg. 5:2.

Soon the earth will be filled with those who prefer Jehovah's sovereignty over any other. How we long for that day! With Deborah and Barak, we sing: "Let all your enemies perish, O Jehovah, but let those who love you be like the sun rising in its glory." (Judg. 5:31) This petition will be answered when Jehovah brings an end to Satan's wicked world! When the battle of Armageddon begins, there will be no need for human volunteers to rout the enemy. That will be the time for us to "stand still, and see the salvation of Jehovah." (2 Chron. 20:17) But in the meantime, there are many opportunities for us to support Jehovah's cause with courage and zeal. "Because of the people's volunteering, praise Jehovah!" Thus, Deborah and Barak began their victory song with praise, not to creatures, but to the Most High. (Judg. 5:1, 2) Likewise today, may your volunteer spirit move all those who benefit from it to "praise Jehovah!" *w17.04 32 ¶17-18*

Tuesday, October 29

I have not done anything here for which they should put me in prison.—Gen. 40:15.

Although Joseph did not forget the wrongs he suffered throughout his 13-year ordeal, he did not become embittered by them. (Gen. 45:5-8) Most important, he did not allow the imperfections and wrong actions of others to separate him from Jehovah. Joseph's loyalty gave him the opportunity to see Jehovah's hand in correcting the injustices and in blessing him and his family. In a similar way, we must cherish and guard our relationship

with Jehovah. Never should we allow the imperfections of our brothers to separate us from the God we love and worship. (Rom. 8:38, 39) Instead, if we experience injustice at the hands of a fellow worshipper, let us be like Joseph and draw even closer to Jehovah, striving to have his view of matters. When we have done all that we Scripturally can to remedy the situation, we need to leave the matter in Jehovah's hands, confident that he will correct it in his own time and way. *w17.04 20 ¶12; 22 ¶15-16*

Wednesday, October 30

If you . . . give to your servant a male child, I will give him to Jehovah all the days of his life.—1 Sam. 1:11.

Hannah did exactly as she had vowed to God. She did not even think of doing otherwise. She took Samuel to High Priest Eli at the tabernacle in Shiloh and said: "It was for this boy that I prayed, and Jehovah granted my petition that I asked of him. I, in turn, now lend him to Jehovah. For all his days, he is lent to Jehovah." (1 Sam. 1:24-28) There, "the boy Samuel continued growing up before Jehovah." (1 Sam. 2:21) But what did that mean for Hannah? She dearly loved her little boy, but now she would not be able to have everyday contact with him during his boyhood. Think of how she longed to cuddle him, to play with him, to nurture him—to share in all the endearing memories that a loving mother cherishes as she watches her little one grow up. Even so, Hannah had no regrets about keeping her vow to God. Her heart rejoiced in Jehovah.—1 Sam. 2:1, 2; Ps. 61:1, 5, 8. *w17.04 5 ¶7-8*

Thursday, October 31

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

After foretelling that this present era would involve “critical times hard to deal with,” the apostle Paul was inspired to write: “Wicked men and impostors will advance from bad to worse.” (2 Tim. 3:2-5, 13) Have you seen those prophetic words come true? Many of us have been victims of wicked people, such as violent bullies, hateful bigots, and vicious criminals. Some of those are openly wicked; others are impostors, hiding what they do under an appearance of righteousness. Even if we ourselves have not been victims, such wicked people still affect us. We are sickened at heart when we learn of their horrible acts. The way the wicked brutalize children, the elderly, and other defenseless ones fills us with horror. Wicked people exhibit a spirit that seems subhuman, animalistic, even demonic. (Jas. 3:15) Happily, Jehovah’s Word counters such bad news with good news. *w17.04* 10 ¶4

Friday, November 1

Reject ungodliness and worldly desires and . . . live with soundness of mind and righteousness and godly devotion.—Titus 2:12.

Self-discipline includes exercising control over ourselves in order to improve in our behavior and thinking. We are not born with an inclination toward self-discipline. We have to learn it. When parents consistently and patiently train their little ones “in the discipline

and admonition of Jehovah,” they are also helping their children to develop self-discipline and wisdom. (Eph. 6:4) The same principles apply to those who come to know Jehovah as adults. True, they may already have developed a measure of self-discipline. Spiritually speaking, however, a new disciple starts off being immature. But he or she can steadily grow toward maturity as part of learning to put on the Christlike “new personality.” (Eph. 4:23, 24) Self-discipline is an important part of that growth. *w18.03* 29 ¶3-4

Saturday, November 2

Follow the course of hospitality.—Rom. 12:13.

We welcome all who attend our Christian meetings as fellow guests at a spiritual meal. Jehovah and his organization are our hosts. (Rom. 15:7) When new ones attend, we become cohosts, as it were. Why not take the initiative to welcome these new ones, no matter how they may be dressed or groomed? (Jas. 2:1-4) If a visitor is not already being cared for, could you invite him to sit with you? He might appreciate help to follow the program and perhaps to find scriptures being read. This would be a fine way to “follow the course of hospitality.” Visits of public speakers from other congregations, as well as visits of circuit overseers and, at times, representatives from the local branch office, provide opportunities for us to extend hospitality. (3 John 5-8) Providing refreshments or a meal is one fine way of doing this. Could you assist? *w18.03* 15 ¶5, 7

Sunday, November 3

What prevents me from getting baptized?—Acts 8:36.

Consider the example of a Jewish man who was persecuting Christians. He was born in a nation that was dedicated to God. However, the Jews had lost their special relationship with Jehovah. That man was zealous for the traditions of Judaism, but he learned a better way. He received a personal witness from the resurrected and glorified Jesus Christ. What was the man's response? He welcomed assistance from the Christian disciple Ananias. Regarding that man the Bible tells us: "He then got up and was baptized." (Acts 9:17, 18; Gal. 1:14) You certainly recognize that Jewish man as the one who came to be known as the apostle Paul. But reflect on the fact that once he gained appreciation for the truth about Jesus' role in the outworking of God's purpose, Paul acted. He got baptized without delay. (Acts 22:12-16) It is much the same with Bible students today, whether young or old. *w18.03 5-6 ¶9-11*

Monday, November 4

I was not able to speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to fleshly men.—1 Cor. 3:1.

Jacob did not have an easy life. He had to put up with his fleshly-minded brother, Esau, who intended to kill him. On top of that, he had to deal with a deceitful father-in-law, who repeatedly tried to exploit him. Yet, despite being surrounded by "physical" men, Jacob was a spiritual man. (1 Cor. 2:14-16) He had faith in the promise made to Abraham and devoted himself

to caring for the family who would play a special role in the outworking of Jehovah's purpose. (Gen. 28:10-15) Jacob's words and actions reveal that he had God's standards and will in mind. For example, when he felt threatened by Esau, Jacob said to God: "Save me, I pray you . . . You have said: 'I will certainly deal well with you, and I will make your offspring like the grains of sand of the sea.'" (Gen. 32:6-12) He obviously put faith in Jehovah's promises and wanted to act in harmony with God's will and purpose. *w18.02 20 ¶9-10*

Tuesday, November 5

He is an upright man of integrity, fearing God and shunning what is bad.—Job 1:8.

The life of Job is a study in contrasts. Before his trial, he was "the greatest of all the people of the East." (Job 1:3) He was wealthy, well-known, and highly respected. (Job 29:7-16) Yet, despite all of this, Job did not develop a lofty view of himself or feel that he did not need God. In fact, Jehovah called him "my servant." Satan launched a series of vicious attacks against Job, leading Job to assume that God was to blame. (Job 1:13-21) Then three false comforters arrived and attacked Job with cruel words, basically saying that God was giving him what he deserved! (Job 2:11; 22:1, 5-10) Yet, Job maintained his integrity. When the trial was over, Jehovah gave Job double what he had before the trial began, as well as an added 140 years of life. (Jas. 5:11) During that time, he continued to give Jehovah exclusive devotion. *w18.02 6 ¶16; 7 ¶18*

Wednesday, November 6

*Men will be . . . boastful, haughty,
. . . puffed up with pride.*

—2 Tim. 3:2, 4.

People with such traits crave to be admired and adored. One scholar wrote the following about the person who has an all-consuming pride: “In his heart there is a little altar where he bows down before himself.” Some have said that inordinate pride is so distasteful that even the proud dislike it in others. Jehovah certainly detests pride. He hates “haughty eyes.” (Prov. 6:16, 17) Pride hinders approach to God. (Ps. 10:4) It is a characteristic of the Devil. (1 Tim. 3:6) Sadly, though, even some loyal servants of Jehovah have become infected with pride. Uzziah, a king of Judah, proved faithful for years. “However,” the Bible states, “as soon as he was strong, his heart became haughty to his own ruin, and he acted unfaithfully against Jehovah his God by entering the temple of Jehovah to burn incense.” Later, King Hezekiah too fell prey to haughtiness, though only temporarily.—2 Chron. 26:16; 32:25, 26. *w18.01 28 ¶4-5*

Thursday, November 7

Each of you should set something aside according to his own means.

—1 Cor. 16:2.

The aspect of giving from personal resources is well-established in the Scriptures. In some cases, Jehovah’s people contributed for specific projects. (Ex. 35:5; 2 Ki. 12:4, 5; 1 Chron. 29:5-9) When the brothers in the early Christian congregation were made aware of the need that arose because of a famine, they “de-

termined, each according to what he could afford, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea.” (Acts 11:27-30) Of course, the sources of such donations varied. In the first century, some Christians sold items that they owned, such as fields or houses, and brought the money to the apostles. The apostles distributed these funds to those in need. (Acts 4:34, 35) Others set aside money and gave regular donations to support the work. Thus, people of all walks of life—from the very wealthy to the very poor—had a share.—Luke 21:1-4. *w18.01 18 ¶7; 19 ¶9*

Friday, November 8

Boys will tire out and grow weary.—Isa. 40:30.

No matter how qualified we may be, we are limited in what we can accomplish in our own strength. That is a lesson we all must learn. Although he was a capable man, the apostle Paul had limitations that prevented him from doing everything he wanted to do. When he expressed his concerns to God, he was told: “My power is being made perfect in weakness.” Paul got the point. He concluded: “When I am weak, then I am powerful.” (2 Cor. 12:7-10) What did he mean by that? Paul realized that there was only so much he could do without help from a higher source. God’s holy spirit could supply the power that Paul lacked. Not only that, but God’s spirit could empower Paul to perform tasks that he would never have been able to complete in his own power. The same is true of us. If the strength we have comes from Jehovah, we will be strong indeed! *w18.01 9 ¶8-9*

Saturday, November 9

From infancy you have known the holy writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation.

—2 Tim. 3:15.

When your child expresses interest in getting baptized, make good use of material that Jehovah's organization has provided for parents. Your doing so may lay the groundwork for stressing both the seriousness and the blessings of being dedicated to Jehovah and of being a baptized Christian. As a parent, you have the weighty responsibility—and privilege—to bring up your children "in the discipline and admonition of Jehovah." (Eph. 6:4) That requires not only teaching them what the Bible says but also helping them to develop conviction about what they learn. Yes, they need a conviction that is so strong that it moves them to dedicate themselves to Jehovah and to serve him wholeheartedly. May Jehovah's Word, his spirit, and your efforts as a parent help your children to become "wise for salvation." *w17.12 22 ¶17, 19*

Sunday, November 10

You will stand up for your lot at the end of the days.

—Dan. 12:13.

Daniel was almost 100 years old and nearing the end of his life. Would Daniel get to live again? Absolutely! At the end of the book of Daniel, we read God's assurance to him: "As for you, go on to the end. You will rest." Elderly Daniel knew that the dead are at rest, with no "planning nor knowledge nor wisdom in the Grave." Daniel would soon be going there. (Eccl. 9:10) But

that would not be the end of him. He was promised a future. The message to the prophet Daniel continued with the words of today's text. No date or length of time was given. Daniel was to come to his end in death and then rest. Yet, saying that he would 'stand up for his lot' in the future amounted to a clear promise of a resurrection to come—long after he had died. That would be "at the end of the days." The *Jerusalem Bible* renders the promise to Daniel: "You will rise for your share at the end of time." *w17.12 7 ¶17-18*

Monday, November 11

No one will be put to death on the testimony of just one witness.

—Num. 35:30.

Jehovah commissioned Israelite elders to imitate his high standard of justice. First, the elders needed to establish the facts. Further, they had to weigh carefully a manslayer's motive, attitude, and previous conduct when deciding whether to show mercy. To reflect divine justice, they had to determine whether the fugitive acted "out of hatred" and "with malicious intent." (Num. 35:20-24) If the testimony of witnesses was considered, at least two witnesses had to substantiate a charge of intentional murder. Thus, after establishing the facts of the case, the elders had to look at the *person*, not just the action. They needed insight, the ability to look beyond the obvious and to see into a matter. Above all, they needed Jehovah's holy spirit, which would enable them to reflect his insight, mercy, and justice.—Ex. 34:6, 7. *w17.11 16 ¶13-14*

Tuesday, November 12

Ponder over these things.

—1 Tim. 4:15.

We discovered some priceless truths when we first began to associate with God's people. We learned that Jehovah is our Creator and Life-Giver and that he has a purpose for mankind. We also learned that God lovingly provided the ransom sacrifice of his Son so that we might be freed from sin and death. We further learned that his Kingdom will end all suffering and that we have the prospect of living forever in peace and happiness under Kingdom rule. (John 3:16; Rev. 4:11; 21:3, 4) From time to time, our understanding of a Bible prophecy or some Scriptural passage may be adjusted. When such new understandings are provided, we ought to take time to study the information carefully and meditate on it. (Acts 17:11) We seek to understand clearly not only the major adjustments but also the subtle differences between the old understanding and the new one. In this way, we are certain to place the new truth securely in our own treasure store. *w17.06* 12-13 ¶15-16

Wednesday, November 13

Deaden . . . your body members that are on the earth as respects sexual immorality, uncleanness, uncontrolled sexual passion.

—Col. 3:5.

It is especially important to be on guard when we are confronted by circumstances that could tempt us to compromise Jehovah's moral standards. For example, it is wise for a couple, right from the start of a courtship, to set clear limits for themselves about such matters as

touching, kissing, or being alone together. (Prov. 22:3) Morally dangerous situations may also come up when a Christian is away from home on a business trip or when a Christian has to work with someone of the opposite sex. (Prov. 2:10-12, 16) We may also find ourselves at greater risk if we are depressed and vulnerable. We may even become so desperate for emotional support that we will accept attention from just about anyone. If that ever happens to you, turn to Jehovah and his people for help.—Ps. 34:18; Prov. 13:20. *w17.11* 26 ¶4-5

Thursday, November 14

Select for yourselves the cities of refuge.—Josh. 20:2.

Jehovah took seriously all cases of bloodshed in ancient Israel. Willful murderers were put to death by the victim's nearest male relative, known as "the avenger of blood." (Num. 35:19) This act atoned for the innocent human blood that had been spilled. Swift execution protected the Promised Land from becoming defiled, for Jehovah commanded: "You must not pollute the land in which you live, for [the shedding of human] blood pollutes the land." (Num. 35:33, 34) How, though, did the Israelites handle cases of accidental bloodshed? Although his deed was accidental, an unintentional manslayer was still guilty of shedding innocent blood. (Gen. 9:5) Mercifully, however, he was allowed to flee from the avenger of blood to one of the six cities of refuge. There, he could find protection. The unintentional manslayer had to remain in the city of refuge until the high priest's death.—Num. 35:15, 28. *w17.11* 9 ¶3-5

Friday, November 15

The shrewd man overlooks an insult.—Prov. 12:16.

A sister from Australia relates: “My father-in-law strongly opposed the truth. Before calling to check on him, my husband and I would pray that Jehovah help us not to respond in kind to angry reactions. To avoid long conversations that would usually lead to a heated discussion about religion, we set a time limit for the visit.” Conflict can make you feel guilty, especially if you love your relatives dearly and have always tried to please them. However, strive to put your loyalty to Jehovah ahead of your love for your family. Such a stand may actually help your relatives to see that applying Bible truth is a life-and-death matter. In any case, remember that you cannot force others to accept the truth. Instead, let them see in you the benefits of following Jehovah’s ways. Our loving God offers to them, just as he does to us, the opportunity to choose the course they will follow.—Isa. 48:17, 18. *w17.10* 15-16 ¶15-16

Saturday, November 16

We should love, not in word or with the tongue, but in deed and truth.—1 John 3:18.

Our love must not be limited to words, especially when the circumstances call for action. For example, when a fellow Christian lacks the basic necessities of life, he needs more than our good wishes. (Jas. 2:15, 16) Similarly, love for Jehovah and our neighbor moves us not only to ask God ‘to send out workers into the harvest’ but also

to have a full share in the preaching work. (Matt. 9:38) The apostle John wrote that we must love “in deed *and truth*.” Thus, our love must be “without hypocrisy,” or “free from hypocrisy.” (Rom. 12:9; 2 Cor. 6:6) This means that we cannot show genuine love while pretending to be something that we are not, as if we were wearing a mask. We might wonder, ‘Is there such a thing as love *with* hypocrisy?’ Not really. This would not be love at all but a worthless imitation. *w17.10* 8 ¶5-6

Sunday, November 17

You must read it in an undertone day and night, . . . then you will act wisely.—Josh. 1:8.

If God’s Word is to have an effect on us, we need to read it regularly—daily if possible. Of course, most of us lead very busy lives. Still, we cannot afford to let anything—even legitimate responsibilities—disrupt our Bible reading routine. (Eph. 5:15, 16) Many of Jehovah’s people have found creative ways to make time for daily Bible reading, whether at the start of their day or at the end or somewhere in between. They feel as did the psalmist, who wrote: “How I do love your law! I ponder over it all day long.” (Ps. 119:97) In addition to reading the Bible, it is important for us to meditate on what we read. (Ps. 1:1-3) Only then will we be able to make the best personal application of its timeless wisdom. Whether reading God’s Word in printed or electronic form, our goal should be to get it off the page and into our heart. *w17.09* 24 ¶4-5

Monday, November 18

All of you have . . . tender compassion.—1 Pet. 3:8.

Compassion does not necessarily need to be shown in every situation. For example, King Saul was disobedient when he showed what he may have felt was compassion. He spared the life of Agag, an enemy of God's people. Consequently, Jehovah rejected Saul from being king over Israel. (1 Sam. 15:3, 9, 15, ftn.) Jehovah, of course, is the righteous Judge. He can read people's hearts, and he knows when compassion is not warranted. (Lam. 2:17; Ezek. 5:11) The time is coming when he will execute judgment on all those who refuse to obey him. (2 Thess. 1:6-10) That will not be the time for him to show compassion for those whom he has judged to be wicked. Rather, executing them will be an appropriate expression of God's compassion for the righteous, whom he will preserve. Clearly, it is not our role to judge whether people should be executed or preserved alive. Instead, we need to do all we can now to *help* people. *w17.09 10-11 ¶10-12*

Tuesday, November 19

The fruitage of the spirit is . . . self-control.—Gal. 5:22, 23.

Self-control is a godly quality. Jehovah possesses self-control in perfect measure. Humans, however, are imperfect and therefore struggle to maintain self-control. Indeed, many of the problems that people face today stem from a lack of self-control. That lack may result in procrastination and underperformance in school or at work. It may also lead to verbal abuse, drunk-

ness, violence, divorce, need-less debt, addiction, imprisonment, emotional trauma, sexually transmitted disease, and unwanted pregnancy, to name a few. (Ps. 34:11-14) And the problem of lacking self-control is worsening. Self-discipline was studied in the 1940's, but recent studies have shown that people have become much worse at exercising self-discipline. This is no surprise to students of God's Word because the Bible foretold that one evidence that we are living in "the last days" is that men would be "without self-control."—2 Tim. 3:1-3. *w17.09 3 ¶1-2*

Wednesday, November 20

The peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts.—Phil. 4:7.

When we have "the peace of God," our hearts and minds remain at rest. We know that Jehovah cares for us and wants us to succeed. (1 Pet. 5:10) That knowledge guards us from becoming overwhelmed by anxiety or discouragement. Soon mankind will face the greatest tribulation that will ever occur here on earth. (Matt. 24:21, 22) We do not know all the details of what that will mean for us individually. However, there is no need for us to be consumed by anxiety. Even though we do not know everything Jehovah will *do*, we do know *our God*. We have seen from his past dealings that no matter what happens, Jehovah will always accomplish his purpose, and sometimes he does it in an unexpected manner. Each time Jehovah does so for us, we may experience in a new way "the peace of God that surpasses all understanding." *w17.08 12 ¶16-17*

Thursday, November 21

Be patient . . . until the presence of the Lord.—Jas. 5:7.

“How long?” That was the question raised by the faithful prophets Isaiah and Habakkuk. (Isa. 6:11; Hab. 1:2) Even our Lord Jesus Christ asked this question when confronted with the faithless attitude of those around him. (Matt. 17:17) So we should not be surprised if we find ourselves at times asking the very same question. Perhaps we have had to deal with some form of injustice. Or maybe we are enduring old age and sickness or the pressures of living in these “critical times” that are so “hard to deal with.” (2 Tim. 3:1) Or maybe the wrong attitudes of those around us are wearing us out. Whatever the cause, how encouraging it is to know that Jehovah’s faithful servants in the past felt free to express the same question that may loom in our minds, and they were not condemned for asking it! But what can help us when we come face-to-face with such difficult circumstances? The disciple James answers with the words of today’s text. *w17.08 3-4 ¶1-3*

Friday, November 22

Make friends for yourselves by means of the unrighteous riches.—Luke 16:9.

Jesus urged his followers to use “unrighteous riches” to make friends in heaven. An obvious way to prove ourselves faithful with our material things is by contributing financially to the worldwide preaching work that Jesus foretold would take place. (Matt. 24:14) A young girl in India kept a small money box and gradually added coins, even giving up toys to do so. When the box

was full, she handed the money over to be used for the preaching work. A brother in India who has a coconut farm contributed a large number of coconuts to the Malayalam remote translation office, reasoning that since the office needs to buy coconuts, his supplying them directly will help his contribution to go further than it would if he gave cash. That is practical wisdom. Likewise, brothers in Greece regularly contribute olive oil, cheese, and other foods for the Bethel family. *w17.07 8 ¶7-8*

Saturday, November 23

Sing for us one of the songs of Zion.—Ps. 137:3.

As captives in Babylon, the Jews did not feel like singing. They needed comfort and consolation. However, true to God’s prophetic word, deliverance came through Cyrus, king of Persia. He conquered Babylon and proclaimed: “Jehovah . . . has commissioned me to build him a house in Jerusalem . . . Whoever there is among you of all his people, may Jehovah his God be with him, and let him go up.” (2 Chron. 36:23) What a comforting effect this development must have had on the Israelites dwelling in Babylon! Jehovah gave comfort not only to the nation of Israel as a whole but also to each individual. The same is true today. God “heals the brokenhearted; he binds up their wounds.” (Ps. 147:3) Yes, Jehovah cares for those who are having problems—whether physical or emotional. He is eager to comfort us and to soothe our emotional wounds. (Ps. 34:18; Isa. 57:15) He gives us wisdom and strength so that we can cope with any troubles we may face.—Jas. 1:5. *w17.07 18 ¶4-5*

Sunday, November 24

Where your treasure is, there your hearts will be also.—Luke 12:34.

Jehovah is the wealthiest Person in the universe. (1 Chron. 29:11, 12) As a generous Father, he open-handedly shares his spiritual riches with all who discern their excellent value. How grateful we are that Jehovah has given us spiritual treasures, which include (1) God's Kingdom, (2) our lifesaving ministry, and (3) the precious truths found in his Word! If we are not careful, though, we could lose appreciation for these treasures and, in effect, throw them away. To hold on to them, we must use them well and constantly renew our love for them. Granted, many of us have made life-transforming changes to become subjects of God's Kingdom. (Rom. 12:2) Even so, our work is not finished. We must remain alert to things that actively compete for our affection, including the desire for material things and any immoral sexual desires.—Prov. 4:23; Matt. 5:27-29. *w17.06* 9 ¶1; 10 ¶7

Monday, November 25

*Do you know this?
—Job 38:21.*

Nowhere do we read of God's telling Job specifically the reason behind his suffering. The main point of Jehovah's words was not to explain to Job *why* he was suffering, as if God had to justify himself. Rather, Jehovah wanted to help Job recognize his insignificance in comparison with God's greatness. And he helped Job to see that there were greater issues with which to be concerned. (Job 38:18-20) This helped Job regain the proper perspective.

Was Jehovah harsh in giving such straightforward counsel after Job had endured so severe a trial? God was not, and Job did not think so. Despite his ordeal, Job finally began to speak appreciatively. He even stated: "I take back what I said, and I repent in dust and ashes." Such was the effect of Jehovah's pointed but refreshing counsel. (Job 42:1-6) After Job responded to God's reproof and corrected his view, Jehovah expressed to others his approval of Job's faithfulness under trial.—Job 42:7, 8. *w17.06* 24-25 ¶11-12

Tuesday, November 26

*Mary chose the good portion, and it will not be taken away from her.
—Luke 10:42.*

To help determine whether we have a balanced view of secular matters and spiritual responsibilities, it is good to ask ourselves: 'Do I find my secular work interesting and exciting but view my spiritual activities as ordinary or routine?' Thinking about and meditating on these matters can help us to determine where our true affection lies. Jesus set the standard in balancing secular interests and spiritual matters. On one occasion, Jesus visited the home of Mary and her sister, Martha. While Martha scurried about preparing a meal, Mary chose to sit at Jesus' feet and listen to him. When Martha complained that Mary was not helping, Jesus told Martha the words of today's text. (Luke 10:38-42) Jesus was teaching Martha a valuable lesson. To avoid being distracted by secular matters and to prove our love for Christ, we must continue to choose "the good portion," to give priority to spiritual things. *w17.05* 24 ¶9-10

Wednesday, November 27

Listen . . . to the discipline of your father.—Prov. 1:8.

Jehovah has assigned *parents*—not grandparents or anyone else—the privilege of raising their children in the truth. (Prov. 31:10, 27, 28) Still, parents who do not know the local language may need help to reach their children’s heart. Arranging for such help need not mean abdicating their spiritual responsibility; rather, it can be part of bringing up their children “in the discipline and admonition of Jehovah.” (Eph. 6:4) For example, parents may ask elders in the congregation for suggestions on conducting family worship and for help in providing good association for their children. Also, they may invite other families to join them in family worship from time to time. Further, many young people thrive under the influence of spiritually balanced companions who may, for example, accompany them in the ministry and share with them in wholesome recreation.—Prov. 27:17. *w17.05* 11-12 ¶17-18

Thursday, November 28

Flee to Egypt.
—*Matt. 2:13.*

After Jehovah’s angel warned Joseph that King Herod intended to kill Jesus, young Jesus and his parents became refugees in Egypt. They remained there until Herod died. (Matt. 2:14, 19-21) Decades later, Jesus’ early disciples “were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria” because of persecution. (Acts 8:1) Jesus had foreseen that many of his followers would be forced from

their homes. He said: “When they persecute you in one city, flee to another.” (Matt. 10:23) This has been the case for thousands of Jehovah’s Witnesses. Many have lost loved ones and nearly all their possessions. Some faced danger when fleeing or when living in a refugee camp where people drank, gambled, stole, and were immoral. Yet, they kept a positive attitude by recalling that, like Israel’s trek in the wilderness, their stay in the camp would eventually come to an end.—2 Cor. 4:18. *w17.05* 3-4 ¶2-5

Friday, November 29

Abundant peace belongs to those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble.—Ps. 119:165.

On rare occasions, you or someone you know may experience or observe what seems to be an injustice in the congregation. Do not let yourself be stumbled. Instead, as faithful servants of God, we loyally and prayerfully rely on him. At the same time, we modestly acknowledge that we likely do not have all the facts. We are keenly aware that the fault may lie in our imperfect view of matters. We want to avoid negative speech, knowing that such speech only makes a bad situation worse. Finally, rather than taking matters into our own hands, let us be determined to be loyal and wait patiently on Jehovah to correct matters. Such an approach is sure to bring Jehovah’s approval and blessing. Yes, we can be certain that Jehovah, “the Judge of all the earth,” will always do what is right, “for all his ways are justice.”—Gen. 18:25; Deut. 32:4. *w17.04* 22 ¶17

Saturday, November 30

*Let the wicked man leave his way
. . . Let him return to Jehovah,
who will have mercy on him.
—Isa. 55:7.*

What of those individuals who refuse to change, who continue to support this system right up to the time of the great tribulation? Jehovah has promised to rid the earth of wicked people for all time. (Ps. 37:10) The wicked may think that they are safe from such judgment. Many have learned to hide what they do, and in this world they often seem to escape justice and consequences. (Job 21:7, 9) Yet, the Bible reminds us: “God’s eyes are upon the ways of a man, and He sees all his steps. There is no darkness or deep shadow where wrongdoers can conceal themselves.” (Job 34:21, 22) There is no hiding from Jehovah God. No impostor can fool him; no shadow is so dark or deep that God’s limitless vision cannot pierce right to the heart of matters. After Armageddon, then, we may look where the wicked used to be, but we will not see them. They will be gone—forever!—Ps. 37:12-15. *w17.04* 10 ¶5

Sunday, December 1

*Be hospitable to one another
without grumbling.
—1 Pet. 4:9.*

In Bible times, hospitality normally included inviting someone to one’s home for a meal. (Gen. 18:1-8; Judg. 13:15; Luke 24:28-30) An invitation to share food was an invitation to friendship and peace. Who should be among our primary guests? Those who are a regular part of our lives, the brothers and sisters in our congregation. When

hard times come, will we not depend on one another? We need loyal friendships and peace with all of them. Circuit overseers and students at theocratic schools may need places to stay, as may construction volunteers. Natural disasters may leave some families homeless and in need of lodging until relief efforts can restore their dwellings. We should not assume that only those who have very comfortable homes are in a position to help; they may already have done so many times. Could you share in offering accommodations even if your circumstances are modest? *w18.03* 15 ¶6; 16 ¶9

Monday, December 2

*The righteous one may fall seven
times, and he will get up again.
—Prov. 24:16.*

What will help one who falls to succeed? Not sheer willpower, but God’s spirit. (Phil. 4:13) The fruitage of that spirit includes self-control, which is closely related to self-discipline. Also important are heartfelt prayer, Bible study, and meditation. But what if you find it hard to study God’s Word? Perhaps you do not consider yourself to be studious. Keep in mind, however, that Jehovah will help you if you let him. He can help you to “form a longing” for his Word. (1 Pet. 2:2) First, pray to Jehovah for the needed self-discipline to study his Word. Then, work in harmony with your prayers, perhaps keeping study periods rather short. Over time, study will be both easier and more pleasurable! Indeed, you will find yourself cherishing your quiet times when you are absorbed in Jehovah’s precious thoughts.—1 Tim. 4:15. *w18.03* 29 ¶5-6

Tuesday, December 3

Baptism . . . is also now saving you.—1 Pet. 3:21.

Before a student can get baptized, he must cultivate faith based on accurate knowledge of God, His purpose, and His arrangement for salvation. (1 Tim. 2:3-6) Such faith moves the student to reject conduct that is displeasing to God and to come in line with Jehovah's righteous standards. (Acts 3:19) Understandably, an individual could not make a valid dedication to God while engaging in any conduct that would exclude him from the Kingdom. (1 Cor. 6:9, 10) But more is needed than adhering to Jehovah's elevated moral standards. One who is pursuing righteousness would also be present at congregation meetings and have a meaningful share in the lifesaving preaching and disciple-making work. (Acts 1:8) Only after taking such steps can a new disciple make a valid dedication to Jehovah in private prayer and then publicly symbolize this dedication by getting baptized before onlookers. *w18.03 6 ¶12*

Wednesday, December 4

[Mary] kept all these sayings in her heart.—Luke 2:51.

Why did Jehovah choose Mary to become Jesus' mother? No doubt because she was a spiritually-minded person. She showed clear evidence of spirituality in her beautiful expressions of praise when she visited the home of her relatives Zechariah and Elizabeth. (Luke 1:46-55) Mary's statements show that she had a deep love for God's Word and was thoroughly familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures. (Gen. 30:13; 1 Sam. 2:1-

10; Mal. 3:12) Note, too, that she and Joseph, although newly married, refrained from sexual relations until Jesus was born. This shows that both of them were more concerned with Jehovah's will than with satisfying their personal desires. (Matt. 1:25) As time passed, Mary carefully noted what took place in Jesus' life and paid attention to the words of wisdom he spoke. She was clearly interested in God's purpose in connection with the Messiah. Does not Mary's example help us to think of how we can put God's will first in our life? *w18.02 21 ¶11*

Thursday, December 5

[Job] is an upright man of integrity.—Job 1:8.

How can we imitate Job's faith and obedience? No matter what our circumstances may be, let us always keep Jehovah at the center of our lives, trusting him fully and obeying him with a complete heart. Indeed, we have even more reason to do so than Job had! Consider: We know a lot about Satan and his tactics. (2 Cor. 2:11) Thanks in part to the book of Job, we know why God permits suffering. From Daniel's prophecy, we understand that God's Kingdom is a world government in the hands of Christ Jesus. (Dan. 7:13, 14) And we know that this Kingdom will soon bring a permanent end to all suffering. Job's experience also highlights our need to show compassion to fellow Christians who may be enduring hardships. Like Job, some may even speak rashly at times. (Eccl. 7:7) But instead of judging them, let us show insight and compassion. In this way, we imitate our loving and merciful Father, Jehovah.—Ps. 103:8. *w18.02 6 ¶16; 7 ¶19-20*

Friday, December 6

Your humility makes me great.

—Ps. 18:35.

Some people become proud because of their good looks, popularity, musical ability, physical prowess, or exalted position. David had not just one of these assets but all of them; yet, he remained humble throughout his life. After he killed Goliath and was offered the daughter of King Saul to be his wife, David said: “Who am I . . . , for me to become son-in-law to the king?” (1 Sam. 18:18) Like David, Jehovah’s people today strive to show humility. We are awed by the knowledge that Jehovah, the greatest Person in the universe, manifests the appealing quality of humility. We take to heart the inspired counsel: “Clothe yourselves with the tender affections of compassion, kindness, humility, mildness, and patience.” (Col. 3:12) We also know that love “does not brag, does not get puffed up.” (1 Cor. 13:4) When we show humility, people may be drawn to Jehovah. *w18.01 28 ¶6-7*

Saturday, December 7

They . . . kept earnestly begging us for the privilege of kindly giving.

—2 Cor. 8:4.

We may be asked to make donations for a specific purpose. (Acts 4: 34, 35; 1 Cor. 16:2) For example, are there plans to build a new Kingdom Hall that your congregation will use? We may be made aware of financial needs with regard to a convention we are attending or assistance to our brothers after a natural disaster. We also donate to support those caring for the work at world headquarters and at branch offices around

the earth. Our donations support missionaries, special pioneers, and those in the circuit work. All of us can have a share in supporting the work that Jehovah is accomplishing in these last days. Most donations are anonymous. We discreetly place funds in the contribution boxes at the Kingdom Hall, or we may make donations online through jw.org. We may feel that our small donations do not mean much. Yet, the majority of donated funds today come from many small gifts rather than from a few large ones. *w18.01 19 ¶10-11*

Sunday, December 8

Baptism . . . is . . . now saving you.—1 Pet. 3:21.

Baptism is a requirement for Christians, and it is an essential step to gaining salvation. (Matt. 28:19, 20) Your baptism symbolizes your dedication. It is a solemn promise that you made to Jehovah to love him and to put his will above everything else. Putting yourself in Jehovah’s hands is *never* a wrong move. Consider the alternative! A person who lives apart from Jehovah is under Satan’s rule. The Devil has no interest in your salvation. In fact, he would be happy if you lost out on everlasting life by siding with him in rejecting Jehovah’s sovereignty. In contrast to supporting Satan, consider the blessings you have as a dedicated and baptized Christian. Now that you have given your life to Jehovah, you can say with greater confidence than ever before: “Jehovah is on my side; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?” (Ps. 118:6) You could have no greater privilege in life than being on God’s side and having him approve of you. *w17.12 23-24 ¶1-3*

Monday, December 9

Do not become upset and turn to doing evil.—Ps. 37:8.

There will be times when we will be irritated by the words or actions of fellow believers—or when they will be annoyed by ours. This can be a serious test. As with other tests, Jehovah allows us to prove our integrity by learning to work unitedly with dedicated men and women whom he loves despite their imperfections. That Jehovah does not prevent his servants from being tested is illustrated by the account of Joseph. As a young man, Joseph was sold into slavery by his jealous half brothers and taken to Egypt. (Gen. 37:28) Jehovah saw what was happening and no doubt was grieved to observe the way his friend, righteous Joseph, was being treated. Still, He did not intervene. Later, when Joseph was accused of trying to rape Potiphar's wife and was thrown into prison, Jehovah still did not step in. But did God ever abandon Joseph? On the contrary: "Jehovah made whatever [Joseph] did successful."—Gen. 39:21-23. *w18.01* 9-10 ¶12-14

Tuesday, December 10

If, indeed, there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised up.—1 Cor. 15:13.

What are the key teachings of your faith? Surely you would stress that Jehovah is the Creator and Life-Giver. You would likely mention your belief in Jesus Christ, who died as a ransom. And you would happily add that an earthly paradise is ahead, where God's people will live forever. But would you mention the resurrection as one of your

most cherished beliefs? We have good reasons to include the resurrection as a key teaching even if we personally hope to survive the great tribulation and live on earth forever. The resurrection is central to our faith. Had Christ not been resurrected, he would not be our ruling King, and our teaching about Christ's rule would be in vain. (1 Cor. 15:12-19) However, we know that Jesus was resurrected, and we hold firm to our belief in the resurrection.—Mark 12:18; Acts 4:2, 3; 17:32; 23:6-8. *w17.12* 8 ¶1-2

Wednesday, December 11

You have disregarded the weightier matters of the Law, namely, justice and mercy.—Matt. 23:23.

The Pharisees focused solely on what a sinner had done rather than on who a sinner was at heart. When Pharisees saw Jesus attending a banquet at Matthew's home, they asked his disciples: "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" Jesus replied: "Healthy people do not need a physician, but those who are ill do. Go, then, and learn what this means: 'I want mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came to call, not righteous people, but sinners." (Matt. 9:9-13) Was Jesus excusing serious wrongdoing? Not at all. In fact, Jesus' principal message included the call to repent from sin. (Matt. 4:17) Nevertheless, Jesus insightfully noted that at least some of these "tax collectors and sinners" wanted to change. They were not at Matthew's home simply to eat. Rather, "there were many of them who were following [Jesus]." (Mark 2:15) Sadly, most Pharisees failed to see in such ones what Jesus saw. *w17.11* 13 ¶2; 16 ¶15

Thursday, December 12

Clothe yourselves with love, for it is a perfect bond of union.

—Col. 3:14.

We all agree that being part of the Christian congregation is a blessing. The study of God's Word at our meetings and the kind and loving support that we give one another help us to keep our eyes focused on the prize. Nevertheless, at times, misunderstandings may lead to some tension among members of the congregation. If we fail to resolve such problems, they could easily lead to feelings of resentment. (1 Pet. 3:8, 9) How can we prevent resentment from depriving us of the prize? Paul urged the Colossians: "As God's chosen ones, holy and loved, clothe yourselves with the tender affections of compassion, kindness, humility, mildness, and patience. Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely even if anyone has a cause for complaint against another. Just as Jehovah freely forgave you, you must also do the same." —Col. 3:12, 13. *w17.11 27 ¶7-8*

Friday, December 13

He must flee to one of these cities.—Josh. 20:4.

After he accidentally killed someone, a fugitive first had to "present his case in the hearing of the elders" at the gate of the city of refuge to which he had fled. He was to be received hospitably. Some time later, he was sent back to the elders of the city where the killing had occurred, and those elders judged the case. (Num. 35:24, 25) Only after they had declared the

killing accidental would the fugitive be returned to the city of refuge. Why were the elders involved? They were to keep the congregation of Israel clean and to help the unintentional manslayer to benefit from Jehovah's mercy. One Bible scholar wrote that if the fugitive neglected to approach the elders, "it was at his peril . . . because he did not make use of the security God had provided for him." If he did not seek refuge in one of the cities Jehovah had set aside, the closest relative of the person he had killed was free to put him to death. *w17.11 9 ¶6-7*

Saturday, December 14

Are they not all spirits for holy service, sent out to minister for those who are going to inherit salvation?—Heb. 1:14.

Jehovah of armies still uses his angels to protect and strengthen his people. (Mal. 3:6; Heb. 1:7) Ever since spiritual Israel was released from symbolic captivity to Babylon the Great in 1919, the expansion of true worship has been unstoppable despite relentless opposition. (Rev. 18:4) Because we have angelic protection, we need not fear that Jehovah's organization might go through another time of spiritual oppression. (Ps. 34:7) Instead, we can be sure that God's servants worldwide will continue to flourish spiritually. We have a cavalry on our side. At that critical moment during the great tribulation, the angelic soldiers of Jehovah of armies will come together to protect God's people and destroy those who oppose his sovereignty. (2 Thess. 1: 7, 8) What a day that will be! *w17.10 28 ¶10-11*

Sunday, December 15

Build yourselves up on your most holy faith, and pray with holy spirit.—Jude 20.

When a family member is disfellowshipped or he disassociates himself from the congregation, it can feel like the stab of a sword. How can you cope with the pain that this brings? It is important to keep up your spiritual routine. Build yourself up by regularly reading the Bible, preparing for and attending Christian meetings, sharing in the field ministry, and praying for the strength to endure. (Jude 21) But what if you feel that your heart is not in your activity, that you are just going through the motions? Do not give up! A good spiritual routine can help you to gain control of your thoughts and feelings. Consider the experience of the writer of Psalm 73. He had developed a wrong viewpoint and had become greatly troubled, but he was able to correct his thinking when he entered God's place of worship. (Ps. 73:16, 17) Your faithfully worshipping Jehovah can help you to do the same. *w17.10 16 ¶17-18*

Monday, December 16

Let your love be without hypocrisy.—Rom. 12:9.

In the garden of Eden, Satan pretended to be looking out for Eve's best interests, but his actions were actually selfish and hypocritical. (Gen. 3:4, 5) In David's day, Ahithophel proved that his friendship with the king was a fraud. Ahithophel turned traitor when he felt that he would gain an advantage. (2 Sam. 15:31) Likewise today, apostates and others who create divisions in the

congregation use "smooth talk and flattering speech" to make themselves appear to be loving, but their true motive is selfish. (Rom. 16:17, 18) Hypocritical love is especially shameful because it is a counterfeit of the godly quality of self-sacrificing love. Such hypocrisy might fool men, but not Jehovah. In fact, Jesus said that those who are like hypocrites would be punished "with the greatest severity." (Matt. 24:51) So we do well to ask ourselves, 'Is my love always genuine, not tainted by selfishness or deception?' *w17.10 8 ¶6-8*

Tuesday, December 17

They have a zeal for God, but not according to accurate knowledge.—Rom. 10:2.

When we read directly from God's Word in the ministry, we are letting Jehovah speak to the householder. A well-chosen scripture will likely be much more powerful than anything we might say. (1 Thess. 2:13) Ask yourself, 'Do I look for every opportunity to share a portion of God's Word with those to whom I bring the good news?' Of course, more is needed than merely reading Bible texts to those we are conversing with. Why? Because many have little or no understanding of the Bible. That was true in the first century, and it is true today. So we should not assume that a person will grasp the point of a verse simply because we read it. We need to take time to isolate portions of the verse—perhaps rereading key words—and explain their meaning. Doing so can go a long way in helping the message of God's Word to reach the mind and heart of our listeners. —Luke 24:32. *w17.09 25 ¶7-8*

Wednesday, December 18

Have . . . tender compassion.

—1 Pet. 3:8.

Showing compassion for one's neighbor and Christian brothers is a basic requirement of those who strive to imitate Jesus. (John 13:34, 35) One meaning of compassion is "to suffer together." A person who shows compassion is moved to relieve others' suffering, perhaps by helping them out of their difficulties. Seek opportunities to do so! The sufferings of those struck by disasters move many to manifest compassion. Jehovah's people are known for coming forward to help in such times of need. (1 Pet. 2:17) One Japanese sister lived in an area that was seriously damaged by the earthquake and tsunami of 2011. She says that she was "very encouraged and comforted" by the efforts of the many volunteers from elsewhere in Japan and from overseas to repair property damage. She writes: "This experience helped me to realize that Jehovah cares. And fellow Witnesses care about one another. Many brothers and sisters all over the world are praying for us." *w17.09 11 ¶12-13*

Thursday, December 19

The fruitage of the spirit is . . . self-control.—Gal. 5:22, 23.

Why should you be interested in cultivating self-control? Consider two important reasons. First, it has been observed that people who are able to control their impulses generally have fewer major problems. They are more stable emotionally, they are better at forming wholesome relationships, and they are not as angry and prone to anxi-

ety and depression as are impulsive people. Second, the ability to resist temptation and to control inappropriate impulses is fundamental to retaining God's favor. The failure of Adam and Eve illustrates this truth. (Gen. 3:6) And think of the sad results reaped by others who since then have failed to exercise this important quality. No imperfect human can exercise perfect self-control. Jehovah is aware of his servants' struggles in this regard, and he wants to help them dominate their sinful tendencies.—1 Ki. 8:46-50. *w17.09 3-4 ¶3-4*

Friday, December 20

Clothe yourselves with the new personality.—Col. 3:10.

At one time, Witnesses of different skin color in South Africa could not freely associate with one another. However, on Sunday, December 18, 2011, it was a wonderful sight to see over 78,000 of our brothers of different races from South Africa and neighboring countries packed into the largest stadium in the city of Johannesburg to enjoy a spiritual program. One of the managers of the stadium said: "This is the best-behaved crowd I have ever seen in this stadium. All are neatly dressed. And you people have cleaned the stadium so nicely. But most of all, you are truly multiracial." Such comments by non-Witnesses show that our international brotherhood is truly unique. (1 Pet. 5:9, ftn.) What, though, makes us so different from any other organization? With the help of God's Word and his holy spirit, we work hard to "strip off the old personality." In its place, we "clothe [ourselves] with the new personality."—Col. 3:9. *w17.08 17-18 ¶2-3*

Saturday, December 21

You too exercise patience.

—*Jas. 5:8.*

According to the Bible, patience is a product of holy spirit; without God's help, imperfect humans cannot be patient to the degree needed. Patience is a gift from God, and being patient is a key way to show our love for him. Patience is also an expression of our love for others. Persistent impatience weakens the bonds of love; patience strengthens them. (1 Cor. 13:4; Gal. 5:22) Patience involves a number of other vital Christian qualities. For example, it is closely connected with endurance, which enables us to put up with difficult circumstances while maintaining a positive attitude. (Col. 1:11; Jas. 1:3, 4) Patience can also involve suffering without retaliating and remaining firm and steadfast no matter what may come our way. Additionally, the Bible urges us to *accept willingly the need to wait*. This aspect of patience is highlighted at James 5:7, 8. *w17.08 4 ¶4*

Sunday, December 22

Do not be anxious, for I am your God. I will fortify you, yes, I will help you.—Isa. 41:10.

You young ones will probably agree that before starting a journey, it is wise to plan where you will go. Life is like a journey, and the time to plan where you want to go is when you are young. Of course, making plans can be challenging. But take courage. Note what Jehovah says in today's text. Jehovah urges you to plan wisely for your future. (Eccl. 12:1; Matt. 6:20) He wants you to be happy. The de-

lightful sights, sounds, and tastes of creation tell you that. Consider, too, how he cares for us and teaches us the best way of life. To those who reject his advice, Jehovah says: "You chose what displeased me. . . . Look! My servants will rejoice, but you will suffer shame. Look! My servants will shout joyfully because of the good condition of the heart." (Isa. 65:12-14) Jehovah is glorified when his people make wise choices in life.—Prov. 27:11. *w17.07 22 ¶1-2*

Monday, December 23

[Jehovah] calls all of [the stars] by name.—Ps. 147:4.

The God who knows where each star is at any given time also knows you as an individual—exactly where you are, precisely how you feel, and specifically what you need at any given moment! Not only is Jehovah interested in you as a person but he also has the power and empathy needed to help you with life's problems. (Ps. 147:5) You may feel that your situation is too difficult and the load too heavy for you to carry. God understands your limitations, 'remembering that you are dust.' (Ps. 103:14) Being imperfect, we make the same mistakes again and again. Oh, how we regret that slip of the tongue, those fleshly tendencies that flare up every now and then, or those inclinations to envy what others have! Jehovah does not experience such shortcomings himself; yet, his understanding of us is immeasurable, unsearchable! (Isa. 40:28) You may already have experienced how Jehovah's mighty hand helped you to recover from some trial.—Isa. 41:10, 13. *w17.07 18-19 ¶6-8*

Tuesday, December 24

The generous person will be blessed.—Prov. 22:9.

A brother from Sri Lanka, now living abroad, has made his property back home available for meetings and assemblies and for housing full-time servants. It is a financial sacrifice for the brother but a great help to the local publishers of little means. In a land where the work is restricted, brothers make their homes available for use as local Kingdom Halls, allowing many pioneers and others with limited funds to have a meeting place without a financial burden. A sister who contributes regularly to the Kingdom work tells of a blessing she has received: “By being materially generous, I have experienced an unusual phenomenon within myself over the years. I find that the more generous I am materially, the more generous my disposition toward others has become. I am more generous in being forgiving, in being patient with others, and in being able to accept disappointments and counsel.”
w17.07 9 ¶9-10

Wednesday, December 25

Jehovah said to Satan: “Look! Everything that he has is in your hand.”—Job 1:12.

Even if Job eventually better understood the reason for his trials, he may on occasion have thought about why it was necessary for him to suffer to *such* an extent. Whatever his thoughts, he could reflect on God’s counsel. Doing so would help him maintain the proper perspective and, in turn, provide comfort. (Ps. 94:19, ftn.) We too can acquire proper perspective and gain com-

fort from the account of Job. After all, Jehovah had it preserved “for our instruction, so that through our endurance and through the comfort from the Scriptures *we* might have hope.” (Rom. 15:4) What is the lesson for us? Primarily this: Let us not become so absorbed in our own lives that we lose sight of this big issue—the vindication of Jehovah’s sovereignty. And let us appreciate that our role in this vital issue entails remaining faithful even under difficult circumstances, as did Job.
w17.06 24 ¶9; 25 ¶13-14

Thursday, December 26

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

Jesus recognized the need to rest on occasion. Following one particularly intense witnessing campaign, he told his disciples the words stated above. Indeed, recreation and entertainment fill an important need. However, the danger exists that having a good time could become the primary focus of our life. Back in the first century, many had the attitude “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we are to die.” (1 Cor. 15:32) That same spirit prevails in many parts of the world today. How can we determine if we have a balanced view of recreation? We could select a week and keep a record of the number of hours we spend on spiritual activities. Then we could compare that figure to the number of hours we spent that same week on recreational activities, such as participating in sports, enjoying hobbies, watching television, or playing video games. Might there be a need to cut back on the latter?—Eph. 5:15, 16. *w17.05 24-25 ¶11-13*

Friday, December 27

The Kingdom of the heavens is like a traveling merchant seeking fine pearls.—Matt. 13:45.

In Jesus' illustration, the merchant found a magnificent pearl. But to buy it would mean that he would have to sell everything else that he owned. Can you imagine how precious that pearl was to him? The truth of God's Kingdom is like that priceless pearl. If we love it as much as the merchant loved that pearl, we will be willing to give up everything in order to become and to remain one of the subjects of the Kingdom. (Mark 10:28-30) Zachaeus, for example, had become rich by extorting money. (Luke 19:1-9) Yet, when that unrighteous man heard Jesus preach about the Kingdom, he recognized the excellent value of what he was hearing and took immediate action. He exclaimed: "Look! The half of my belongings, Lord, I am giving to the poor, and whatever I extorted from anyone, I am restoring four times over." He gladly gave up his ill-gotten riches and abandoned his greed for material things. *w17.06 10 ¶3-5*

Saturday, December 28

No greater joy do I have than this: that I should hear that my children go on walking in the truth.
—3 John 4.

Those whom parents choose to help their children should always build up the young ones' respect for their parents, speaking positively about them, not taking over their responsibility. Moreover, those who help should avoid any conduct that could be misinterpreted by some in-

side or outside the congregation as morally questionable. (1 Pet. 2:12) Parents must not merely turn their children over to others for spiritual training. They must monitor the help given by companions and continue to teach their children themselves. Parents, pray to Jehovah for help, and try your best. (2 Chron. 15:7) Put your child's friendship with Jehovah ahead of your own interests. Do whatever you can to ensure that God's Word reaches your child's heart. Never stop believing that your child can become a fine servant of Jehovah. *w17.05 12 ¶19-20*

Sunday, December 29

It is unthinkable, from Jehovah's standpoint, for me to give you the inheritance of my forefathers.
—1 Ki. 21:3.

Imagine the scene. A man is falsely accused of a capital offense. To the shock and dismay of his family and friends, he is convicted on the basis of false testimony presented by witnesses who are known to be good-for-nothing men. A sick feeling overwhelms lovers of justice as they witness the execution of that innocent man and his sons. This is not an imaginary account. This was the experience of a faithful servant of Jehovah named Naboth, who lived during the reign of King Ahab of Israel. (1 Ki. 21:11-13; 2 Ki. 9:26) When King Ahab offered to purchase Naboth's vineyard or to give him a better vineyard in its place, Naboth refused. Why? Naboth's refusal was based on Jehovah's law to the nation of Israel that forbade the permanent sale of one's tribal inheritance. (Lev. 25:23; Num. 36:7) Clearly, Naboth had Jehovah's view of matters. *w17.04 23 ¶1; 24 ¶4*

Monday, December 30

Just a little while longer, and the wicked will be no more; you will look at where they were, and they will not be there.

—Ps. 37:10.

Who will remain in place of wicked people? Jehovah makes this heartwarming promise: “The meek will possess the earth, and they will find exquisite delight in the abundance of peace.” Later in the same psalm, we read: “The righteous will possess the earth, and they will live forever on it.” (Ps. 37:11, 29) Who are “the meek” and “the righteous”? The meek are those who humbly accept Jehovah’s teaching and guidance; the righteous are those who love doing what is right in the eyes of Jehovah God. In today’s world, righteous people are greatly outnumbered by the wicked. But in the new world to come, the meek and the righteous will be neither a minority nor a majority; they will be the *only* people alive. Truly, a population of such people will make the earth a paradise! *w17.04* 10-11 ¶5-6

Tuesday, December 31

Do not withhold good . . . if it is within your power to help.

—Prov. 3:27.

“The love of God” compels us to show love to one another, especially in dire situations. (1 John 3:17, 18) When famine threatened Judean Christians in the first century, the congregation organized help for them. (Acts 11:28, 29) The apostles Paul and Peter also exhorted Christians to be hospitable to one another. (Rom. 12:13; 1 Pet. 4:9) If Christians are to welcome visiting brothers, how much more should they welcome fellow believers whose lives are in danger or who have been persecuted for their faith! Recently, thousands of Jehovah’s Witnesses had to flee conflict and persecution in eastern Ukraine. Tragically, some were killed. But most of them were taken in by their spiritual brothers elsewhere in Ukraine and in Russia. In both countries, they remain politically neutral, being “no part of the world,” and continue zealously “declaring the good news of the word.” —John 15:19; Acts 8:4. *w17.05* 4 ¶6-7