

***Examining
the Scriptures
Daily***

2022



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Examining the Scriptures Daily

2022

Yeartext

**“Those seeking Jehovah will
lack nothing good.”**

—Psalm 34:10.

Name

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JANUARY

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OUR CHRISTIAN LIFE AND MINISTRY

BIBLE READING SCHEDULE FOR 2022

January

3	Judges 15-16	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Judges 17-19	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	Judges 20-21	<input type="checkbox"/>
24	Ruth 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/>
31	Ruth 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/>

February

7	1 Samuel 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	1 Samuel 3-5	<input type="checkbox"/>
21	1 Samuel 6-8	<input type="checkbox"/>
28	1 Samuel 9-11	<input type="checkbox"/>

March

7	1 Samuel 12-13	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	1 Samuel 14-15	<input type="checkbox"/>
21	1 Samuel 16-17	<input type="checkbox"/>
28	1 Samuel 18-19	<input type="checkbox"/>

April

4	1 Samuel 20-22	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	Week of Memorial	
18	1 Samuel 23-24	<input type="checkbox"/>
25	1 Samuel 25-26	<input type="checkbox"/>

May

2	1 Samuel 27-29	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	1 Samuel 30-31	<input type="checkbox"/>
16	2 Samuel 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/>
23	2 Samuel 4-6	<input type="checkbox"/>
30	2 Samuel 7-8	<input type="checkbox"/>

June

6	2 Samuel 9-10	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	2 Samuel 11-12	<input type="checkbox"/>
20	2 Samuel 13-14	<input type="checkbox"/>
27	2 Samuel 15-17	<input type="checkbox"/>

July

- 4 2 Samuel 18-19 ☐
- 11 2 Samuel 20-21 ☐
- 18 2 Samuel 22 ☐
- 25 2 Samuel 23-24 ☐

August

- 1 1 Kings 1-2 ☐
- 8 1 Kings 3-4 ☐
- 15 1 Kings 5-6 ☐
- 22 1 Kings 7 ☐
- 29 1 Kings 8 ☐

September

- 5 1 Kings 9-10 ☐
- 12 1 Kings 11-12 ☐
- 19 1 Kings 13-14 ☐
- 26 1 Kings 15-16 ☐

October

- 3 1 Kings 17-18 ☐
- 10 1 Kings 19-20 ☐
- 17 1 Kings 21-22 ☐
- 24 2 Kings 1-2 ☐
- 31 2 Kings 3-4 ☐

November

- 7 2 Kings 5-6 ☐
- 14 2 Kings 7-8 ☐
- 21 2 Kings 9-10 ☐
- 28 2 Kings 11-12 ☐

December

- 5 2 Kings 13-15 ☐
- 12 2 Kings 16-17 ☐
- 19 2 Kings 18-19 ☐
- 26 2 Kings 20-21 ☐

Saturday, January 1

From infancy you have known the holy writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

—2 Tim. 3:15.

Timothy's faith was built on facts that drew him closer to Jehovah. You too must logically reason on what you have learned about Jehovah from reading the Bible. To start with, you need to prove to yourself at least three basic truths. First, you need to be convinced that Jehovah God is the Creator of all things. (Ex. 3:14, 15; Heb. 3:4; Rev. 4:11) Second, you must prove to yourself that the Bible is God's inspired message to mankind. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17) And third, you need to confirm that Jehovah has an organized group of people who are worshipping him under Christ's headship and that Jehovah's Witnesses are that group. (Isa. 43:10-12; John 14:6; Acts 15:14) This does not require that you become a walking encyclopedia of Bible knowledge. Your goal should be to use your "power of reason" to strengthen your conviction that you have the truth.—Rom. 12:1. *w20.07* 10 ¶8-9

Sunday, January 2

It was granted the locusts, not to kill them, but to torment them five months.—Rev. 9:5.

This prophecy describes a swarm of locusts that have human faces and 'what seem to be crowns of gold' on their heads. (Rev. 9:7) They torment "those people [God's enemies] who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads" for a period of five months, the average life span of a locust. (Rev. 9:4) This does indeed appear to be a description of Jehovah's

anointed servants. They boldly proclaim God's judgments against this wicked system of things and, as a result, make its supporters very uncomfortable. Are we saying that the locusts described at Joel 2:7-9 are not the same as the locusts presented in the book of Revelation? Yes. In the Bible, it is not unusual for a symbol to convey different meanings in different settings. For example, at Revelation 5:5, Jesus is called "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," whereas at 1 Peter 5:8, the Devil is described as "a roaring lion." *w20.04* 3 ¶8; 5 ¶10

Monday, January 3

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

Hagar, the maidservant of Sarai, acted foolishly after she was given as a wife to Abram. Hagar became pregnant and then began to look down on Sarai, who had no children of her own. The situation became so bad that Sarai chased Hagar away. (Gen. 16:4-6) From our imperfect viewpoint, Hagar might appear to be no more than a spiteful woman who got what she deserved. But Jehovah saw more in Hagar. He sent his angel to her. When the angel found her, he helped her to adjust her attitude and blessed her. Hagar sensed that Jehovah had been watching her and knew all about her situation. She was moved to call him "a God of sight, . . . the one who sees me." (Gen. 16:7-13) What did Jehovah see in Hagar? He was fully aware of her background and everything she had been through. While Jehovah did not excuse Hagar's disrespect for Sarai, we can be sure that he took Hagar's background and her situation into account. *w20.04* 16 ¶8-9

Tuesday, January 4

I have run the race to the finish.

—2 Tim. 4:7.

The apostle Paul said that all true Christians are in a race. (Heb. 12:1) And all of us, young or old, energetic or tired, must endure to the end if we want to receive the prize that Jehovah offers us. (Matt. 24:13) Paul had freeness of speech because he had successfully “run the race to the finish.” (2 Tim. 4:7, 8) But what, specifically, is the race that Paul spoke about? Paul sometimes used features from the games held in ancient Greece to teach important lessons. (1 Cor. 9:25-27; 2 Tim. 2:5) On a number of occasions, he used running as in a footrace to illustrate the Christian course of life. (1 Cor. 9:24; Gal. 2:2; Phil. 2:16) A person enters this “race” when he dedicates himself to Jehovah and gets baptized. (1 Pet. 3:21) He crosses the finish line when Jehovah grants him the prize of everlasting life.—Matt. 25:31-34, 46; 2 Tim. 4:8. *w20.04* 26 ¶1-3

Wednesday, January 5

Take up the complete suit of armor from God.—Eph. 6:13.

“The Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the wicked one.” (2 Thess. 3:3) How does Jehovah protect us? Jehovah has made available to us a suit of armor that can protect us from Satan’s attacks. (Eph. 6:13-17) This spiritual armor is strong and effective! But it will protect us only if we put on each piece of the armor—and keep it on. For instance, the belt of truth represents the truths found in God’s Word, the Bible. Why must we wear this

belt? Because Satan is “the father of the lie.” (John 8:44) He has had thousands of years to practice his lying and has misled “the entire inhabited earth”! (Rev. 12:9) But the truths contained in the Bible protect us from being deceived. How do we wear this symbolic belt? We do so by learning the truth about Jehovah, by worshipping him “with spirit and truth,” and by conducting ourselves honestly in all things.—John 4:24; Eph. 4:25; Heb. 13:18. *w21.03* 26-27 ¶3-5

Thursday, January 6

He will also enter into the land of the Decoration.—Dan. 11:41.

What made that land especially precious was that it was the location where true worship was practiced. Since Pentecost 33 C.E., that “land” is not a single, literal geographic location; it cannot be, for Jehovah’s people are spread throughout the earth. Rather, “the land of the Decoration” today is the realm of activity of Jehovah’s people that includes such things as their worship of Jehovah through meetings and the field ministry. During the last days, the king of the north has repeatedly entered into “the land of the Decoration.” For example, when Nazi Germany filled the role of the king of the north, particularly during the second world war, that king entered into “the land of the Decoration” by persecuting and killing God’s people. After World War II when the Soviet Union took on the role of the king of the north, that king entered into “the land of the Decoration” by persecuting God’s people, exiling them. *w20.05* 13 ¶7-8

Friday, January 7

Close friendship with Jehovah belongs to those who fear him, and he makes his covenant known to them.—Ps. 25:14.

Consider some pre-Christian men who became friends of God. Abraham was a man who showed outstanding faith. Over 1,000 years after Abraham's death, Jehovah called him "my friend." (Isa. 41:8) So not even death can separate Jehovah from his close friends. Abraham is alive in Jehovah's memory. (Luke 20: 37, 38) Another example is Job. Before an assembly of the angels in heaven, Jehovah spoke confidently about Job. Jehovah called him "an upright man of integrity, fearing God and shunning what is bad." (Job 1:6-8) And how did Jehovah feel about Daniel, who served God faithfully in a pagan land for about 80 years? Three times angels assured that aged man that he was "very precious" to God. (Dan. 9:23; 10:11, 19) We can be certain that Jehovah longs for the day when he will resurrect his beloved friends who have died.—Job 14:15. *w20.05* 26-27 ¶3-4

Saturday, January 8

Teach me your regulations.

—Ps. 119:68.

A good student may learn about God's laws, even admire them. But will the student obey Jehovah out of love for him as a Person? Remember, Eve knew God's law, but she did not truly love the Lawgiver; nor did Adam. (Gen. 3:1-6) So we must do more than teach others about God's righteous requirements and standards. Jehovah's requirements and standards are appealing and beautiful. (Ps. 119:97, 111, 112) But our students may not see them that way un-

less they see Jehovah's love behind those laws. So we might ask our students: "Why do you think God asks his servants to do this or to refrain from doing this? What does that tell us about him as a Person?" If we help our students to think about Jehovah and to develop real love for his glorious name, we are more likely to reach their heart. Our students will come to love not only the laws but also the Lawgiver. They will grow in faith and will be helped to endure fiery tests to come.—1 Cor. 3: 12-15. *w20.06* 10 ¶10-11

Sunday, January 9

Be quick to listen, slow to speak.

—Jas. 1:19.

We need to be patient because it takes time for a person to heal spiritually. Many formerly inactive ones admit that they responded only after repeated visits by the elders and others in the congregation. A sister named Nancy, from Southeast Asia, writes: "A close friend in the congregation helped me a great deal. She loved me like an older sister. She reminded me of the good times we shared in the past. She would listen patiently as I expressed my feelings, and she did not hesitate to give me advice. She proved to be a true friend, ready to help at any time." Empathy is like a powerful ointment; it can help to heal hurt feelings. Some inactive ones have struggled for years with bitter feelings toward someone in the congregation. These feelings have stifled the desire to return to Jehovah. Some may think that they were treated unjustly. They may need someone who will listen to them and understand their feelings. *w20.06* 26 ¶10-11

Monday, January 10

You have conquered the wicked one.—1 John 2:14.

Each time you resist temptation, it will get easier for you to do what is right. Remember, too, that this world's twisted view of sex originates with Satan. So when you refuse to compromise, you 'conquer the wicked one.' We acknowledge that Jehovah has the right to define what is sinful conduct. And we do our best not to commit a sin. But when we do sin, we confess our wrongdoing to Jehovah in prayer. (1 John 1:9) And if we commit a serious sin, we seek the help of the elders, whom Jehovah has appointed to care for us. (Jas. 5:14-16) However, we should not be consumed by feelings of guilt over past mistakes. Why not? Because our loving Father provided the ransom sacrifice of his Son so that our sins can be forgiven. When Jehovah says that he will forgive repentant sinners, he means what he says. So there is nothing to stop us from serving Jehovah with a clean conscience.—1 John 2:1, 2, 12; 3:19, 20. *w20.07* 22-23 ¶9-10

Tuesday, January 11

*With you is the source of life.
—Ps. 36:9.*

There was a time when Jehovah was alone. But he was not lonely. He was complete in every way. Nevertheless, God wanted others to enjoy life. Motivated by love, Jehovah began creating. (1 John 4:19) First, Jehovah created a fellow worker. Then, by means of this first Son, "all other things were created," including millions of intelligent spirit creatures. (Col. 1:16) Jesus rejoiced at the opportunity to work with his Father.

(Prov. 8:30) And the angelic sons of God also had reason to rejoice. They had front-row seats, as it were, when Jehovah and his Master Worker, Jesus, made the heavens and the earth. How did the angels respond? They "began shouting in applause" when the earth was formed, and they no doubt continued to applaud each of Jehovah's creative works, including his final masterpiece, humans. (Job 38:7; Prov. 8:31, ftn.) Each of these creations revealed Jehovah's love and wisdom.—Ps. 104:24; Rom. 1:20. *w20.08* 14 ¶1-2

Wednesday, January 12

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

Jehovah created us to love and to be loved. So when someone hates us, we feel hurt and perhaps even afraid. A brother writes: "When soldiers hit me, insulted me, and threatened me because I was one of Jehovah's Witnesses, I felt frightened and humiliated." Such hatred hurts, but it does not surprise us. Jesus foretold that we would be hated. Why does the world hate Jesus' followers? Because like Jesus, we are "no part of the world." (John 15:17-19) As a result, while we respect human governments, we refuse to worship them or the emblems that represent them. We give Jehovah our exclusive devotion. We uphold God's right to rule mankind—a right that Satan and his "offspring" vigorously challenge. (Gen. 3:1-5, 15) We preach that God's Kingdom is mankind's only hope and that the Kingdom will soon crush all those who oppose it. (Dan. 2:44; Rev. 19:19-21) That message is good news to the meek but bad news to the wicked. *w21.03* 20 ¶1-2

Thursday, January 13

We know that we originate with God.—1 John 5:19.

Jehovah gives Christian sisters a dignified place in the congregation. They are fine examples of wisdom, faith, zeal, courage, generosity, and good works. (Luke 8:2, 3; Acts 16:14, 15; Rom. 16:3, 6; Phil. 4:3; Heb. 11:11, 31, 35) We are also blessed to have many elderly ones. They may struggle with various health problems associated with advanced age. Yet, these older ones do what they can in the field ministry, and they use all the energy they have to encourage and train others! And we benefit from their experience. They are truly beautiful to Jehovah and to us. (Prov. 16:31) Think, too, about our young ones. They face many challenges as they grow up in this world dominated by Satan the Devil and his wicked philosophies. Yet, we all feel encouraged when we see our young ones comment at meetings, share in the ministry, and courageously defend their beliefs. Yes, you young ones have an important place in Jehovah's congregation! —Ps. 8:2. *w20.08* 21-22 ¶9-11

Friday, January 14

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

When we start to preach and identify ourselves as Jehovah's Witnesses, we may face "storms" of family opposition, ridicule from acquaintances, and resistance to our message. How can you build your courage? First, be convinced that Jesus continues to direct this work from heaven. (John 16:33; Rev. 14:14-16) Next, strengthen your faith in Jehovah's promise to care for you. (Matt.

6:32-34) The stronger your faith becomes, the more courageous you will be. You showed great faith when you informed acquaintances and members of your family that you had begun to study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses and to attend their meetings! No doubt you have made significant changes in your conduct and lifestyle in order to live by Jehovah's righteous standards. That too took faith and courage. As you continue to build courage, you can be confident that "Jehovah your God is with you wherever you go."—Josh. 1:7-9. *w20.09* 5 ¶11-12

Saturday, January 15

*Jehovah gave him rest.
—2 Chron. 14:6.*

King Asa is an excellent example of a man who acted wisely by relying completely on Jehovah. He served Jehovah not only in bad times but also during times of peace. From early on, "Asa's heart was completely devoted to Jehovah." (1 Ki. 15:14, fn.) One way Asa demonstrated his devotion was by clearing out false worship from Judah. The Bible says that "he removed the foreign altars and the high places, smashed the sacred pillars, and cut down the sacred poles." (2 Chron. 14:3, 5) He even removed Maacah, his grandmother, from being a sort of first lady in the kingdom. Why? Because she promoted false worship of an idol. (1 Ki. 15:11-13) Asa did more than clear away false worship. He promoted pure worship, helping the kingdom of Judah return to Jehovah. Jehovah blessed Asa and the Israelites with a time of peace. For a period of ten years during Asa's rulership, "the land had no disturbance."—2 Chron. 14:1, 4, 6. *w20.09* 14 ¶2-3

Sunday, January 16

Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you.—1 Tim. 6:20.

We often place our valuable things in the care of others. For instance, we may deposit our money in a bank. When we do, we expect that our funds will be kept secure and not be lost or stolen. The apostle Paul reminded Timothy that he had received something precious—accurate knowledge of God’s purpose for humankind. Timothy was also entrusted with the privilege to “preach the word” and to “do the work of an evangelizer.” (2 Tim. 4:2, 5) Paul urged Timothy to guard what had been entrusted to him. Like Timothy, we have been entrusted with valuable things. Jehovah has favored us with an accurate knowledge of the precious truths found in his Word, the Bible. These truths are precious because they teach us how to have a good relationship with Jehovah and they explain what brings real happiness in life. When we accept those truths and live by them, we are freed from enslavement to false teachings and immoral practices.—1 Cor. 6:9-11. *w20.09* 26 ¶1-3

Monday, January 17

You know what sort of men we became among you for your sakes.—1 Thess. 1:5.

A student needs to see your enthusiasm and to hear your conviction about the truths that are found in the Bible. Then he will be more likely to get excited about what he is learning. If appropriate, tell him how living by Bible principles has helped you personally. Then he will come to realize that the Bible contains practical guidance that can

benefit him too. During the Bible study, tell your student about real-life examples of those who faced challenges similar to his and overcame them. You could bring along on the study someone from the congregation whose example might benefit the student. Help your student to see how wise it is to apply Bible principles in his life. If the student is married, is the spouse also studying? If not, invite the mate to join in the study. Encourage your student to share what he is learning with his family and friends.—John 1:40-45. *w20.10* 16 ¶7-9

Tuesday, January 18

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

Jesus’ earthly parents helped Jesus to grow up to have God’s favor; they followed Jehovah’s directions to parents. (Deut. 6:6, 7) Joseph and Mary had a deep love for Jehovah, and their priority was to encourage their children to develop that same kind of love. Joseph and Mary chose to maintain a good spiritual routine as a family. No doubt, they attended weekly meetings at the synagogue in Nazareth, as well as the annual Passover in Jerusalem. (Luke 2:41; 4:16) They may have used those family trips to Jerusalem to teach Jesus and his siblings about the history of Jehovah’s people, possibly along the way visiting locations that are mentioned in the Scriptures. As their family grew in number, it must not have been easy for Joseph and Mary to keep a good spiritual routine. But look at the benefits they enjoyed! Because they put worship of Jehovah first, their family was well cared for spiritually. *w20.10* 28 ¶8-9

Wednesday, January 19

Ezra had prepared his heart to consult the Law of Jehovah . . . and to teach its regulations.

—Ezra 7:10.

If you are invited to sit in on a Bible study, it would be good if you could prepare the material that will be discussed. Dorin, a special pioneer, says: "I appreciate it when my companion prepares for the study. Then he can participate in a meaningful way." Additionally, the student will likely notice that both of you are well-prepared, and this will set a good example for him. Even if you are not able to prepare the material thoroughly, at least take some time to get the key points of the lesson in mind. Prayer is an important part of a Bible study session, so think in advance about what to say if you are asked to offer a prayer. Then your prayer will likely be more meaningful. (Ps. 141:2) Hanae, who lives in Japan, remembers the prayers offered by a sister who accompanied her Bible teacher. She says: "I felt her strong friendship with Jehovah, and I wanted to be like her. I also felt loved when she included my name in her prayers." *w21.03* 9-10 ¶7-8

Thursday, January 20

Take courage! . . . You must also bear witness in Rome.—Acts 23:11.

Jesus assured the apostle Paul that he would reach Rome. However, some Jews in Jerusalem planned to ambush Paul and kill him. When the Roman military commander Claudius Lysias learned about the plan, he came to Paul's rescue. Quickly, Claudius sent Paul—protected by many soldiers—to Caesarea. There, Gover-

nor Felix ordered that Paul "be kept under guard in Herod's palace." Paul was out of the reach of the would-be murderers. (Acts 23:12-35) But Felix was succeeded as governor by Festus, who wanted "to gain favor with the Jews." He asked Paul: "Do you wish to go up to Jerusalem and be judged before me there?" Paul knew that he would probably be killed in Jerusalem. He said: "I appeal to Caesar!" Festus told Paul: "To Caesar you have appealed; to Caesar you will go." In time, Paul would be in Rome—far out of the reach of the Jews who were seeking to kill him. —Acts 25:6-12. *w20.11* 13 ¶4; 14 ¶8-10

Friday, January 21

Our hearts may condemn us.

—1 John 3:20.

Feelings of guilt are not unusual. For example, some feel guilty because of things they did before they learned the truth. Others feel guilty because of mistakes they made after baptism. (Rom. 3:23) Of course, we want to do what is right. But "we all stumble many times." (Jas. 3:2; Rom. 7:21-23) Although we do not enjoy feeling guilty, it can do us some good. Why? Because feelings of guilt can move us to correct our course and to be determined not to repeat our mistakes. (Heb. 12:12, 13) On the other hand, it is possible to feel excessive guilt—that is, to continue to feel guilty even after we have repented and Jehovah has shown that he has forgiven us. That type of guilt can be harmful. (Ps. 31:10; 38:3, 4) It is vital that we guard against the trap of excessive guilt. After all, just think how happy it would make Satan if we were to give up on ourselves—even though Jehovah has not given up on us!—Compare 2 Corinthians 2:5-7, 11. *w20.11* 27 ¶12-13

Saturday, January 22

Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure and washed my hands in innocence.—Ps. 73:13.

The Levite psalmist began to envy the wicked and arrogant, not because of their badness, but because of their evident prosperity. (Ps. 73:2-9, 11-14) They seemed to have it all—wealth, a good life, and no anxieties. The Levite needed to see things from Jehovah's standpoint. On doing so, he was at peace once again, and he was happy. He said: "Besides [Jehovah] I desire nothing on earth." (Ps. 73:25) Likewise, let us never envy wicked people who seem to prosper. Their happiness is superficial and temporary. (Eccl. 8:12, 13) To envy them is to invite discouragement as well as spiritual ruin. So if you find yourself envying the seeming success of the wicked, do what the Levite did. Heed God's loving advice, and associate with others who do Jehovah's will. When Jehovah is your greatest delight, you will find true happiness. And you will stay on the path to "the real life."—1 Tim. 6:19. *w20.12 19 ¶14-16*

Sunday, January 23

The problem is that we do not know what we should pray for as we need to, but the spirit itself pleads for us with unuttered groanings.—Rom. 8:26.

As you throw your anxiety on Jehovah in prayer, be sure to include words of thanks. It is good for us to count our blessings, even when our circumstances are especially difficult. If at times you are unable to find the right words to express your intense emotions, remember that Jehovah answers prayers as

simple as 'Please help!' (2 Chron. 18:31) Rely on Jehovah's wisdom, not your own. Back in the eighth century B.C.E., the people of Judah felt threatened by the Assyrians. In a desperate effort to avoid coming under the Assyrian yoke, they turned to pagan Egypt. (Isa. 30:1, 2) Jehovah warned them that their wayward course would end in disaster. (Isa. 30:7, 12, 13) Through Isaiah, Jehovah told the people how they could find real security. He said: "Your strength will be in keeping calm and showing trust" in Jehovah.—Isa. 30:15b. *w21.01 3-4 ¶8-9*

Monday, January 24

I heard the number of those who were sealed, 144,000.—Rev. 7:4.

As a reward for their faithfulness, Christ's anointed brothers become kings and priests with him in heaven. (Rev. 20:6) All those who make up the heavenly part of God's family will be eager to see the 144,000 anointed ones receive their heavenly reward. After telling about these 144,000 kings and priests, the apostle John sees something exciting, "a great crowd" who survive Armageddon. Unlike the first group, this second group is much larger and has no fixed number. (Rev. 7:9, 10) They are "dressed in white robes," indicating that they have kept themselves "without spot" from Satan's world and have remained loyal to God and Christ. (Jas. 1:27) They cry out that they have been saved because of what Jehovah and Jesus, the Lamb of God, have done. All the while, they are holding palm branches, which shows that they joyfully acknowledge Jesus as Jehovah's appointed King.—Compare John 12:12, 13. *w21.01 15-16 ¶6-7*

Tuesday, January 25

Your humility makes me great.

—2 Sam. 22:36.

A man can learn to be a good family head by imitating the way that Jehovah and Jesus exercise their headship. For instance, consider the quality of humility. Jehovah is the wisest Person in existence; yet, he listens to the opinions of his servants. (Gen. 18:23, 24, 32) Jehovah is perfect, but he does not, at present, expect perfection from us. Instead, he helps imperfect humans who serve him to succeed. (Ps. 113:6, 7) In fact, the Bible even describes Jehovah as a “helper.” (Ps. 27:9; Heb. 13:6) King David acknowledged that he could accomplish the great work he was given to do only because of Jehovah’s humility. Consider Jesus’ example. Although Lord and Master of his disciples, he washed their feet. Jesus himself said: “I set the pattern for you, that just as I did to you, you should also do.” (John 13:12-17) Although he had great authority, Jesus did not expect to be served. Instead, he served others.—Matt. 20:28. *w21.02* 3-4 ¶8-10

Wednesday, January 26

The glory of young men is their strength.—Prov. 20:29.

Young brothers, you have a lot to offer. Many of you are strong and full of energy. You are a real asset to your congregation. You may look forward to the time when you are appointed as a ministerial servant. However, you may feel that others view you as being too young or too inexperienced to be entrusted with important work. Even though you

may be young, there are things you can do right now to earn the trust and respect of those in your congregation. Do you young men have a skill that could benefit others in the congregation? Many of you do. For example, you may notice that some older ones appreciate being shown how to make the best use of their tablets and other electronic devices for personal study and for meetings. Your knowledge of these devices can be of great benefit to such older ones. In everything you do, make your heavenly Father proud of you. *w21.03* 2 ¶1, 3; 7 ¶18

Thursday, January 27

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

Even if a wife is better educated than her husband, it is his responsibility to take the lead in family worship and in other theocratic activities. (Eph. 6:4) A woman must be submissive to her husband, but she is still responsible for her own spiritual health. To that end, she must allocate some time for her own personal study and meditation. That will help her to maintain her love and respect for Jehovah and to find joy in being submissive to her husband. Wives who remain subject to their husband out of love for Jehovah will find more joy and contentment than those who reject Jehovah’s headship arrangement. They set a good example for both young men and young women. And they help to create a warm atmosphere not only in the family but also in the congregation. (Titus 2:3-5) Today, women make up a large part of those who are loyally serving Jehovah.—Ps. 68:11. *w21.02* 13 ¶21-23

Friday, January 28

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

The apostle Paul set an outstanding example of courage and endurance. At times, he felt weak. But he was able to endure because he relied on Jehovah to give him the strength he needed. (2 Cor. 12:8-10; Phil. 4:13) We can have that kind of strength and courage if we humbly recognize that we need Jehovah's help. (Jas. 4:10) We can be certain that the trials we face are not punishment from Jehovah. The disciple James assures us: "When under trial, let no one say: 'I am being tried by God.' For with evil things God cannot be tried, nor does he himself try anyone." (Jas. 1:13) When we are convinced of that fact, we are drawn closer to our loving heavenly Father. Jehovah "does not vary or change." (Jas. 1:17) He supported the first-century Christians through their trials, and he will help each of us today too. Earnestly ask Jehovah to help you gain wisdom, faith, and courage. He will answer your prayers. *w21.02 31 ¶19-21*

Saturday, January 29

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

You can encourage a Bible student who attends meetings by showing personal interest in him. (Phil. 2:4) Without being too personal, you could commend him for any positive changes he has made and ask him about his Bible study, his family, and his work. These conversations might draw you closer together. When you befriend the

student, you help him to progress to baptism. As the student continues to progress and make changes, help him to feel that he belongs in the congregation. You can do this by being hospitable. (Heb. 13:2) Once the Bible student qualifies as a publisher, you can also invite him to accompany you in the ministry. Diego, a publisher from Brazil, says: "Many brothers invited me to go out in the ministry. This was the best way to get to know them well. As I did, I learned a lot, and I felt closer to Jehovah and Jesus." *w21.03 12 ¶15-16*

Sunday, January 30

*Return evil for evil to no one.
—Rom. 12:17.*

Jesus told his followers to love their enemies. (Matt. 5:44, 45) Is that easy to do? By no means! But it is possible with the help of God's holy spirit. The fruitage of God's spirit includes love as well as patience, kindness, mildness, and self-control. (Gal. 5:22, 23) These qualities help us to endure hatred. Many opposers have had a change of heart because a believing husband, wife, child, or neighbor displayed those godly qualities. Many opposers have even become our dear brothers and sisters. So if you find it hard to love those who hate you just because you are serving Jehovah, pray for holy spirit. (Luke 11:13) And be fully convinced that God's way is always best. (Prov. 3:5-7) Hatred can be powerful and hurtful, but love is much stronger. It wins hearts. And it brings joy to Jehovah's heart. But even if opposers continue to hate us, we can still be happy. *w21.03 23 ¶13; 24 ¶15, 17*

Monday, January 31

*A nation has come up into my land,
mighty and without number.*

—Joel 1:6.

The prophet Joel was predicting a military attack. (Joel 2:1, 8, 11) Jehovah said that he would use his “great army” (Babylonian soldiers) to punish the disobedient Israelites. (Joel 2:25) The invading army is rightly called “the northerner” because the Babylonians would invade Israel from the north. (Joel 2:20) That army is likened to a well-organized swarm of locusts. Of them, Joel says: “Each [soldier] advances in his course. . . . Into the city they rush Onto the houses they climb, through the windows they enter like a thief.” (Joel 2:8, 9) Can you picture the scene? There are soldiers everywhere. There is nowhere to hide. No one can escape the sword of the Babylonians! Like locusts, the Babylonians (or, Chaldeans) invaded the city of Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E. The Bible reports: “The king of the Chaldeans . . . felt no compassion for young man or virgin, old or infirm.” —2 Chron. 36:17. *w20.04* 5 ¶11-12

Tuesday, February 1

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

Get to know your brothers and sisters better. Talk with them before and after meetings, work with them in the ministry, and if possible, invite them for a meal. When you do, you may learn that a sister who seems unfriendly is actually shy, a brother whom you thought to be materialistic is hospitable, or a family that often comes late to the meetings is enduring opposition. (Job 6:29) Of course, we should not

become “meddlers in other people’s affairs.” (1 Tim. 5:13) However, it is good to know something about our brothers and sisters and the circumstances that have shaped their personality. When you get to know the background of a fellow Christian whom you find irritating, you are more likely to feel empathy for that one. It takes effort to get to know your brothers better. Still, when you follow the Bible’s counsel to open your heart wide, you imitate Jehovah, who loves “all sorts of people.”—1 Tim. 2:3, 4; 2 Cor. 6:11-13. *w20.04* 16-17 ¶10-12

Wednesday, February 2

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

—John 15:13.

On the night before he died, Jesus reminded his disciples to love one another. He knew that self-sacrificing love would help them to stay united and to endure the world’s hatred. Consider the example of the congregation in Thessalonica. From the time it was formed, its members were persecuted. Yet, the brothers and sisters there became examples of integrity and love. (1 Thess. 1:3, 6, 7) Paul encouraged them to continue showing love, even “in fuller measure.” (1 Thess. 4:9, 10) Love would move them to console the depressed and support the weak. (1 Thess. 5:14) They followed Paul’s instructions, for in his second letter, written about a year later, Paul could say to them: “The love of each and every one of you is increasing toward one another.” (2 Thess. 1:3-5) Their love helped them to endure hardship and persecution. *w21.03* 22 ¶11

Thursday, February 3

Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.

—Heb. 12:1.

If we want to receive the prize of everlasting life, we must follow the Christian course, or way of life. (Acts 20:24; 1 Pet. 2:21) However, Satan and those who follow his example want us to make a different choice; they want us to “continue running with them.” (1 Pet. 4:4) They ridicule the course of life we follow and claim that the path they are on is better, that it leads to freedom. But their claim is false. (2 Pet. 2:19) How important it is that we choose the right road to follow! Satan wants all of us to stop running on the cramped road that is “leading off into life” and cross over to the spacious road that most people in this world are on. That road is popular and is easier to travel. But it is “leading off into destruction.” (Matt. 7:13, 14) To remain on the right road and not be sidetracked, we must trust in Jehovah and listen to him. w20.04 26 ¶1; 27 ¶5, 7

Friday, February 4

I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions . . . be made . . . so that we may go on leading a calm and quiet life with complete godly devotion.—1 Tim. 2:1, 2.

In recent years, Russia and its allies have also entered into “the land of the Decoration.” (Dan. 11:41) How? In 2017, this current king of the north banned the work of Jehovah’s people and threw some of our brothers and sisters into prison. He also banned our publications, including the *New World Translation*. Further, he confiscated our branch

office in Russia as well as Kingdom Halls and Assembly Halls. After these actions, in 2018 the Governing Body identified Russia and its allies as the king of the north. However, even when Jehovah’s people are severely persecuted, they refuse to participate in any action to subvert or change human governments. Rather, they follow the Bible’s counsel to pray for “all those who are in high positions,” especially when such ones are making decisions that could affect freedom of worship. w20.05 14 ¶9

Saturday, February 5

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

Parents, if your children are to be convinced that they have the truth, they need to have a personal relationship with God and to be convinced of the truthfulness of what the Bible teaches. If you are to teach your children the truth about God, you must set the example by being good students of the Bible. You must take time to meditate on what you learn. Then you will be able to teach your children to do the same. You need to teach your children to use our Bible study tools, just as you teach one of your Bible students. In doing so, you will help your children to appreciate Jehovah and the channel he uses to dispense spiritual food—“the faithful and discreet slave.” (Matt. 24:45-47) Do not settle for teaching your children only basic Bible truths. Help them develop strong faith by teaching them about “the deep things of God” to an extent that is appropriate to their age and ability.—1 Cor. 2:10. w20.07 11 ¶10, 12-13

Sunday, February 6

Jehovah detests a devious person, but His close friendship is with the upright.—Prov. 3:32.

How many imperfect humans today enjoy a close friendship with Jehovah? There are millions. This friendship is possible because of their faith in Jesus' ransom sacrifice. On that basis, Jehovah kindly allows us to dedicate ourselves to him and get baptized. When we take these important steps, we join the millions of dedicated, baptized Christians who are enjoying "close friendship" with the greatest Person in the universe! How can we show that we treasure God's friendship? Like Abraham and Job, who remained faithful to God for well over a hundred years, we must remain faithful—no matter how long we have been serving Jehovah in this old system. Like Daniel, we must value our friendship with God more than life. (Dan. 6:7, 10, 16, 22) With Jehovah's help, we can endure any trials we face and thus keep our close bond with him.—Phil. 4:13. *w20.05 27 ¶5-6*

Monday, February 7

Unify my heart.—Ps. 86:11.

King David saw another man's wife bathing. He knew Jehovah's standard: "You must not desire your fellow man's wife." (Ex. 20:17) Yet, evidently he kept looking. His heart became divided between his desire for the woman, Bath-sheba, and his desire to please Jehovah. Although David had long loved and feared Jehovah, he gave in to his selfish desire. In that instance, David pursued a very bad course. He brought reproach on Jehovah's name. David

also brought terrible harm to innocent people, including his own family. (2 Sam. 11:1-5, 14-17; 12:7-12) Jehovah disciplined David, and he recovered. (2 Sam. 12:13; Ps. 51:2-4, 17) David remembered the trouble and misery that resulted when he let his heart become divided. His words recorded at Psalm 86:11 may also be rendered: "Give me an undivided heart." Did Jehovah help David make his heart whole, or undivided? Yes, for Jehovah's Word later refers to David as a man whose "heart was . . . complete with Jehovah his God." —1 Ki. 11:4; 15:3. *w20.06 11 ¶12-13*

Tuesday, February 8

I kept drawing them, with the cords of love.—Hos. 11:4.

The Bible describes Jehovah's love for his people as a cord, or rope. In what sense is God's love like a rope? Consider this illustration: Imagine that you are drowning in rough seas and someone throws you a life vest. Surely you would appreciate the help because that may ease your struggle to stay afloat. But a life vest will not be enough to keep you alive. The water is cold, and you will not survive unless you can reach a lifeboat. You need someone to throw you a rope and to pull you toward the lifeboat. As Jehovah said in the words of today's text, he lovingly "kept drawing" the Israelites who had gone astray. God feels the same way today about those who have stopped serving him and who are drowning in problems and anxiety. He wants them to know that he loves them, and he wants to draw them to him. And Jehovah can use you to express his love to them. It is important to assure inactive ones that Jehovah loves them and that we love them too. *w20.06 27 ¶12-13*

Wednesday, February 9

Happy is the man who keeps on enduring trial.—Jas. 1:12.

When the disciple Stephen was murdered, many Christians fled from Jerusalem and “were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria,” eventually as far away as Cyprus and Antioch. (Acts 7:58-8:1; 11:19) We can only imagine the hardship the disciples had to endure. Still, they eagerly preached the good news wherever they went, and congregations were established throughout the Roman Empire. (1 Pet. 1:1) But far more turbulent times lay ahead for the early Christians. For instance, about the year 50 C.E., Roman Emperor Claudius ordered all Jews to leave Rome. So Jews who had become Christians were forced to abandon their homes and relocate elsewhere. (Acts 18:1-3) About 61 C.E., the apostle Paul wrote that his fellow Christians had been publicly reproached, put in prison, and plundered. (Heb. 10:32-34) And just like other people, Christians had to endure poverty and sickness.—Rom. 15:26; Phil. 2:25-27. *w21.02 26-27 ¶2-4*

Thursday, February 10

The Devil has come down to you, having great anger, knowing that he has a short period of time.
—Rev. 12:12.

There is nothing that Satan or those influenced by him can do that will destabilize a Christian who has strengthened his own faith. (2 John 8, 9) We must expect to be hated by the world. (1 John 3:13) John reminds us that “the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one.” (1 John 5:19) As this system draws to an end, Satan’s

anger grows hotter. He uses more than subtle forms of attack, such as the lure of immorality or the lies of apostates. He will also use brute force. Satan knows that he has only a short period of time left to try to stop our preaching work or to break our faith. It is no surprise, then, that our work is restricted or banned in a number of countries. Even so, our brothers and sisters in those lands are enduring. They are proving that no matter what the wicked one throws at us, we can be victorious!
w20.07 24 ¶12-13

Friday, February 11

The gift God gives is everlasting life by Christ Jesus our Lord.
—Rom. 6:23.

Jehovah intended for the human family to enjoy everlasting life on the beautiful planet that he had created. But when Adam and Eve rebelled against their loving Father, sin and death cast a shadow over the earth. (Rom. 5:12) How did Jehovah respond? Immediately, he stated how he would rescue mankind. (Gen. 3:15) Jehovah purposed to provide a ransom that would make it possible for Adam and Eve’s children to be freed from sin and death. He could then allow each person to choose to serve Him and to receive everlasting life. (John 3:16; 1 Cor. 15:21, 22) When Jehovah through his Son resurrects countless millions, we may assume that not all of them will come back to life at the same time. Why not? Because an explosion in the earth’s population would likely cause chaos. And Jehovah never does anything in a disorganized, chaotic way. He knows that for peace to last, order must be maintained.—1 Cor. 14:33. *w20.08 14 ¶13; 15 ¶5*

Saturday, February 12

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

A student should understand that the purpose of the Bible study is to help him to start serving Jehovah as one of His Witnesses. Step-by-step, a sincere Bible student can reach the goal of baptism! First, the student comes to know and love Jehovah and put faith in Him. (John 3:16; 17:3) The student then forms a relationship with Jehovah and begins to bond with the congregation. (Heb. 10:24, 25; Jas. 4:8) Eventually, the student rejects bad practices and repents of his sins. (Acts 3:19) Meanwhile, his faith impels him to share the truth with others. (2 Cor. 4:13) Then he dedicates himself to Jehovah and symbolizes his dedication by getting baptized. (1 Pet. 3:21; 4:2) And what a joyous day that is for everyone! As the student takes each step toward his goal, be generous with sincere commendation and encourage him to continue his progress in the right direction. *w20.10* 17-18 ¶12-13

Sunday, February 13

If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am no part of the body," that does not make it no part of the body.—1 Cor. 12:15.

If you compare yourself with others in the congregation, you may be blinded to your own value. Some in the congregation may be gifted teachers, good organizers, or skilled shepherds. Perhaps you feel that you do not have those gifts to the same degree. This shows that you are humble and modest. (Phil. 2:3) But be careful. If you constantly compare yourself with those who

have outstanding talents, you will be disappointed in yourself. You may even feel, as the apostle Paul mentioned, that you have no place in the congregation at all. Jehovah gave some first-century Christians miraculous gifts of the holy spirit, but not all Christians received the same gifts. (1 Cor. 12:4-11) Yet, each Christian was valuable. Today, we do not have the miraculous gifts of the holy spirit. But the principle still applies. We may not all have the same talents, but all of us are valuable to Jehovah. *w20.08* 23 ¶13-15

Monday, February 14

Jehovah is on my side; I will not be afraid.—Ps. 118:6.

When you pray for courage and boldness, Jehovah will answer your prayers and never abandon you. (Acts 4:29, 31) He is always there to give you support. Think about how he has helped you overcome challenges and given you the strength to make changes in your lifestyle. Certainly the One who led his people through the Red Sea can help you to be a disciple of Christ. (Ex. 14:13) Maintain the same conviction as did the psalmist who said the words of today's text. Jehovah can also help new publishers to be courageous. Note the experience of a sister named Tomoyo. When she started to preach from house to house, the first householder she met shouted: "I don't want anything to do with Jehovah's Witnesses!" and slammed the door. Tomoyo courageously told her companion: "Did you hear that? I didn't have to say a word, and she recognized me as one of Jehovah's Witnesses. I'm so happy!" Tomoyo now serves as a regular pioneer. *w20.09* 6 ¶13-14

Tuesday, February 15

Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of Jehovah his God.

—2 Chron. 14:2.

Asa told the people that it was Jehovah who had “given [them] rest all around.” (2 Chron. 14:6, 7) Asa did not feel that this period of peace was a time to relax. On the contrary, he set out to build cities, walls, towers, and gates. He told the people of Judah: “The land is still at our disposal.” What did Asa mean? He meant that the people could move about freely in their God-given land and build without opposition from enemies. He urged the people to take advantage of this time of peace. Asa also used the time of peace to strengthen his military force. (2 Chron. 14:8) Does this mean that he did not trust in Jehovah? No. Rather, Asa knew that it was his duty as king to prepare the people for the troubles they might face in the future. Asa knew that the period of peace that Judah enjoyed likely would not last indefinitely, and this proved true. w20.09 15 ¶4-5

Wednesday, February 16

Do not go beyond the things that are written.—1 Cor. 4:6.

With good intentions, an elder might make rules that he hopes will protect God’s sheep. However, there are significant differences between the role of an elder and the role of a family head. For instance, Jehovah has assigned the elders to act as judges, and he has given them the responsibility of removing unrepentant sinners from the congregation. (1 Cor. 5:11-13) On the other

hand, Jehovah has given family heads some authority that he has not given to elders. For instance, he has authorized a family head both to make and to enforce rules for his family. (Rom. 7:2) For example, a family head has the right to decide at what time his children should arrive home at night. He also has the authority to discipline his children if they fail to obey that rule. (Eph. 6:1) Of course, a loving family head consults with his wife before making rules in the household; after all, the two of them are “one flesh.” —Matt. 19:6. w21.02 16-18 ¶10-13

Thursday, February 17

[Wisdom] is more precious than corals; nothing you desire can compare to it.—Prov. 3:15.

One reason why the truths found in God’s Word are precious is that Jehovah reveals them only to humble ones who are “rightly disposed.” (Acts 13:48) Such individuals accept the channel he uses to dispense those truths today. (Matt. 11:25; 24:45) We cannot learn these truths on our own, and nothing else is anywhere near as valuable. (Prov. 3:13) Jehovah has also entrusted us with the privilege of teaching others the truth about him and his purposes. (Matt. 24:14) The message we bear is invaluable because it helps people become part of Jehovah’s family and gives them the opportunity to gain everlasting life. (1 Tim. 4:16) Whether our personal share in the ministry is large or small, we are supporting the most important work being done at this time. (1 Tim. 2:3, 4) What an honor it is to be God’s fellow workers!—1 Cor. 3:9. w20.09 26-27 ¶4-5

Friday, February 18

We found brothers and were urged to remain with them.—Acts 28:14.

During his journey to Rome, the apostle Paul time and again received help that Jehovah provided by means of his fellow believers. For example, two faithful companions of Paul, Aristarchus and Luke, decided to travel with him to Rome. They willingly risked their lives to be with Paul, although it does not appear that either of them had received a personal assurance from Jesus that they would reach Rome. Only later, during the rough voyage, did they learn that their lives would be spared. When they reached the port city of Sidon, Julius permitted Paul “to go to his friends and enjoy their care.” (Acts 27:1-3) And later, in the city of Puteoli, Paul and his companions “found brothers and were urged to remain with them for seven days.” While the Christians in those places cared for the needs of Paul and his companions, Paul no doubt brought great joy to his hosts by sharing upbuilding experiences.—Compare Acts 15:2, 3. *w20.11* 15-16 ¶15-17

Saturday, February 19

Godly devotion . . . holds promise of the life now and the life that is to come.—1 Tim. 4:8.

Parents, teach your children in word and action that you love Jehovah deeply. Realize that the greatest gift that you can give them is the opportunity to love Jehovah. And one of the most valuable lessons that you can teach them is how to keep a good spiritual routine of study, prayer, meetings, and participation in the ministry. (1 Tim. 6:6)

Of course, you must give your children the material things they need. (1 Tim. 5:8) But remember that it will be your children's close relationship with Jehovah, not their material possessions, that will help them to survive the end of this old system and make it into God's new world. (Ezek. 7:19) How heartwarming it is to see so many Christian parents who are making good spiritual choices for their families! Children who are raised in such families often continue with the good habits they learned, and they have no regrets! —Prov. 10:22. *w20.10* 28-29 ¶10-11

Sunday, February 20

You will not have this happen to you at all.—Matt. 16:22.

On occasion, the apostle Peter said or did things that he later regretted. For instance, when Jesus told his apostles that he would suffer and die, Peter rebuked him, saying the above. (Matt. 16:21-23) Jesus then corrected Peter. When a mob came to arrest Jesus, Peter acted rashly, cutting off the ear of a slave of the high priest. (John 18:10, 11) Again, Jesus corrected the apostle. In addition, Peter had boasted that while the other apostles might stumble in connection with Christ, he would never do so! (Matt. 26:33) But that overconfidence gave way to fear of man, and Peter denied his Master three times. Deeply discouraged, Peter “went outside and wept bitterly.” (Matt. 26:69-75) He must have wondered if Jesus could ever forgive him. However, Peter did not allow himself to be overwhelmed by discouragement. After stumbling, he recovered, and we later find him with the other apostles.—John 21:1-3; Acts 1:15, 16. *w20.12* 20 ¶17-18

Monday, February 21

You husbands, . . . continue dwelling with them according to knowledge. Assign them honor as to a weaker vessel, the feminine one.

—1 Pet. 3:7.

A family head can show humility in many ways. For example, he does not expect perfection from his wife and children. He listens to and considers the opinions of family members, even when they do not agree with his. In addition, a humble husband is willing to do household tasks, even if in his community these tasks are viewed as women's work. That can be a challenge. Why? "Where I come from," says a sister named Rachel, "if a husband helps his wife wash dishes or clean the home, his neighbors and relatives will question if he is a 'real man.' They will think that he cannot control his wife." If that attitude is common where you live, remember that Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, even though it was viewed as a slave's job. A good family head is concerned, not about making himself look good, but about making his wife and children feel good. *w21.02 2 ¶3; 4 ¶11*

Tuesday, February 22

One thing is certain: Forgetting the things behind and stretching forward to the things ahead, I am pressing on toward the goal.

—Phil. 3:13, 14.

Good memories are a blessing from Jehovah; but no matter how good our life was in the past, our future in the new world will be better. Others may hurt us, but when we choose to forgive, we are able to move forward. Excessive guilt can prevent us from serving Jehovah with joy. But, like the apostle Paul,

we need to believe that Jehovah has forgiven us. (1 Tim. 1:12-15) We have the prospect of living forever. And in God's new world, we will not be plagued with regrets about the past. Regarding that time, the Bible says: "The former things will not be called to mind." (Isa. 65:17) Just think: Some of us have grown old in Jehovah's service, but in the new world, we will be young again. (Job 33:25) Let us, therefore, be determined not to live in the past. Rather, let us look to the future and live for what is ahead! *w20.11 24 ¶4; 29 ¶18-19*

Wednesday, February 23

I saw . . . a great crowd . . . And they keep shouting with a loud voice, saying: "Salvation we owe to our God . . . and to the Lamb."

—Rev. 7:9, 10.

What lies ahead? During the great tribulation, Jehovah will save us in two amazing ways. First, he will save his loyal servants during the time when he causes the kings of the earth to destroy Babylon the Great, the empire of false religion. (Rev. 17:16-18; 18:2, 4) Then, he will save his people when he annihilates the remaining elements of Satan's world at Armageddon. (Rev. 16:14, 16) When we remain close to Jehovah, Satan can do us no lasting harm. In fact, he is the one who will suffer permanent harm. (Rom. 16:20) So put on the complete suit of armor—and leave it on! Do not try to fight the battle on your own. Support your brothers and sisters. And follow Jehovah's direction. If you do, you can be confident that your loving heavenly Father will strengthen you and protect you. —Isa. 41:10. *w21.03 30 ¶16-17*

Thursday, February 24

Your strength will be in keeping calm and showing trust.

—Isa. 30:15.

How might we show our trust in Jehovah? By applying the direction that Jehovah gives. The Bible contains many accounts that highlight the value of keeping calm and putting our trust in Jehovah. As you study these accounts, notice what helped God's servants to remain calm in the face of extreme opposition. For example, when the Jewish supreme court ordered the apostles to stop preaching, they were not intimidated. Instead, they boldly declared: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men." (Acts 5:29) Even after being flogged, the apostles did not panic. Why? Because they knew that Jehovah was on their side. He was pleased with them. Thus, they continued preaching the good news. (Acts 5:40-42) Likewise, when the disciple Stephen faced death, he remained so peaceful and serene that his face looked "like an angel's face." (Acts 6:12-15) Why? Because he was assured of Jehovah's approval. *w21.01 4 ¶10-11*

Friday, February 25

They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.—Rev. 7:14.

This signifies that they have a clean conscience and a righteous standing before Jehovah. (Isa. 1:18) They are dedicated, baptized Christians, who exercise strong faith in Jesus' sacrifice and who have a relationship with Jehovah. (John 3:36; 1 Pet. 3:21) Thus, they qualify to stand before God's throne to render him "sacred service day and night" in the earthly courtyard of his spiri-

tual temple. (Rev. 7:15) Even now, they zealously perform the greater part of the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work, putting the interests of God's Kingdom ahead of their own. (Matt. 6:33; 24:14; 28:19, 20) The great crowd who come out of the great tribulation are assured of God's continued care, for "the One seated on the throne will spread his tent over them." The promise that the other sheep have longed to see fulfilled will be fully realized: "[God] will wipe out every tear from their eyes."—Rev. 21:3, 4. *w21.01 16 ¶9-10*

Saturday, February 26

I will pour out some of my spirit on every sort of flesh, and your sons and your daughters will prophesy.
—Acts 2:17.

We love being part of Jehovah's family, and we do our best to respect the headship arrangement that Jehovah has put in place. The Bible indicates that Jehovah values women as well as men. For instance, it reveals that in the first century, Jehovah gave holy spirit to women as well as to men and empowered them to perform miraculous works, such as speaking in different languages. (Acts 2:1-4, 15-18) They both have been anointed by holy spirit with the prospect of ruling with Christ. (Gal. 3:26-29) Women as well as men will receive the reward of everlasting life on earth. (Rev. 7:9, 10, 13-15) And both men and women are assigned to preach and teach the good news. (Matt. 28:19, 20) In fact, the book of Acts recognizes the work of a sister named Priscilla who, along with her husband, Aquila, helped to explain the truth more correctly to the well-educated man Apollos.—Acts 18:24-26. *w21.02 14 ¶1; 15 ¶4*

Sunday, February 27

Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock . . . Shepherd the congregation of God.—Acts 20:28.

Elders, you have the weighty responsibility of helping publishers to be effective in their ministry, including their Bible study work. If someone is shy about conducting a Bible study in your presence, offer to conduct the study. Elders can do a great deal to encourage and to motivate the teachers to persevere. (1 Thess. 5:11) Even if we do not presently conduct a Bible study, we can still help someone to grow spiritually. Without taking over, we can with our well-prepared comments support the teacher during a study session. We can befriend the students when they come to the Kingdom Hall, and we can serve as good examples for them. And elders can encourage the students by making time for them and the teachers by training and commending them. Really, what greater joy could we have than knowing that we played even a small part in helping someone come to love and serve our Father, Jehovah?
w21.03 13 ¶18-19

Monday, February 28

*Close friendship with Jehovah belongs to those who fear him.
—Ps. 25:14.*

David proved to be responsible and reliable. For example, as a young man, he diligently looked after his father's sheep. That turned out to be a dangerous assignment. David later explained to King Saul: "Your servant became a shepherd of his father's flock, and a lion came, also a bear, and each carried off a sheep from the flock. I went out after it and struck it down and rescued it

from its mouth." (1 Sam. 17:34, 35) David felt responsible for the welfare of the sheep. Young brothers can imitate David by diligently fulfilling any assignment they are given. Young David developed a close, personal relationship with Jehovah. That relationship was more important than David's courage or his skill with a stringed instrument. Jehovah was not only David's God but also his Friend—his close Friend. Young brothers, the most important thing that you can do is to strengthen your relationship with your heavenly Father. *w21.03 3 ¶4-5*

Tuesday, March 1

Happy are you whenever men hate you.—Luke 6:22.

We do not choose to be hated. We are not trying to be martyrs. So why can we be happy when hated? Consider three reasons. First, when we endure, we gain God's approval. (1 Pet. 4:13, 14) Second, our faith is refined and becomes stronger. (1 Pet. 1:7) And third, we will receive a priceless reward—everlasting life. (Rom. 2:6, 7) Soon after Jesus' resurrection, the apostles experienced the happiness he spoke about. After being flogged and ordered to stop preaching, they rejoiced. Why? "Because they had been counted worthy to be dishonored in behalf of [Jesus'] name." (Acts 5:40-42) They loved their Master more than they feared the hatred of their enemies. And they showed their love by proclaiming the good news "without letup." Many of our brothers today continue to serve faithfully despite difficulties. They know that Jehovah will not forget their work and their love for his name. *w21.03 25 ¶18-19*

Wednesday, March 2

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

Anointed Christians are not born with the heavenly hope. It has to be implanted in their heart by God. They think about their hope, pray about it, and are eager to receive their reward in heaven. They cannot even imagine what their spiritual body will be like. (Phil. 3:20, 21; 1 John 3:2) Even so, they long to take their place in the heavenly Kingdom. The other sheep cherish a hope that comes naturally to humans, the prospect of living forever on earth. They look forward to the day when they can help turn the entire planet into a paradise. They yearn for the day when they can build their houses, plant their gardens, and raise their children in perfect health. (Isa. 65:21-23) They look forward to exploring the earth—its mountains, forests, and seas—and to studying Jehovah's abundant creation. Above all, they are thrilled to know that their bond with Jehovah will grow ever stronger and closer. *w21.01* 18-19 ¶17-18

Thursday, March 3

He burned down the house of the true God . . . and destroyed everything of value.—2 Chron. 36:19.

When the Babylonians were finished with the land, onlookers could only say: "It is a wasteland without man and beast, and it has been handed over to the Chaldeans." (Jer. 32:43) Some 200 years after Joel's prophecy, Jehovah used Jeremiah to foretell something else about this attack. He said that a thorough search would be made for those Israelites who engaged

in wicked practices—a search that would lead to their capture. "'Here I am sending for many fishermen,' declares Jehovah, 'and they will fish for them. After that I will send for many hunters, and they will hunt them down on every mountain and every hill and out of the clefts of the crags. . . . I will repay the full amount due for their error and their sin.'" Neither the oceans nor the forests would be able to conceal the unrepentant Israelites from the Babylonian invaders.—Jer. 16:16, 18. *w20.04* 5 ¶12-13

Friday, March 4

*[Lot] kept lingering.
—Gen. 19:16.*

At a critical time in his life, Lot was slow to obey Jehovah's instructions. We may judge Lot as being apathetic, even disobedient. However, Jehovah did not give up on him. "Because of Jehovah's compassion for him," the angels took the family by the hand and led them outside the city. (Gen. 19:15, 16) Jehovah might have felt compassion for Lot for a number of reasons. Lot may have been reluctant to leave his home because he feared the people outside the city. There were other dangers too. Lot likely knew of the two kings who had fallen into pits of bitumen, or asphalt, in a nearby valley. (Gen. 14:8-12) As a husband and father, Lot must have worried about his family. In addition, Lot was wealthy, so he may have owned a fine house in Sodom. (Gen. 13:5, 6) Of course, none of those factors excused Lot for failing to obey Jehovah immediately. However, Jehovah looked beyond Lot's mistake and viewed him as a "righteous man." —2 Pet. 2:7, 8. *w20.04* 18 ¶13-14

Saturday, March 5

You have your company of young men just like dewdrops.—Ps. 110:3.

Young men, it may take time for those who have known you as a child to start viewing you as a young adult. You can be sure, however, that Jehovah sees beyond your outward appearance. He knows who you are and what you are capable of doing. (1 Sam. 16:7) Strengthen your relationship with God. David did that by looking closely at Jehovah's creative works. David considered what such works reveal about the Creator. (Ps. 8:3, 4; 139:14; Rom. 1:20) Another thing you can do is to look to Jehovah for strength. For example, do some of your schoolmates make fun of you because you are one of Jehovah's Witnesses? If so, pray for Jehovah to help you deal with this challenge. And apply the practical advice you find in his Word and in our Bible-based publications and videos. Each time you see Jehovah help you deal with a challenge, your confidence in him will grow. Furthermore, as others see that you rely on Jehovah, you will gain their trust. *w21.03 4 ¶7*

Sunday, March 6

*The prayer of the upright is a pleasure to [Jehovah].
—Prov. 15:8.*

Close friends enjoy sharing thoughts and feelings with each other. Is that true of our friendship with Jehovah? Yes! Jehovah speaks to us through his Word, and in it he reveals to us his thoughts and feelings. We communicate with him in prayer, and we can share with him our deepest thoughts and innermost feelings. As a loving Friend, Jehovah not only listens to our prayers

but also answers them. Sometimes the answer comes quickly. At other times we may have to keep praying about a matter. Still, we can be confident that the answer will come at the right time and in the best way. Of course, God's answer may be different from what we expect. For example, rather than remove a trial, he might give us the wisdom and strength "to endure it." (1 Cor. 10:13) How can we show our appreciation for this priceless gift of prayer? One way is by heeding the divine counsel to "pray constantly."—1 Thess. 5:17. *w20.05 27-28 ¶7-8*

Monday, March 7

The one who has endured to the end will be saved.—Matt. 24:13.

The contestants in a long-distance race keep an eye on the road immediately in front of them so that they do not stumble. If they do fall down, they get back up and keep on running. They focus primarily, not on what made them stumble, but on the finish line and the prize they hope to win. In our race, we may stumble many times, making mistakes in what we say or do. Or our fellow runners may make mistakes that hurt us. That is to be expected. We are all imperfect, and we are all running on the same cramped road to life. So we are bound to "bump" against one another at times and arouse a "cause for complaint." (Col. 3:13) But rather than focus on what made us stumble, let us focus on the prize ahead and keep on running. If we become bitter and resentful and refuse to get back up, we will not cross the finish line and receive the prize. In addition, we are likely to become an obstacle for others who are trying to run on the cramped road to life. *w20.04 26 ¶1; 28 ¶13-9*

Tuesday, March 8

This kingdom . . . will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms.

—Dan. 2:44.

The prophet Daniel describes a series of human governments that have had an impact on God's people. They are described as the various parts of a giant metal image. The last human government in that series is depicted as the feet of the image that are made of iron mixed with clay. The feet represent the Anglo-American World Power. That prophecy indicates that it will still be functioning when God's Kingdom strikes and destroys human governments. The apostle John also describes a series of world powers that have had an effect on Jehovah's people. John depicts these governments as being like a seven-headed wild beast. The seventh head of that beast represents the Anglo-American World Power. This is significant because the beast is not shown as growing any other heads. The seventh head of this beast is still dominant when Christ and his heavenly forces destroy it along with the rest of the beast.—Rev. 13: 1, 2; 17:13, 14. *w20.05* 14 ¶11-12

Wednesday, March 9

God is love.—1 John 4:8.

That simple statement reminds us of a fundamental truth: God, the Source of life, is also the Source of love. Jehovah loves us! His love makes us feel secure, happy, and satisfied. For Christians, showing love is not optional. It is a commandment. (Matt. 22:37-40) When we come to know Jehovah well, we may find it easy to obey the first commandment. After all, Jehovah

is perfect; he is thoughtful and gentle in the way he treats us. But we may have difficulty obeying the second commandment. Why? Because our brothers and sisters—who are among our closest neighbors—are imperfect. At times, they may say and do things that we feel are uncaring and unkind. Jehovah knew that we would face this challenge, so he inspired some of the writers of the Bible to include specific counsel on why and how we should show love to one another. One of those writers was the apostle John.—1 John 3:11, 12. *w21.01* 8 ¶1-2

Thursday, March 10

[Do] not be overreached by Satan.

—2 Cor. 2:11.

Whether we have recently begun to serve Jehovah or have done so for many years, we need to ask ourselves, 'Am I resisting Satan's attempts to divide my heart?' For instance, if you see an image on TV or the Internet that could arouse sensual desires, how do you respond? It might be easy to rationalize that the picture or movie is not exactly pornographic. But might it represent an effort by Satan to divide your heart? That image can be like a little metal wedge that a man uses to split a big log. At first he drives the thin, sharp edge of the wedge into the log. Then as he drives the wedge deeper, the log splits apart. Could suggestive imagery in the media be like the thin part of that wedge? What may start off as small and seemingly harmless can quickly lead a person to commit sins that divide his heart and break his integrity. So refuse to give anything improper entry into your heart! Keep it unified to fear Jehovah's name! *w20.06* 11-12 ¶14-15

Friday, March 11

Bear the weaknesses of those not strong.—Rom. 15:1.

Inactive ones need consistent support from us. Like the lost son in Jesus' illustration, they may be emotionally scarred. (Luke 15:17-24) And they are likely weak spiritually because of what they experienced in Satan's world. We need to help them rebuild their faith in Jehovah. In the illustration of the lost sheep, Jesus describes how the shepherd puts the sheep on his shoulders and carries it back to the flock. The shepherd has already spent time and energy finding the lost sheep. But he realizes that he will need to carry it back to the fold because it will not have the strength to return on its own. (Luke 15:4, 5) We may need to invest time and energy in helping some inactive ones to overcome their weaknesses. But with Jehovah's spirit, his Word, and the publications provided through the congregation, we can help them to become spiritually strong again. So if you are asked to study with an inactive person, why not welcome the privilege? *w20.06 28 ¶14-15*

Saturday, March 12

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

Each one of us should show love—the identifying mark of true Christians. But we also need “accurate knowledge and full discernment.” (Phil. 1:9) Otherwise, we could be influenced “by every wind of teaching by means of the trickery of men,” including apostates. (Eph. 4:14) When many disciples in the first century C.E. stopped fol-

lowing Jesus, the apostle Peter expressed his firm conviction that Jesus had “sayings of everlasting life.” (John 6:67, 68) Even though Peter at that time did not understand all the details of those sayings, he remained loyal because he had discerned the truth about Christ. You too can strengthen your conviction in what the Bible teaches. If you do, your faith will stand the test of time, and you will help to build strong faith in others.—2 John 1, 2. *w20.07 8 ¶12; 13 ¶18*

Sunday, March 13

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

To help our brothers and sisters to remain in the truth, we must show compassion. (1 John 3:10, 11, 16, 17) We need to love one another not only when things are going well but also when problems arise. For example, do you know someone who has lost a loved one in death and needs to be comforted or helped in practical ways? Or have you heard that fellow believers suffered loss from a natural disaster and need help to rebuild their Kingdom Halls or homes? We show the depth of our love and compassion for our brothers and sisters not only by what we say but, more important, by what we do. We imitate our loving heavenly Father when we show love for one another. (1 John 4:7, 8) An important way that we show love is by forgiving one another. For example, someone might hurt us but then apologize. We show love by forgiving him and putting his error behind us.—Col. 3:13. *w20.07 24 ¶14-15*

Monday, March 14

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

Will each resurrected person receive individual instruction, similar to the way we conduct Bible studies today? Will these new ones be assigned to congregations and be trained to teach those who are resurrected after them? We will have to wait and see. We do know, however, that by the end of Christ's Thousand Year Reign, "the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah." (Isa. 11:9) What a busy but enjoyable thousand years that will be! During the Thousand Year Rule of Christ, all of Jehovah's earthly children will have to make changes to please him. So all of them will have true fellow feeling as they help the resurrected ones to combat sinful tendencies and to live by Jehovah's standards. (1 Pet. 3:8) No doubt those who come back to life will be drawn to Jehovah's humble people, who will also be "working out [their] own salvation."—Phil. 2:12. *w20.08 16 ¶6-7*

Tuesday, March 15

Let each one examine his own actions, . . . and not in comparison with the other person.—Gal. 6:4.

If we follow the apostle Paul's inspired counsel and examine our own actions, we may begin to see that we have unique gifts and abilities. For example, an elder may not be a gifted teacher when on the platform, but he may be very effective in the disciple-making work. Or he may not be as well-organized as some other elders in his congregation, but he might be well-known as a loving shepherd whom publish-

ers feel free to approach for sound Scriptural advice. Or he might have a fine reputation for being hospitable. (Heb. 13:2, 16) When we clearly see our own strengths and gifts, we will have reason to feel good about what we can contribute to the congregation. And we will be less likely to envy our brothers who have gifts that are different from ours. No matter what place we have in the congregation, all of us should desire to improve in our service and develop our abilities. *w20.08 24 ¶16-18*

Wednesday, March 16

*I saw . . . a great crowd, which no man was able to number.
—Rev. 7:9.*

A history-making talk entitled "The Great Multitude" was given in 1935 by J. F. Rutherford at a convention in Washington, D.C., U.S.A. In his talk, Brother Rutherford identified those who would make up the "great multitude" (*King James Version*), or "great crowd," mentioned at Revelation 7:9. Until then, this group was thought to be a secondary heavenly class that was less faithful. Brother Rutherford used the Scriptures to explain that the great crowd are not chosen to live in heaven, but they are Christ's other sheep who will survive "the great tribulation" and live forever on earth. (Rev. 7:14) Jesus promised: "I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; those too I must bring in, and they will listen to my voice, and they will become one flock, one shepherd." (John 10:16) These sheeplike ones are loyal Witnesses of Jehovah who have the prospect of living forever in Paradise on earth.—Matt. 25:31-33, 46. *w21.01 14 ¶1-2*

Thursday, March 17

You will be hated by all people on account of my name, but the one who has endured to the end will be saved.—Matt. 10:22.

We need self-discipline if we are to endure and complete our preaching work. (Matt. 28:19, 20) We do not inherit self-discipline. On the contrary, our natural inclination often is to follow the course of least resistance. It takes self-control to be self-disciplined. Therefore, we need help to train ourselves to do the things that may be difficult for us to do. Jehovah gives us that help through his holy spirit. (Gal. 5:22, 23) The apostle Paul was self-disciplined. But he admitted that he had to “pummel” his body in order to do what was right. (1 Cor. 9:25-27) He urged others to discipline themselves and to do all things “decently and by arrangement.” (1 Cor. 14:40) We must exercise self-discipline to maintain a good spiritual routine that includes a regular share in the preaching work.—Acts 2:46. *w20.09* 6-7 ¶15-17

Friday, March 18

In all the nations, the good news has to be preached.—Mark 13:10.

In many lands today, we can preach without disturbance. Do you live in a country that grants freedom of worship? If so, ask yourself, ‘How am I using this freedom?’ During these exciting last days, Jehovah’s organization has spearheaded the greatest preaching and teaching campaign the world has ever known. Many possibilities are open to Jehovah’s people. How can you take advantage of a time of peace? (2 Tim. 4:2) Why not examine your

circumstances and see if you or a member of your family could have an increased share in the preaching work, perhaps even serving as a pioneer? Now is not the time to amass riches and material possessions—things that will not survive with us through the great tribulation. (Prov. 11:4; Matt. 6:31-33; 1 John 2:15-17) Many publishers have learned a new language so that they can use it in preaching and teaching. God’s organization supports them by producing Bible-based material in over 1,000 languages! *w20.09* 16 ¶9-11

Saturday, March 19

*Go on waging the fine warfare.
—1 Tim. 1:18.*

A good soldier is loyal. He will fight hard to protect someone he loves or something he values. Paul encouraged Timothy to develop godly devotion—that is, a loyal attachment to God. (1 Tim. 4:7) The deeper our love and devotion for God, the greater our desire to hold on to the truth. (1 Tim. 4:8-10; 6:6) A good soldier must also discipline himself if he is to remain fit for duty. Timothy remained spiritually fit because he followed Paul’s inspired advice to flee from wrong desires, to pursue godly qualities, and to associate with fellow believers. (2 Tim. 2:22) That required self-discipline. We need self-discipline to win the war against our fleshly desires. (Rom. 7:21-25) In addition, we need self-discipline to keep working at stripping off the old personality and putting on the new. (Eph. 4:22, 24) And when we are tired at the end of a long day, we may need to push ourselves to attend a meeting.—Heb. 10:24, 25. *w20.09* 28 ¶9-11

Sunday, March 20

I have resolved to obey your regulations at all times, down to the last.—Ps. 119:112.

We need to be patient when helping a student progress to dedication and baptism. But at some point, we need to find out if he has the desire to serve Jehovah God. Do you see signs that the student is trying to obey Jesus' commandments? Or does he only want to learn facts from the Bible? Regularly analyze the progress that the student is making. For example, does he express his feelings for Jehovah? Does he pray to Jehovah? (Ps. 116:1, 2) Does he enjoy reading the Bible? (Ps. 119:97) Is he attending the meetings regularly? (Ps. 22:22) Has he made any needed changes in his lifestyle? Has he started sharing what he is learning with his family and friends? (Ps. 9:1) Most important, does he want to become one of Jehovah's Witnesses? (Ps. 40:8) If the student is not making progress in any of these areas, tactfully try to find out why and then discuss the matter with him kindly but frankly. *w20.10 18 ¶14-15*

Monday, March 21

The One who sent me is with me; he did not abandon me to myself, because I always do the things pleasing to him.—John 8:29.

Jesus' heavenly Father always makes good choices, and his earthly parents also made wise decisions. However, as Jesus grew up, he had to make his own choices. (Gal. 6:5) Like all of us, he had the gift of free will. He could have chosen to seek his own interests first. Instead, he chose to maintain a good relationship with Jehovah. As Jesus

learned about his role in Jehovah's purpose, he chose to accept his assignment. (John 6:38) He knew that he would be hated by many, and that thought must have been sobering for him to contemplate. Yet, he chose to submit himself to Jehovah. When Jesus got baptized in 29 C.E., his main focus in life was that of doing what Jehovah required of him. (Heb. 10:5-7) Even when he was dying on the torture stake, Jesus never wavered in doing his Father's will.—John 19:30. *w20.10 29 ¶12; 30 ¶15*

Tuesday, March 22

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

Do you know of brothers or sisters in your congregation who are suffering distress because they are ill or are facing other challenging circumstances? Or maybe they have lost a loved one in death. If we become aware of an individual in need, we can ask Jehovah to help us to say or do something kind and loving. Our words and actions may be just the encouragement that our brother or sister needs. (1 Pet. 4:10) We know that we can take courage because Jehovah is with us. He gives us help by means of Jesus and the angels. Also, if it is in harmony with his purpose, Jehovah can help us by means of people in authority. And as many of us have personally experienced, Jehovah uses his holy spirit to stir the hearts of his servants to come to the aid of their Christian brothers and sisters. Therefore, like the apostle Paul, we have good reason to say with confidence: "Jehovah is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"—Heb. 13:6. *w20.11 17 ¶19-20*

Wednesday, March 23

Your strength will be in keeping calm and showing trust.

—Isa. 30:15.

The apostles had direct evidence that Jehovah was with them. He had given them the power to perform miracles. (Acts 5:12-16; 6:8) That is not the case with us today. Even so, through his Word, Jehovah lovingly assures us that when we suffer for the sake of righteousness, he is pleased with us and his spirit is with us. (1 Pet. 3:14; 4:14) So rather than dwell on how we might react to severe persecution in the future, we need to focus on what we can do now to build our confidence in Jehovah's ability to sustain and deliver us. We must trust Jesus' promise: "I will give you words and wisdom that all your opposers together will not be able to resist or dispute." We have the guarantee: "By your endurance you will preserve your lives." (Luke 21:12-19) And never forget that Jehovah keeps in his memory the smallest details about his servants who die faithful to him. With that knowledge, he will resurrect them. *w21.01 4 ¶12*

Thursday, March 24

I have hope toward God . . . that there is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous.—Acts 24:15.

The apostle Paul was not the first to express the hope of a resurrection. The patriarch Job did too. He was confident that God would remember him and raise him to life again. (Job 14:7-10, 12-15) "The resurrection of the dead" is part of the "foundation," or "primary doctrine," of all Christian teachings.

(Heb. 6:1, 2) Paul's discussion of the resurrection is recorded in 1 Corinthians chapter 15. What he wrote must have built up first-century Christians. And that chapter can build us up and strengthen a hope that we may have long held. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is key to our hope for our dead loved ones. It was part of "the good news" that Paul declared to the Corinthians. (1 Cor. 15:1, 2) In fact, he said that if a Christian lacked belief in that resurrection, his faith would be useless.—1 Cor. 15:17. *w20.12 2 ¶2-4*

Friday, March 25

Peter called to mind what Jesus had said . . . And he went outside and wept bitterly.—Matt. 26:75.

What helped the apostle Peter to recover? For one thing, Jesus had prayed earlier that Peter's faith might not give out. Jehovah answered that heartfelt prayer. Later, Jesus personally appeared to Peter, no doubt to encourage him. (Luke 22:32; 24:33, 34; 1 Cor. 15:5) After the apostles had a disappointing night of fishing, Jesus appeared to them. On this occasion, Jesus gave Peter the opportunity to reaffirm his love for him. Jesus had forgiven his dear friend and entrusted him with more work. (John 21:15-17) The way that Jesus dealt with Peter highlights Jesus' mercy, and Jesus perfectly reflects his Father. So when we make mistakes, we should not judge ourselves as being beyond hope. We should bear in mind that Satan wants us to give in to such feelings. Instead, let us try hard to see ourselves—and those who sin against us—through the compassionate and loving eyes of our heavenly Father. —Ps. 103:13, 14. *w20.12 20-21 ¶17-19*

Saturday, March 26

I will remain confident.

—Ps. 27:3.

We can learn from the experiences of those who failed to keep calm and trust in Jehovah. Studying those bad examples will help us to avoid making the same mistakes they made. For instance, early in his reign, King Asa looked to Jehovah when faced with problems. But later he failed to turn to his God for help, preferring to handle matters on his own. (2 Chron. 16:1-3, 12) On the surface, Asa's asking the Syrians for help against Israel may have appeared to be very practical. But his success was short-lived. Jehovah told him through a prophet: "Because you relied on the king of Syria and did not rely on Jehovah your God, the army of the king of Syria has escaped out of your hand." (2 Chron. 16:7) We must be careful not to feel so confident about handling matters on our own that we fail to look to Jehovah for guidance through his Word. Even when we are faced with an urgent situation, we should calmly rely on Jehovah, and he will help us to succeed. *w21.01* 6 ¶13-15

Sunday, March 27

They will hunger no more.

—Rev. 7:16.

Right now, some of Jehovah's people are suffering physical hunger because of oppressive economic conditions or as a result of the ravages of civil unrest and war. Others are imprisoned for their faith. However, those of the great crowd are thrilled to know that on escaping the destruction of this wicked system of things, they will al-

ways have an abundance of physical and spiritual food. When destruction is unleashed on Satan's system of things, the great crowd will be spared the "scorching heat" of Jehovah's anger that he will pour out on the nations. After the great tribulation ends, Jesus will guide these earthly survivors to the "waters of [everlasting] life." (Rev. 7:17) Just think: The great crowd have a unique prospect. Of all the billions who have ever lived, they may never die! (John 11:26) The other sheep have a marvelous hope for which they are thankful to Jehovah and Jesus! *w21.01* 16-17 ¶11-12

Monday, March 28

The Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you.

—2 Thess. 3:3.

On the last night of his life as a man, Jesus was thinking about the challenges that his disciples would face. Moved by his love for his friends, Jesus asked his Father to "watch over them because of the wicked one." (John 17:14, 15) Jesus knew that after he returned to heaven, Satan the Devil would continue to wage war against any who wanted to serve Jehovah. Clearly, Jehovah's people would need protection. Today we need Jehovah's protection as never before. Satan has been cast out of heaven, "having great anger." (Rev. 12:12) He has managed to convince some who persecute us that they are offering "a sacred service to God." (John 16:2) Others, who do not believe in God, persecute us because we do not fit into this world's mold. Whatever the case, we can be confident. Why? The answer is given in today's text. *w21.03* 26 ¶1, 3

Tuesday, March 29

[Nothing] will be able to separate us from God's love that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.—Rom. 8:39.

Everything Jehovah does is motivated by love. He lovingly cares for all our needs. Out of love, Jehovah provided the ransom arrangement for us. As for Jesus, he loves us so much that he gave his life for us. (John 3:16; 15:13) Nothing can break the bond of love that Jehovah and Jesus feel for those who are loyal to them. (John 13:1; Rom. 8:35) Likewise, everything a family head does should be motivated by love. Why is that so important? The apostle John answers: "The one who does not love his brother [or family], whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen." (1 John 4:11, 20) Specifically, a man who loves his family and who wants to imitate Jehovah and Jesus will provide for his family's spiritual, emotional, and material needs. (1 Tim. 5:8) He will train and discipline his children. He will also continue to learn to make decisions that honor Jehovah and benefit his family. *w21.02 5 ¶12-13*

Wednesday, March 30

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

Our loving heavenly Father knows how our past experiences and our negative thinking have affected us. But he also sees the good in our heart—qualities that we may not see in ourselves. (1 John 3:19, 20) Someone who is struggling to overcome a deep-seated bad habit might have a setback and feel disappointed in himself. Of course, it is normal to feel a measure of guilt when we sin.

(2 Cor. 7:10) However, we should not go to extremes and condemn ourselves, thinking: 'I'm a complete failure. How can Jehovah ever forgive me?' Such negative thinking is not based on the truth and could cause us to stop serving Jehovah. Instead, "set matters straight" with Jehovah by going to him in prayer and seeking his mercy. (Isa. 1:18) Considering your sincere repentance, he will forgive you. In addition, approach the elders. They will patiently help you to become spiritually well again. —Jas. 5:14, 15. *w20.12 23 ¶5-6*

Thursday, March 31

[Treat] older women as mothers, . . . younger women as sisters. —1 Tim. 5:2.

Jesus gave women honor and respect. He did not follow the custom of the Pharisees, who looked down on women and who would not even speak to them in public, let alone discuss the Scriptures with them. Instead, he included women in the deep spiritual discussions that he had with his other disciples. (Luke 10:38, 39, 42) He also allowed women to accompany him on his preaching tours. (Luke 8:1-3) And Jesus gave them the privilege of announcing to the apostles that he had been raised from the dead. (John 20:16-18) The apostle Paul specifically reminded Timothy to honor women. Paul acknowledged that it was Timothy's mother and grandmother who had first taught Timothy "the holy writings." (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14, 15) Paul specifically greeted sisters by name in his letter to the Romans. He not only noticed the work sisters did but also expressed appreciation for them as Christian ministers.—Rom. 16:1-4, 6, 12; Phil. 4:3. *w21.02 15 ¶5-6*

Friday, April 1

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

Are you suffering through a difficult trial? Perhaps someone in the congregation has hurt you. (Jas. 3:2) Or maybe your workmates or schoolmates ridicule you for serving Jehovah. (1 Pet. 4:3, 4) Or family members are possibly trying to stop you from attending meetings or from talking to others about your faith. (Matt. 10:35, 36) If a trial is especially painful, you may feel like giving up. But you can be confident that no matter what challenge you face, Jehovah will give you the wisdom to deal with it and the strength to endure it. In his Word, Jehovah included detailed descriptions of how imperfect individuals dealt with difficult trials. Why? So that we can learn from them. That is what Jehovah moved the apostle Paul to write. Reading these accounts can bring us a measure of comfort and hope. However, to benefit, we need to do more than just read the Bible. We must allow the Scriptures to mold our thinking and to touch our hearts. *w21.03 14 ¶1-2*

Saturday, April 2

View the fields, that they are white for harvesting.—John 4:35.

Do you view the people to whom you preach as being like grain that is ripe for harvesting? If so, three things will prove true. First, you will preach with more urgency. A harvest period is limited; there is no time to waste. Second, you will be happy as you see people respond to the good news. The Bible says: “People rejoice in the harvesttime.”

(Isa. 9:3) And third, you will see each person as a potential disciple, so you will adapt your approach to appeal to his or her interests. Jesus did not write off the Samaritans, as his followers may have done. Instead, he saw them as potential disciples. We too need to see the people in our territory as potential disciples of Christ. The apostle Paul set an outstanding example for us to follow. He knew something about the beliefs of those to whom he preached, discerned their interests, and saw them as potential disciples of Jesus. *w20.04 8-9 ¶3-4*

Sunday, April 3

The Grave and the place of destruction are in full view of Jehovah. How much more so the hearts of men!—Prov. 15:11.

Rather than judge another person's actions, do your best to understand how he feels. The only person who fully understands us is Jehovah. So ask him to help you to see in others what he sees and to understand how to show compassion for them. You cannot pick which brothers and sisters deserve your tender compassion. All of them face problems, many of which are similar to those that were experienced by Jonah, Elijah, Hagar, and Lot. In a number of cases, they have brought the problems on themselves. Realistically, all of us have done that at some point. It is reasonable, then, for Jehovah to ask us to show fellow feeling for one another. (1 Pet. 3:8) When we obey Jehovah, we add to the unity of our remarkable and diverse global family. So when dealing with one another, may we be determined to listen, learn, and show compassion. *w20.04 18-19 ¶15-17*

Monday, April 4

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

Jesus set the perfect example of obeying Jehovah. So one important way that we obey Jehovah is by following Jesus' steps as closely as possible. (John 8:29) To keep walking in the truth, we must be convinced that Jehovah is the God of truth, that everything he tells us in his Word, the Bible, is true. And we must also be convinced that Jesus is the promised Messiah. Many today doubt that Jesus has been anointed as King of God's Kingdom. John warned that there were "many deceivers," who could mislead those who were not prepared to defend the truth about Jehovah and Jesus. (2 John 7-11) John wrote: "Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ?" (1 John 2:22) The only way we can avoid being deceived is by studying God's Word. Only if we do that will we come to know Jehovah and Jesus. (John 17:3) And only then will we be convinced that we have the truth. *w20.07 21 ¶4-5*

Tuesday, April 5

Be determined not to put a stumbling block . . . before a brother.—Rom. 14:13.

One way we can avoid becoming "a stumbling block" to our fellow runners is by yielding to their preferences whenever possible instead of insisting on our rights. (Rom. 14:19-21; 1 Cor. 8:9, 13) In this important way, we are not like a runner in a literal race who strives to gain the prize just for himself. Those runners think primarily about their

own interests. So they may try to push their way to the front of the pack. By contrast, we are not competing against one another. (Gal. 5:26; 6:4) Our goal is to help as many as possible to cross the finish line with us and gain the prize of life. So we try to apply the inspired counsel to "look out not only for [our] own interests, but also for the interests of others." (Phil. 2:4) In the race that we run, Jehovah has kindly offered his people a guaranteed reward for completing the race—everlasting life either in heaven or on a paradise earth. *w20.04 28 ¶10; 29 ¶12*

Wednesday, April 6

These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation.—Rev. 7:14.

Millions of Christian men and women will survive into the new world. Those survivors on earth will be eyewitnesses to another victory over death—the resurrection of billions of people who died in the past. Just imagine the joy when that victorious event occurs! (Acts 24:15) And all those who prove completely loyal to Jehovah will be victorious even over inherited death. They will be able to live forever. Every Christian now alive should be grateful for the reassuring words that Paul wrote to the Corinthians regarding the resurrection. We have every reason to show that we accept Paul's urging to be fully occupied now "in the work of the Lord." (1 Cor. 15:58) If we loyally and actively share in that work, we will put ourselves in line to experience a future filled with joy. That future will be more wonderful than anything we can imagine. It certainly will confirm that our labor has not been in vain in connection with the Lord. *w20.12 13 ¶16-17*

Thursday, April 7

Their armies gathered together to wage war against the one seated on the horse and against his army.

—Rev. 19:19.

If we view the prophecies of Ezekiel 38:10-23; Daniel 2:43-45; 11:44-12:1; and Revelation 16:13-16, 21 as speaking about the same time period and events, it appears that we can expect the following developments. Sometime after the start of the great tribulation, “the kings of the entire inhabited earth” will form a coalition of nations. (Rev. 16:13, 14) That coalition becomes what the Scriptures call “Gog of the land of Magog.” (Ezek. 38:2) That coalition of nations will make one final all-out assault on God’s people. Speaking of this time, the apostle John saw a storm of unusually large hailstones raining down on God’s enemies. That symbolic hailstorm may take the form of a hard-hitting judgment message delivered by Jehovah’s people that provokes Gog of Magog into attacking God’s people with the intention of wiping them off the earth.—Rev. 16:21. w20.05 15 ¶13-14

Friday, April 8

If you, although being wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more so will the Father in heaven give holy spirit to those asking him!

—Luke 11:13.

God’s active force is a gift we should treasure. We can deepen our appreciation for holy spirit by reflecting on what that spirit has accomplished in our day. Before Jesus ascended to heaven, he told his disciples: “You will receive

power when the holy spirit comes upon you, and you will be witnesses of me . . . to the most distant part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8) With the backing of holy spirit, some eight and a half million worshippers of Jehovah have been gathered from every corner of the earth. Also, we enjoy a spiritual paradise because God’s spirit helps us to cultivate beautiful qualities, such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, and self-control. These qualities make up “the fruitage of the spirit.” (Gal. 5: 22, 23) What a precious gift holy spirit is! w20.05 28 ¶10; 29 ¶13

Saturday, April 9

Since death came through a man, resurrection of the dead also comes through a man.

—1 Cor. 15:21.

For a number of reasons, we can assume that those greeting resurrected individuals will be able to recognize their loved ones. For instance, based on resurrections that have already occurred, it seems that Jehovah will re-create people so that they look, speak, and think in the same way as they did shortly before they died. Remember that Jesus likened death to sleep and the resurrection to being awakened from sleep. (Matt. 9:18, 24; John 11:11-13) When people awaken from sleep, they look and sound the same as when they went to sleep, and they retain their memory. Consider the example of Lazarus. He had been dead for four days, so his body had begun to decay. Yet, when Jesus resurrected him, his sisters immediately recognized him, and Lazarus obviously remembered them.—John 11:38-44; 12:1, 2. w20.08 14 ¶3; 16 ¶8

Sunday, April 10

Salvation we owe to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb.—Rev. 7:10.

The difference between the anointed and the other sheep is not their value to God. Both groups are equally precious to him. After all, he paid the same price, the life of his dear Son, to purchase both the anointed and the other sheep. The difference between the two groups is that they have different hopes. Both groups must remain loyal to God and Christ. (Ps. 31:23) And remember, God's spirit can work with equal force on all of us. This means that Jehovah supplies his holy spirit to each individual according to what is needed. Jehovah has given each of his dedicated servants a wonderful hope for the future. (Jer. 29:11) The Memorial of Christ's death gives each of us a grand opportunity to praise God and Christ for what they have done for us so that we can enjoy unending life. The Memorial is without question the most important occasion for true Christians to meet together. *w21.01 18 ¶16; 19 ¶19*

Monday, April 11

*Keep doing this.
—1 Cor. 11:25.*

The vast majority who attend the Memorial have the earthly hope. Why, then, do they attend? For the same reason that people attend a friend's wedding. They want to show their love and support for the couple who are getting married. Thus, those of the other sheep attend the Memorial because they want to show their love and support for Christ and the anointed. The other sheep also attend to show their appreciation for the sacrifice that the Memorial com-

memorates, a sacrifice that makes it possible for them to live forever on earth. Another important reason why the other sheep attend the Memorial is in order to be obedient to Jesus' command. When Jesus instituted that special meal with his faithful apostles, he told them: "Keep doing this in remembrance of me." (1 Cor. 11:23-26) So they continue to attend the Lord's Evening Meal as long as some anointed ones are alive here on earth. *w21.01 17-18 ¶13-14*

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

Tuesday, April 12

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.

For love to be real, it must be backed by actions. (Compare James 2:17, 26.) For example, Jehovah loves us. (1 John 4:19) And he expresses his love through the beautiful words recorded in the Bible. (Ps. 25:10; Rom. 8:38, 39) However, we are convinced that God loves us not just because of what he says but also because of what he does. Jehovah allowed his beloved Son to suffer and die for us. (John 3:16) Can there be any doubt that Jehovah really loves us? We prove that we love Jehovah and Jesus by obeying them. (John 14:15; 1 John 5:3) And Jesus specifically commanded us to love one another. (John 13:34, 35) We must not only express our love for our brothers and sisters in words but also show that we love them by what we do.—1 John 3:18. *w21.01 9 ¶6; 10 ¶8*

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

Wednesday, April 13

I have called you friends.

—John 15:15.

Those who are anointed with holy spirit have the hope of being with Jesus forever, serving as joint heirs of God's Kingdom. They will actually be with Christ—see him, speak with him, and spend time in his company. (John 14:2, 3) Those with the earthly hope will also receive Jesus' love and attention. Even though they will not see Jesus, their bond with him will grow ever stronger as they enjoy the life that Jehovah and Jesus make possible for them. (Isa. 9:6, 7) When we accept Jesus' invitation to become his friends, we gain many blessings. For example, we benefit from his love and support right now. We are given the opportunity to live forever. And most important, our friendship with Jesus will lead us to the finest treasure of all—a close, personal relationship with Jesus' Father, Jehovah. What a privilege we have to be called Jesus' friends! *w20.04 25 ¶15-16*

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

Thursday, April 14

In the Christ all will be made alive.

—1 Cor. 15:22.

The apostle Paul's letter was written to anointed Christians in Corinth, who would be resurrected to life in heaven. Those Christians were "sanctified in union with Christ Jesus, called to be holy ones." And Paul mentioned "those who have fallen asleep in death in union with Christ." (1 Cor. 1:2; 15:18; 2 Cor. 5:17) In another inspired letter, Paul

wrote that those "united with [Jesus] in the likeness of his death" will "be united with him in the likeness of his resurrection." (Rom. 6:3-5) Jesus was raised as a spirit and went to heaven. So that will be the outcome for all "in union with Christ," that is, all spirit-anointed Christians. Paul wrote that Christ was raised as "the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep in death." (1 Cor. 15:20) Jesus was the first one ever to be raised from the dead as a spirit and to receive everlasting life. *w20.12 5-6 ¶15-16*

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

MEMORIAL DATE
After Sundown
Friday, April 15

We will always be with the Lord.
—1 Thess. 4:17.

Anointed ones who today finish their earthly course are instantly raised to life in the heavens. This is confirmed by the apostle Paul's words recorded at 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52. Upon their resurrection, these brothers of Christ will have complete joy. The Bible tells us what work those who are changed "in the blink of an eye" will do in heaven. Jesus says to them: "To the one who conquers and observes my deeds down to the end, I will give authority over the nations, and he will shepherd the people with an iron rod so that they will be broken to pieces like clay vessels, just as I have received from my Father."—Rev. 2:26, 27. *w20.12 12 ¶14-15*

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

Saturday, April 16

Christ has been raised from the dead.—1 Cor. 15:20.

By calling Jesus “the firstfruits,” the apostle Paul implied that others thereafter would be raised from death to heavenly life. The apostles and others “in union with Christ” would follow Jesus. (1 Cor. 15:18) In due time, they would experience a resurrection similar to that of Jesus. The heavenly resurrection for those “in union with Christ” had not yet begun to occur at the time Paul wrote to the Corinthians. Rather, Paul pointed to a future time: “Each one in his own proper order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who belong to the Christ during his presence.” (1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Thess. 4:15, 16) Today we are living during that foretold “presence” of Christ. Yes, the apostles and other spirit-anointed Christians who died had to await that presence to receive their heavenly reward and be “united with [Jesus] in the likeness of his resurrection.”—Rom. 6:5. *w20.12* 5 ¶12; 6 ¶16-17

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

Sunday, April 17

It is sown in corruption; it is raised up in incorruption.—1 Cor. 15:42.

The apostle Paul was referring to a person who is resurrected with a heavenly body, that is, “a spiritual one.” (1 Cor. 15:43, 44) When Jesus walked the earth, he had a fleshly body. But when he was resurrected, he “became a life-giving spirit” and returned to heaven. Likewise, anointed Christians would be resurrected to spirit life. Paul explained: “Just as we have borne

the image of the one made of dust, we will bear also the image of the heavenly one.” (1 Cor. 15:45-49) Note that Jesus was not resurrected with a human body. Paul pointedly said: “Flesh and blood cannot inherit God’s Kingdom” in heaven. (1 Cor. 15:50) The apostles and other anointed ones would not be resurrected to heaven with corruptible bodies of flesh and blood. *w20.12* 10-11 ¶10-12

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

Monday, April 18

*Death, where is your victory?
Death, where is your sting?
—1 Cor. 15:55.*

God inspired some of Jesus’ disciples in the first century to write about the heavenly hope. The apostle John explained: “We are now children of God, but it has not yet been made manifest what we will be. We do know that when he is made manifest we will be like him.” (1 John 3:2) So anointed Christians do not know what they will be like when they are raised to heaven with spirit bodies. However, they will see Jehovah when they receive their reward. The Bible provides some information about it. The anointed will be with Christ when he brings “to nothing all government and all authority and power.” That includes “the last enemy, death.” Finally, Jesus—along with his corulers—will subject himself and all things to Jehovah. (1 Cor. 15:24-28) What a climax that will be! *w20.12* 8 ¶2

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

Tuesday, April 19

I have hope . . . that there is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous.

—Acts 24:15.

Loyal Christians who do not have the hope of living in heaven with Christ also have the hope of a resurrection. The Bible says that the apostle Paul and others who go to heaven share in “the earlier resurrection from the dead.” (Phil. 3:11) Does that not suggest that another resurrection would follow? That would be in harmony with what Job said about his future. (Job 14:15) “Those who belong to the Christ during his presence” will be in heaven with Jesus when he brings to nothing all governments and all authority and power. Even “the last enemy, death,” will be brought to nothing. Certainly, inherited death will no more afflict those raised to heaven. (1 Cor. 15:23-26) Those with an earthly hope can derive hope from Paul’s words as found in today’s text. Clearly, no unrighteous person can enter into heaven, so those words point to a future resurrection on earth. *w20.12 6-7 ¶18-19*

Wednesday, April 20

[Christ] loved me and handed himself over for me.—Gal. 2:20.

We may wonder, ‘How can I know for sure that Jehovah has not given up on me?’ In a sense, by asking that question, we also answer it. Decades ago, *The Watchtower* stated: “We [may] find ourselves stumbling and falling many times over some bad habit that has bitten more deeply into our former pattern of life than we had realized. . . . Do not conclude you have committed the unforgivable sin. That is just how Sa-

tan would like you to reason. The fact that you feel grieved and vexed with yourself is proof in itself that you have not gone too far. Never weary of turning humbly and earnestly to God, seeking his forgiveness and cleansing and help.” Before becoming a Christian, the apostle Paul committed a number of serious sins. Paul remembered what he had done. (1 Tim. 1:12-15) But he viewed the ransom as a personal gift to him. Paul thus avoided the trap of excessive guilt and focused on giving Jehovah his best from that point forward. *w20.11 27 ¶14; 29 ¶17*

Thursday, April 21

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

Satan presents us with many temptations to do wrong. How do we respond? It is easy to rationalize. For example, we might reason: ‘Well, I would not be disfellowshipped for doing this, so it must not be that serious.’ Such reasoning is deeply flawed. We do better to ask ourselves such questions as these: ‘Is Satan trying to use this temptation to divide my heart? If I give in to wrong desires, would I bring reproach on Jehovah’s name? Would this action draw me closer to my God, or might it distance me from him?’ Meditate on such questions. Pray for wisdom to answer them honestly, without self-deception. Doing so can be a real protection. It can help you to reject temptation firmly, as Jesus did when he said: “Go away, Satan!” (Matt. 4:10) Remember, a divided heart is of little value. *w20.06 12-13 ¶16-17*

Friday, April 22

I tell everyone there among you not to think more of himself than it is necessary to think, but to think so as to have a sound mind.

—Rom. 12:3.

We humbly submit to Jehovah's standards, realizing that Jehovah always knows what is best for us. (Eph. 4:22-24) Humility moves us to put Jehovah's will above our own and to consider others superior to us. As a result, we enjoy good relationships with Jehovah and fellow believers. (Phil. 2:3) If we are not careful, though, we could be influenced by people in Satan's system who are proud and selfish. Apparently, this was a danger to some in the first century C.E., for the apostle Paul wrote to the Romans: "I tell everyone there among you not to think more of himself than it is necessary to think, but to think so as to have a sound mind." Paul acknowledged that we need to think something of ourselves. However, humility will help us to keep a balanced view of ourselves and will help us avoid thinking too much of ourselves. *w20.07 2 ¶1-2*

Saturday, April 23

The land had no disturbance and there was no war against him.

—2 Chron. 14:6.

In King Asa's day, the time of peace eventually came to an end. A huge military force—one million strong—came from Ethiopia. Its commander, Zerah, was confident that he and his army could defeat Judah. However, Asa trusted, not in numbers, but in his God, Jehovah. Asa prayed: "Help us, O Jehovah our God, for we are relying on you, and in your name we have come against

this crowd." (2 Chron. 14:11) Although the Ethiopian army had almost double the number of soldiers, Asa acknowledged Jehovah's power and ability to act in behalf of His people. And Jehovah did not disappoint him; the Ethiopian army suffered a humiliating defeat. (2 Chron. 14:8-13) Although we do not know in detail what the future holds for us as individuals, we do know that any time of peace God's people enjoy will be temporary. In fact, Jesus foretold that in the last days, his disciples would "be hated by all the nations."—Matt. 24:9. *w20.09 17-18 ¶14-16*

Sunday, April 24

I take pleasure . . . in insults.

—2 Cor. 12:10.

None of us like to be insulted. However, if our enemies do insult us and we are overly concerned with what they say, we can become discouraged. (Prov. 24:10) How, then, should we view the insults of opposers? Like the apostle Paul, we can "take pleasure . . . in insults." Why? Because insults and opposition are signals that we are genuine disciples of Jesus. (1 Pet. 4:14) Jesus said that his followers would be persecuted. (John 15:18-20) That proved true in the first century. Back then, those influenced by Greek culture viewed Christians as unintelligent and weak. And among the Jews, Christians were considered to be "uneducated and ordinary," like the apostles Peter and John. (Acts 4:13) Christians seemed to be weak; they had no political influence or military power, and people viewed them as outcasts of society. Did those early Christians allow the negative view of their opposers to stop them? No. *w20.07 14-15 ¶3-4*

Monday, April 25

Let us continue loving one another, because love is from God, and everyone who loves has been born from God and knows God.

—1 John 4:7.

The apostle John felt a deep, loving concern for the spiritual welfare of his brothers, and that feeling is clearly reflected in the counsel he gave in his three inspired letters. How encouraging it is to know that men and women, like him, are anointed to be corulers with Christ! (1 John 2:27) May we take to heart the counsel he gave. Let us be determined to walk in the truth, obeying Jehovah in all aspects of our life. Study his Word, and put your trust in it. Build strong faith in Jesus. Reject human philosophies and apostate teachings. Resist the pressure to live a double life and to give in to sin. Live by Jehovah's high moral standards. And let us help our brothers remain strong by forgiving those who hurt us and helping those in need. Then, despite the struggles we face, we will keep walking in the truth. w20.07 24-25 ¶15-17

Tuesday, April 26

God has arranged each of the body members just as he pleased.

—1 Cor. 12:18.

Jehovah has lovingly given each of his faithful servants a place in his congregation. Although our roles are different, we are all valuable and we all need one another. The apostle Paul emphasized that none of us can look at another servant of Jehovah and say "I do not need you." (1 Cor. 12:21) If the congregation is to function peacefully, we must value one another and work together. (Eph. 4:

16) When we work together in unity, the congregation thrives and is built up in love. All elders in the congregation are appointed by Jehovah's holy spirit. Yet, each one has different gifts and abilities. (1 Cor. 12:17) Some may be newly appointed and relatively inexperienced. Others may be limited because of age and health. Yet, no elder should look at any of his fellow elders and, in effect, say "I do not need you." Instead, each elder should follow the counsel of Paul as recorded at Romans 12:10. w20.08 26 ¶1-2; 27 ¶4

Wednesday, April 27

The scene of this world is changing.—1 Cor. 7:31.

Jehovah guides us on the road to life by means of the earthly part of his organization. No doubt, we readily follow the Bible-based direction we receive regarding doctrinal or moral matters. But how do we react when God's organization makes a change that affects other aspects of our life, such as selling the Kingdom Hall we attend? We will maintain our joy if we remember that we are working for Jehovah and that he is directing his organization. (Col. 3:23, 24) King David set a good example when donating funds to build the temple. He said: "Who am I and who are my people that we should be in a position to make voluntary offerings like this? For everything is from you, and we have given to you what comes from your own hand." (1 Chron. 29:14) When we donate funds, we too are giving to Jehovah what has come from his own hand. Even so, Jehovah appreciates the time, energy, and resources that we donate to support the work he wants done. —2 Cor. 9:7. w20.11 22-23 ¶14-16

Thursday, April 28

The one who looks at the clouds will not reap.—Eccl. 11:4.

As Witnesses of Jehovah, we do not judge our success by the number of people we bring into God's organization. (Luke 8:11-15) As long as we endure in preaching the good news and teaching others, Jehovah will view us as being successful. Why? Because we are being obedient to him and his Son. (Mark 13:10; Acts 5:28, 29) We have this additional incentive to preach now: The end of this system is fast approaching! The time left to share in this lifesaving work is greatly reduced. Do not delay or feel that you have to wait for the perfect circumstances to take part in this vital activity. Act now to strengthen your motivation, deepen your knowledge of the Bible, build your courage, and cultivate self-discipline. Join the more than eight million fishers of men, and you will experience the joy of Jehovah. (Neh. 8:10; Luke 5:10) Be determined to have a full share in this work and to see it through to completion. *w20.09 7 ¶18-20*

Friday, April 29

Guard what has been entrusted to you.—1 Tim. 6:20.

We cannot afford to become distracted by a desire for more material things. "The deceptive power of riches" could choke our love for Jehovah, our appreciation for God's Word, and our desire to share it with others. (Matt. 13:22) If we are to safeguard the things that Jehovah has entrusted to us, we need to act quickly when we see danger. We can rehearse beforehand what we will do if we suddenly encoun-

ter an immoral scene, graphic violence, or apostate material while using the Internet or while watching a movie or TV program. If we prepare for what might happen, we can act quickly to escape spiritual harm and remain clean in Jehovah's eyes. (Ps. 101:3; 1 Tim. 4:12) We must guard the valuable things that Jehovah has given to us—precious Bible truths and the privilege of teaching them to others. When we do, we will have a clean conscience, a life that has real meaning, and the joy of helping others come to know Jehovah. *w20.09 30 ¶16-19*

Saturday, April 30

You will see your Grand Instructor with your own eyes.—Isa. 30:20.

Are you baptized? If so, you have publicly expressed your faith in Jehovah and your willingness to serve with his organization. Today, Jehovah directs his organization in a way that reflects his personality, purpose, and standards. Note three of Jehovah's attributes that are reflected in his organization. First, "God is not partial." (Acts 10:34) Love moved Jehovah to give his Son as a "ransom for all." (1 Tim. 2:6; John 3:16) Jehovah uses his people to preach the good news to all who will listen, thereby helping as many as possible to benefit from the ransom. Second, Jehovah is a God of order and peace. (1 Cor. 14:33, 40) Therefore, we should expect that his worshippers serve him as an orderly, peaceful group. Third, Jehovah is the "Grand Instructor." (Isa. 30:21) Thus, his organization focuses on teaching his inspired Word, both in the congregation and in the public ministry. *w20.10 20 ¶1-3*

Sunday, May 1

He continued subject to them.

—*Luke 2:51.*

Early in his human life, Jesus chose to be submissive to his parents. He never rejected his parents' direction, reasoning that he knew more than they did. Jesus no doubt took his responsibility as the oldest son seriously. He surely worked hard to learn a trade from his adoptive father so that he could help support his family. Jesus' parents likely told him about his miraculous birth and what God's messengers had said about him. (Luke 2: 8-19, 25-38) Jesus was not satisfied with what he was told; he also studied the Scriptures for himself. How do we know that Jesus was a good student of God's Word? Because while he was still a boy, the teachers in Jerusalem were "in constant amazement at his understanding and his answers." (Luke 2:46, 47) And at only 12 years of age, Jesus had already proved to himself that Jehovah was his Father.—Luke 2:42, 43, 49. *w20.10* 29-30 ¶13-14

Monday, May 2

Christ has been raised from the dead.—1 Cor. 15:12.

Belief in the resurrection of Jesus is central to our Christian hope. Early in the apostle Paul's discussion of the resurrection, he brought up three realities. They are (1) "Christ died for our sins." (2) He "was buried." (3) He "was raised up on the third day according to the Scriptures." (1 Cor. 15:3, 4) What do Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection mean for us? The prophet Isaiah foretold that the Messi-

ah would be "cut off from the land of the living" and be "given a burial place with the wicked." More was involved, though. Isaiah added that the Messiah would carry "the sin of many people." Jesus did this by providing the ransom. (Isa. 53:8, 9, 12; Matt. 20:28; Rom. 5:8) So the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus provide a solid basis for our hope of being set free from sin and death and being reunited with our loved ones who have died. *w20.12* 2-3 ¶4-6; 5 ¶11

Tuesday, May 3

I, if anyone, do have grounds for confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinks he has grounds for confidence in the flesh, I have more.
—*Phil. 3:4.*

The apostle Paul preached often in Jewish synagogues. In the synagogue in Thessalonica, for example, "for three sabbaths he reasoned with [the Jews] from the Scriptures." (Acts 17:1, 2) Paul likely felt comfortable in the synagogue. He was raised as a Jew. (Acts 26:4, 5) Paul could relate to the Jews, so he was able to preach to them with confidence. (Phil. 3:5) After Paul was forced by persecutors to flee Thessalonica and then Beroea, he arrived in Athens. Once again, "he began to reason in the synagogue with the Jews and the other people who worshipped God." (Acts 17:17) While preaching in the marketplace, however, Paul now had a different audience. Among his listeners were philosophers and other Gentiles who viewed Paul's message as a "new teaching." They said to him: "You are introducing some things that are strange to our ears."—Acts 17:18-20. *w20.04* 9 ¶5-6

Wednesday, May 4

*When I wish to do what is right,
what is bad is present with me.*

—Rom. 7:21.

Do not condemn yourself if you are struggling with a weakness. Remember that none of us can earn a righteous standing before God. We all need God's undeserved kindness by means of the ransom. (Eph. 1:7; 1 John 4:10) And we can turn to our brothers and sisters—our spiritual family—for encouragement! They may provide a listening ear when we need to talk and offer reassuring words that can cheer us up. (Prov. 12:25; 1 Thess. 5:14) Joy, a sister in Nigeria who has battled with discouragement, says: "Where would I be without the brotherhood? My brothers and sisters are proof that Jehovah answers my prayers. I have even learned from them how to encourage others who are downhearted." We need to keep in mind, though, that our brothers and sisters may not always know when we need encouragement. So we may need to take the initiative to approach a mature fellow believer and open up about our need for help. *w20.12 23-24 ¶7-8*

Thursday, May 5

I have called you friends.

—John 15:15.

Usually, the first step in building a close friendship with someone you meet is to spend time with the person. As you talk to each other, sharing thoughts and experiences, you become friends. When it comes to building a close friendship with Jesus, however, we face challenges. One of them is that we have not met Jesus personally. Many Christians in the first century faced the same

challenge. Even so, the apostle Peter observed: "Though you never saw him, you love him. Though you do not see him now, yet you exercise faith in him." (1 Pet. 1:8) So it is possible to form a close relationship with Jesus without having met him personally. Also, we are not able to speak to Jesus. When we pray, we direct our thoughts to Jehovah. True, we do pray in Jesus' name, but we do not talk directly to him. In fact, Jesus does not want us to pray to him. Why not? Because prayer is a form of worship, and only Jehovah should be worshipped. (Matt. 4:10) Even so, we can express our love for Jesus. *w20.04 20 ¶1-3*

Friday, May 6

*[God] will make you firm, he will
make you strong.—1 Pet. 5:10.*

The runners in the Greek games had to overcome challenges, such as tiredness and pain. But all they had to rely on was their training and their own strength. We are like those runners in that we receive training in how to run the race we are in. But we have an advantage over the literal runners. We can draw on an unlimited source of power. If we rely on Jehovah, he promises not only to train us but also to make us strong! The apostle Paul had to deal with many challenges. In addition to being insulted and persecuted by others, he at times felt weak and he had to cope with what he called "a thorn in the flesh." (2 Cor. 12:7) But rather than view those challenges as a reason for giving up, he saw them as an opportunity to rely on Jehovah. (2 Cor. 12:9, 10) Because Paul adopted this viewpoint, Jehovah helped him through all his trials. *w20.04 29 ¶13-14*

Saturday, May 7

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

We have the unseen treasure of “working together” with Jehovah and the heavenly part of his organization. (2 Cor. 6:1) We do so whenever we share in the disciple-making work. Paul said of himself and those who share in this work: “We are God’s fellow workers.” (1 Cor. 3:9) When we participate in the Christian ministry, we are also Jesus’ fellow workers. Recall that after commanding his followers to “make disciples of people of all the nations,” Jesus said: “I am with you.” (Matt. 28:19, 20) And what about the angels? What a blessing it is to be directed by angels as we declare “everlasting good news . . . to those who dwell on the earth”! (Rev. 14:6) With such heavenly support, what is being accomplished? As we sow the Kingdom message, some seeds fall on receptive hearts and grow. (Matt. 13:18, 23) Who causes those seeds of truth to grow and become fruitful? Jesus explains that in today’s text. *w20.05 30 ¶14-15*

Sunday, May 8

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

Millions of families today have been divided by divorce. Even families who stay in the same house may become virtual strangers. “Mom, dad, and the kids are all disconnected from each other and connected to a computer screen, tablet, smartphone, or video game console,” says one family counselor. “Although these families live under the same roof, they barely know each other.” We do not want to be molded by the world’s loveless spirit. Instead, we

need to cultivate tender affection not only for our family members but also for those who are related to us in the faith. (Rom. 12:10) What is tender affection? It is a term that specifically describes the warm friendship between close family members. That is the kind of love we should cultivate for our spiritual family, our Christian brothers and sisters. When we show tender affection, we help maintain the unity that is a vital part of true worship.—Mic. 2:12. *w21.01 20 ¶1-2*

Monday, May 9

Unify my heart to fear your name.—Ps. 86:11.

A sports team that is united is more likely to have success than one that is not. Your heart can be like that successful team if your thoughts, desires, and emotions are united in serving Jehovah. Remember, Satan would love to divide your heart. He wants your thoughts, desires, and emotions to be at odds and in conflict with Jehovah’s standards. You, however, need your heart to be whole in order for you to serve Jehovah. (Matt. 22:36-38) Never let Satan divide your heart! Pray to Jehovah as did David: “Unify my heart to fear your name.” Make it your aim to live up to that prayer. Each day, be determined that your decisions, from small to great, show that you hold Jehovah’s holy name in profound awe. In so doing, as one of Jehovah’s Witnesses, you will reflect well on that name. (Prov. 27:11) And all of us will be able to say, along with the prophet Micah: “We will walk in the name of Jehovah our God forever and ever.”—Mic. 4:5. *w20.06 13 ¶17-18*

Tuesday, May 10

He will go out in a great rage to annihilate and to devote many to destruction.—Dan. 11:44.

This attack by the king of the north, acting along with the rest of the world's governments, provokes the Almighty and brings on the war of Armageddon. (Rev. 16:14, 16) At that time, the king of the north, along with the rest of the nations that make up Gog of Magog, comes to his end, and there will be “no helper for him.” (Dan. 11:45) The very next verse in Daniel's account gives more details about how the king of the north and his allies will come to their end and how we will be saved. (Dan. 12:1) What does this verse mean? Michael is another name for our ruling King, Christ Jesus. He has been “standing in behalf” of God's people since 1914 when his Kingdom was established in the heavens. In the near future, he will “stand up,” or take significant action, at the war of Armageddon. That battle will be the final event in what Daniel calls the greatest “time of distress” in history.—Rev. 6:2; 7:14. *w20.05 15-16 ¶15-17*

Wednesday, May 11

*Joseph was taken down to Egypt.
—Gen. 39:1.*

While a slave and later in prison, Joseph had limited options and freedom of movement. How did he keep his balance? Instead of focusing on what he was no longer able to do, he diligently applied himself to the work he was assigned to do. Joseph kept Jehovah as the most important Person in his life. In turn, Jehovah blessed everything Joseph did. (Gen. 39:21-23) We are reminded that this world is cruel and that peo-

ple will treat us unjustly. Even a fellow believer may hurt us. But if we view Jehovah as our Rock, or Refuge, we will not lose heart or stop serving him. (Ps. 62:6, 7; 1 Pet. 5:10) Recall, too, that Joseph may have been about 17 when Jehovah dealt with him in a special way. Obviously, Jehovah has confidence in young servants of his. Today, many young ones are like Joseph. They too have faith in Jehovah. Some of them have even been unjustly imprisoned because they would not compromise their loyalty to God.—Ps. 110:3. *w20.12 16 ¶3; 17 ¶5, 7*

Thursday, May 12

They summoned the apostles, flogged them, and ordered them to stop speaking on the basis of Jesus' name.—Acts 5:40.

The apostles Peter and John viewed it as an honor to be persecuted for following Jesus and sharing his teachings. (Acts 4:18-21; 5:27-29, 41, 42) The disciples had no reason to feel ashamed. In the long run, those humble first-century Christians did more good for mankind than any of their opposers did. For example, the inspired books written by some of those Christians continue to give help and hope to millions of people. And the Kingdom they promoted not only is now in existence but will soon rule all of mankind. (Matt. 24:14) By comparison, the great political power that persecuted the Christians has collapsed into the ash heaps of history, whereas those loyal disciples are now kings in heaven. Their opposers, however, are dead; and if they are ever resurrected, they will be subjects of the Kingdom that was promoted by the Christians whom they hated.—Rev. 5:10. *w20.07 15 ¶4*

Friday, May 13

[Abraham] was awaiting the city having real foundations, whose designer and builder is God.

—Heb. 11:10.

Abraham had such strong faith in God's promises that it was as if he could see the Anointed One, or Messiah, who would be King of God's Kingdom. For this reason, Jesus could tell the Jews in his day: "Abraham your father rejoiced greatly at the prospect of seeing my day, and he saw it and rejoiced." (John 8:56) Clearly, Abraham knew that his descendants would form a Kingdom that had Jehovah's backing, and he was willing to wait for Jehovah to fulfill that promise. How did Abraham show that he was waiting for the city, or Kingdom, designed by God? First, Abraham did not join himself to any earthly kingdom. He remained a nomad, choosing not to settle down and give his support to a human king. In addition, Abraham did not try to set up his own kingdom. Instead, he kept obeying Jehovah and waited for Him to fulfill His promise. In doing so, Abraham showed extraordinary faith in Jehovah. *w20.08 3 ¶4-5*

Saturday, May 14

The one who has died has been acquitted from his sin.—Rom. 6:7.

Jehovah promises that no one living under Christ's rule will say: "I am sick." (Isa. 33:24) Thus, those who are raised from the dead will be re-created with healthy bodies. However, they will not immediately be perfect. If they were, they might seem unfamiliar to their loved ones. It seems that all mankind will gradually grow to perfection during the Thousand Year Reign of Christ. It

is only at the end of the thousand years that Jesus will hand the Kingdom back to his Father. Then the Kingdom will have accomplished its work completely, including the raising of mankind to a perfect state. (1 Cor. 15:24-28; Rev. 20:1-3) Imagine what it will be like to greet your loved ones again. Will the joy you feel make you laugh or cry? Will you fill the air with songs of praise to Jehovah? One thing is certain, you will feel intense love for your caring Father and his unselfish Son because of the wonderful gift of the resurrection. *w20.08 16-17 ¶9-10*

Sunday, May 15

Each one has his own gift from God, one in this way, another in that way.—1 Cor. 7:7.

The apostle Paul encouraged Christians to consider whether they could serve Jehovah as single people. (1 Cor. 7:8, 9) Certainly Paul did not look down on single Christians. In fact, he chose young Timothy, a single brother, to care for weighty assignments. (Phil. 2:19-22) Obviously, then, it would be wrong to think that a brother is more qualified or less qualified based solely on whether he is married or not. (1 Cor. 7:32-35, 38) Neither Jesus nor Paul taught that Christians must marry or that they must remain single. What, then, can we say about marriage and singleness? *The Watchtower* of October 1, 2012, stated it nicely when it said: "Really, both [marriage and singleness] can be described as gifts from God. . . . Jehovah does not view [singleness] as a cause for shame or grief." With this in mind, we need to respect the place of single brothers and sisters in the congregation. *w20.08 28 ¶8-9*

Monday, May 16

Concerning that day and hour nobody knows, . . . only the Father.

—Matt. 24:36.

In some countries, people respond eagerly when they hear the good news. It is just what they have been waiting for! In other lands, people show little interest in God or the Bible. What is the common response where you live? Whatever it is, Jehovah expects us to keep right on preaching until the work is completed to his satisfaction. At Jehovah's set time, the preaching work will reach its conclusion and "the end will come." (Matt. 24:14) Jesus foretold events and conditions that would mark the last days and that could distract his followers from accomplishing the preaching work. He admonished his disciples to "keep on the watch." (Matt. 24:42) Today, we face distractions similar to those that prevented the people of Noah's day from paying attention to the warning proclaimed by Noah. (Matt. 24:37-39; 2 Pet. 2:5) Therefore, we want to stay focused on the work Jehovah has given us to do. w20.09 8 ¶1-2, 4

Tuesday, May 17

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

Satan has "great anger," and we would be fooling ourselves if we were to imagine that we could somehow avoid his wrath. (Rev. 12:12) In the near future, all of us will face tests of our integrity. Soon, the world will experience "great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world's beginning until now."

(Matt. 24:21) During that time, family members may turn against us and our work may be banned. (Matt. 10:35, 36) Will we personally, like King Asa, trust in Jehovah for help and protection? (2 Chron. 14:11) Jehovah has been preparing us spiritually for what lies ahead. He is guiding "the faithful and discreet slave" to provide nourishing spiritual "food at the proper time" to help us remain steadfast in our worship. (Matt. 24:45) But we must do our part and build unshakable faith in Jehovah.—Heb. 10:38, 39. w20.09 18 ¶16-18

Wednesday, May 18

A king's heart is like streams of water in Jehovah's hand. He directs it wherever He pleases.

—Prov. 21:1.

When it is in harmony with his purpose, Jehovah may use his powerful holy spirit to cause people in authority to do what he desires. Humans can dig a canal to divert the water of a stream in a direction that fits their plans. Similarly, Jehovah can use his spirit to divert the thoughts of rulers in a direction that is in harmony with his purpose. When that occurs, people in authority feel motivated to make decisions that benefit God's people. (Compare Ezra 7:21, 25, 26.) What can we do? We can pray "concerning kings and all those who are in positions of authority" when these individuals are called on to make decisions that affect our Christian life and ministry. (1 Tim. 2:1, 2, ftn.; Neh. 1:11) As the first-century Christians did, we too pray intensely to God for our brothers and sisters who are in prison.—Acts 12:5; Heb. 13:3. w20.11 15 ¶13-14

Thursday, May 19

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

—Matt. 28:19.

If you are the one who studied with the new disciple, how thrilling for you to witness that one's baptism! (1 Thess. 2:19, 20) Newly baptized disciples are fine "letters of recommendation," not just for those who studied with them but also for the whole congregation. (2 Cor. 3:1-3) It is very good to see that in a four year period, on average, some 10,000,000 Bible studies have been reported every month worldwide. And during those same years, on average, over 280,000 got baptized each year as Jehovah's Witnesses and new disciples of Jesus Christ. How can we help more of those millions of Bible students to get baptized? As long as Jehovah is patiently allowing people the time and opportunity to become Christ's disciples, we want to do all we can to help them progress to baptism as quickly as possible. Time is fast running out!—1 Cor. 7:29a; 1 Pet. 4:7. w20.10 6 ¶1-2

Friday, May 20

***God opposes the haughty ones, but he gives undeserved kindness to the humble ones.*—Jas. 4:6.**

King Saul did not obey Jehovah. And when the prophet Samuel confronted him about the matter, Saul did not acknowledge his mistake. Instead, he tried to justify his actions by minimizing the consequences of his disobedience and shifting the blame to others. (1 Sam. 15:13-24) Earlier, Saul had displayed a similar attitude. (1 Sam. 13:10-14) Sadly, he allowed his heart to become haugh-

ty. He did not correct his thinking, so Jehovah reproved him and rejected him. To learn from Saul's example, we do well to ask ourselves these questions: 'When I read counsel from God's Word, do I tend to justify my thinking? Do I minimize the consequences of disobedience? Do I shift the blame for my actions to someone else?' If our answer to any of those questions is yes, we must adjust our thinking and attitude. Otherwise, our heart can become so haughty that Jehovah will reject us as his friend. w20.11 20 ¶4-5

Saturday, May 21

Remember . . . your Grand Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of distress come and the years arrive when you will say: "I have no pleasure in them."
—Eccl. 12:1.

Young ones, decide whom you will serve. You have to prove to yourself who Jehovah is, what his purpose involves, and how his will relates to your life. (Rom. 12:2) Then you will be able to make the most important decision of your life, the decision to serve Jehovah. (Josh. 24:15) If you keep a regular schedule of Bible reading and study, your love for Jehovah will continue to grow and your faith in him will become stronger. Choose to put Jehovah's will first in your life. Satan's world promises that if you use your talents for your own benefit, you will be happy. In truth, those who focus on material goals stab themselves "all over with many pains." (1 Tim. 6:9, 10) On the other hand, if you listen to Jehovah and choose to put his will first in your life, you will be successful and "you will act wisely."—Josh. 1:8. w20.10 30-31 ¶17-18

Sunday, May 22

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

—Luke 4:43.

In the first century, the message that Jesus preached offered hope to all mankind. He commanded his followers to continue the work he started, to give a witness “to the most distant part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8) Of course, they could not do this work in their own strength. They would need holy spirit—“the helper” that Jesus had promised them. (John 14:26; Zech. 4:6) Jesus’ followers received the holy spirit at Pentecost 33 C.E. With the help of that spirit, they immediately began to preach, and in a short time, thousands accepted the good news. (Acts 2:41; 4:4) When opposition arose, the disciples did not give in to fear but turned to God for help. They prayed: “Grant to your slaves to keep speaking your word with all boldness.” They were then filled with holy spirit and kept “speaking the word of God with boldness.” —Acts 4:18-20, 29, 31. *w20.10* 21 ¶4-5

Monday, May 23

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

Why can we be certain that Jehovah brought Jesus back to life? There were many eyewitnesses who testified that Jesus had been raised. (1 Cor. 15:5-7) The first witness on the apostle Paul’s list was the apostle Peter (Cephas). A group of disciples confirmed that Peter saw the resurrected Jesus. (Luke 24:33, 34) In addition, “the Twelve,” the apostles, saw Jesus after he was raised.

Then Christ “appeared to more than 500 brothers at one time,” perhaps at the joyous event in Galilee mentioned at Matthew 28:16-20. Jesus also “appeared to James,” likely Jesus’ half brother, who previously had not put faith in Jesus as the Messiah. (John 7:5) After seeing the resurrected Jesus, James was convinced. Significantly, about 55 C.E. when Paul wrote this letter, many eyewitnesses of the resurrection were alive, so any doubter could consult with living, credible witnesses. *w20.12* 3 ¶5, 7-8

Tuesday, May 24

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

When we are not feeling well and especially if we are dealing with a chronic illness, we may find it hard to think positively. So turn to Jehovah for support. While he does not cure us miraculously now, he does comfort us and can give us the strength we need so as to endure. (Ps. 94:19) For example, he may move fellow Christians to come to our aid when we need help with chores. He may move our brothers to pray with us. Or he may bring back to our mind comforting thoughts found in his Word, such as the wonderful hope of perfect life without sickness and pain in the coming new world. (Rom. 15:4) However, we may feel limited in what we can do in the ministry. A sister named Laurel was confined to an iron lung for 37 years! She endured cancer, major surgeries, and chronic skin disorders. But it did not silence her. She witnessed to nurses and attendants who came to her home and helped at least 17 people come to an accurate knowledge of the Bible! *w20.12* 24 ¶9; 25 ¶12

Wednesday, May 25

Jehovah is on my side; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?

—Ps. 118:6.

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

Thursday, May 26

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

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

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

Friday, May 27

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

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

Saturday, May 28

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

—1 Pet. 2:21.

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

Sunday, May 29

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

By means of the ransom, Jehovah purchased the lives of each individual in the congregation and, potentially, of all humankind. (Mark 10:45; Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 15:21, 22) So it is fitting that he appointed Jesus, who gave his life as a ransom, as head of the congregation. As our head, Jesus has the authority to make and to enforce rules that govern the conduct of individuals, of families, and of the entire congregation. (Gal. 6:2)

But Jesus does more than just make rules. He feeds and cherishes each one of us. (Eph. 5:29) Sisters show that they respect Christ by following the direction given by the men he has appointed to take care of them. Brothers show that they understand the headship arrangement by respecting and honoring sisters. When all in the congregation understand and respect the principle of headship, the congregation enjoys peace. And more important, we bring praise to our loving heavenly Father, Jehovah. *w21.02* 18-19 ¶14-17

Monday, May 30

David inquired of Jehovah.

—1 Sam. 30:8.

During the time when David and his men were fugitives, they had left their families to go on a mission. While the men were away, an enemy force raided their homes and took their families captive. David could have concluded that with all the experience he had as a warrior, he could surely devise an effective strategy for rescuing the captives. Instead, David looked to Jehovah for guidance. David inquired of Jehovah: "Should I chase after this marauder band?" Jehovah indicated that David should do so and assured him that he would be successful. (1 Sam. 30:7-10) What can you learn from this incident? Seek advice before you make decisions. Young ones, consult your parents. You can also get good advice by talking to experienced elders. Jehovah trusts these appointed men, and you can too. Jehovah views them as "gifts" to the congregation. (Eph. 4:8) You will benefit by imitating their faith and by listening to the wise suggestions they give. *w21.03* 4-5 ¶10-11

Tuesday, May 31

[Nothing] will be able to separate us from God's love.—Rom. 8:38, 39.

Jesus said that if we do not apply what we learn, we are like a man who builds his house on sand. He works hard, but he is wasting his effort. Why? Because when a storm and flood hit his house, it will collapse. (Matt. 7:24-27) Similarly, if we do not apply what we learn, we will have wasted our effort. When our faith is tested by trials or persecution, it will not be strong enough. On the other hand, when we study and apply what we learn, we make better decisions, we gain more peace, and we develop stronger faith. (Isa. 48:17, 18) To maintain our integrity under trial, we need to rely on Jehovah in prayer and maintain a good study routine. And we must always remember that one of the most important things we can do is to bring glory to Jehovah. We can be certain that Jehovah will never abandon us and that there is nothing anyone can do to break his love for us.—Heb. 13:5, 6. *w21.03* 15 ¶6; 18 ¶20

Wednesday, June 1

We were determined to impart to you, not only the good news of God but also our very selves.
—1 Thess. 2:8.

Teachers must show genuine, personal interest in their students. View them as your future spiritual brothers or sisters. It is not easy for them to give up friends in the world and to make all the necessary changes to serve Jehovah. Effective Bible teachers introduce their students to others in the congregation who can have a good influence on them. The students can then enjoy associat-

ing with God's people, who can give them spiritual and emotional support. We want each student to feel that he belongs in the congregation and is part of our spiritual family. We want him to be drawn to our warm and loving Christian brotherhood. Then it will be easier for him to stop having close association with people who do not help him to love Jehovah. (Prov. 13:20) If his former associates reject him, he will know that he can find true friends in Jehovah's organization.—Mark 10:29, 30; 1 Pet. 4:4. *w20.10* 17 ¶10-11

Thursday, June 2

All authority has been given me in heaven and on the earth.
—Matt. 28:18.

We must be friends with Jesus if we are to have a good relationship with Jehovah. Why is that true? Consider just two reasons. First, Jesus told his disciples: "The Father himself has affection for you, because you have had affection for me." (John 16:27) He also said: "No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6) Trying to be Jehovah's friend without building a close bond with Jesus is like trying to enter a building without using the door. Jesus used a similar illustration when he described himself as "the door for the sheep." (John 10:7) A second reason is that Jesus perfectly reflected his Father's qualities. He said to his disciples: "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father also." (John 14:9) So an important way that we come to know Jehovah is by studying the life of Jesus. As we learn about Jesus, our affection for him will grow. And as our friendship with Jesus grows, our love for his Father will deepen. *w20.04* 21-22 ¶5-6

Friday, June 3

I take pleasure in weaknesses, . . . for when I am weak, then I am powerful.—2 Cor. 12:10.

Are you lying in a bed or sitting in a wheelchair? Do you have weak knees or poor eyesight? If so, can you run along with those who are young and healthy? You certainly can! Many older and infirm ones are running on the road to life. They cannot do this work in their own power. Instead, they draw on Jehovah's strength by listening to Christian meetings over a telephone tie-line or watching meetings through video streaming. And they engage in the disciple-making work by witnessing to doctors, nurses, and relatives. Never let discouragement over your physical limitations convince you that you are too weak to run on the road to life. Jehovah loves you for your faith in him and your record of endurance. You need his help now more than ever, and he will not abandon you. (Ps. 9:10) Instead, he will draw even closer to you. *w20.04 29 ¶16-17*

Saturday, June 4

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

What subjects might you discuss with a religious person? Try to find common ground. He may worship only one God, he may recognize Jesus as the Savior of humankind, or he may believe that we are living in a time of wickedness that will soon end. Based on beliefs you have in common, present the Bible's message in a way that is appealing to that person. Keep in mind that people may not believe everything that

their religion teaches. So even after you discern a person's religion, try to find out what he personally believes. A missionary brother notes that some people say that they believe in the Trinity, but they may not actually believe that the Father, the Son, and the holy spirit are one God. "Knowing that makes it much easier to find common ground with the person," he says. So try to find out what people really believe. Then, like the apostle Paul, you can "become all things to people of all sorts."—1 Cor. 9:19-22. *w20.04 10 ¶9-10*

Sunday, June 5

During that time your people will escape, everyone who is found written down in the book.

—Dan. 12:1.

We can face the future with confidence because both Daniel and John confirm that those who serve Jehovah and Jesus will survive this unparalleled time of distress. Daniel says that the survivors will have their names "written down in the book." How do we get our names in that book? We must give clear evidence that we have faith in Jesus, the Lamb of God. (John 1:29) We need to get baptized in symbol of our dedication to God. (1 Pet. 3:21) And we must show our support for God's Kingdom by doing what we can to help others learn about Jehovah. Now is the time to build trust in Jehovah and his organization of loyal servants. Now is the time to support God's Kingdom. If we do, we will be saved when the king of the north and the king of the south are destroyed by God's Kingdom. *w20.05 16 ¶18-19*

Monday, June 6

O Jehovah, your name endures forever.—Ps. 135:13.

Adam and Eve knew Jehovah's name, as well as vital truths about the One bearing that name. They knew him as the Creator, the One who gave them life, their lovely Paradise home, and a perfect mate. (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:18) However, would they continue to use their perfect minds to meditate on all that Jehovah had done for them? Would they keep building up their love and appreciation for the Person represented by that name? The answers became clear when God's enemy tested them. Using a serpent as his mouthpiece, Satan asked Eve a question: "Did God really say that you must not eat from every tree of the garden?" (Gen. 2:16, 17; 3:1) That question contained a subtle lie that was like hidden poison. What God had actually said was that they could eat from every tree, with one exception. (Gen. 2:9) Satan made it seem as if God were not generous. Eve may have wondered, 'Is God withholding something good?' w20.06 3-4 ¶8-9

Tuesday, June 7

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

Some of Jehovah's servants have felt hurt by a fellow believer. The apostle Paul recognized that at times we might have a valid "cause for complaint against" a brother or a sister. We may even have been treated unjustly. If we are not careful, we could become resentful. Bitterness may eventually cause a person to drift away from Jehovah's people. Pablo, a brother in South America, was falsely accused of wrongdoing

and, as a result, lost a privilege of service in the congregation. How did he react? "I got angry," says Pablo, "and I gradually drifted away from the congregation." Or a guilty conscience may torment a person who has broken God's law in the past, making him feel unworthy of God's love. Even if he was repentant and was shown mercy, he might feel that he is no longer good enough to be one of God's people. How do you feel about brothers and sisters who face situations like those just discussed? w20.06 19 ¶6-7

Wednesday, June 8

The shrewd one sees the danger and conceals himself.—Prov. 22:3.

We must learn to recognize situations that could harm us and then act to avoid the danger. (Heb. 5:14) For instance, we need to choose our recreation and entertainment wisely. Television shows and movies often portray immoral conduct. Such conduct offends God and will inevitably bring about harm. Accordingly, we avoid entertainment that could gradually undermine our love for God. (Eph. 5:5, 6) We must also discern the danger of false information spread by apostates, as they try to raise doubts about our brothers and Jehovah's organization. (1 Tim. 4:1, 7; 2 Tim. 2:16) Such misinformation could undermine our faith. We must avoid being fooled by this propaganda. Why? Because these types of stories are spread "by men who are corrupted in mind and deprived of the truth." Their goal is to start "arguments and debates." (1 Tim. 6:4, 5) They want us to believe their slander and develop wicked suspicions about our brothers. w20.09 29 ¶13, 15

Thursday, June 9

[Seek], not [your] own advantage, but that of the other person.
—1 Cor. 10:24.

A husband and a wife should treat each other with love and respect. (Eph. 5:33) The Bible teaches us to focus on giving rather than on receiving. (Acts 20:35) What quality will help a married couple to show love and respect? The answer is humility. Humility has helped many Christian couples find greater happiness in their marriage. For example, a husband named Steven says: "If you are a team, you will work together, especially when there are problems. Instead of thinking 'what is best for me?' you will think 'what is best for us?'" His wife, Stephanie, feels similarly. "Nobody wants to live with an opponent," she says. "When a conflict arises, we identify the problem. We then pray, do research, and talk it out. We attack the problem, not each other." Husbands and wives truly benefit when they do not think more of themselves than is necessary. *w20.07* 3-4 ¶5-6

Friday, June 10

I was making greater progress in Judaism than many of my own age in my nation.—Gal. 1:14.

Do not rely on your own strength or abilities when serving Jehovah. The apostle Paul was well-educated—he was taught by one of the most respected Jewish leaders of his day, a man named Gamaliel. (Acts 5:34; 22:3) And at one point, Paul had some influence in the Jewish community. (Acts 26:4) But Paul did not rely on himself. Paul gladly gave up the things that made him powerful by the world's standards. (Phil. 3:8; ftn.) Paul paid a price for be-

coming a follower of Christ. He was hated by his own nation. (Acts 23:12-14) And he was beaten and imprisoned by his fellow citizens, the Romans. (Acts 16:19-24, 37) In addition, Paul became painfully aware of his own limitations. (Rom. 7:21-25) But rather than allow his opponents or his own shortcomings to cripple him, he took "pleasure in weaknesses." Why? Because it was when he was weak that he saw God's power at work in his life.—2 Cor. 4:7; 12:10. *w20.07* 16 ¶7-8

Saturday, June 11

Whoever exercises faith in me . . . will do works greater than these.
—John 14:12.

The work of Kingdom preaching deserves our careful attention today. Jesus foretold that this work would expand in scope and continue long after his death. Following his resurrection, Jesus gave some of his disciples a miraculous catch of fish. He used that occasion to confirm that their assignment to be fishers of men was more important than any other endeavor. (John 21:15-17) Just before Jesus ascended to heaven, he informed his disciples that the witnessing work he had started would expand far beyond the borders of Israel. (Acts 1:6-8) Years later, Jesus gave a vision to the apostle John to show him what would take place "in the Lord's day." In it John saw this awe-inspiring event: Under angelic direction, "everlasting good news" was being preached to "every nation and tribe and tongue and people." (Rev. 1:10; 14:6) Clearly, Jehovah's will for us today is to share in this grand witnessing work until it is finished. *w20.09* 9 ¶5

Sunday, June 12

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, as good as offered up Isaac.—Heb. 11:17.

Abraham's family life was difficult. His beloved wife, Sarah, could not have children. For decades they had to deal with that bitter disappointment. Eventually, Sarah gave her servant girl, Hagar, to Abraham so that she could bear children for Abraham and Sarah. But when Hagar became pregnant with Ishmael, she began to despise Sarah. The situation became so difficult that Sarah chased Hagar away from home. (Gen. 16:1-6) Sarah finally became pregnant and gave Abraham a son whom he named Isaac. Abraham loved both of his sons, Ishmael and Isaac. But because of the bad way that Ishmael treated Isaac, Abraham was forced to send Ishmael and Hagar away. (Gen. 21:9-14) Later, Jehovah asked Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. (Gen. 22:1, 2; Heb. 11:17-19) In both cases, Abraham had to trust that Jehovah would eventually make things turn out well for his sons. *w20.08 4 ¶9-10*

Monday, June 13

Put on the new personality that was created according to God's will in true righteousness and loyalty.—Eph. 4:24.

Imagine the joy that those who are resurrected will feel as they strip off their old personality and live according to God's righteous standards. Those who make these changes will experience a resurrection of life. On the other hand, those who rebel against God will not be allowed to disrupt the peace of Par-

adise. (Isa. 65:20; John 5:28, 29) Under Kingdom rule, all of God's people will experience the truthfulness of what Proverbs 10:22 says: "It is the blessing of Jehovah that makes one rich, and He adds no pain with it." With Jehovah's spirit at work on them, God's people will become spiritually rich, that is, they will become more and more like Christ and will grow toward perfection. (John 13:15-17; Eph. 4:23) Each day they will become stronger, better people. What a joy life will be then!—Job 33:25. *w20.08 17 ¶11-12*

Tuesday, June 14

Make it your aim . . . to mind your own business.—1 Thess. 4:11.

We do well to keep in mind that some single Christians have made it a personal goal to remain unmarried. Other single Christians would like to marry, but they simply have not found the right person. Still others may have lost their mate in death. In any case, should those in the congregation feel the need to ask single Christians why they are not married or to offer to help them find a mate? If help is not requested, how might such offers make our single brothers and sisters feel? (1 Tim. 5:13) Our single brothers and sisters will be grateful if we value them based on their fine qualities and not on their marital status. Instead of feeling sorry for them, we do well to appreciate their faithfulness. As a result, our single brothers and sisters will never feel that we are saying to them: "I do not need you." (1 Cor. 12:21) Instead, they will know that we respect them and value their place in the congregation. *w20.08 29 ¶10, 14*

Wednesday, June 15

[Christ] appeared to more than 500 brothers at one time.

—1 Cor. 15:6.

Later, Jesus appeared to the apostle Paul himself. (1 Cor. 15:8) Paul (Saul) was on his way to Damascus when he heard the voice of the resurrected Jesus and saw a vision of him in heavenly glory. (Acts 9:3-5) Paul's experience added to the evidence that Jesus' resurrection was not a myth. (Acts 26:12-15) Paul's testimony would be especially noteworthy to some because he at one time persecuted Christians. Once he became convinced that Jesus had been raised up, Paul labored to convince others of this truth. He endured beatings, imprisonment, and shipwreck as he spread the truth that Jesus had died but was alive again. (1 Cor. 15:9-11; 2 Cor. 11:23-27) Paul was so sure that Jesus had been raised from the dead that he was willing to die defending his belief. Does this early testimony not convince you that Jesus was raised from the dead? And does it not strengthen your belief in the resurrection? *w20.12 3 ¶8-10*

Thursday, June 16

If you search for [Jehovah], he will let himself be found by you.

—2 Chron. 15:2.

We might ask ourselves, 'Do I regularly attend congregation meetings?' When we attend the meetings provided by Jehovah's organization, we receive true spiritual refreshment along with upbuilding association. (Matt. 11:28) We might also ask ourselves, 'Do I have good personal study habits?' If you live with your family, do you set aside time every

week for family worship? Or if you live alone, do you still set aside time just as if you were part of a family? Also, do you share as fully as possible in the preaching and disciple-making work? Why should we ask those questions? The Bible tells us that Jehovah examines our thoughts and what is in our hearts, so we should do the same. (1 Chron. 28:9) If we see that we need to make some changes in our goals, attitude, or thinking, we should ask Jehovah to help us make those changes. Now is the time to prepare ourselves for the tests that lie ahead. *w20.09 19 ¶19-20*

Friday, June 17

Not one of you who does not say good-bye to all his belongings can be my disciple.—Luke 14:33.

Jesus illustrated the cost of becoming his disciple. He spoke about someone wanting to build a tower and about a king wanting to march into war. Jesus said that the builder must "first sit down and calculate the expense" to complete the tower and that the king must "first sit down and take counsel" to see whether his troops can accomplish what they intend to do. (Luke 14:27-32) Likewise, Jesus knew that a person who wants to become his disciple should analyze very carefully what it means to follow him. For that reason, we need to encourage prospective disciples to study with us every week. As the teacher, you need to prepare well for each Bible study session. With your student in mind, meditate in advance on how to present the information simply and clearly so that your student can easily understand and apply it.—Neh. 8:8; Prov. 15:28a. *w20.10 7 ¶5; 8 ¶7*

Saturday, June 18

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

—Matt. 28:19, 20.

Jesus' instructions are clear. We must teach people the things that he commanded. However, we should not overlook an important detail. Jesus did not say: 'Teach them all the things I have commanded you.' Instead, he said: Teach them "to observe all the things I have commanded you." To apply that specific instruction when teaching a Bible student, we need to be not only teachers but also guides. (Acts 8: 31) To "observe" a command means to obey it. When we study the Bible with others, we teach them what God requires of us. But we must do more. We must teach our Bible students to apply in their daily life what they learn. (John 14:15; 1 John 2:3) By example, we can show our students how they can apply basic Scriptural principles at school, at work, or during recreation. In the presence of our students, we can pray to Jehovah that the holy spirit guide them.—John 16:13. *w20.11* 2-3 ¶13-5

Sunday, June 19

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

Jesus' disciples faced challenges. For example, copies of the Scriptures were few. There were no study aids such as we have today. And the disciples had to preach to people who spoke many different languages. In spite of all those challenges, those zealous disciples did the seemingly impossible—within just a few decades, they had

preached the good news "in all creation under heaven." (Col. 1: 6, 23) In modern times, Jehovah continues to direct and empower his people. The direction, of course, comes largely through God's spirit-inspired Word. There we find a record of Jesus' ministry and his command that his followers continue the work he started. (Matt. 28:19, 20) Jehovah is impartial; he foretold that the good news would be declared "to every nation and tribe and tongue and people." (Rev. 14: 6, 7) He wants the Kingdom message to be available to all. *w20.10* 21 ¶16-8

Monday, June 20

You save those who are humble, but your eyes are against the haughty.—2 Sam. 22:28.

King David was a man who loved "the law of Jehovah." (Ps. 1:1-3) David knew that Jehovah saves those who are humble but opposes the haughty. So David allowed God's law to adjust his thinking. He wrote: "I will praise Jehovah, who has given me advice. Even during the night, my innermost thoughts correct me." (Ps. 16:7) If we are humble, we will allow God's Word to correct our wrong thinking before we act on those thoughts. God's Word will be like a voice that tells us: "This is the way. Walk in it." It will warn us when we are straying from the path—to the left or to the right. (Isa. 30: 21) By listening to Jehovah, we will benefit ourselves in a number of ways. (Isa. 48:17) For instance, we will avoid the embarrassment of having to be corrected by someone else. And we will draw closer to Jehovah because we recognize that he is treating us like a beloved child. —Heb. 12:7. *w20.11* 20 ¶16-7

Tuesday, June 21

When they heard of a resurrection of the dead, some began to scoff.

—Acts 17:32.

Such thinking may have affected some in Corinth. (1 Cor. 15:12) Also, others may have thought of the resurrection in a figurative sense, meaning that a person was once “dead” in sin but had become “alive” as a Christian. Whatever their reason, denying the resurrection meant that their faith was in vain. If God did not resurrect Jesus, no ransom was paid and all remained in sin. So those who rejected the resurrection had no valid hope. (1 Cor. 15:13-19; Heb. 9:12, 14) The apostle Paul had firsthand knowledge that “Christ [had] been raised from the dead.” That resurrection was superior to the resurrection of those who had earlier been brought back to life on earth—only to die again. Paul said that Jesus was “the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep in death.” He was the first person to be raised to life as a spirit being and the first one from mankind to ascend to heaven.—1 Cor. 15:20; Acts 26:23; 1 Pet. 3:18, 22. *w20.12* 5 ¶11-12

Wednesday, June 22

They would deliver to them for observance the decrees that had been decided on by the apostles and the elders.—Acts 16:4.

In the first century, the governing body in Jerusalem worked unitedly to maintain order and peace among God’s people. (Acts 2:42) For example, when the issue of circumcision came to a head about 49 C.E., the governing body, under the direction of holy spirit, considered the matter. If the congregation had remained divided over this issue, the

preaching work would have been hindered. Even though they were Jewish, the apostles and older men were not influenced by Jewish tradition or by those strongly promoting it. Rather, they looked to God’s Word and spirit for guidance. (Acts 15:1, 2, 5-20, 28) The result? Jehovah blessed their decision, peace and unity prevailed, and the preaching work moved ahead. (Acts 15:30, 31; 16:5) In modern times, Jehovah’s organization has also worked to maintain order and peace among Jehovah’s people. *w20.10* 22-23 ¶11-12

Thursday, June 23

My son Solomon [is] the one whom God has chosen.—1 Chron. 29:1.

Because of the limitations of age, health, or other factors, we may not be eligible to receive a certain theocratic assignment. In that connection, we can learn from the example of King David. When told that he had not been chosen to build God’s temple—something that David had dearly hoped to do—he gave full support to the one whom God had selected for the assignment. David even contributed generously toward the project. What an outstanding example to follow! (2 Sam. 7:12, 13; 1 Chron. 29:3-5) Because of health problems, Hugues, a brother in France, stopped serving as an elder, and he could not even care for simple tasks around the home. He writes: “At first, I felt worthless and deeply discouraged. But in time, I saw the importance of accepting my limitations, and I found joy in serving Jehovah within those limits. Like Gideon and his three hundred men—all of whom were tired—I will keep up the fight!”—Judg. 8:4. *w20.12* 25 ¶14-15

Friday, June 24

Continue loving one another.

—1 John 4:7.

In his account of Jesus' life, the apostle John uses the words "love" and "loved" more often than the other three Gospel writers combined. His inspired writings reveal that love must influence everything a Christian does. (1 John 4:10, 11) However, it took time for John to learn that lesson. When John was a young man, he did not always show love. For example, on one occasion, Jesus and his disciples were traveling to Jerusalem through Samaria. A certain Samaritan village refused to show them hospitality. John proposed calling down fire from heaven and destroying all the inhabitants of the village! (Luke 9:52-56) On another occasion, John and his brother James apparently coaxed their mother into asking Jesus to give them prominent positions alongside him in the Kingdom. When the other apostles found out what James and John had done, they were furious! (Matt. 20:20, 21, 24) Nevertheless, despite all of John's flaws, Jesus loved him.—John 21:7. *w21.01* 8-9 ¶13-4

Saturday, June 25

The Christ did not please himself.

—Rom. 15:3.

Jehovah makes decisions that are in the best interests of others. For example, he decided to create life, not to benefit himself, but to share with us the joy of living. No one could have forced him to give his Son to cover our sins. He willingly decided to make that sacrifice for our benefit. Jesus too made decisions that primarily benefited others. For example, he decided to for-

go his own need for rest in order to teach a crowd of people. (Mark 6:31-34) A good family head knows that one of the most difficult things he must do is make wise decisions for his family, and he takes that responsibility seriously. He tries to avoid making decisions that are arbitrary or that are based purely on emotion. Instead, he allows Jehovah to train him. (Prov. 2:6, 7) That way, he will think of benefiting others, not himself. (Phil. 2:4) If a husband strives to follow the example set by Jehovah and Jesus, he will be a good family head. *w21.02* 7 ¶19-21

Sunday, June 26

Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of Jehovah his God.

—2 Chron. 14:2.

As a young man, King Asa was humble and courageous. For example, when he succeeded his father, Abijah, he launched a campaign against idolatry. He also "told Judah to search for Jehovah the God of their forefathers and to observe the Law and the commandment." (2 Chron. 14:1-7) And when Zerah the Ethiopian invaded Judah with 1,000,000 soldiers, Asa wisely turned to Jehovah for help, saying: "O Jehovah, it does not matter to you whether those you help are many or have no power. Help us, O Jehovah our God, for we are relying on you." This beautiful expression shows how much confidence Asa had in Jehovah's ability to save him and his people. Asa trusted in his heavenly Father, and "Jehovah defeated the Ethiopians." (2 Chron. 14:8-12) You would no doubt agree that facing an army of 1,000,000 soldiers was a huge challenge, and it was one that Asa met successfully. *w21.03* 5 ¶12-13

Monday, June 27

Have tender affection for one another.—Rom. 12:10.

The Bible contains accounts of imperfect humans who showed tender affection. Consider the example of Jonathan and David. The Bible says: "Jonathan and David became bound together in close friendship, and Jonathan began to love him as himself." (1 Sam. 18:1) David was anointed to succeed Saul as king. After that, Saul became resentful of David and tried to kill him. But Saul's son Jonathan did not join his father in this murderous campaign against David. Jonathan and David promised to remain friends and always to support each other. (1 Sam. 20:42) The tender affection between Jonathan and David is all the more remarkable when we consider some factors that could have prevented them from becoming friends. For example, Jonathan was some 30 years older than David. Jonathan could have concluded that he had nothing in common with this much younger and less experienced man. Yet, Jonathan did not view or treat David as an inferior. *w21.01 21-22 ¶6-7*

Tuesday, June 28

Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you meet with various trials.—Jas. 1:2.

Jesus promised his followers that they would be genuinely happy. He also warned those who love him that they would face trials. (Matt. 10:22, 23; Luke 6:20-23) We find joy in being disciples of Christ. But how do we feel about the possibility of being opposed by our family, persecuted by the government, or pressured to do what is wrong by our workmates or schoolmates? Understand-

ably, such possibilities can make us feel anxious. People do not normally view persecution as a reason to feel joyful. Yet, that is exactly what God's Word tells us to do. For example, the disciple James wrote that instead of feeling overwhelmed, we should consider it a joy when we go through trials. (Jas. 1:2, 12) And Jesus said that we should be happy even when we are persecuted. (Matt. 5:11) Jehovah inspired James to write to Christians to give them practical advice that would help them remain joyful even when facing trials. *w21.02 26 ¶1-2; 27 ¶5*

Wednesday, June 29

[Turn] away from the empty speeches that violate what is holy.—1 Tim. 6:20.

Some of Timothy's contemporaries failed to appreciate their privilege of being fellow workers with God. These included Demas, Phygellus, Hermogenes, Hymenaeus, Alexander, and Philetus. (1 Tim. 1:19, 20; 2 Tim. 1:15; 2:16-18; 4:10) Apparently, all these people were once spiritually strong, but they lost their sense of what was truly valuable. How does Satan try to make us give up the treasures that Jehovah has entrusted us with? Note some of Satan's tactics. He uses entertainment and the media to promote values, thinking, and behavior that he hopes will cause us to loosen our grip on the truth. He attempts to intimidate us through peer pressure or persecution so that we will stop preaching. And he tries to entice us to listen to "the falsely called 'knowledge'" of apostates so that we will abandon the truth. If we are not careful, we could gradually lose our grip on the truth.—1 Tim. 6:21. *w20.09 27 ¶6-8*

Thursday, June 30

Jehovah will hear my request for favor; Jehovah will accept my prayer.—Ps. 6:9.

Has a friend or a family member betrayed your trust? If so, you would benefit by reviewing the account of King David's son Absalom. (2 Sam. 15:5-14, 31; 18:6-14) With the account in mind, tell Jehovah how you are feeling about the way you have been mistreated. (Ps. 6:6-8) Next, imagine how David must have felt as all of this was happening to him. He loved Absalom and trusted Ahithophel. Yet, both of these close companions betrayed him. They hurt him deeply and even tried to kill him. David could have lost faith in his other friends, suspecting that they too had joined Absalom. He might have thought only of himself and have wanted to flee the country alone. Or he could just have given up in despair. Instead, he prayed to Jehovah for help. He also asked his friends to help him. And he acted quickly to implement the decisions he made. He continued to trust in Jehovah and to trust his friends. *w21.03 15 ¶7-8; 17 ¶10-11*

Friday, July 1

*All authority has been given me in heaven and on the earth.
—Matt. 28:18.*

We must have a relationship with Jesus in order for our prayers to be answered. This calls for doing more than simply adding the phrase "in Jesus' name" to our prayers as a formality. We must recognize how Jehovah uses Jesus in answering our prayers. Jesus told the apostles: "Whatever you ask in my name, I will do this." (John 14:13) Although Jehovah is the one who hears and

answers our prayers, he has given Jesus the authority to carry out His decisions. Thus, before God answers our prayers, he sees if we have applied the counsel Jesus gave. For example, Jesus said: "If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; whereas if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matt. 6:14, 15) How important it is, then, that we treat others in the same kind way that Jehovah and Jesus treat us! *w20.04 22 ¶6*

Saturday, July 2

*We are declaring the good news to you, for you to turn from these vain things to the living God.
—Acts 14:15.*

The apostle Paul discerned the interests of his audience, and then he adapted his presentation. For example, the crowd he spoke to in Lystra had little or no knowledge of the Scriptures. So Paul used arguments that they could relate to. He spoke of fruitful harvests and the ability to enjoy life. He used words and examples that his listeners could readily understand. Use insight to discern the interests of people in your territory and adapt your presentation. How can you find out what a person is interested in as you approach him or his home? Be observant. Perhaps he is gardening, reading a book, repairing a vehicle, or engaging in some other activity. If appropriate, why not use what he is doing to engage him in conversation? (John 4:7) Even a person's clothing may say something about him—perhaps it indicates his nationality, occupation, or favorite sports team. *w20.04 11 ¶11-12*

Sunday, July 3

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

—1 Pet. 5:7.

Because of severe anxiety, some brothers and sisters feel very nervous and self-conscious in everyday social situations. They may find it difficult to be in large groups, but they continue to attend congregation meetings, assemblies, and conventions. They find it a challenge to speak to strangers, yet they talk to others in the field ministry. If that is true in your case, be assured that you are not alone. Many deal with similar struggles. Remember that Jehovah is pleased with your whole-souled efforts. The fact that you have not given up is proof that he is blessing you and giving you the strength you need. (Phil. 4:6, 7) If you are serving Jehovah despite enduring physical or emotional limitations, you can be confident that you are pleasing Jehovah. Many of us have physical limitations, yet we are enduring. (2 Cor. 4:16) With Jehovah's help, we will all run the race to the finish! *w20.04 31 ¶20-21*

Monday, July 4

*His invisible qualities are clearly
seen . . . by the things made.*

—Rom. 1:20.

God's wisdom is clearly seen in the way he constructed our home, the earth. (Heb. 3:4) The earth is unique because it has all the right conditions to sustain human life. In some respects, the earth is like a boat floating in the vast ocean of space. But there are key differences between a man-made boat, full of people, and our earth. For example, how long would the occupants of a literal boat survive if they had to pro-

duce their own oxygen, food, and water and if they could not throw any waste products overboard? The people in that boat would soon die. In contrast, the earth supports billions of living creatures. It produces all the oxygen, food, and water we need, and we do not run out of those vital supplies. Its waste products are not ejected into space; yet, the earth remains beautiful and habitable. How is that possible? Jehovah designed the earth with the ability to recycle resources. *w20.05 20 ¶3-4*

Tuesday, July 5

You certainly will not die.

—Gen. 3:4.

Satan was in effect telling Eve that Jehovah is a liar. Satan thus became a devil, or slanderer. Eve was thoroughly deceived; she believed Satan. (1 Tim. 2:14) She put more trust in him than in Jehovah. That made it easier for Eve to make the worst possible decision. She decided to disobey Jehovah. She began eating of the fruit that Jehovah had forbidden her to eat. Afterward, she gave some to Adam. (Gen. 3:6) Think for a moment about what Eve should have said to Satan. Imagine that she had said something like this: "I do not know who you are, but I know my Father, Jehovah, and I love and trust him. He has given Adam and me everything we have. How dare you say anything bad about him? Go away!" How delighted Jehovah would have been to hear such loyal words from a loving daughter! (Prov. 27:11) But Eve did not have loyal love for Jehovah; neither was Adam guided by that quality. Lacking such love for their Father, Adam and Eve failed to defend his name against slander. *w20.06 4 ¶10-11*

Wednesday, July 6

The women proclaiming the good news are a large army.—Ps. 68:11.

Our sisters deserve to be commended for all they do in Jehovah's service. That service includes constructing and maintaining buildings, supporting foreign-language groups, and volunteering at Bethel facilities. They assist in disaster relief work, help to translate our publications, and serve as pioneers and missionaries. In addition, wives help their husband to carry a heavy load in the congregation and in the organization. These responsible brothers would not be able to serve so fully as "gifts in men" were it not for the support of their wife. (Eph. 4:8) Wise elders realize that sisters are "a large army" of willing workers and that they are often among the most capable preachers of the good news. In addition, elders recognize that faithful, mature sisters are effective in helping younger sisters deal with challenges. (Titus 2: 3-5) Certainly, our sisters deserve to be appreciated! *w20.09* 23-24 ¶13-14

Thursday, July 7

It is not a desirable thing to my Father who is in heaven for even one of these little ones to perish.

—Matt. 18:14.

Jehovah does not forget those who once served him but who have temporarily stopped associating with his people; nor does he forget the work they did in his service. (Heb. 6:10) The prophet Isaiah recorded a beautiful illustration to show how Jehovah cares for his people. "Like a shepherd he will care for his flock," Isaiah wrote. "With his arm he will gather to-

gether the lambs, and in his bosom he will carry them." (Isa. 40: 11) How does the Great Shepherd feel when one of his sheep strays from the flock? Jesus revealed Jehovah's feelings when he asked his disciples: "What do you think? If a man has 100 sheep and one of them strays, will he not leave the 99 on the mountains and set out on a search for the one that is straying? And if he finds it, I certainly tell you, he rejoices more over it than over the 99 that have not strayed." —Matt. 18:12, 13. *w20.06* 19-20 ¶8-9

Friday, July 8

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

We view it as a privilege to serve Jehovah in any way we can. (Ps. 27:4; 84:10) If a brother is able to make himself available for a special privilege of service, that is commendable. However, when he receives an assignment, he should not think more of himself than is necessary. (Luke 17:7-10) His goal should be to serve others humbly. (2 Cor. 12:15) The Bible contains warning examples of people who thought too much of themselves. Diotrophes immodestly sought to have "the first place" in the congregation. (3 John 9) Uzziah proudly tried to perform a task that Jehovah had not assigned him to do. (2 Chron. 26:16-21) Absalom slyly tried to win the support of the public because he wanted to be king. (2 Sam. 15:2-6) As those Bible accounts clearly show, Jehovah is not pleased with people who seek their own glory. (Prov. 25:27) In time, pride and ambition lead only to disaster.—Prov. 16:18. *w20.07* 4 ¶7-8

Saturday, July 9

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

Some Christian families have moved to another country to seek refuge or to find employment. In such cases, their children may now be educated in the main language of their new country. The parents may also need to learn the main language in order to find employment. What if there is a local congregation or group in their mother tongue? Which congregation should the family attend? Should it be a congregation in which the main language of the country is spoken or a congregation in which the family's mother tongue is spoken? The family head must decide which congregation his family will attend. Because this is a personal matter, he must consider what is in the best interests of his family. We need to respect the decision of the family head. Whatever he decides, let us accept his decision and welcome the family as a valued part of our congregation.—Rom. 15:7. *w20.08 30 ¶17-18*

Sunday, July 10

God chose the weak things of the world.—1 Cor. 1:27.

If we want to gain power from Jehovah, we must not think that physical strength, education, cultural background, or material wealth determine how valuable we are. These things are not what make us useful to Jehovah. In fact, not many of God's people are "wise in a fleshly way, not many powerful, not many of noble birth." (1 Cor. 1:26) So do not view any supposed disadvantages as obstacles to serving Jehovah. Instead, view them as oppor-

tunities, a chance to see Jehovah's power working through you. For example, if you feel intimidated by those who try to make you doubt your beliefs, pray for Jehovah to give you boldness when defending your faith. (Eph. 6:19, 20) If you are struggling to cope with a chronic disability, ask Jehovah to give you the strength you need to stay as busy as you can in his service. Each time you see Jehovah help you, your faith grows and you become stronger. *w20.07 16 ¶9*

Monday, July 11

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

If we are to put the Kingdom first in our lives, we must be like Abraham, who willingly made sacrifices to please God. (Mark 10:28-30; Heb. 11:8-10) Do not expect your life to be trouble-free. Even those who devote their entire life to serving Jehovah must still deal with problems. (Jas. 1:2; 1 Pet. 5:9) Today, we have more reason than ever to focus on the future. World events clearly show that we are in the final part of the last days of this system of things. Among the many blessings we will enjoy under Kingdom rule will be that of seeing our loved ones raised from the dead. At that time, Jehovah will reward Abraham for his faith and patience by bringing him and his family back to life on earth. Will you be there to welcome them? You can be if you, like Abraham, are willing to make sacrifices for God's Kingdom, if you keep your faith despite problems, and if you learn to wait patiently on Jehovah.—Mic. 7:7. *w20.08 5-6 ¶13-14; 7 ¶17*

Tuesday, July 12

Prove yourself faithful even to death, and I will give you the crown of life.—Rev. 2:10.

We know that if our enemies kill us, Jehovah will restore us to life. We are convinced that nothing they do can sever our attachment to Jehovah. (Rom. 8:35-39) What remarkable wisdom Jehovah has shown by giving us the resurrection hope! By means of it, he disarms Satan of one of his most effective weapons and at the same time arms us with unbreakable courage. If enemies of Jehovah threaten you with death, will you be willing to entrust him with your life? How can you know? One way is to ask yourself, ‘Do the small decisions I make each day give evidence that I trust in Jehovah?’ (Luke 16:10) Another question could be, ‘Does my lifestyle prove that I trust in Jehovah’s promise to care for my material needs if I seek his Kingdom first?’ (Matt. 6:31-33) If the answer to those questions is yes, you will be prepared for any trial that comes your way.—Prov. 3:5, 6. *w20.08* 17-18 ¶15-16

Wednesday, July 13

Do your utmost to present yourself approved to God, a workman with nothing to be ashamed of, handling the word of the truth aright.
—2 Tim. 2:15.

We need to become skillful in handling God’s Word. We can learn some of these skills at our meetings. But if we are to convince others that Bible truth is truly valuable, we need to stick to a regular routine of personal Bible study. We need to use God’s Word to strengthen our faith. This involves more than just reading the

Bible. It requires that we meditate on what we read and do research in our publications so that we can correctly understand and apply the Scriptures. (1 Tim. 4:13-15) Then we will be able to use God’s Word to teach others. Again, this involves more than just reading a Bible text. We want to help our listeners to understand the verse and how it applies to them. By sticking to a regular schedule of personal Bible study, we can improve in our ability to use God’s inspired Word to teach others.—2 Tim. 3:16, 17. *w20.09* 28 ¶12

Thursday, July 14

Consider closely [Jesus] . . . , so that you may not get tired and give up.—Heb. 12:3.

We can stay focused on the preaching work if we reflect on how much Jehovah is doing to help us. For example, he is providing an abundance of spiritual food in the form of printed and digital publications, audio and video recordings, and Internet broadcasts. Just think: On our official website, information is available in over 1,000 languages! (Matt. 24:45-47) Another way we can stay focused on preaching is by following Jesus’ example. He allowed nothing to distract him from bearing witness to the truth. (John 18:37) He was not enticed when Satan offered him “all the kingdoms of the world and their glory”; nor was he tempted when others wanted to make him king. (Matt. 4:8, 9; John 6:15) He was not swayed by a desire for material riches; nor was he deterred by fierce opposition. (Luke 9:58; John 8:59) When we face tests of our faith, we can stay focused if we remember the apostle Paul’s counsel in today’s text. *w20.09* 9-10 ¶6-7

Friday, July 15

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

How grateful we are to have so many sisters working hard in the congregation! They participate at the meetings and in the ministry. Some share in maintaining the Kingdom Hall, and they show personal interest in fellow worshippers. Of course, they face challenges. Some provide care for elderly parents. Others endure opposition from family members. And still others who are single parents work hard to provide for their children. Why focus on giving support to sisters? Because the world does not always treat women with the dignity that they deserve. In addition, the Bible encourages us to give them support. For instance, the apostle Paul alerted the congregation in Rome to welcome Phoebe and “give her whatever help she may need.” (Rom. 16: 1, 2) Paul came from a culture that treated women as being inferior. But as a Christian, he imitated Jesus and treated women with dignity and kindness. *w20.09 20 ¶1-2*

Saturday, July 16

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

To help Bible students to develop the desire to share the good news with others, we might ask them such questions as these: “How has accepting the Kingdom message changed your life for the better? Do you think that others need to hear this message? What can you do to help them?” (Prov. 3:27; Matt. 9:37, 38) Keep in mind that Jesus instructed us to teach others

“to observe all the things” he commanded. That certainly includes the two greatest commands—to love God and to love neighbor—both of which are closely connected to the preaching and disciple-making work. (Matt. 22:37-39) In fact, love is the principal motive for sharing in the preaching work. Understandably for some Bible students, the thought of sharing in the preaching work may cause fear. But we can assure such students that with Jehovah’s help they will gradually be able to overcome the fear of man. —Ps. 18:1-3; Prov. 29:25. *w20.11 3 ¶6-8*

Sunday, July 17

We have never stopped praying for you.—Col. 1:9.

When preparing for a Bible study, pray to Jehovah about the student and his needs. Ask Jehovah to help you teach from the Bible in a way that will reach the person’s heart. Keep in mind that your goal is to help him progress to baptism. The student also needs to communicate with Jehovah. How? By listening to and talking to Jehovah. He can listen to God by reading the Bible daily. (Josh. 1:8; Ps. 1:1-3) He can talk to Jehovah by praying each day. So offer heartfelt prayers at the beginning and at the end of each study session, praying with and for your student. As he listens to your prayers, he will learn how to pray from his heart and sincerely address his prayers to Jehovah God in the name of Jesus Christ. (Matt. 6:9; John 15:16) Imagine how reading the Bible daily (listening to Jehovah) and praying (talking to Jehovah) will help your student draw ever closer to God!—Jas. 4:8. *w20.10 8 ¶8; 9 ¶10-11*

Monday, July 18

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

—Eph. 4:3.

The desire for order and peace that marked the early Christians is evident in Jehovah's organization today. (Acts 16:4, 5) To illustrate: If you were to attend a *Watchtower* Study in another congregation—even in another land—you would know how the study would be conducted and which article would be considered. Immediately, you would feel at home! What else but God's spirit can account for this precious unity? (Zeph. 3:9, ftn.) What can you do? Ask yourself: 'Do I promote unity and peace in the congregation? Am I obedient to those taking the lead? Can others depend on me, especially if I have responsibilities in the congregation? Am I punctual, helpful, and eager to serve?' (Jas. 3:17) If you see room for improvement, pray for holy spirit. The more you allow it to mold your personality and influence your actions, the more your brothers and sisters will love you and value you. *w20.10 23 ¶12-13*

Tuesday, July 19

*Become doers of the word and
not hearers only.—Jas. 1:22.*

God's Word can act as a mirror for us. (Jas. 1:23-25) Most of us look in a mirror each morning before we leave home. That way, we can see if we need to make an adjustment before others see us. Similarly, when we read the Bible each day, we will see ways that we can adjust our thinking and our attitude. Many find it helpful to read the daily text each morning before they leave home. They allow what they read to affect their thinking. Then throughout the

day, they look for ways to apply the counsel from God's Word. In addition, we must have a study routine that includes reading and thinking about God's Word each day. This may sound simple, but it is one of the most important things we can do to help us stay on the cramped road to life. In a sense, God's Word acts like an X-ray machine, enabling us to see what is inside. But we must be humble if we are to benefit from the counsel we receive from the Bible or from God's representatives. *w20.11 18 ¶3; 20 ¶18*

Wednesday, July 20

*The congregations continued to
be made firm in the faith and to
increase in number day by day.*

—Acts 16:5.

Although the first-century Christians were often persecuted, they also enjoyed periods of peace. How did the disciples use those opportunities? Those faithful men and women preached the good news without letup. The account in Acts says that they "walked in the fear of Jehovah." They kept on preaching the good news, and as a result, they "kept on multiplying." Jehovah obviously blessed their zealous preaching during times of peace. (Acts 9:26-31) The first-century disciples took every opportunity to spread the good news. As one example, when the apostle Paul recognized that a large door was opened to him while in Ephesus, he took advantage of the opportunity to preach and to make disciples in that city. (1 Cor. 16:8, 9) The disciples put forth great effort to declare "the good news of the word of Jehovah." (Acts 15:30-35) What resulted? Today's text tells us. *w20.09 16 ¶6-8*

Thursday, July 21

Death came through a man.

—1 Cor. 15:21.

When Adam sinned, he brought disaster on himself and his descendants. We still feel the tragic effects of his disobedience. How different is the outcome made possible because God raised his Son! “Resurrection of the dead also comes through a man,” Jesus. “For just as in Adam all are dying,” the apostle Paul reasoned, “so also in the Christ all will be made alive.” (1 Cor. 15:22) What did Paul mean when he said that “in Adam all are dying”? Paul had in mind Adam’s descendants, who inherited sin and imperfection from Adam and thus are in a dying condition. (Rom. 5:12) Adam is not among those who “will be made alive.” Christ’s ransom does not cover him, for Adam was a perfect man who willfully disobeyed God. The outcome for Adam is the same as what is ahead for those whom “the Son of man” will judge as “goats,” namely, “everlasting cutting-off.” —Matt. 25:31-33, 46; Heb. 5:9. *w20.12* 5 ¶13-14

Friday, July 22

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

If we do not get a certain assignment, think of the example of the faithful angels. During King Ahab’s reign, Jehovah invited the angels to suggest ways to fool the wicked king. A number of angels responded by offering ideas. But God chose one angel and told him that his suggestion would succeed. (1 Ki. 22:19-22) Did the other faithful angels become discouraged, perhaps thinking, ‘Why did I bother?’ We

have no reason to believe that they did. The angels are truly humble and want all honor to go to Jehovah. (Judg. 13:16-18; Rev. 19:10) Fix in mind the privilege we have to bear God’s name and to announce his Kingdom. Assignments are not what make us precious to God. It is when we are modest and humble that we become truly lovable to Jehovah and to our brothers. So beg Jehovah to help you remain modest and humble. Reflect on the many fine examples of modesty and humility that are recorded in his Word. Willingly serve your brothers in any way you can.—1 Pet. 5:5. *w20.12* 26 ¶16-17

Saturday, July 23

Accept the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, that is, God’s word.—Eph. 6:17.

The helmet of salvation is the hope Jehovah gives us—the hope that he will save us from death and will reward all those who do his will. (1 Thess. 5:8; 1 Tim. 4:10; Titus 1:1, 2) The hope of salvation protects our thinking ability. It keeps us focused on God’s promises and helps us to see problems in the right perspective. We wear this helmet by keeping our thinking in harmony with God’s thoughts. For example, we place our hope, not on uncertain riches, but on God. (Ps. 26:2; 104:34; 1 Tim. 6:17) The sword of the spirit is God’s Word, the Bible. That sword has the power to cut through deception and to liberate people from being enslaved to false teachings and harmful habits. (2 Cor. 10:4, 5; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Heb. 4:12) We learn to use that sword properly through personal study and through the training we receive from God’s organization. —2 Tim. 2:15. *w21.03* 27 ¶4; 29 ¶10-11

Sunday, July 24

I . . . was on the island called Patmos for speaking about God and bearing witness concerning Jesus.

—Rev. 1:9.

Even while confined for preaching about Jesus, the apostle John proved that he was thinking of others. For example, he recorded the revelation that he received and had it sent to the congregations so that they would know what “must shortly take place.” (Rev. 1:1) Then, likely after he was released from Patmos, John wrote his Gospel account of Jesus’ life and ministry. He also wrote three letters in order to encourage and strengthen his brothers and sisters. You can imitate John’s self-sacrificing life course and prove that you love people by what you choose to do with your life. Satan’s system would have you spend all your time and energy on yourself, trying to make money or to make a name for yourself. Instead, self-sacrificing Kingdom proclaimers all over the world spend as much time as they can preaching the good news and helping people to draw close to Jehovah. *w21.01 10 ¶9-10*

Monday, July 25

Jonathan began to love him as himself.—1 Sam. 18:1.

Jonathan could have been jealous of David. As King Saul’s son, Jonathan could have insisted that he was the rightful heir to the throne. (1 Sam. 20:31) But Jonathan was humble, and he was loyal to Jehovah. So he fully supported Jehovah’s choice of David as future king. He was also loyal to David, even when this incurred the wrath of Saul. (1 Sam. 20:32-34) Jonathan had tender affection for David, so he

did not view him as a rival. Jonathan was a skilled archer and a courageous warrior. He and his father, Saul, had a reputation for being “swifter than the eagles” and “mightier than the lions.” (2 Sam. 1:22, 23) Therefore, Jonathan could have boasted about his own heroic exploits. However, Jonathan was not competitive or resentful. On the contrary, Jonathan admired David for his courage and reliance on Jehovah. In fact, it was after David killed Goliath that Jonathan began to love David as himself. *w21.01 21 ¶6; 22 ¶8-9*

Tuesday, July 26

The head of a woman is the man.
—1 Cor. 11:3.

All Christians come under the perfect headship of Jesus Christ. However, when a Christian woman gets married, she comes under the headship of an imperfect man. That can present a challenge. So when considering a potential marriage mate, she would do well to ask herself: ‘What indication do I have that this brother will be a good family head? Do spiritual activities play an important role in his life? If not, what makes me think that he will be a good spiritual head after we get married?’ Of course, a sister also does well to ask herself: ‘What qualities will I bring to the marriage? Am I patient and generous? Do I have a strong relationship with Jehovah?’ (Eccl. 4:9, 12) The level of happiness a wife will experience in her marriage will depend to some extent on the decisions she makes before getting married. Millions of our Christian sisters set an excellent example in being submissive to their husband. They are to be commended! *w21.02 8 ¶1-2*

Wednesday, July 27

*Step over into Macedonia
and help us.—Acts 16:9.*

In recent years, many publishers have made it their goal to learn another language so that they can expand their ministry and serve in a congregation where there is a greater need for Kingdom publishers. This is a personal decision that these Christians make in order to advance Kingdom interests. Although it may take years for them to become fluent in the new language, they accomplish much good. Their fine qualities and experience strengthen and stabilize the congregation. We value these self-sacrificing brothers and sisters! A body of elders would not hold back from recommending a brother to serve as an elder or a ministerial servant simply because he is not yet fluent in the language of the congregation. The elders will evaluate a brother based on the Scriptural qualifications for elders and ministerial servants and not on how well he speaks the language of the local congregation.—1 Tim. 3:1-10, 12, 13; Titus 1:5-9. *w20.08 30 ¶15-16*

Thursday, July 28

*Consider it all joy, my brothers,
when you meet with various trials.
—Jas. 1:2.*

People may think that they can be happy only if they have good health, a lot of money, and peaceful family relationships. But the type of joy that James wrote about is a part of the fruitage of God's spirit and is not dependent on a person's circumstances. (Gal. 5:22) A Christian gains joy, or a deep sense of happiness, from knowing that he is pleasing Jehovah and following Jesus' example. (Luke 6:22, 23; Col.

1:10, 11) Like a flame burning inside the protection of a lantern, this type of joy burns within a Christian's heart. It does not flicker when health fails or money is scarce. And it is not snuffed out by ridicule or opposition from family members or others. Rather than being put out, the flame burns brighter each time opposers try to extinguish it. The trials we face because of our faith confirm that we are true disciples of Christ. (Matt. 10:22; 24:9; John 15:20) For good reason, James could write the words of today's text. *w21.02 28 ¶16*

Friday, July 29

*A good word cheers [a heart] up.
—Prov. 12:25.*

As you come across Bible passages showing that strength comes from keeping calm and trusting in Jehovah, try to commit a few key verses to memory. You may find it helpful to read them aloud or to write them down and review them often. Joshua was commanded to read the book of the Law regularly in an undertone in order to act wisely. These reminders would also help him overcome the fear that he might otherwise have felt in his circumstances. (Josh. 1:8, 9) Many expressions found in God's Word can give you peace of mind and heart in situations that would normally lead to feelings of anxiety or dread. (Ps. 27:1-3; Prov. 3:25, 26) At our meetings, we benefit from the instruction presented from the platform, the comments made by the audience, and the upbuilding conversations we have with our brothers and sisters. (Heb. 10:24, 25) We can also be greatly encouraged when we share our feelings with trusted friends in the congregation. *w21.01 6 ¶15-16*

Saturday, July 30

Become an example to the faithful ones.—1 Tim. 4:12.

When you got baptized, you showed great faith and trust in Jehovah. And Jehovah happily entrusted you with the privilege of becoming a member of his family. The key now is to continue to rely on Jehovah. It may seem that it is easy to rely on Jehovah when you must make life-altering decisions, but what about at other times? How important it is that you trust in Jehovah when making decisions, including those regarding entertainment, secular work, and life goals! Do not rely on your own wisdom. Instead, look for Bible principles that apply to your circumstances, and then act in harmony with that direction. (Prov. 3:5, 6) If you do so, you will make Jehovah happy and you will earn the respect of those in your congregation. Of course, like all of us, you are imperfect, and at times you will make mistakes. However, this should not prevent you from doing all you can in Jehovah's service. *w21.03 6 ¶14-15*

Sunday, July 31

I was rescued from the lion's mouth.—2 Tim. 4:17.

Are you dealing with opposition from members of your family? Or do you live in a country where the work of Jehovah's people is severely restricted or even banned? If so, you might be encouraged by reading 2 Timothy 1:12-16 and 4:6-11, 17-22. The apostle Paul wrote this portion of Scripture while he was in prison. Before you read those passages, tell Jehovah about your problem and how it makes you feel. Be specific. Then ask Jehovah to help you dis-

cern principles in the accounts about Paul's trials that will help you to know how you should respond to the challenge you are facing. Jehovah had warned Paul that he would have to endure persecution for being a Christian. (Acts 21:11-13) How did Jehovah help Paul? He answered Paul's prayers and over time gave him power. Paul was assured that he would receive the reward that he had worked so hard to gain. Jehovah also moved Paul's loyal friends to give him practical help. *w21.03 17-18 ¶14-15, 19*

Monday, August 1

Apart from me you can do nothing at all.—John 15:5.

Only those who have a close friendship with Jesus will benefit from his ransom sacrifice. Jesus said that he would "surrender his life in behalf of his friends." (John 15:13) Faithful people who lived before Jesus came to earth will have to learn about him and come to love him. Such men and women will be resurrected, but even these righteous servants of Jehovah will need to form a friendship with Jesus in order to gain everlasting life. (John 17:3; Acts 24:15; Heb. 11:8-12, 24-26, 31) We have the joy of working along with Jesus in preaching and teaching the good news of the Kingdom. When Jesus was on earth, he was a teacher. And since his return to heaven, Jesus, as head of the congregation, has continued to direct the preaching and teaching work. He sees and appreciates your efforts to help as many as you can to come to know him and his Father. In fact, the only way we can accomplish this work is with the help of Jehovah and Jesus. —John 15:4. *w20.04 22 ¶7-8*

Tuesday, August 2

These two kings . . . will sit at one table speaking lies to each other.

—Dan. 11:27.

The titles “king of the north” and “king of the south” were initially given to political powers located north and south of the literal land of Israel. (Dan. 10:14) Until Pentecost 33 C.E., the literal nation of Israel was God’s people. From then on, however, Jehovah made it obvious that he viewed Jesus’ faithful disciples as his people. Therefore, much of the prophecy recorded in Daniel chapter 11 involves, not the literal nation of Israel, but Christ’s followers. (Acts 2:1-4; Rom. 9:6-8; Gal. 6:15, 16) And the identity of the king of the north and the king of the south changed over time. Even so, several factors remained constant. First, the kings interacted with God’s people in a significant way. Second, they showed by their treatment of God’s people that they hated the true God, Jehovah. And third, the two kings engaged in a power struggle with each other. *w20.05 3 ¶3-4*

Wednesday, August 3

I Will Become What I Choose to Become.—Ex. 3:14.

Jehovah makes things happen by becoming whatever is needed in order to fulfill his purpose. Jehovah can also cause his imperfect human servants to become what is needed in order to serve him and fulfill his purpose. (Isa. 64:8) In these ways, Jehovah causes his will to be carried out. Nothing can stop him from causing his purposes to be fulfilled. (Isa. 46:10, 11) We can build our appreciation for our heavenly

Father by meditating on what he has done and what he has enabled us to do. For instance, when we meditate on the wonders of creation, we are filled with awe at what Jehovah has accomplished, what he has caused to come into existence. (Ps. 8:3, 4) And when we meditate on what Jehovah has caused us to become so that we can do his will, we develop deep respect for him. The name Jehovah really is awe-inspiring! It includes all that our Father is, all that he has done, and all that he will do. —Ps. 89:7, 8. *w20.06 9-10 ¶6-7*

Thursday, August 4

God . . . gives to all people life and breath.—Acts 17:24, 25.

Oxygen is a life-sustaining gas that is used by some living things, including us. It has been estimated that living creatures breathe in a hundred billion tons of oxygen in a year. These same creatures breathe out a waste product called carbon dioxide. Yet, these living creatures never consume all the oxygen, and the atmosphere never becomes choked with the “waste” gas, carbon dioxide. Why not? Because Jehovah also created organisms—from large trees to tiny algae—that take in carbon dioxide and give off oxygen. In a very literal way, the oxygen cycle confirms the words of today’s text. How can we develop appreciation for our amazing planet and all that it supplies? (Ps. 115:16) One way is by meditating on the things Jehovah has made. That will motivate us to thank Jehovah each day for the good things he gives us. And we show that we appreciate the earth by keeping the part of it where we live as clean as possible. *w20.05 22 ¶5, 7*

Friday, August 5

I will certainly sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the nations.—Ezek. 36:23.

Jehovah handled Satan's challenge with wisdom, patience, and justice. He has also shown his almighty power in countless ways. Above all, his love shines through in all that he does. (1 John 4:8) Jehovah has worked unceasingly to sanctify his name. Satan is still slandering God's name today. He fools people into doubting that God is powerful, just, wise, and loving. For example, Satan tries to convince people that Jehovah is not the Creator. And if people do accept that God exists, Satan attempts to make them believe that God and His standards are restrictive and unfair. He even teaches people that Jehovah is a heartless and cruel God who burns people in a fiery hell. When they believe such slander, they are more likely to take the next step—rejecting Jehovah's righteous rule. Until Satan is completely defeated, he will target you as well. Will he succeed? *w20.06 5 ¶13-15*

Saturday, August 6

There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, foreigner, Scythian, slave, or free-man; but Christ is all things and in all.—Col. 3:11.

In many congregations, there will be brothers and sisters who are struggling to learn a new language. It might be difficult for them to express their thoughts. Yet, if we look beyond their language skills, we will see their love for Jehovah and their desire to serve him. If we see these beautiful qualities, we will deep-

ly value and respect these brothers and sisters. We will not say "I do not need you" simply because they do not speak our language fluently. (1 Cor. 12:21) Jehovah has given us the wonderful privilege of having a place in his congregation. Whether we are male or female, single or married, young or old or we speak a certain language well or hardly at all, we are precious to Jehovah and to one another. (Rom. 12:4, 5; Col. 3:10) Let us always look for ways to treasure our place and the place of others in Jehovah's congregation. *w20.08 31 ¶20-22*

Sunday, August 7

Some men joined him and became believers.—Acts 17:34.

The apostle Paul did not give up on the Athenians, even though their city was filled with idolatry, sexual immorality, and pagan philosophy; nor did he let their insults discourage him. Paul himself became a Christian, although he had been "a blasphemer and a persecutor and an insolent man." (1 Tim. 1:13) Just as Jesus saw the potential in Paul, so Paul saw the potential in the Athenians. And his confidence was not misplaced. (Acts 9:13-15) In the first century, people of all backgrounds became Jesus' disciples. When Paul wrote to Christians living in the Grecian city of Corinth, he said that some members of that congregation had at one time been criminals or had lived shockingly immoral lifestyles. And then he added: "That is what some of you were. But you have been washed clean." (1 Cor. 6:9-11) Would you have seen that those people had the potential to change and become disciples? *w20.04 12 ¶15-16*

Monday, August 8

It is enough! . . . Take my life away.—1 Ki. 19:4.

Elders should not be quick to judge those who begin to question the benefits of serving Jehovah. Rather than condemn them, elders must try to understand why they speak and act the way they do. Only then can the elders draw attention to the specific Scriptural encouragement that is needed. The prophet Elijah fled from Queen Jezebel. (1 Ki. 19:1-3) He felt that his work had served no purpose, and he wanted to die. (1 Ki. 19:10) Rather than condemn Elijah, Jehovah assured him that he was not alone, that he could trust in God's power, and that there was still much work for him to do. Jehovah kindly listened to Elijah's concerns and gave him new assignments. (1 Ki. 19:11-16, 18) The lesson? All of us, especially the elders, should treat Jehovah's sheep kindly. Whether a person expresses bitterness or feels unworthy of Jehovah's mercy, elders will listen to him as he pours out his heart. Then they will try to assure the lost sheep that Jehovah values him. *w20.06 22 ¶13-14*

Tuesday, August 9

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

Jehovah made us to enjoy pleasant association with friends and family members. (Ps. 133:1) Jesus had good friends. (John 15:15) The Bible describes the benefits of having true friends. (Prov. 18:24) And it tells us that it is not good for us to isolate ourselves. (Prov. 18:1) Many feel that social media is a way to have a lot of friends and to avoid feeling isolated. However, we need to be cautious

about using this method of communication. Studies have found that people who spend a lot of time scrolling through social media postings might actually end up feeling lonely and depressed. Why? One possible reason is that people often post on social media photos that depict the highlights of their lives, showing selected images of themselves, their friends, and the exciting places they have been. A person who views those images might conclude that, by comparison, his or her own life is ordinary—even dull. *w20.07 5-6 ¶12-13*

Wednesday, August 10

The apostles and the elders gathered together to look into this matter.—Acts 15:6.

The Watchtower of October 1, 1988, stated: "Elders will recognize that Christ, by means of the holy spirit, can direct the mind of any elder on the body of elders to provide the Bible principle needed to cope with any situation or make any important decision. (Acts 15:7-15) No one elder has the monopoly of the spirit within the body." An elder who respects his fellow elders does not always try to speak first at elders' meetings. He does not dominate the discussion, and he does not believe that his opinion is always right. Instead, he states his viewpoint humbly and modestly. He listens carefully to the comments of others. More important, he is eager to share Scriptural principles and to listen to direction from "the faithful and discreet slave." (Matt. 24:45-47) As elders discuss matters in an atmosphere of love and respect, God's holy spirit will be present, and it will guide them to reach the right decisions. —Jas. 3:17, 18. *w20.08 27 ¶5-6*

Thursday, August 11

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

The apostle Paul's enemies were vastly more powerful than he was. Often, they had him beaten and thrown into jail. Also, Paul was treated badly by people who should have been friends. Some in the Christian congregation even opposed him. (2 Cor. 12:11; Phil. 3:18) But Paul conquered all who fought against him. How? He continued preaching despite opposition. He remained loyal to his brothers and sisters even when they disappointed him. And above all, he was faithful to God to the end of his life. (2 Tim. 4:8) He overcame great odds, not because he was physically strong, but because he relied on Jehovah. Do you have to deal with insults or persecution? Your goal is to embed God's Word in receptive minds and hearts. You can achieve that goal by relying on the Bible to answer people's questions, by being respectful and kind to those who treat you badly, and by doing good to all, even your enemies.—Matt. 5:44; 1 Pet. 3:15-17. *w20.07* 17-18 ¶14-15

Friday, August 12

*Your humility makes me great.
—2 Sam. 22:36.*

Can we really say that Jehovah is humble? Yes, we can, as David acknowledged above. (Ps. 18:35) Perhaps David was thinking of the day when the prophet Samuel came to the house of David's father to anoint the future king of Israel. David was the youngest of eight boys; yet, he was the one whom Jehovah chose to replace King Saul. (1 Sam. 16:1, 10-13) David would cer-

tainly agree with the sentiments expressed by a psalmist who said of Jehovah: "He stoops down to look on heaven and earth, raising the lowly from the dust. He lifts up the poor . . . to make him sit with nobles." (Ps. 113:6-8) Jehovah proves that he is humble by how he deals with imperfect human worshippers. Not only does he accept our worship but he also views us as his friends. (Ps. 25:14) In order to make friendship with him possible, Jehovah took the initiative by providing his Son as a sacrifice for our sins. What mercy—what compassion—he has shown us! *w20.08* 8 ¶1-3

Saturday, August 13

[Jehovah] does not desire anyone to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance.—2 Pet. 3:9.

Jehovah has a fixed day and hour when he will bring an end to this old system. (Matt. 24:36) He will not become impatient and act before that time. He has a longing to resurrect the dead, but he is patient. (Job 14:14, 15) He is waiting until the right time arrives to raise them to life. (John 5:28) We have good reasons to appreciate Jehovah's patience. Just think: Because Jehovah is patient, many people, including us, have had time "to attain to repentance." Jehovah wants as many people as possible to have the opportunity to gain everlasting life. So let us show that we appreciate his patience. How? By earnestly looking for those who are "rightly disposed for everlasting life" and helping them to love Jehovah and serve him. (Acts 13:48) Then they will benefit from Jehovah's patience, just as we have. *w20.08* 18 ¶17

Sunday, August 14

*Make me know your ways,
O Jehovah; teach me your
paths.—Ps. 25:4.*

What a student learns on a Bible study should appeal not just to his mind but also to his heart. Why? Our heart—which includes our desires, emotions, and feelings—motivates us to action. Jesus used logical reasoning that appealed to the mind. But people followed him because he also stirred their heart. (Luke 24:15, 27, 32) Your student needs to see Jehovah as a real Person, someone with whom he can develop a relationship, and to see Him as his Father, his God, and his Friend. (Ps. 25:5) During the Bible study, make our God's personality come alive. (Ex. 34:5, 6; 1 Pet. 5:6, 7) Regardless of the topic you are discussing, focus attention on the kind of Person Jehovah is. Help the student to appreciate Jehovah's beautiful qualities—his love, kindness, and compassion. Jesus said that “the greatest and first commandment” is to “love Jehovah your God.” (Matt. 22:37, 38) Try to instill deep love for God in your student's heart. *w20.10 10 ¶12*

Monday, August 15

*Jesus loved Martha and her sister
and Lazarus.—John 11:5.*

Jesus treated all women with dignity. (John 4:27) Jesus, however, had special regard for women who did the will of his Father. Significantly, he viewed them as sisters and mentioned them along with the men whom he viewed as part of his spiritual family. (Matt. 12:50) Jesus also was a true friend to them. Consider his friendship with Mary and Martha, both of whom were apparently single. (Luke 10:38-42) By his

words and actions, Jesus obviously made them feel comfortable. Mary felt welcome to sit at his feet as a disciple. And Martha, disturbed because Mary was not helping, felt free to tell Jesus what was on her mind. In that informal setting, Jesus was able to help both women spiritually. And he showed his care for these women and their brother, Lazarus, by visiting with them on other occasions. (John 12:1-3) It is no wonder that when Lazarus fell seriously ill, Mary and Martha knew that they could turn to Jesus for help.—John 11:3. *w20.09 20 ¶3; 21 ¶6*

Tuesday, August 16

*They thought that the Kingdom
of God was going to appear
instantly.—Luke 19:11.*

Jesus' disciples hoped that the Kingdom would “appear instantly” and rescue them from Roman oppression. We yearn for the day when God's Kingdom will remove wickedness and usher in the new world of righteousness. (2 Pet. 3:13) However, we need to be patient and wait on Jehovah's appointed time. Jehovah allowed Noah sufficient time to build the ark and to serve as “a preacher of righteousness.” (2 Pet. 2:5; 1 Pet. 3:20) Jehovah listened as Abraham repeatedly questioned him about His decision to destroy the inhabitants of the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. (Gen. 18:20-33) For centuries, Jehovah was extraordinarily patient with the unfaithful nation of Israel. (Neh. 9:30, 31) We see evidence of Jehovah's patience today as he allows time for all whom he draws “to attain to repentance.” (2 Pet. 3:9; John 6:44; 1 Tim. 2:3, 4) Jehovah's example gives us good reason to exercise patience as we continue to preach and teach. *w20.09 10 ¶8-9*

Wednesday, August 17

*There is going to be a resurrection.
—Acts 24:15.*

When Jehovah resurrects people, he will restore their memories and the personality traits that made them who they were. Just think of what that implies. Jehovah loves you so much that he is keeping track of all that you think, feel, say, and do. So if he had to resurrect you, he would easily be able to restore your memories, attitude, and personality traits. King David was aware of just how interested Jehovah is in each one of us. (Ps. 139:1-4) In what way can understanding how well Jehovah knows us affect us now? When we meditate on how well Jehovah knows us, we should not feel worried. Why not? Remember that Jehovah deeply cares for us. He cherishes the traits that make each one of us unique. He carefully notes the experiences in our life that make us who we are. What a comforting thought! Never should we feel that we are alone. Each minute of every day, Jehovah is right beside us, looking for opportunities to help us.—2 Chron. 16:9. *w20.08* 17 ¶13-14

Thursday, August 18

*I will give you insight and instruct you in the way you should go.
—Ps. 32:8.*

Jehovah takes great pleasure in educating his people. He wants them to know him, to love him, and to live forever as his beloved children. All of this would be impossible without the education he provides. (John 17:3) Jehovah used the first-century Christian congregation to educate his people. (Col. 1:9, 10) Holy spirit

—the “helper” that Jesus had promised—played a major role. (John 14:16) It gave the disciples more insight into God’s Word, and it brought back to their mind the many things Jesus said and did, as later recorded in the Gospels. This knowledge strengthened the early Christians’ faith as well as their love for God, for his Son, and for one another. Jehovah foretold that “in the final part of the days,” people of all nations would flock to his figurative mountain to be instructed about his ways. (Isa. 2:2, 3) We are seeing that prophecy being fulfilled. *w20.10* 24 ¶14-15

Friday, August 19

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

What could cause someone to reject good counsel from a loving friend? Pride. Proud people like “to have their ears tickled.” They “turn away from listening to the truth.” (2 Tim. 4:3, 4) They have an inflated view of their own opinion and worth. However, the apostle Paul wrote: “If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he is deceiving himself.” (Gal. 6:3) King Solomon summed up the matter well. He wrote: “Better is a poor but wise child than an old but stupid king, who no longer has enough sense to heed a warning.” (Eccl. 4:13) Note the example set by the apostle Peter when he was publicly corrected by the apostle Paul. (Gal. 2:11-14) Peter could have resented what Paul said, focusing on the way he said it and where he chose to say it. But Peter was wise. He accepted the counsel and did not nurse a grudge against Paul. Instead, he later referred to Paul as a “beloved brother.”—2 Pet. 3:15. *w20.11* 21 ¶9, 11-12

Saturday, August 20

Make disciples . . . , teaching them.

—Matt. 28:19, 20.

What will greatly help Bible students to make spiritual progress? Attending our Christian meetings. The Scriptural instruction given at the meetings will deepen their knowledge, strengthen their faith, and help them to grow in their love for God. (Acts 15:30-32) Also, a publisher may tell the student how his own growing love for Jehovah moved him to obey God's commandments. (2 Cor. 7:1; Phil. 4:13) And when Bible students get to know a variety of faithful publishers, the students learn from their examples what it means to observe Christ's command to love God and neighbor. (John 13:35; 1 Tim. 4:12) They see that publishers deal with challenges that are similar to the ones they face and learn that the changes they need to make to become a disciple of Christ are within reach. (Deut. 30:11) Each one in the congregation can contribute in various ways to the spiritual progress of Bible students.—Matt. 5:16. *w20.11* 5 ¶10-12

Sunday, August 21

I have fought with wild beasts at Ephesus.—1 Cor. 15:32.

Perhaps the apostle Paul was alluding to his fighting real animals at an arena in Ephesus. (2 Cor. 1:8; 4:10; 11:23) Or he may have been referring to hostile Jews and others who were like "wild beasts." (Acts 19:26-34; 1 Cor. 16:9) Whichever it was, Paul faced serious perils. Yet, he still had a positive outlook on the future. (1 Cor. 15:30, 31; 2 Cor. 4:16-18) We are living in dangerous

times. Some of our brothers have been victims of crime. Others live in war-torn areas where their safety is far from guaranteed. Still others serve Jehovah at the risk of their life or freedom in lands where the preaching work is restricted or even banned. Yet, all these brothers and sisters persevere in their worship of Jehovah, becoming examples for us. They are secure in the knowledge that even if they lose their life at the present time, Jehovah has something far better in mind for them in the future. *w20.12* 9 ¶3-4

Monday, August 22

We are God's fellow workers. You are God's field under cultivation, God's building.—1 Cor. 3:9.

Have you at some point felt discouraged because your territory seems to be unproductive or because few people are found at home? In such a situation, what can be done to maintain or increase our joy? It is important to have the right view of the ministry. What does that involve? Keep your focus on proclaiming God's name and Kingdom. Jesus made it plain that relatively few will find the path to life. (Matt. 7:13, 14) When we are in the ministry, we have the honor of working with Jehovah, Jesus, and the angels. (Matt. 28:19, 20; Rev. 14:6, 7) Jehovah draws those who are desiring. (John 6:44) So if a person does not respond well to our message this time, he may listen the next time we call. "Discouragement can be a formidable weapon used by Satan," notes a sister named Deborah. But Satan's weapons are no match for Jehovah God. *w20.12* 26 ¶18-19; 27 ¶21

Tuesday, August 23

Let us continue loving one another, because love is from God.—1 John 4:7.

Many loyal Christians must work at secular jobs full-time so that they can support themselves and their families. Even so, these faithful publishers support God's organization in any way they can. For instance, some are able to provide disaster relief, others can work on construction projects, and everyone has the opportunity to donate funds to the worldwide work. They do these things because they love God and their fellow man. Each week, we prove that we love our brothers and sisters by attending congregation meetings and participating in them. Although we may be tired, we are present at those meetings. Although we may be nervous, we comment. And although we all have problems of our own, we encourage others before or after the meeting. (Heb. 10:24, 25) How grateful we are for the work done by our fellow publishers! *w21.01 10 ¶11*

Wednesday, August 24

Let us not become egotistical.—Gal. 5:26.

Proud people find it difficult to commend others, preferring that they themselves receive praise. They are more likely to compare themselves with others and to promote a spirit of competition. Rather than training others and giving them authority, they are likely to say, "If you want something done right"—the way that pleases them—"you have to do it yourself." A proud person is often ambitious and jealous. If we detect that we have a prob-

lem with pride, we should earnestly pray for Jehovah's help to 'make our mind over' so that this bad trait does not become deeply rooted within us. (Rom. 12:2) How thankful we are for Jehovah's example! (Ps. 18:35) We see his humility in how he deals with his servants, and we want to imitate him. In addition, we want to imitate the fine examples found in the Bible of modest people who had the privilege of walking with God. May we always give Jehovah the honor and the glory that he deserves.—Rev. 4:11. *w20.08 13 ¶19-20*

Thursday, August 25

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

Marriage is a perfect gift from God, but people are imperfect. (1 John 1:8) That is why God's Word warns married couples that they will face challenges that are described as "tribulation in their flesh." Jehovah expects Christian husbands to care for the spiritual, emotional, and material needs of their family. (1 Tim. 5:8) However, married sisters have to take time from their busy schedule each day to read God's Word and meditate on it and to turn to Jehovah in earnest prayer. This can be a challenge. Wives are busy, but it is vital that they take the time. Why? Because Jehovah wants each one of us to develop and maintain a personal relationship with him. (Acts 17:27) Understandably, a wife may have to work hard to be submissive to her imperfect husband. However, she will find it easier to fulfill the assignment Jehovah has given her if she understands and accepts the Scriptural reasons why she should be submissive. *w21.02 9 ¶3, 6-7*

Friday, August 26

This tested quality of your faith produces endurance.—Jas. 1:3.

Trials can be likened to the fire that is used to forge a blade of steel. When the blade is heated and cooled, the steel becomes stronger. Similarly, when we endure trials, our faith is strengthened. That is why James wrote: “Let endurance complete its work, so that you may be complete and sound in all respects.” (Jas. 1:4) When we see that our trials make our faith stronger, we can endure them with joy. In his letter, James also identifies some of the things that could cause us to lose our joy. One challenge is not knowing what to do. When undergoing a trial, we want to look to Jehovah for help to make choices that please him, benefit our brothers and sisters, and help us to keep our own integrity. (Jer. 10:23) We need wisdom to know what course to take and what we should say to those who oppose us. If we do not know what to do, we may feel that we are helpless victims of our circumstances, and we could quickly lose our joy. *w21.02* 28 ¶7-9

Saturday, August 27

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

Jehovah sets the example for us. His love is so intense that if we are loyal to him, nothing can break that bond. (Rom. 8:38, 39) The Greek word rendered “intensely” conveys the idea of stretching outward—even straining. At times, we may need to “stretch” and “strain” in order to have tender affection for a fellow believer. When others upset us, we need to continue “putting up with one another in love, earnestly en-

deavoring to maintain the oneness of the spirit in the uniting bond of peace.” (Eph. 4:1-3) We will look beyond our brothers’ faults and try our best to view our brothers as Jehovah does. (1 Sam. 16:7; Ps. 130:3) It is not always easy to show tender affection for our brothers and sisters, especially when we are aware of their faults. Apparently, this was a challenge for some first-century Christians, as was the case with Euodia and Syntyche. The apostle Paul urged them “to be of the same mind in the Lord.”—Phil. 4:2, 3. *w21.01* 22-23 ¶10-11

Sunday, August 28

I write you, young men, because you are strong and the word of God remains in you and you have conquered the wicked one.

—1 John 2:14.

Older ones deeply appreciate you young men who serve Jehovah “shoulder to shoulder” with them! (Zeph. 3:9) They love your zealous spirit and the energetic, enthusiastic way you do the work you are given. You have found favor in their eyes. Young brothers, never forget that Jehovah loves and trusts you. He foretold that during the last days, there would be an army of young men who would offer themselves willingly. (Ps. 110:1-3) He knows that you love him and want to serve him to the best of your ability. So be patient with others, and be patient with yourself. When you make mistakes, accept the training and discipline that you receive, viewing it as coming from Jehovah. (Heb. 12:6) Diligently care for any assignments you are given. And above all, in everything you do, make your heavenly Father proud of you.—Prov. 27:11. *w21.03* 7 ¶17-18

Monday, August 29

If you become discouraged in times of trouble, your strength will be meager.—Prov. 24:10, ftn.

We can become discouraged by many things—some internal, some external. The causes may include imperfections, weaknesses, and ill health. They may also include our not receiving a desired assignment in Jehovah's service or our having to witness in a territory that seems unresponsive. It would be easy for us to develop an unbalanced view of our imperfections and weaknesses. As a result, we might believe that because of our failings, Jehovah would never welcome us into his new world. Such an attitude can be harmful. The Bible reveals that, with the exception of Jesus Christ, all humans "have sinned." (Rom. 3:23) But the Bible's Author is not a faultfinder or perfectionist. Rather, he is a loving Father who wants to help us. He is also patient. He sees how we struggle to fight our weaknesses and overcome an unbalanced view of ourselves, and he is ready to help us.—Rom. 7:18, 19. *w20.12 22 ¶1-3*

Tuesday, August 30

Finally, brothers, continue to rejoice, to be readjusted.
—2 Cor. 13:11.

All of us are on a journey. Our destination, or goal, is to live in the new world under Jehovah's loving rulership. Each day, we try to follow the path that leads to life. But as Jesus said, that road is cramped and at times difficult to follow. (Matt. 7:13, 14) We are imperfect, and it is easy for us to stray from this path. (Gal. 6:1) If we are to stay on the

cramped road to life, we must be willing to adjust our thinking, attitude, and actions. The apostle Paul encourages us "to be readjusted." When we try to examine our own thoughts and feelings, we face a challenge. Our heart is treacherous, and that can make it difficult for us to know where it might be leading us. (Jer. 17:9) It is easy to deceive ourselves with "false reasoning." (Jas. 1:22) So we must use God's Word to examine ourselves. God's Word reveals what we are on the inside, the innermost "thoughts and intentions" of our heart.—Heb. 4:12, 13. *w20.11 18 ¶1-3*

Wednesday, August 31

In showing honor to one another, take the lead.—Rom. 12:10.

When we are humble and modest, we are more likely to be joyful. Why so? When we are aware of our limitations, we will be grateful and happy for any help that we receive from others. For example, think of the occasion when Jesus healed ten lepers. Only one of them returned to thank Jesus for curing him of his dreadful disease—something the man could never have done on his own. This humble and modest man was thankful for the help he received, and he glorified God for it. (Luke 17:11-19) Humble, modest people tend to get along well with others and are more likely to have close friends. Why? They willingly acknowledge that other people have fine qualities and show confidence in them. Humble and modest ones are happy when others succeed in whatever assignment they receive and are quick to commend them and honor them. *w20.08 12 ¶17-18*

Thursday, September 1

After that I will pour out my spirit on every sort of flesh.—Joel 2:28.

Peter used slightly different wording when quoting Joel's prophecy. (Acts 2:16, 17) Instead of beginning the quotation with the words "after that," Peter said: "And in the last days"—in this context, the last days of the Jewish system of things—God's spirit would be poured out "on every sort of flesh." This indicates that considerable time had passed before Joel's prophecy was fulfilled. It was after that remarkable outpouring of God's spirit in the first century that the preaching work began to go forward to the greatest extent. By the time the apostle Paul wrote his letter to the Colossians, about 61 C.E., he could describe the good news as being preached "in all creation under heaven." (Col. 1:23) In Paul's day, "all creation" meant the world as it was then known. With the help of Jehovah's powerful holy spirit, the preaching work has expanded much more in our day—"to the ends of the earth"—Acts 13:47. *w20.04 6-7 ¶15-16*

Friday, September 2

I myself will search for my sheep, and I will care for them.—Ezek. 34:11.

Jehovah loves each one of us, including any sheep who have strayed from his flock. (Matt. 18:12-14) God promised that he would search for his lost sheep and help them to regain their spiritual health. And he outlined specific steps that he would take—steps that a typical Israelite shepherd would take if a sheep went missing. (Ezek. 34:12-16) First, the shepherd would search for the

sheep, which could require much time and effort. Then, once he located the stray, the shepherd would bring it back to the flock. Further, if the sheep was injured or starving, the shepherd would lovingly support the weak animal, binding its wounds, carrying it, and feeding it. Elders, the shepherds of "the flock of God," need to take these same steps to help any who have strayed from the congregation. (1 Pet. 5:2, 3) The elders search for them, help them to return to the flock, and show them love by providing the necessary spiritual support. *w20.06 20 ¶10*

Saturday, September 3

The fields . . . are white for harvesting.—John 4:35.

Did Jesus view the fields as being ripe for harvesting because he expected that most people would follow him? Not at all. The Scriptures had foretold that relatively few would put faith in him. (John 12:37, 38) And Jesus had the miraculous ability to read hearts. (Matt. 9:4) Still, he focused on those few who would believe, and he zealously preached to everyone. How much more so should we, who cannot read hearts, resist the tendency to judge a territory or an individual! Instead, see people's potential. Remember what Jesus said to his disciples. The fields are white, that is, they are ready to be harvested. People can change and become disciples of Christ. Jehovah views these potential disciples as "precious things." (Hag. 2:7) If we see people as Jehovah and Jesus do, we will learn about their backgrounds and interests. We will view them, not as strangers, but as potential brothers and sisters. *w20.04 13 ¶18-19*

Sunday, September 4

I have called you friends, because I have made known to you all the things I have heard from my Father.—John 15:15.

God's Word clearly teaches that we must have and maintain love for Jesus in order to please Jehovah. One thing we can do to become a friend of Jesus is to get to know him. We can do this by reading the Bible books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. As we meditate on the Bible accounts of Jesus' life, we come to love and respect Jesus because of the kind way he dealt with people. For instance, even though he was their Master, he did not treat his disciples as slaves. Instead, he revealed his inner thoughts and feelings to them. Jesus shared their pain and cried with them. (John 11:32-36) Even his opposers acknowledged that he was a friend of those who responded to his message. (Matt. 11:19) When we imitate Jesus in the way that he dealt with his disciples, our relationships with others improve, we feel more content and happy, and our appreciation for Christ grows.

w20.04 22 ¶9-10

Monday, September 5

The king of the south will prepare himself for the war with an exceedingly large and mighty army.—Dan. 11:25.

By 1870, Britain had become the largest empire on earth, and it had the most powerful military force. That empire was pictured as a small horn that vanquished three other horns—France, Spain, and the Netherlands. (Dan. 7:7, 8) And it filled the role of the king of the south well

into World War I. During this same time, the United States of America had become the dominant economic power and was forming a close partnership with Britain. During World War I, the United States and Britain were welded into a powerful military alliance. At that time, Britain and its former colony became the Anglo-American World Power. As Daniel foretold, this king had amassed “an exceedingly large and mighty army.” Throughout the last days, the Anglo-American alliance has been the king of the south.

w20.05 4 ¶7-8

Tuesday, September 6

To the place from which the streams flow, there they return.—Eccl. 1:7.

Water in liquid form exists on earth because our planet is located at the perfect distance from the sun. If it were just a little closer, all the water would boil off, leaving a hot, lifeless rock. If the earth were just a little farther from the sun, all the water would freeze, turning the earth into a giant ball of ice. Because Jehovah placed the earth at this ideal location, the earth's water cycle can sustain life. The sun heats water in the oceans and on the earth's surface and evaporates the water to form clouds. Each year, the sun evaporates nearly 120,000 cubic miles (500,000 cu km) of water. This water stays in the atmosphere for about ten days before falling as rain or snow. The water eventually makes its way back to the oceans or other bodies of water, and the cycle is repeated. This efficient, sustainable cycle proves that Jehovah is both wise and powerful.—Job 36:27, 28. w20.05 22 ¶6

Wednesday, September 7

You will receive power when the holy spirit comes upon you.

—Acts 1:8.

Jesus urged us to keep praying for holy spirit. (Luke 11:9, 13) By means of his spirit, Jehovah gives us power—even “power beyond what is normal.” (2 Cor. 4:7) With the help of God’s spirit, we can endure any trial we may be facing. Holy spirit can also help us handle our assignments in God’s service and can enhance our talents and abilities. We can honestly attribute the good results of our efforts, not to ourselves, but to the help of God’s spirit. We can show that we value God’s holy spirit by praying that it will help us detect any wrong thoughts or desires in our heart. (Ps. 139:23, 24) If we make such a request, Jehovah, through his spirit, can make us aware of wrong thinking or inclinations. Then we should pray for God’s spirit to give us the strength to resist such a thought or desire. Thus we will show that we are determined to avoid doing anything that would cause Jehovah to stop helping us with his holy spirit.—Eph. 4:30. *w20.05* 28-29 ¶10-12

Thursday, September 8

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

When we defend Jehovah’s name, we follow the example of Jesus Christ. Jesus made his Father’s name known not only by using that name but also by defending Jehovah’s reputation. For example, he contradicted the Pharisees, who in various ways painted Jehovah as harsh, demanding, distant, and merciless. Jesus helped people to see his Father as being reasonable, patient,

loving, and forgiving. He also helped people to see Jehovah by the way he perfectly imitated his Father’s qualities in his daily life. (John 14:9) Like Jesus, we can share what we know about Jehovah, teaching people what a loving and kind God He is. As we do so, we overturn lies and slander about Jehovah. We sanctify Jehovah’s name, making it holy in the minds and hearts of people. With our words and actions, we show people what Jehovah is truly like. We vindicate that name by helping to free people from the misconceptions they may have about it. *w20.06* 6 ¶17-18

Friday, September 9

Let us not become egotistical, stirring up competition with one another, envying one another.

—Gal. 5:26.

Social media can be used for a good purpose—for example, to keep in touch with family and friends. Have you observed, though, that some of the material that people post on social media is designed to promote the people themselves? “Look at me” seems to be the message they want to convey. Some even post rude and obscene comments on their own photos or about the photos that others post. This too is contrary to the humility and fellow feeling that Christians are encouraged to cultivate. (1 Pet. 3:8) If you use social media, ask yourself: ‘Might the comments, photos, or videos that I post give others the impression that I am bragging? Could I make others feel jealous?’ Christians do not feel the need for promoting themselves. They follow the Bible’s admonition found in today’s text. Humility will help us avoid getting caught up in the world’s spirit of self-promotion. —1 John 2:16. *w20.07* 6 ¶14-15

Saturday, September 10

Formerly I was a blasphemer and a persecutor and an insolent man. Nevertheless, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance.
—1 Tim. 1:13.

Before the apostle Paul became a disciple of Christ, he was an insolent young man who persecuted Jesus' followers. (Acts 7:58) Jesus himself stopped Paul, then known as Saul, from terrorizing the Christian congregation. Jesus spoke to Paul from heaven and struck him blind. To recover his sight, Paul was forced to seek help from the very people he had been persecuting. He humbly accepted assistance from a disciple named Ananias who restored Paul's sight. (Acts 9:3-9, 17, 18) Paul later became a prominent member of the Christian congregation, but he never forgot the lesson Jesus taught him on the road to Damascus. Paul remained humble, and he willingly accepted the help of his brothers and sisters. He acknowledged that they were "a strengthening aid" to him.—Col. 4: 10, 11, fn. w20.07 18-19 ¶16-17

Sunday, September 11

Your Father has approved of giving you the Kingdom.—Luke 12:32.

Even though Jehovah is almighty, he delegates authority to others. For instance, he appointed Jesus to be King of the Kingdom, and He will give a measure of authority to the 144,000 humans who become co-rulers with Jesus. Of course, Jehovah trained Jesus to be King and High Priest. (Heb. 5:8, 9) He also trains Jesus' co-rulers, but he does not give them this assignment and then step in to manage

every detail of the work. Instead, he trusts that they will do his will. (Rev. 5:10) If our heavenly Father—who does not need help from anyone—delegates authority to others, how much more so should we do the same! For instance, are you a family head or an elder in the congregation? Follow Jehovah's example by delegating tasks to others and then resisting the urge to micromanage them. When you imitate Jehovah, not only will you get the work done but you will also train others and boost their confidence.—Isa. 41:10. w20.08 9 ¶5-6

Monday, September 12

The Son of man came to seek and to save what was lost.—Luke 19:10.

How does Jehovah want us to feel about his lost sheep? Jesus provides the pattern for us. He knew that all of Jehovah's sheep are precious in God's eyes, so Jesus did all he could to help "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" return to Jehovah. (Matt. 15:24) As the fine shepherd, Jesus also did his utmost to avoid losing any of Jehovah's sheep. (John 6:39) The apostle Paul urged the elders of the congregation in Ephesus to imitate Jesus' example. "You must assist those who are weak and must keep in mind the words of the Lord Jesus, when he himself said: 'There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving.'" (Acts 20:17, 35) Clearly, elders today have a special responsibility in this regard. "When I think of how much Jehovah cares for his lost sheep, I feel motivated to do all I can to help them," explains Salvador, an elder in Spain. "I am convinced that Jehovah wants me to care for them." w20.06 23 ¶15-16

Tuesday, September 13

The former things have passed away.—Rev. 21:4.

Jehovah will patiently wait until the end of the thousand years before he expects us to be perfect. Until that time, Jehovah is willing to overlook our sins. Surely, then, we have reason to look for the good in others and to be patient with them. Jesus and the angels were joyful when the earth was first created. But imagine how happy they will be to see the earth full of perfect people, who love and serve Jehovah. Imagine the joy that those who were brought from the earth to heaven to rule with Christ will feel as they see mankind benefiting from their work. (Rev. 4:4, 9-11; 5:9, 10) And imagine living when tears of joy replace tears of pain, when sickness, sorrow, and death are gone forever. Until then, be determined to imitate your loving, wise, and patient Father. If you do, you will maintain your joy, no matter what trials you face. (Jas. 1:2-4) How thankful we can be for Jehovah's promise that "there is going to be a resurrection!"—Acts 24:15. *w20.08 19 ¶18-19*

Wednesday, September 14

This good news of the Kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth.—Matt. 24:14.

The Bible is a loving gift from God. Our heavenly Father inspired men to write it because he cares greatly for his earthly children. By means of the Bible, Jehovah answers the most important questions we could ask, such as: Where did we come from? What is the purpose of life? And what does the future hold? Jehovah wants all his children to learn the answers to those questions, so

throughout the centuries he has moved men to translate the Bible into many languages. Today, the whole Bible or portions of it are available in over 3,000 languages! The Bible is the most widely translated and distributed book in history. We can prove that we appreciate the Bible by reading it each day, meditating on what it teaches, and doing our best to apply what we learn. In addition, we show our gratitude to God by doing all we can to share its message with as many people as possible.—Ps. 1:1-3; Matt. 28:19, 20. *w20.05 24-25 ¶15-16*

Thursday, September 15

The word of Jehovah has been the cause of insults and jeering all day long.—Jer. 20:8.

The prophet Jeremiah was assigned a territory that was extremely difficult. He became so discouraged at one point that he felt like giving up. But he did not. Why not? "The word of Jehovah" was like a fire inside Jeremiah, and he could not hold it in! (Jer. 20:9) The same is true of us when we fill our mind and heart with God's Word. That is an added reason for us to study the Bible daily and meditate on it. As a result, our joy can continue to increase, and our ministry may become more productive. (Jer. 15:16) So when you feel discouraged, supplicate Jehovah for his support. He will help you to deal with your imperfections, weaknesses, or illness. He will help you to keep a balanced view of assignments of service. And he will help you to have a positive view of your ministry. Moreover, pour out your concerns to your heavenly Father. With his help, you can win the fight against discouragement. *w20.12 27 ¶20-21*

Friday, September 16

Appeal to . . . older women as mothers, to younger women as sisters, with all chasteness.

—1 Tim. 5:1, 2.

For some sisters, the meetings are their main opportunity to be with fellow worshippers. So we want to use those occasions to welcome them, speak with them, and let them see our concern for them. Like Jesus, we can make time to socialize with sisters. (Luke 10:38-42) Perhaps we can invite them over for a simple meal or for some recreation. When we do, we want to keep the conversation upbuilding. (Rom. 1:11, 12) Elders do well to keep Jesus' attitude in mind. He knew that singleness could be challenging for some, but he made it clear that neither getting married nor having children is the key to lasting happiness. (Luke 11:27, 28) Rather, permanent happiness comes from putting Jehovah's service first. (Matt. 19:12) Elders especially need to treat Christian women as their spiritual sisters and mothers. Elders do well to make time before or after meetings to talk with the sisters. w20.09 21-22 ¶7-9

Saturday, September 17

The farmer keeps waiting for the precious fruit . . . You too exercise patience.—Jas. 5:7, 8.

In Israel, the farmer planted his seeds after the early rain in the fall and reaped the grain after the late rain in the spring. (Mark 4:28) May we wisely imitate the farmer's patience. However, this may not be easy. Imperfect humans tend to want immediate results from their efforts. Yet, if we want our garden to produce, we must give it constant attention—digging, planting, weeding,

and watering. The disciple-making work also requires continuous effort. It takes time for us to root out weeds of prejudice and indifference in those whom we teach. Our patience will help us to avoid becoming discouraged when we encounter difficulties. When we do receive some positive response, we must still be patient. We cannot force a Bible student to grow in faith. At times, even Jesus' disciples were slow to grasp the meaning of what he taught. (John 14:9) Let us remember that we may plant and water, but God makes it grow.—1 Cor. 3:6. w20.09 11 ¶10-11

Sunday, September 18

I will praise Jehovah with all my heart in the assembled group of upright ones and in the congregation.—Ps. 111:1.

All of us want our students to progress to baptism. One important way we can help them is by encouraging them to attend congregation meetings. Often students who attend meetings right away make the fastest progress. Some teachers explain to their students that they will receive half of their Bible education from the study and the other half from the meetings. Read Hebrews 10:24, 25 with your student, and explain to him the benefits that he will receive if he comes to the meetings. Enthusiastically share something you learned at a recent meeting. That is more motivating than just inviting the student to attend. What your student experiences at his first meeting will far exceed anything he ever experienced at any other type of religious gathering. (1 Cor. 14:24, 25) He will meet others whose good example he can imitate and who will help him progress to baptism. w20.10 10-11 ¶14-15

Monday, September 19

What instructor is like [God]?

—Job 36:22.

God's spirit will help you to make practical application of what you read and study in God's Word. Pray as did the psalmist: "Instruct me, O Jehovah, about your way. I will walk in your truth. Unify my heart to fear your name." (Ps. 86:11) So continue to take in the spiritual food that Jehovah provides through his Word and his organization. Of course, your goal is not just to gain knowledge. You want to impress the truth on your heart and apply it in your life. Jehovah's spirit can help you to do that. You also want to encourage your brothers and sisters. (Heb. 10:24, 25) Why? Because they are your spiritual family. Pray for God's spirit to help you to give heartfelt comments at Christian meetings and to do your very best when you have a part on the program. In these ways you show Jehovah and his Son that you love their precious "sheep." (John 21:15-17) So listen to your Grand Instructor by taking full advantage of the spiritual banquet he provides. *w20.10* 24-25 ¶15-17

Tuesday, September 20

They all abandoned him and fled.—Mark 14:50.

How did Jesus treat his apostles when they were temporarily in a weakened condition? Shortly after his resurrection, Jesus told some of his followers: "Have no fear! Go, report to my brothers [that I was raised]." (Matt. 28:10a) Jesus did not give up on his apostles. Even though they had abandoned him, he still called them "my brothers." Like Je-

hovah, Jesus was merciful and forgiving. (2 Ki. 13:23) Likewise, we have deep concern for those who have stopped sharing in the ministry. They are our brothers and sisters, and we love them! We still remember the labors of love that those fellow believers performed in the past—some perhaps for decades. (Heb. 6:10) We truly miss them! (Luke 15:4-7) So encourage inactive ones to attend the congregation meetings. And when an inactive one arrives at the Kingdom Hall, we should take the initiative by warmly welcoming him. *w20.11* 6 ¶14-17

Wednesday, September 21

Do not go beyond the things that are written.—1 Cor. 4:6.

James and John along with their mother approached Jesus and asked for a privilege that was beyond Jesus' authority to give. Without hesitating, Jesus stated that only his heavenly Father could decide who would sit at Jesus' right hand and at his left in the Kingdom. (Matt. 20:20-23) Jesus showed that he respected his limitations. He was modest. He never went beyond what Jehovah commanded him to do. (John 12:49) How can we imitate Jesus' fine example? We imitate Jesus' example of modesty by applying the Bible's counsel found in today's text. So when asked for advice, we never want to promote our own opinion or simply say the first thing that comes to our mind. Rather, we should direct attention to the counsel found in the Bible and in our Bible-based publications. In this way, we acknowledge our limitations. With modesty, we give credit to the "righteous decrees" of the Almighty.—Rev. 15:3, 4. *w20.08* 11-12 ¶14-15

Thursday, September 22

Do not be overly righteous, nor show yourself excessively wise.

Why should you bring ruin to yourself?—Eccl. 7:16.

If you ever feel that you need to give counsel to a friend, what points should you keep in mind? Before you approach your friend, ask yourself, 'Am I being "overly righteous"?' An overly righteous person judges others, not by Jehovah's standards, but by his own, and he is probably not very merciful. If after examining yourself you still see the need to speak to your friend, clearly identify the problem and use viewpoint questions to help your friend to recognize his mistake. Make sure that what you say is based on the Scriptures, remembering that your friend is accountable, not to you, but to Jehovah. (Rom. 14:10) Rely on the wisdom found in God's Word, and when counseling someone, imitate Jesus' compassion. (Prov. 3:5; Matt. 12:20) Why? Because Jehovah will deal with us in the same way that we deal with others.—Jas. 2:13.
w20.11 21 ¶13

Friday, September 23

Stop judging by the outward appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.—John 7:24.

Would you like people to judge you based on the color of your skin, the shape of your face, or the size of your body? Likely, you would not. How comforting it is to know, then, that Jehovah does not judge us by what human eyes can see! For example, when Samuel looked at the sons of Jesse, he did not see what Jehovah saw. Jehovah had told Samuel that one of Jesse's sons would

become king of Israel. But which one? When Samuel saw Jesse's oldest son, Eliab, he said: "Surely here before Jehovah stands his anointed one." Eliab looked like a king. "But Jehovah said to Samuel: 'Do not pay attention to his appearance and how tall he is, for I have rejected him.'" The lesson? Jehovah continued: "Man sees what appears to the eyes, but Jehovah sees into the heart." (1 Sam. 16:1, 6, 7) We do well to imitate Jehovah when dealing with our brothers and sisters.
w20.04 14 ¶1; 15 ¶3

Saturday, September 24

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

Jesus had been traveling through fields, likely of young green barley. (John 4:3-6) This crop would be ready to be harvested in about four months' time. Jesus said something that must have sounded unusual: "Lift up your eyes and view the fields, that they are white for harvesting." (John 4:35, 36) What did he mean? Jesus was apparently referring to a figurative harvest of people. Consider what had just happened. Although Jews usually had no dealings with Samaritans, Jesus had preached to a Samaritan woman—and she had listened! In fact, while Jesus was speaking about fields that were "white for harvesting," a crowd of Samaritans who had heard about Jesus from the woman were on their way to learn more from him. (John 4:9, 39-42) One Bible commentary says about this account: "The eagerness of the people . . . showed that they were like grain ready for harvesting."
w20.04 8 ¶1-2

Sunday, September 25

Let us consider one another so as to incite to love and fine works.
—Heb. 10:24.

Our meetings help us improve our battle skills, so to speak, by equipping us for the ministry. For example, we learn to use the tools in our Teaching Toolbox effectively. So prepare well for congregation meetings. During the meeting, listen carefully. After the meeting, apply the training you received. By doing such things, you will become “a fine soldier of Christ Jesus.” (2 Tim. 2:3) We also have the support of myriads of powerful angels. Think of what just one angel can do! (Isa. 37:36) Now consider what a mighty army of angels would be able to accomplish. No man or demon is equal to Jehovah’s powerful fighting force. It has been said that one faithful Witness plus Jehovah equals the majority. (Judg. 6:16) How true that is! Keep those thoughts in mind when you feel intimidated by something a workmate, a schoolmate, or an unbelieving relative says or does. Remember, you are not alone in this fight. You are following Jehovah’s direction. *w21.03 29 ¶13-14*

Monday, September 26

If the dead are not to be raised up, “let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we are to die.”—1 Cor. 15:32.

The apostle Paul may have been quoting Isaiah 22:13, which refers to the attitude of the Israelites. Instead of drawing close to God, they pursued a life of pleasure. Basically, the attitude of those Israelites was “here today, gone tomorrow,” a view common even today. Clearly, the fact that Jehovah can resurrect the dead should affect our choice of

associates. The brothers in Corinth needed to guard against associating with those who denied the resurrection. There is a lesson for us today: No good can come from choosing as regular associates those who have a live-for-the-moment outlook. Being with such ones can ruin a true Christian’s viewpoint and habits. In fact, it might lead him to have a life-style that includes what God hates—sin. Thus, Paul strongly urged: “Come to your senses in a righteous way and do not practice sin.”—1 Cor. 15:33, 34. *w20.12 9 ¶3, 5-6*

Tuesday, September 27

The head of every man is the Christ; in turn, the head of a woman is the man; in turn, the head of the Christ is God.—1 Cor. 11:3.

This verse describes the way in which Jehovah has organized his universal family. Headship involves two key elements—authority and accountability. Jehovah is “the head,” or the ultimate authority, and all his children, both angelic and human, are accountable to him. (Rom. 14:10; Eph. 3:14, 15) Jehovah has given Jesus authority over the congregation, but Jesus is accountable to Jehovah for the way he treats us. (1 Cor. 15:27) Jehovah has also given a husband authority over his wife and children. How can he learn to be a good family head? He must first understand what Jehovah requires of him. He also needs to know why Jehovah established headship and, specifically, how he can imitate the example set by Jehovah and Jesus. Why is this so important? Because Jehovah has given family heads a measure of authority, and he expects them to use it well.—Luke 12:48b. *w21.02 2 ¶1-3*

Wednesday, September 28

I, Jehovah, am your God, the One teaching you to benefit yourself.
—Isa. 48:17.

We do well to imitate Jehovah regarding the things he chooses to forget. For example, Jehovah has a perfect memory, but if we are repentant, he chooses to forgive and forget the mistakes we make. (Ps. 25:7; 130:3, 4) And he wants us to do the same for others when they are sorry for mistakes they make that hurt us. (Matt. 6:14; Luke 17:3, 4) We can show appreciation for the marvelous gift of our brain by using it to honor the One who gave it to us. Some choose to use their brain for selfish purposes—to set their own standards of right and wrong. But because Jehovah created us, it is only reasonable to expect that his standards are better than any standards we could set for ourselves. (Rom. 12:1, 2) When we live by his standards, our life is peaceful. (Isa. 48:18) And we gain a clear purpose for living—to bring honor to our Creator and Father and make him proud of us.—Prov. 27:11. *w20.05* 23-24 ¶13-14

Thursday, September 29

Have tender affection for one another.—Rom. 12:10.

How can we cultivate tender affection for our brothers and sisters today? When we get to know fellow believers better, we may find it easier to understand them and to develop tender affection for them. Age and background need not be a barrier. Remember, Jonathan was about 30 years older than David; yet he developed a close friendship with him. Could you take an interest in someone who is older—or younger—than you? By doing so, you can show that

you “have love for the whole association of brothers.” (1 Pet. 2:17) Does having tender affection for fellow believers mean that we will feel equally close to everyone in the congregation? No, that would not be realistic. It is not necessarily wrong to be drawn more to some than to others because of having similar interests. Jesus referred to all his apostles as “friends,” but he had a special affection for John. (John 13:23; 15:15; 20:2) However, Jesus did not show favoritism to John.—Mark 10:35-40. *w21.01* 23 ¶12-13

Friday, September 30

You seem to be more given to the fear of the deities than others are.
—Acts 17:22.

The apostle Paul did not present his message to the Gentiles in Athens in the same way that he presented it to the Jews in the synagogue. He carefully observed his surroundings and took note of people's religious customs. (Acts 17:23) Next, Paul searched for common ground between their form of worship and the truth in the Scriptures. So Paul was willing to adapt his approach. He told the Athenians that his message came from the “Unknown God,” whom they had been trying to worship. Although the Gentiles were not familiar with the Scriptures, Paul did not give up on them. Instead, he viewed them as being like grain that is ripe for harvesting, and he adjusted his presentation of the good news. Like Paul, be observant. Look for signs that indicate what beliefs people in your territory have. How has the householder decorated his home or vehicle? Does his name, dress, grooming, or even his vocabulary indicate what his religion is? *w20.04* 9-10 ¶7-8

Saturday, October 1

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

When we get to know Jesus, we will imitate his way of thinking and acting. And the better we know and imitate his way of thinking, the closer our friendship with him will be. How can we imitate Jesus? Note just one example. Jesus thought more about helping others than about pleasing himself. (Matt. 20:28; Rom. 15:1-3) Because he had this mental attitude, he was self-sacrificing and forgiving. He did not easily become offended at what people said about him. (John 1:46, 47) And he did not freeze people in time by holding their past mistakes against them permanently. (1 Tim. 1:12-14) Jesus said: “All will know that you are my disciples—if you have love among yourselves.” (John 13:35) Why not ask yourself, “Am I following Jesus’ example by doing everything in my power to maintain peace with my brothers and sisters?” *w20.04 24 ¶11*

Sunday, October 2

*They will sanctify my name.
—Isa. 29:23.*

Despite being in a world full of people who slander and blaspheme Jehovah’s name, you have the opportunity to stand up and speak the truth—that Jehovah is holy, righteous, good, and loving. You can support his rule. You can promote it as the only way of ruling that is truly righteous and that will bring peace and happiness to all creation. (Ps. 37:9, 37; 146:5, 6, 10) When we teach Bible truths to others, we often emphasize God’s sov-

ereignty, that Jehovah has the right to rule the universe, and this is perfectly true. However, while it is important to focus on God’s laws, our main goal is that of helping others come to love Jehovah, our Father, and to be loyal to him. We thus need to highlight Jehovah’s appealing qualities, emphasizing the kind of Person that the name Jehovah represents. (Isa. 63:7) As we teach in that way, we will help others to love Jehovah and to obey him because they want to be loyal to him. *w20.06 6 ¶16; 7 ¶19*

Monday, October 3

*Who made a mouth for man . . . ?
Is it not I, Jehovah?—Ex. 4:11.*

The human brain is a marvel of engineering. When you were in your mother’s womb, your brain was built according to a preset plan, and thousands of new brain cells were constructed every minute! Researchers estimate that an adult’s brain contains close to 100 billion special cells called neurons—assembled into a package that weighs about 3.3 pounds (1.5 kg). One of the brain’s amazing abilities concerns speech. With each word you say, your brain has to coordinate the movement of some 100 muscles in your tongue, throat, lips, jaw, and chest. All those muscles have to move according to precise timing if the words are to be understood. A study published in 2019 showed that newborn babies can pick out individual words. This finding reinforces what many researchers believe—that we are born with the ability to recognize and learn languages. Certainly, our ability to speak is a gift from God. *w20.05 22-23 ¶8-9*

Tuesday, October 4

He was awaiting the city having real foundations, whose designer and builder is God.—Heb. 11:10.

Abraham willingly left the comfortable lifestyle available to him in the city of Ur. Why? Because he was awaiting “the city having real foundations.” (Heb. 11:8-10, 16) The city that Abraham awaited is God’s Kingdom. That Kingdom is made up of Jesus Christ and 144,000 anointed Christians. Paul refers to the Kingdom as “a city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem.” (Heb. 12:22; Rev. 5:8-10; 14:1) Jesus taught his disciples to pray for this same Kingdom, asking that it come so that God’s will can take place on earth as it does in heaven. (Matt. 6:10) Did Abraham know the details of how God’s Kingdom would be structured? No. For many centuries, those details were a “sacred secret.” (Eph. 1:8-10; Col. 1:26, 27) But Abraham did know that some of his offspring would become kings. Jehovah had specifically made that promise to him.—Gen. 17:1, 2, 6. *w20.08 2-3 ¶2-4*

Wednesday, October 5

Go on walking in union with [the Lord], being rooted and built up in him and being stabilized in the faith.—Col. 2:6, 7.

We must reject apostate teachings. Since the beginning of the Christian congregation, the Devil has been using many deceivers to plant doubts in the minds of God’s faithful servants. As a result, we need to know how to discern the difference between facts and lies. Our enemies may use the Internet or social media to try to undermine our

trust in Jehovah and our love for our brothers. Remember who is behind such propaganda, and reject it! (1 John 4:1, 6; Rev. 12:9) To resist Satan’s attacks, we need to deepen our trust in Jesus and in the role he plays in God’s purpose. We also need to trust in the only channel that Jehovah is using today. (Matt. 24:45-47) We deepen our trust by regularly studying God’s Word. Then our faith will be like a tree that has roots that go deep into the ground. The apostle Paul made a similar point when he wrote the words of today’s text. *w20.07 23-24 ¶11-12*

Thursday, October 6

*Man sees what appears to the eyes, but Jehovah sees into the heart.
—1 Sam. 16:7.*

As imperfect humans, all of us have a tendency to judge others by their outward appearance. (John 7:24) But we learn only a little about a person from what we see with our eyes. To illustrate, even a brilliant and experienced doctor can learn only so much by just looking at a patient. He must listen attentively if he is to learn about the patient’s medical history, his emotional makeup, or any symptoms he is having. The doctor may even order an X-ray to see the inside of the patient’s body. Otherwise, the doctor could misdiagnose the problem. Similarly, we cannot fully understand our brothers and sisters by simply looking at their outward appearance. We must try to look beneath the surface—at the inner person. Of course, we cannot read hearts. But we can do our best to imitate Jehovah. He listens to his worshippers. He takes into account their background and situation. And he shows compassion for them. *w20.04 14-15 ¶1-3*

Friday, October 7

Think so as to have a sound mind.—Rom. 12:3.

We need to cultivate humility because those who are proud do not have “a sound mind.” Proud people are contentious and egotistical. Their thinking and actions often cause them to hurt themselves and others. Unless they change their way of thinking, their minds will be blinded and corrupted by Satan. (2 Cor. 4:4; 11:3) A humble person has a sound mind. He has a balanced and reasonable view of himself, recognizing that in many ways others are superior to him. (Phil. 2:3) And he knows that “God opposes the haughty ones, but he gives undeserved kindness to the humble ones.” (1 Pet. 5:5) Those with a sound mind do not want to have Jehovah as an opponent. To remain humble, we must apply the Bible’s counsel to “strip off the old personality with its practices, and clothe [ourselves] with the new personality.” We need to study Jesus’ example and try to imitate him as closely as possible.—Col. 3:9, 10; 1 Pet. 2:21. *w20.07 7 ¶16-17*

Saturday, October 8

The body is one but has many members.—1 Cor. 12:12.

What a privilege we have to be part of Jehovah’s congregation! We are in a spiritual paradise that is full of peaceful, happy people. What is your place in the congregation? The apostle Paul compared the congregation to the human body. He also compared the individuals in a congregation to parts of the body. (Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 4:16) One lesson we can learn from

Paul’s illustration is that each one of us has an important place in Jehovah’s family. Paul begins his illustration by saying: “Just as we have in one body many members, but the members do not all have the same function, so we, although many, are one body in union with Christ, but individually we are members belonging to one another.” (Rom. 12:4, 5) What was Paul’s point? Each one of us has a different role in the congregation, but each one of us is valuable. *w20.08 20 ¶1-2; 21 ¶4*

Sunday, October 9

Jehovah asked him, “How will you do it?”—1 Ki. 22:21.

Parents, how can you imitate Jehovah’s example of humility? When appropriate, ask your children for their opinions on how a task should be done. And when fitting, follow their suggestions. Jehovah also set an example in the matter of exercising patience, even when those who served him questioned his decisions. He listened as Abraham stated his concerns about the decision to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. (Gen. 18:22-33) And remember how Jehovah dealt with Abraham’s wife, Sarah. He did not become offended or angry when she laughed at his promise that she would become pregnant in her old age. (Gen. 18:10-14) Instead, he treated Sarah with dignity. Parents and elders, what can you learn from Jehovah’s example? Consider how you respond when those under your authority question your decisions. Is your initial reaction to correct them? Or do you try to understand their point of view? Families and congregations surely benefit when those in authority imitate Jehovah. *w20.08 10 ¶7-9*

Monday, October 10

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

When we first began to associate with Jehovah's people, we may have been eager to accept help from others, realizing that we were spiritual infants and had a lot to learn. (1 Cor. 3:1, 2) But what about now? If we have been serving Jehovah for many years and have gained a lot of experience, we may not be as ready to accept help, especially if it is offered by someone who has not been in the truth as long as we have. However, Jehovah often uses our brothers and sisters to strengthen us. (Rom. 1:11, 12) We must recognize that fact if we are to gain the power that Jehovah supplies. Success depends, not on a person's physical strength, education, wealth, or social background, but on his humility and reliance on Jehovah. May all of us press forward (1) by relying on Jehovah, (2) by learning from Bible examples, and (3) by accepting help from fellow believers. Then, no matter how weak we may feel, Jehovah will make us powerful! w20.07 14 ¶2; 19 ¶18-19

Tuesday, October 11

Show the same industriousness . . . so that you may not become sluggish, but be imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.—Heb. 6:11, 12.

One area in which we may find it difficult to be patient is when witnessing to unbelieving relatives. The principle found at Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7 can help us. It states: "There is . . . a time to be silent and a time to speak." We can let our good conduct be a silent witness, yet we are always alert to opportunities to speak about the truth. (1 Pet. 3:1, 2) We are pa-

tient with all people—including family members—as we preach and teach with zeal. We can learn patience from the examples of faithful ones in the Bible as well as in modern times. Habakkuk longed for an end to wickedness, but he confidently declared: "At my guardpost I will keep standing." (Hab. 2:1) The apostle Paul expressed his heartfelt desire to "finish" his ministry. Yet, he patiently continued "to bear thorough witness to the good news."—Acts 20:24. w20.09 11-12 ¶12-14

Wednesday, October 12

[Jesus] gave no consideration to a seizure, namely, that he should be equal to God.—Phil. 2:6.

Jesus, whose authority is second only to Jehovah's, does not think more of himself than is necessary. In imitation of Jesus, humble servants of Jehovah contribute to the loving spirit that identifies God's organization. (Luke 9:48; John 13:35) What if it seems that there are problems in the congregation and you feel that they are not being dealt with properly? Rather than complain, you can show humility by supporting those taking the lead. (Heb. 13:17) To help you do that, ask yourself: 'Are the problems that I see really so serious that they need to be corrected? Is this the right time to correct them? Is it my place to correct them? In all honesty, am I really trying to promote unity, or am I trying to promote myself?' Jehovah values humility more than ability and unity more than efficiency. Therefore, do your best to serve Jehovah with humility. In doing so, you will promote unity in the congregation.—Eph. 4:2, 3. w20.07 4-5 ¶9-11

Thursday, October 13

Jesus said to them: "Have no fear! Go, report to my brothers."

—Matt. 28:10.

Jesus valued the help he received from the godly women who ministered to him "from their belongings." (Luke 8:1-3) He revealed to them deep spiritual truths. For example, he informed them that he would die and be resurrected. (Luke 24:5-8) He prepared these women, as he had the apostles, for the trials they would encounter. (Mark 9:30-32; 10:32-34) It is worth noting that though the apostles fled when Jesus was arrested, some of the women who had supported him were by his side while he was dying on the torture stake. (Matt. 26:56; Mark 15:40, 41) Godly women were the first witnesses of his resurrection. He assigned those women to tell the apostles that he had been raised from the dead. (Matt. 28:5, 9, 10) And at Pentecost 33 C.E., women may have been present when the holy spirit was poured out and all there received the miraculous ability to speak in foreign languages and tell others about "the magnificent things of God."—Acts 1:14; 2:2-4, 11. *w20.09* 23 ¶11-12

Friday, October 14

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

The disciple-making work is a lifesaving work! How do we know? When Jesus gave the command that is recorded at Matthew 28:19, 20, he said: "Go, . . . make disciples . . . , baptizing them." What do we know about the importance of baptism? It is a requirement for those seeking salvation. The baptism candidate must have faith that salvation is pos-

sible only because Jesus died a sacrificial death and was resurrected. That is why the apostle Peter told fellow Christians: "Baptism [is] now saving you . . . through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 3:21) So when a new disciple gets baptized, he puts himself in line for salvation. To make disciples, we need to develop the "art of teaching." (2 Tim. 4:1, 2) Why? Because Jesus commanded us: "Go, . . . make disciples . . . , teaching them." The apostle Paul said to "persevere" in that work, "for by doing this you will save both yourself and those who listen to you." *w20.10* 14 ¶1-2

Saturday, October 15

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

The disciple Peter learned to love being a fisher of men. And with Jehovah's backing, Peter became very good at that work. (Acts 2:14, 41) We preach because we love Jehovah; that is our primary motivation for doing this work. Our love for Jehovah can help us to overcome any feelings of inadequacy. When Jesus invited Peter to become a fisher of men, he told him: "Stop being afraid." (Luke 5:8-11) Peter was not gripped by fear of what might happen if he became a disciple. Rather, he was astonished at the miraculous catch of fish that Jesus had just given the men, and Peter felt unworthy of being asked to work with Jesus. On the other hand, you may feel overwhelmed when you realize what is involved in being a disciple of Christ. If so, strengthen your love for Jehovah, Jesus, and your neighbor, and you will be motivated to accept Jesus' invitation to become a fisher of men.—Matt. 22:37, 39; John 14:15. *w20.09* 3 ¶4-5

Sunday, October 16

Go, therefore, and make disciples . . . , teaching them.—Matt. 28:19, 20.

We gladly give of our time, energy, and resources to find those who are “rightly disposed for everlasting life.” (Acts 13:48) When we do this, we follow Jesus’ example. He stated: “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.” (John 4:34; 17:4) That is also our heartfelt desire. We want to finish the work that has been entrusted to us. (John 20:21) And we want others, including inactive ones, to endure in this work with us. (Matt. 24:13) Granted, fulfilling Jesus’ great commission is a challenge. However, we are not facing this task alone. Jesus promised that he would be with us. We carry out the assignment to make disciples as “God’s fellow workers” and “in company with Christ.” (1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 2:17) Therefore, we can accomplish it. What a privilege and pleasure it is to carry out this assignment and help others to do so as well!—Phil. 4:13. *w20.11 7 ¶19-20*

Monday, October 17

*Jesus went on progressing in wisdom and in physical growth and in favor with God and men.
—Luke 2:52.*

Often, the choices that parents make affect their children for a long time. If parents make poor choices, they can cause problems for their children. But if they make wise choices, they give their children the best chance of having a happy, satisfying life. Of course, children must also make good decisions. The best decision anyone can make is

to serve our loving heavenly Father, Jehovah. (Ps. 73:28) Jesus’ parents were determined to help their children to serve Jehovah, and the choices the parents made proved that this was their main goal in life. (Luke 2:40, 41, 52) Jesus likewise made good choices that helped him to fulfill his role in Jehovah’s purpose. (Matt. 4:1-10) Jesus grew up to be a kind, loyal, and courageous man—the type of son who would bring pride and joy to the heart of any God-fearing parent. *w20.10 26 ¶1-2*

Tuesday, October 18

Your eyes should look straight ahead.—Prov. 4:25.

Imagine the following scenarios. An elderly Christian sister reflects on good times from her past. Even though her life is more challenging now, she continues to do all she can for Jehovah. (1 Cor. 15:58) Every day she imagines herself and her loved ones living together in the promised new world. Another sister remembers that she was hurt by a fellow believer, but she chooses to let go of her resentment. (Col. 3:13) A brother is keenly aware of his past mistakes but focuses on staying faithful from now on. (Ps. 51:10) What do these three Christians have in common? All of them remember what happened in their past, but they are not living in it. Rather, they “look straight ahead” to the future. Why is that important? Just as a person cannot walk in a straight line if he is constantly looking back, we cannot move forward in our service to Jehovah if we are constantly looking back on our past.—Luke 9:62. *w20.11 24 ¶1-3*

Wednesday, October 19

He sneered at him in contempt.

—1 Sam. 17:42.

David was viewed as weak by the physically powerful warrior Goliath. After all, Goliath was bigger, better equipped, and better trained for war. David, on the other hand, was just an inexperienced boy who seemed to be poorly equipped for battle. But David relied on Jehovah for power, and he defeated his enemy. (1 Sam. 17:41-45, 50) David had to deal with another challenge that could have made him feel weak and powerless. David loyally served the one whom Jehovah had appointed as king of Israel, Saul. King Saul at first respected David. Later on, pride caused Saul to become jealous of David. Saul treated David badly, even trying to kill him. (1 Sam. 18:6-9, 29; 19:9-11) Despite the unjust way that he was treated by King Saul, David continued to show respect for Jehovah's appointed king. (1 Sam. 24:6) David relied on Jehovah to give him the strength he needed to endure this difficult trial. —Ps. 18:1, superscription. *w20.07* 17 ¶11-13

Thursday, October 20

In the time of the end the king of the south will engage with him [the king of the north] in a pushing.

—Dan. 11:40.

A large portion of the prophecy about the king of the north and the king of the south has already been fulfilled, so we can be confident that the rest of it will also come true. To understand the prophecy recorded in Daniel chapter 11, we need to keep in mind that it identifies only rulers and governments that have had a direct influence on God's peo-

ple. And even though God's servants make up only a small portion of the world's population, they are often at the center of major world events. Why? Because Satan and his entire system have one prime objective—conquering those who serve Jehovah and Jesus. (Gen. 3:15; Rev. 11:7; 12:17) In addition, the prophecy recorded by Daniel must harmonize with other prophecies in God's Word. In fact, we can come to the right understanding of Daniel's prophecy only if we compare it with other portions of the Scriptures. *w20.05* 2 ¶1-2

Friday, October 21

How are the dead to be raised up?

Yes, with what sort of body?

—1 Cor. 15:35.

Many people today have personal views about life after death. But what does the Bible teach? When someone dies, his body decomposes. But the One who created the universe from nothing can resurrect that person, giving him a suitable body. (Gen. 1:1; 2:7) The apostle Paul used an illustration to show that God would not need to bring back the same body. Think of “a bare grain,” or a plant “seed.” A seed of grain that is planted in the ground germinates and becomes a new plant. The resulting plant is quite different from the small seed. Paul used this comparison to show that our Creator can provide “a body just as it [pleases] him.” Paul also stated that “there are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies.” How so? Well, on earth, we have bodies of flesh, but in heaven there are spirit bodies, like the ones the angels have.—1 Cor. 15:36-41. *w20.12* 9-10 ¶7-9

Saturday, October 22

How long will I have anxious concern, with grief in my heart each day?—Ps. 13:2.

We all want to lead a calm and peaceful life. No one enjoys feeling anxious. At times, however, we may struggle with anxieties and ask the same question as King David did in today's text. We may have little or no control over some things that could cause us to feel anxious. For example, we cannot regulate how much the cost of food, clothing, and shelter will rise each year; nor can we control how frequently our workmates or schoolmates will try to tempt us to be dishonest or immoral. And we cannot stop the crime that happens in our neighborhood. We face these challenges because we live in a world where most people's thinking is not based on Bible principles. Satan, the god of this world, knows that some people will allow "the anxiety of this system of things" to keep them from serving Jehovah. (Matt. 13:22; 1 John 5:19) No wonder that the world is so full of stressful situations! *w21.01 2 ¶1, 3*

Sunday, October 23

Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has everlasting life remaining in him.—1 John 3:15.

The apostle John urged us not to hate our brothers or sisters. If we fail to heed that counsel, we leave ourselves open to being manipulated by Satan. (1 John 2:11) This happened to some at the end of the first century C.E. Satan was doing all that he could to promote hatred and divide God's people. By the time John wrote his letters, men

who showed the same spirit as Satan had slipped into the congregation. For instance, Diotrephes was creating serious divisions in one congregation. (3 John 9, 10) He was disrespectful to traveling representatives of the governing body. He even tried to throw out of the congregation those who were hospitable to people whom he disliked. How arrogant! Satan is still desperately trying to divide and conquer God's people today. May we never allow hatred to drive us apart. *w21.01 11 ¶14*

Monday, October 24

When they have finished their witnessing, the wild beast . . . will wage war with them and conquer them and kill them.—Rev. 11:7.

In the first world war, both the German government and the British government persecuted God's servants who refused to take up arms. And the U.S. government threw into prison those who were taking the lead in the preaching work. This persecution fulfilled the prophecy recorded at Revelation 11:7-10. Then, in the 1930's and especially during the second world war, the king of the north attacked God's people without mercy. Hitler and his followers banned the work of God's people. The opposers killed hundreds of Jehovah's people and sent thousands more to concentration camps. The king of the north was able to "profane the sanctuary" and "remove the constant feature" by severely restricting the freedom of God's servants to praise Jehovah's name publicly. (Dan. 11:30b, 31a) Its leader, Hitler, even vowed that he would exterminate God's people in Germany. *w20.05 6 ¶12-13*

Tuesday, October 25

In brotherly love have tender affection for one another. In showing honor to one another, take the lead.—Rom. 12:10.

When we show tender affection for one another, we protect the congregation from a spirit of competition. Recall that Jonathan did not try to compete with David, viewing him as a rival to the throne. (1 Sam. 20:42) All of us can imitate Jonathan's example. Do not view your fellow workers as rivals because of their abilities, "but with humility consider others superior to you." (Phil. 2:3) Keep in mind that each person in the congregation has something to contribute. By keeping a humble view of ourselves, we see the good in our brothers and sisters and benefit from their faithful example. (1 Cor. 12:21-25) When we show tender affection for one another, we strengthen the unity among God's people. We prove that we are Jesus' disciples, and this attracts honesthearted ones to true worship. Above all, we glorify "the Father of tender mercies and the God of all comfort," Jehovah.—2 Cor. 1:3. *w21.01* 24 ¶14; 25 ¶16

Wednesday, October 26

Because you are no part of the world, . . . the world hates you.—John 15:19.

Today, as Jehovah's people, we are sometimes looked down on and ridiculed as being unintelligent and weak. Why? Because we do not agree with the attitudes of those around us. We try to be humble, meek, and obedient. The world, on the other hand, admires the proud, the arrogant, and the rebellious. In addition, we do not get involved in pol-

itics, and we do not join the military forces of any country. We do not fit into the world's mold, so we are considered to be inferior to others. (Rom. 12:2) Despite what the world thinks of us, Jehovah is achieving extraordinary things with us. He is accomplishing the greatest preaching campaign in human history. His servants today produce the most widely translated and distributed journals on earth and use the Bible to help millions of people to improve their lives. All credit for these remarkable accomplishments goes to Jehovah. *w20.07* 15 ¶5-6

Thursday, October 27

I am doing just as the Father has commanded me to do.—John 14:31.

Jesus is subject to Jehovah, but certainly not because he lacks intelligence or skill. Only a highly intelligent person could teach as simply and clearly as Jesus did. (John 7:45, 46) Jehovah respected Jesus' ability so much that He allowed Jesus to work beside Him when Jehovah created the universe. (Prov. 8:30; Heb. 1:2-4) And since Jesus' resurrection, Jehovah has entrusted him with 'all authority in heaven and on earth.' (Matt. 28:18) Even though Jesus is talented, he still looks to Jehovah for guidance. Why? Because he loves his Father. Husbands should note that Jehovah did not make a wife subject to her husband because He views women as inferior to men. Jehovah himself has made that evident by choosing women as well as men to be corulers with Jesus. (Gal. 3:26-29) Jehovah has shown confidence in his Son by entrusting him with authority. Similarly, a wise husband will entrust his wife with a measure of authority. *w21.02* 11 ¶13-14

Friday, October 28

We consider happy those who have endured.—Jas. 5:11.

God's Word acts like a mirror, helping us to identify and address what we need to work on. (Jas. 1: 23-25) For example, after studying God's Word, we might realize that we need to control our temper. With Jehovah's help, we learn how to be mild when dealing with people or problems that could provoke us. Now we are able to think more clearly and make better decisions. (Jas. 3: 13) How important it is that we know the Bible well! Sometimes we learn what to avoid only after we make a mistake. A better way to gain wisdom is to learn from both the successes and the mistakes of others. That is why James encourages us to look at examples set by such Bible characters as Abraham, Rahab, Job, and Elijah. (Jas. 2:21-26; 5:10, 11, 17, 18) Those loyal servants of Jehovah were able to endure trials that could have robbed them of joy. Their examples of endurance show that with Jehovah's help we can do the same. *w21.02 29-30 ¶12-13*

Saturday, October 29

By consultation, plans will succeed, and by skillful direction wage your war.—Prov. 20:18.

At a Bible study, the teacher is primarily responsible for helping the student to understand God's Word. If the teacher invites you to accompany him, you should view yourself as his partner. Your role is to support him. (Eccl. 4:9, 10) What, specifically, can you do to help make the Bible study session productive? Prepare for the Bible study. First, ask the teacher to tell you a little about the student. What is the Bi-

ble student's background? What topic will you be studying with him? What is your objective for this session? Is there anything that I should or should not do or say while at the study? What might encourage the student to progress? Obviously, the teacher would not share any confidential information, but what he does share can be helpful. A missionary named Joy acknowledges: "This discussion helps my companion to be interested in the student and to know how to contribute to the study." *w21.03 9 ¶5-6*

Sunday, October 30

If the world hates you, you know that it has hated me before it hated you.—John 15:18.

Sometimes we are hated because we live by God's righteous standards. These standards contrast sharply with the world's degraded morals. For example, many people now openly approve of grossly immoral practices similar to the ones for which God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah! (Jude 7) Because we hold to the Bible's standards regarding such practices, many people ridicule us and call us intolerant. (1 Pet. 4:3, 4) What can help us to endure when people hate us and insult us? We need to have strong faith that Jehovah will help us. Like a shield, our faith can "extinguish all the wicked one's burning arrows." (Eph. 6:16) But we need more than faith. We also need love. Why? Because love "does not become provoked." It bears and endures all hurtful things. (1 Cor. 13:4-7, 13) Love for Jehovah, love for our fellow worshippers, and even love for our enemies will help us to endure hatred. *w21.03 20-21 ¶3-4*

Monday, October 31

Do not be quick to take offense, for the taking of offense lodges in the bosom of fools.—Eccl. 7:9.

Sometimes, we prove our love for our brothers and sisters by what we do not do. For example, we do not get easily offended by what they say. Consider an incident that happened toward the end of Jesus' life on earth. He told his disciples that to gain life they had to eat his flesh and drink his blood. (John 6:53-57) That speech was so shocking that many of his disciples abandoned him—but not so his real friends. They loyally stuck with him. They did not understand what Jesus said, and they were likely surprised by it. However, Jesus' loyal friends did not assume that what he said was wrong and become offended by it. Instead, they trusted him, knowing that he spoke the truth. (John 6:60, 66-69) How important it is that we do not become easily offended by what our friends say! Rather, we allow them the opportunity to explain misunderstandings.—Prov. 18:13. *w21.01 11 ¶13*

Tuesday, November 1

When anyone replies to a matter before he hears the facts, it is foolish and humiliating.—Prov. 18:13.

From our limited viewpoint, we could judge Jonah as unreliable, even disloyal. He received a direct command from Jehovah to proclaim judgment in Nineveh. But instead of obeying, Jonah boarded a ship traveling in the opposite direction, “away from Jehovah.” (Jonah 1:1-3) Would you have given Jonah another chance to handle the assignment? Possibly not. Yet, Jeho-

vah saw reasons to do so. (Jonah 3: 1, 2) Jonah revealed the type of person he really was in his prayer. (Jonah 2:1, 2, 9) That prayer—doubtless one of many Jonah offered—helps us to see him as far more than a man who ran away from an assignment. His words show that he was humble, thankful, and determined to obey Jehovah. No wonder Jehovah looked beyond Jonah's actions, responded to his prayer, and continued to use him as a prophet! How important it is that each elder “hears the facts” before giving counsel! *w20.04 15 ¶4-6*

Wednesday, November 2

[Paul] reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving by references.

—Acts 17:2, 3.

The first-century disciples accepted Christian teachings and relied on the holy spirit to help them understand God's Word. They proved to themselves that these teachings were based on the Scriptures. (Acts 17:11, 12; Heb. 5:14) They did not build their faith on feelings and emotions alone, and they did not serve Jehovah simply because they felt good when they associated with fellow believers. Instead, their faith was built on “the accurate knowledge of God.” (Col. 1:9, 10) The truths of God's Word remain constant. (Ps. 119:160) For example, they do not change if a fellow believer offends us or commits a serious sin. And they do not change when we face adversity. So we need to be thoroughly familiar with Bible teachings and convinced that they are truthful. Our firm faith built on Bible truths will steady us in times of test, just as an anchor can steady a boat during a turbulent storm. *w20.07 9 ¶6-7*

Thursday, November 3

He ordered us to preach to the people and to give a thorough witness.—Acts 10:42.

Jesus views what we do for his anointed brothers as if we were doing it for him. (Matt. 25:34-40) The primary way that we support the anointed is by sharing fully in the disciple-making work that Jesus directed his followers to carry out. (Matt. 28:19, 20) Only with the help of the “other sheep” can Christ’s brothers accomplish the great worldwide preaching campaign now taking place. (John 10:16) If you are of the other sheep, each time you share in this work, you show your loving attachment not only to the anointed but also to Jesus. We also make friends with Jehovah and Jesus by using our financial resources to support the work that they are directing. (Luke 16:9) For example, we can contribute toward the worldwide work, which includes providing material relief for those who have suffered loss. We can also support our own congregation financially and help those whom we personally know to be in need.—Prov. 19:17. *w20.04 24 ¶12-13*

Friday, November 4

He will show no regard for the God of his fathers. . . . But instead he will give glory to the god of fortresses.—Dan. 11:37, 38.

In fulfillment of that prophecy, the king of the north did not show any “regard for the God of his fathers.” How so? The Soviet Union, with the goal of eliminating religion, tried to break the power of the traditional religious organizations. To achieve that goal, the Soviet government had already back in 1918 issued an

order that laid the foundation for atheism to be taught in schools. How did this king of the north “give glory to the god of fortresses”? The Soviet Union spent an enormous amount of money building its army and producing thousands of nuclear weapons to fortify its realm. Both the king of the north and the king of the south eventually gathered enough firepower to kill billions of people! The king of the north has supported the king of the south in one key endeavor; they “put in place the disgusting thing that causes desolation”—the United Nations.—Dan. 11:31. *w20.05 6-7 ¶16-17*

Saturday, November 5

Your brother . . . was lost and has been found.—Luke 15:32.

Who can share in the search for inactive ones? All of us—elders, pioneers, family members, and congregation publishers—can help in locating them. Do you have a friend or a relative who has become inactive? Have you met an inactive one in your house-to-house ministry or while sharing in public witnessing? Explain to the person that if he would appreciate a visit, you would be happy to provide his contact information to the local elders. An elder named Thomas says: “First, I ask various brothers and sisters if they know where inactive individuals now live. Or I ask the publishers if they remember any who no longer attend meetings. Later, when I visit inactive brothers or sisters, I ask about their children and other relatives. Some inactive ones used to bring their children to the meetings, and these children may have been publishers at one time. They too can be helped to return to Jehovah.” *w20.06 24 ¶1; 25 ¶6-7*

Sunday, November 6

*I will remember the works of Jah;
I will remember your marvelous
deeds of long ago.—Ps. 77:11.*

Among all the creatures on earth, only humans have the ability to learn moral lessons by remembering and analyzing past events. As a result, we can adopt better values and change our way of thinking and living. (1 Cor. 6:9-11; Col. 3:9, 10) In fact, we can train our conscience to recognize the difference between right and wrong. (Heb. 5:14) We can learn to show love, compassion, and mercy. And we can develop a healthy sense of justice. One way we prove that we appreciate the gift of memory is by choosing to remember all the times that Jehovah has helped and comforted us in the past. This will build our confidence that he will also help us in the future. (Ps. 77:12; 78:4, 7) Another way is by remembering the good things that other people do for us and being grateful for what they do. Researchers have found that people who are grateful are more likely to be happy. *w20.05* 23 ¶12-13

Monday, November 7

*Fear this glorious and
awe-inspiring name, that
of Jehovah your God.
—Deut. 28:58.*

Think of how Moses felt when he was huddled in a rocky crevice and he saw a vision of Jehovah's glory passing by. *Insight on the Scriptures* notes that it "was probably the most awe-inspiring experience of any man prior to the coming of Jesus Christ." Moses heard the following words, evidently spoken by an angel: "Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and compassionate, slow to an-

ger and abundant in loyal love and truth, showing loyal love to thousands, pardoning error and transgression and sin." (Ex. 33:17-23; 34:5-7) Memory of that event possibly came back to Moses when he used the name Jehovah in speaking the words of today's text. When we think about the name Jehovah, we do well to meditate on the one who bears that name. We should remember his qualities, such as his power, his wisdom, his justice, and his love. Reflecting on those qualities and others can fill us with awe for him.—Ps. 77:11-15. *w20.06* 8-9 ¶3-4

Tuesday, November 8

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

Jesus said that his disciples would be identified by their love for one another. (John 13:34, 35) But more is needed if we are to have strong faith. Our faith has to be based on more than just the Christlike love of God's people. Why? Suppose a fellow believer—even an elder or a pioneer—commits a serious sin. Or what if a brother or a sister hurts you in some way? Or perhaps someone becomes an apostate, asserting that we do not have the truth. If such things happen, will you be stumbled and stop serving Jehovah? The lesson is this: If you were to build your faith in God purely on the way that other people act instead of on your relationship with Jehovah himself, your faith would not be solid. In your house of faith, you should use not only such soft materials as feelings and emotions but also hard facts and solid logic. You need to prove to yourself that the Bible contains the truth about Jehovah.—Rom. 12:2. *w20.07* 8 ¶2-3

Wednesday, November 9

Assist those who are weak.

—Acts 20:35.

Many experiences indicate that the angels are working alongside us to help us find inactive ones who yearn to return to Jehovah. (Rev. 14:6) For example, Silvio, from Ecuador, earnestly prayed for help to return to the congregation. While he was still praying, his doorbell rang. Two elders were at his door. During that visit, they were happy to begin providing him with the help he needed. We will find much joy in helping the spiritually weak return to Jehovah. Note what Salvador, a pioneer who pays special attention to inactive ones, says: “At times, I find it hard to hold back tears of happiness. It pleases me so much to think that Jehovah has rescued one of his dear sheep from Satan’s world and that I’ve had the privilege of cooperating with Him in this work.” If you have stopped associating with Jehovah’s people, you can be sure that he still loves you. Jehovah is on the lookout for your return, and he will gladly welcome you home. *w20.06 29 ¶16-18*

Thursday, November 10

You will see your Grand Instructor.

—Isa. 30:20.

As our “Grand Instructor,” Jehovah provides examples in his Word in order to teach us. (Isa. 30:21) We learn as we meditate on Bible accounts about those who showed godly qualities. We also learn as we examine what happened to those who failed to show such fine qualities. (Ps. 37:37; 1 Cor. 10:11) Reflect on what happened to King Saul. He started out as a modest young man. He was aware of his limita-

tions and even hesitated to take on more responsibility. (1 Sam. 9:21; 10:20-22) Yet, in time Saul became presumptuous. He revealed this bad trait soon after he became king. On one occasion, he lost patience while waiting for the prophet Samuel and offered up a burnt sacrifice even though he was not authorized to do so. As a result, Saul lost Jehovah’s favor and eventually the kingship. (1 Sam. 13:8-14) We are wise if we learn from this warning example and avoid acting presumptuously. *w20.08 10 ¶10-11*

Friday, November 11

Show respect for those who are . . . presiding over you in the Lord.

—1 Thess. 5:12.

It is true that through Christ, Jehovah has given “gifts in men” to His congregation. (Eph. 4:8) These “gifts in men” include Governing Body members, appointed helpers to the Governing Body, Branch Committee members, circuit overseers, field instructors, congregation elders, and ministerial servants. All these brothers are appointed by holy spirit to care for Jehovah’s precious sheep and serve the interests of the congregation. (1 Pet. 5:2, 3) Brothers are appointed by holy spirit to carry out various responsibilities. Just as various parts of the body, such as the hands and the feet, work to benefit the entire body, brothers who are appointed by holy spirit work hard to benefit the entire congregation. They do not seek personal glory. Instead, they strive to build up and strengthen their brothers and sisters. (1 Thess. 2:6-8) We thank Jehovah for such unselfish, spiritually qualified men! *w20.08 21 ¶5-6*

Saturday, November 12

Go . . . and make disciples.

—Matt. 28:19.

One reason why we are motivated to preach is because people are “skinned and thrown about” and are in dire need of learning the truth about the Kingdom. (Matt. 9:36) Jehovah wants all sorts of people to come to an accurate knowledge of the truth and be saved. (1 Tim. 2:4) We will be moved to take up this life-saving work when we think about the effect our preaching can have. We save people’s lives. (Rom. 10:13-15; 1 Tim. 4:16) We also need to be properly equipped for our work. And we need to know how to use that equipment. Jesus gave clear instructions to his disciples. He told them what to carry, where to preach, and what to say. (Matt. 10:5-7; Luke 10:1-11) Today, Jehovah’s organization provides a Teaching Toolbox that contains tools that have proved to be effective. And we are taught how to use those tools. That training helps us to gain the confidence and skill we need to be effective in our work.—2 Tim. 2:15. *w20.09 4 ¶6-7, 10*

Sunday, November 13

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

—3 John 4.

Can you imagine how happy the apostle John felt when he heard that those whom he had helped to learn the truth were continuing to serve Jehovah faithfully? They faced many problems, and John was working hard to strengthen the faith of these loyal Christians whom he viewed as his spiritual children. Sim-

ilarly, we feel happy when our children, whether natural or spiritual, dedicate themselves to Jehovah and persevere in serving him. (3 John 3) About 98 C.E., Jehovah’s holy spirit moved John to write three letters. The purpose of those letters was to motivate loyal Christians to maintain their faith in Jesus and to keep on walking in the truth. John was concerned about the effect that false teachers were having on the congregations. (1 John 2:18, 19, 26) Those apostates claimed to know God, but they did not obey Jehovah’s commands. *w20.07 20 ¶1-3*

Monday, November 14

Exercise faith in God; exercise faith also in me.—John 14:1.

We have faith in the message we preach, so we are eager to share it with as many people as possible. We trust the promises found in God’s Word. (Ps. 119:42; Isa. 40:8) We have seen Bible prophecies fulfilled in our day. We have witnessed how people change their lives for the better when they start to apply the Bible’s counsel. This evidence bolsters our confidence that the good news of the Kingdom is a message everyone needs to hear. We also have faith in Jehovah, the Source of the message we preach, and in the one whom he has enthroned as King of the Kingdom, Jesus. No matter what circumstances we face, Jehovah will always be our refuge and strength. (Ps. 46:1-3) In addition, we are confident that Jesus is directing the preaching work from heaven, using the power and authority Jehovah has given him. (Matt. 28:18-20) Faith builds our confidence that Jehovah will bless our efforts. *w20.09 12 ¶15-17*

Tuesday, November 15

She did a fine deed toward me.

... She did what she could.

—Mark 14:6, 8.

At times, sisters may need someone to speak up for them when they face a specific challenge. (Isa. 1:17) For example, a widow or a divorced sister may need someone to help her care for some tasks that her husband used to do. An elderly sister may need help to speak to medical professionals. Or a pioneer sister who works on other theocratic projects may need someone to speak up for her if she is criticized for not being in the ministry as often as other pioneers are. Consider Jesus' example. Jesus was quick to speak up for his spiritual sisters when they were misunderstood. For instance, he defended Mary when Martha criticized her. (Luke 10:38-42) And he defended Mary a second time when others berated her for making what they thought was a bad decision. (Mark 14:3-9) Jesus understood Mary's motive and commended her. He even prophesied that her kind act would be recounted "wherever the good news is preached in all the world." w20.09 24 ¶15-16

Wednesday, November 16

Shepherd the flock of God under your care, serving as overseers, not under compulsion, but willingly before God.—1 Pet. 5:2.

A good shepherd understood that sheep may get lost. And if a sheep did wander away from the flock, the shepherd did not treat it harshly. Consider the example that God set when helping some of his servants who, for a while, strayed from Jehovah. The prophet Jonah ran away from his assignment. Even so, Jeho-

vah did not quickly give up on Jonah. Like a good shepherd, Jehovah rescued him and helped him gain the strength he needed to fulfill his assignment. (Jonah 2:7; 3:1, 2) Later, God used a bottle-gourd plant to help Jonah understand the value of each human life. (Jonah 4:10, 11) The lesson? Elders must not quickly give up on those who become inactive. Instead, the elders try to understand what caused a sheep to stray from the flock. And when that sheep comes back to Jehovah, the elders continue to show loving interest in him. w20.06 20-21 ¶10-12

Thursday, November 17

They will be given a little help.

—Dan. 11:34.

After the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, God's people in that vast region enjoyed "a little help"—a period of freedom. As a result, they were able to preach freely, and before long the number of publishers in the former Communist bloc rose to hundreds of thousands. Gradually, Russia and its allies emerged as the king of the north. For a government to fill the role of the king of the north or the king of the south, it must do three things: (1) interact directly with God's people, (2) show by its actions that it is an enemy of Jehovah and his people, and (3) compete with the rival king. Russia and its allies have had a direct impact on God's people, banning the preaching work and persecuting hundreds of thousands of our brothers and sisters. Those actions show that they hate Jehovah and his people. And they have been competing with the king of the south, the Anglo-American World Power. w20.05 12-13 ¶3-4

Friday, November 18

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

Since teaching is linked to disciple-making, we want our teaching to be the best. We are regularly teaching millions of people the truths found in the Bible. We love what we teach from God's Word. So we may be tempted to talk at length about what we love. However, whether conducting the *Watchtower* Study, the Congregation Bible Study, or a home Bible study, the conductor should not do too much talking. In order to let the Bible do the teaching, the teacher has to exercise self-control and not try to explain everything he knows about a certain Bible passage or subject. (John 16:12) Compare the Bible knowledge that you had at the time of your baptism with what you have now. Likely back then, you understood just the primary doctrines. (Heb. 6:1) It has taken you years to learn what you know today, so do not try to teach a new student everything all at once. *w20.10* 14-15 ¶2-4

Saturday, November 19

This is the carpenter, the son of Mary.—Mark 6:3.

Jehovah chose excellent parents for Jesus. (Matt. 1:18-23; Luke 1:26-38) Mary's heartfelt expressions recorded in the Bible reveal her deep love for Jehovah and his Word. (Luke 1:46-55) And the way that Joseph reacted to Jehovah's direction shows that he feared God and wanted to please him. (Matt. 1:24) Note that Jehovah did not choose wealthy parents for Jesus. The sacrifice Joseph and Mary of-

fered after Jesus' birth shows that they were poor. (Luke 2:24) Their way of living must have been simple, especially as the family grew in size to include at least seven children. (Matt. 13:55, 56) Jehovah protected Jesus from certain dangers, but He did not shield His Son from all challenges. (Matt. 2:13-15) For example, Jesus had to deal with unbelieving relatives who did not initially accept him as the Messiah. (Mark 3:21; John 7:5) Likely, Jesus also had to cope with the death of his adoptive father, Joseph. *w20.10* 26-27 ¶4-6

Sunday, November 20

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

Have you ever felt that you were all alone, that you had no one to help you deal with a challenge you faced? Many have felt that way, including faithful servants of Jehovah. (1 Ki. 19:14) If that ever happens to you, remember Jehovah's promise: "I will never leave you, and I will never abandon you." So we can say with confidence: "Jehovah is my helper; I will not be afraid." (Heb. 13:5, 6) The apostle Paul wrote those words to fellow believers in Judea about 61 C.E. His words remind us of the sentiments expressed at Psalm 118:5-7. Like the psalmist, Paul knew from personal experience that Jehovah was his Helper. For instance, over two years before he wrote his letter to the Hebrews, Paul made a dangerous journey through a storm-tossed sea. (Acts 27:4, 15, 20) Throughout that journey and during the time leading up to it, Jehovah proved to be Paul's Helper in various ways. *w20.11* 12 ¶1-2

Monday, November 21

Do not say, "Why were the former days better than these?"

—Eccl. 7:10.

Why is it unwise to keep thinking that our life was better in the past? Nostalgia can cause us to remember only good things from our past. Consider, for example, the ancient Israelites. After leaving Egypt, they quickly forgot how hard their life had been there. Instead, they focused on the good food they had enjoyed. They said: "How fondly we remember the fish that we used to eat without cost in Egypt, also the cucumbers, the watermelons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic!" (Num. 11:5) But was it really "without cost" that they ate that food? No. The Israelites paid a heavy price; at the time, they were being severely oppressed as slaves in Egypt. (Ex. 1:13, 14; 3:6-9) Yet, they later forgot about those hardships and longed for the past. They chose to focus on "the good old days" instead of focusing on the positive things that Jehovah had just done for them. Jehovah was not pleased with their attitude.—Num. 11:10. *w20.11* 25 ¶5-6

Tuesday, November 22

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

At times, we might think about the fact that life is short and our days are "filled with trouble." (Job 14:1) So it is understandable that we occasionally feel discouraged. A number of Jehovah's servants in ancient times felt that way. Some even wanted to die. (1 Ki. 19:2-4; Job 3:1-3, 11; 7:15, 16) But time and again, Jehovah—the God in whom they trusted—

reassured and strengthened them. Their accounts were recorded to comfort and instruct us. (Rom. 15:4) Consider Jacob's son Joseph. In short order, Joseph went from being a cherished son of his father to being a lowly slave of a pagan court official in Egypt. (Gen. 37:3, 4, 21-28; 39:1) Then Potiphar's wife falsely accused Joseph of trying to rape her. Without investigating the charges, Potiphar had Joseph thrown into prison, and he was bound in irons. (Gen. 39:14-20; Ps. 105:17, 18) Surely Joseph had reason to feel discouraged! *w20.12* 16-17 ¶1-4

Wednesday, November 23

Let your name be sanctified.

—Matt. 6:9.

That is what Jesus stated as a priority in prayer. But what do Jesus' words mean? To sanctify something means to make it holy, clean, or pure. Some might wonder, though, 'Is not Jehovah's name already holy, clean, and pure?' To answer, we need to think about what a name involves. A name is more than a collection of letters written on a page or spoken aloud. Notice what the Bible says: "A good name is to be chosen rather than great wealth." (Prov. 22:1; Eccl. 7:1) Why does a name have such value? Because it involves a reputation, what others think of the one bearing that name. So the way a name appears on a page—or even the way it is pronounced—is not what matters most; what truly matters is whom and what that name stands for in the minds and hearts of others. When people tell lies about Jehovah, they are attacking his reputation. When they attack his reputation, they are trying to damage his name. *w20.06* 3 ¶5-7

Thursday, November 24

I am greatly disturbed, and I ask you, O Jehovah—how long will it be?—Ps. 6:3.

We might respond to intense pressures by becoming consumed with anxiety. For instance, we may worry that we will not earn enough money to care for our needs or that we will get sick and miss work or even lose our job. We may also be concerned that we will be unfaithful when tempted to break God's law. Soon Satan will cause those whom he controls to attack God's people, so we may worry about how we will react to that attack. We may wonder, 'Is it wrong for me to feel some concern about such issues?' We know that Jesus told his followers: "Stop being anxious." (Matt. 6:25) Does this mean that he expects us to feel no anxiety whatsoever? Certainly not! After all, in the past some of Jehovah's loyal servants struggled with anxiety, but they did not lose Jehovah's approval. (1 Ki. 19:4) Jesus was actually reassuring us. He did not want us to become so anxious about the cares of this life that our service to God would be negatively affected. *w21.01 3 ¶4-5*

Friday, November 25

*The head of a woman is the man.
—1 Cor. 11:3.*

A husband is accountable to both Jehovah and Jesus for the way he treats his family. (1 Pet. 3:7) As Head of his universal family, Jehovah has the authority to make rules about how his children should behave, and he is able to enforce those rules. (Isa. 33:22) Jesus, as head of the Christian congregation, also has the right to make and enforce rules.

(Gal. 6:2; Col. 1:18-20) Following the pattern set by Jehovah and Jesus, the head of a Christian family has the authority to make decisions for his family. (Rom. 7:2; Eph. 6:4) However, his authority has limits. For example, his rules should be based on principles found in God's Word. (Prov. 3:5, 6) And a family head does not have the authority to make rules for those who are not part of his family. (Rom. 14:4) Also, when his sons and daughters grow up and leave home, they continue to respect him, but they are no longer under his headship.—Matt. 19:5. *w21.02 2-3 ¶3-5*

Saturday, November 26

*Provide for those who are
[your] own.—1 Tim. 5:8.*

One important way that a family head proves that he loves his family is by providing for their material needs. He must remember, however, that material things cannot satisfy his family's spiritual needs. (Matt. 5:3) While Jesus was dying on a torture stake, he wanted to make sure that Mary was cared for. Despite being in severe agony, Jesus arranged for the apostle John to care for Mary. (John 19:26, 27) A brother who is a family head may have a number of weighty responsibilities. He must be diligent in his secular work so that his conduct reflects well on Jehovah. (Eph. 6:5, 6; Titus 2:9, 10) And he may have responsibilities in the congregation, such as shepherding and taking the lead in the preaching work. At the same time, it is important that he regularly study the Bible with his wife and children. They will deeply appreciate his efforts to keep them physically, emotionally, and spiritually healthy. —Eph. 5:28, 29; 6:4. *w21.01 12 ¶15, 17*

Sunday, November 27

[A capable wife] watches over the activity of her household.

—Prov. 31:27.

Describing the role of a capable wife, God's Word says that she can oversee a household, buy and manage property, and negotiate financial transactions. (Prov. 31:15, 16, 18) She is not a slave who has no right to voice her opinion. Rather, her husband trusts her and listens to her ideas. (Prov. 31:11, 26) When a man treats his wife with that kind of respect, she will find pleasure in being subject to him. Despite his accomplishments, Jesus does not feel that it is demeaning to subject himself to Jehovah's headship. (1 Cor. 15:28; Phil. 2:5, 6) Likewise, a capable woman who follows Jesus' example will not feel diminished by submitting to her husband. She will support her husband not only because she loves him but primarily because she loves and respects Jehovah. A submissive Christian wife, however, will not support her husband if he asks her to violate Bible laws or principles. *w21.02* 11 ¶14-15; 12 ¶19

Monday, November 28

Tribulation produces endurance.

—Rom. 5:3.

Love for God has always helped Jehovah's servants to endure persecution. For instance, when the apostles were commanded by the powerful Jewish supreme court to stop preaching, love for God moved them to "obey God as ruler rather than men." (Acts 5:29; 1 John 5:3) Such unbreakable love also strengthens our brothers today, many of whom are standing firm against cruel and powerful governments. Instead of being discour-

aged, we count it a privilege to endure the world's hatred. (Acts 5:41; Rom. 5:4, 5) Perhaps one of our biggest tests comes from members of our own family. When we begin to show interest in the truth, some family members may think that we have been misled. Others may think that we have lost our mind. (Compare Mark 3:21.) They may even violently oppose us. This negative reaction should not surprise us. Jesus said: "A man's enemies will be those of his own household."—Matt. 10:36. *w21.03* 21 ¶6-7

Tuesday, November 29

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

When you accompany a publisher on his Bible study, listen attentively while the teacher and the student are talking. Only then will you be ready to assist if fitting. Of course, you must use good judgment. For instance, you would not want to talk too much, interrupt the teacher's line of reasoning, or introduce a different topic. But with a brief comment, illustration, or question, you could help clarify the point being taught. At times, you may feel that you cannot add much to the study. But if you commend the student and show personal interest in him, you will do much to help him to progress. If it is appropriate, you could briefly tell the student how you learned the truth, how you overcame a challenge, or how you have seen Jehovah's helping hand in your life. (Ps. 78:4, 7) Your experience could be just what the student needs to hear. It may strengthen his faith or encourage him to continue progressing to baptism. *w21.03* 10 ¶9-10

Wednesday, November 30

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

Who really is responsible for any success we have in the ministry? Paul answered that question when he wrote these words about the Corinthian congregation: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God kept making it grow, so that neither is the one who plants anything nor is the one who waters, but God who makes it grow." (1 Cor. 3:6, 7) Like Paul, we should always give credit to Jehovah for any success enjoyed in the ministry. How can we show our appreciation for the privilege of "working together" with God, Christ, and the angels? (2 Cor. 6:1) We can do so by zealously seeking opportunities to share the good news with others. We must not only plant seeds of truth but also water them. When an individual shows interest, we want to do our best to follow up on it with a view to starting a Bible study. As the study progresses, we rejoice when we see how Jehovah works on the heart and mind of a potential disciple. *w20.05 30 ¶14, 16-18*

Thursday, December 1

The one who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven by the wind and blown about.—Jas. 1:6.

From time to time, we might have difficulty understanding something in God's Word. Or Jehovah may not answer our prayers the way that we had hoped for. This may give rise to doubts. If we ignore our doubts, they will weaken our faith and damage our relationship with Jehovah. (Jas. 1:7, 8) And they could even make us lose our hope for the future.

The apostle Paul likened our hope for the future to an anchor. (Heb. 6:19) An anchor stabilizes a ship during a storm and stops it from drifting onto rocks. But an anchor is useful only if the chain that attaches it to the ship does not break. Just as rust weakens an anchor chain, so unresolved doubts weaken our faith. When tested by opposition, a person who has doubts could lose faith that Jehovah will fulfill his promises. If we lose our faith, we lose our hope. A person in that position is unlikely to feel any joy at all! *w21.02 30 ¶14-15*

Friday, December 2

*Abraham put faith in Jehovah.
—Jas. 2:23.*

Abraham was likely over 70 when he and his family left Ur. (Gen. 11:31-12:4) And for some one hundred years, he lived in tents, roaming the land of Canaan. Abraham died when he was 175. (Gen. 25:7) But he did not see Jehovah fulfill His promise to give the land he walked on to his descendants. And he did not live to see the city, God's Kingdom, established. Even so, Abraham is described as dying "old and satisfied." (Gen. 25:8) Despite all the challenges he had to deal with, Abraham maintained strong faith and was content to wait on Jehovah. Why was he able to endure? Because throughout Abraham's life, Jehovah protected him and treated him as a friend. (Gen. 15:1; Isa. 41:8; Jas. 2:22) Like Abraham, we are awaiting the city having real foundations. (Heb. 11:10) We are not waiting for it to be built, however. God's Kingdom was established in 1914 and has already taken complete control of heaven. (Rev. 12:7-10) But we are waiting for it to take complete control of the earth. *w20.08 4-5 ¶11-12*

Saturday, December 3

The thoughts of a man's heart are like deep waters, but the discerning man draws them out.—Prov. 20:5.

To listen attentively to others, we need to be humble and patient. It is worth the effort for at least three reasons. First, we will be less likely to jump to wrong conclusions about people. Second, we can discern feelings and motives in our brother, and that will help us to be more empathetic. And third, we may help the person to learn something about himself. Sometimes we do not really understand even our own emotions until we express those emotions in words. Some of our brothers and sisters find it difficult to talk about their feelings because of their background, culture, or personality. It may take time for them to feel comfortable speaking to us, but only when they do will we be able to discern their true feelings. If we imitate Jehovah by being patient, we can earn their confidence. Then, when they are ready to share their feelings, we should listen attentively. *w20.04 15-16 ¶6-7*

Sunday, December 4

You will be catching men alive.—Luke 5:10.

Fish usually stay in an area where the water conditions suit them and where there is plenty of food. Does it matter at what time a fisherman does his work? Regarding the best time to catch literal fish, note what a local Witness on a Pacific island said when he invited a missionary to go fishing. The missionary said, "I'll meet you at nine o'clock tomorrow morning." The brother replied, "You do not understand. We go when

it is the right time for the fish, not when it is the right time for us." Likewise, fishers of men in the first century went to places where the "fish" would be and at a time when they were likely to be there. For example, Jesus' followers preached at the temple and in the synagogues, from house to house, and in the marketplace. (Acts 5:42; 17:17; 18:4) We too need to be familiar with the habits of people who live in our assigned territory. We need to be flexible and preach where and when we are most likely to find people.—1 Cor. 9:19-23. *w20.09 4 ¶8-9*

Monday, December 5

Speaking the truth, let us by love grow up in all things into him who is the head, Christ.—Eph. 4:15.

One way to build a friendship with Jesus is to support the arrangements of the Christian congregation. We strengthen our connection to Jesus as the head of the congregation when we cooperate with those who are appointed to care for us. (Eph. 4:16) For example, we are now trying to make sure that all Kingdom Halls are used to full capacity. To that end, some congregations have been merged with other congregations. This arrangement has resulted in considerable savings of dedicated resources. At the same time, however, it has required that some publishers adjust to the new circumstances. Those faithful publishers may have served with a certain congregation for many years and may have grown close to the brothers and sisters there. But now they are being asked to serve in a different congregation. How pleased Jesus must be to see these loyal disciples cooperate with this arrangement! *w20.04 24 ¶14*

Tuesday, December 6

The king of the south will lock horns with him.—Dan. 11:40; ftn.

The king of the north and the king of the south continue to compete for world domination. For example, consider what happened after World War II when the Soviet Union and its allies gained influence over much of Europe. The actions of the king of the north forced the king of the south to form an international military alliance, known as NATO. The king of the north continues to compete with the king of the south in an expensive arms race. The king of the north fought his rival in proxy wars and insurgencies in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In recent years, Russia and its allies have spread their influence across the globe. They have also engaged with the king of the south in cyber warfare. The kings have accused each other of using destructive computer programs in an effort to damage their economies and political systems. And as foretold by Daniel, the king of the north continues his attack on God's people.—Dan. 11:41. *w20.05* 13 ¶5-6

Wednesday, December 7

I myself will search for my sheep, and I will care for them.

—Ezek. 34:11.

“Can a woman forget her nursing child?” That was a question Jehovah asked in the days of the prophet Isaiah. “Even if these women forget, I would never forget you,” God told his people. (Isa. 49:15) He does not often compare himself to a mother. However, he did so on that occasion. Jehovah used the bond be-

tween a mother and her child to reveal how deeply he is attached to his servants. Most mothers can relate to what a sister named Jasmin says, “When you nurse your child, you form a very special bond that lasts a lifetime.” Jehovah takes note when even one of his children stops associating with the Christian congregation and engaging in the preaching work. Many of these dear brothers and sisters who have become inactive do come back to the congregation, where they are most welcome! Jehovah wants them to come back, and so do we.—1 Pet. 2:25. *w20.06* 18 ¶1-3

Thursday, December 8

Keep [your] eyes . . . on the things unseen. For the things seen are temporary, but the things unseen are everlasting.—2 Cor. 4:18.

Not all treasures can be seen. In fact, the greatest treasures are unseen. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus mentioned heavenly treasures that are vastly superior to material possessions. Then he added this truth: “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matt. 6:19-21) Our heart will move us to pursue the things we treasure, or value highly. We store up “treasures in heaven” by gaining a good name, or standing, with God. Such treasures, Jesus explained, can never be destroyed or stolen. The apostle Paul urges us to “keep our eyes . . . on the things unseen.” (2 Cor. 4:17, 18) These unseen things are treasures that include the blessings we will enjoy in God's new world. Do we show that we appreciate these unseen treasures? *w20.05* 26 ¶1-2

Friday, December 9

*My instruction will fall as the rain.
—Deut. 32:2.*

What Moses taught the Israelites nourished and refreshed them, like gentle rain on vegetation. How can we make sure that our teaching is like that? When we are in the door-to-door work or the public ministry, we can use our Bible to show people God's personal name, Jehovah. We can offer them beautiful literature, excellent videos, and material on our website that honor Jehovah. At work, at school, or while traveling, we may find opportunities to talk about our beloved God and what he is like. When we tell those we meet about Jehovah's loving purpose for mankind and the earth, we are giving them a view of Jehovah that may well be completely new to them. As we tell others the truth about our loving Father, we are adding to the sanctifying of God's name. We are clearing up some of the lies and slander about Jehovah that others may have been taught. We offer people the most nourishing, refreshing teachings available.—Isa. 65:13, 14. *w20.06* 10 ¶8-9

Saturday, December 10

*Return to me, and I will return
to you.—Mal. 3:7.*

What qualities must we have if we are to help those who want to return to Jehovah? Note some lessons we can learn from Jesus' illustration of the wayward son who left home. (Luke 15:17-24) The son finally came to his senses and decided to return home. The father ran to meet his son and gave him a warm embrace, assuring the son of his love. The son had a troubled conscience and

felt unworthy of being called a son. The father felt empathy for his son, who poured out his feelings. The father then took practical steps to assure his son that he was welcome back home as a cherished member of the family. To prove the point, the father arranged a feast and provided fine clothes for his repentant son. Jehovah is like the father in that illustration. He loves our inactive brothers and sisters and wants them to return to him. By imitating Jehovah, we can help them to return. This calls for patience, empathy, and love on our part. *w20.06* 25-26 ¶8-9

Sunday, December 11

*If you remain in my word, you are
really my disciples, and you will
know the truth, and the truth will
set you free.—John 8:31, 32.*

Jesus said that some would accept the truth "with joy," but their faith would wither when tested. (Matt. 13: 3-6, 20, 21) Perhaps they did not realize that following Jesus would involve challenges and hardship. (Matt. 16:24) Or maybe they thought that being a Christian meant living a trouble-free life—one with only blessings, no challenges. But in this imperfect world, there will be challenges. Circumstances can change, causing our joy to diminish for a time. (Ps. 6:6; Eccl. 9:11) The vast majority of our brothers and sisters prove that they are convinced that they have the truth. How? Their conviction does not waver even if a fellow believer hurts them or gets involved in unchristian conduct. (Ps. 119:165) With each test, their faith grows stronger, not weaker. (Jas. 1:2-4) We must build that type of strong faith. *w20.07* 8 ¶1; 9 ¶4-5

Monday, December 12

If any one of you is lacking in wisdom, let him keep asking God.

—Jas. 1:5.

Before you start reading the Bible, ask Jehovah to help you to see how you can benefit from what you read. For example, if you are looking for counsel on how to deal with a problem, ask Jehovah to help you find principles in his Word that can guide you. (Phil. 4:6, 7) Jehovah has given us the amazing faculty of imagination. To help you bring a Bible account to life, try to imagine the scene and see yourself in the place of the key character. Try to see the things he or she saw and to feel the emotions that the character might have felt. Next, meditate. Meditation means thinking carefully about what you read and about how the information applies to you. It helps you to connect thoughts and gain a deeper understanding of a subject. Reading the Bible without meditation is like looking at pieces of a jigsaw puzzle on a table without assembling them. Meditation helps us to see the whole picture. *w21.03 15 ¶3-5*

Tuesday, December 13

I am grateful to God, . . . never ceasing to remember you in my supplications night and day.

—2 Tim. 1:3.

The apostle Paul could have focused on the past, thinking that if he had made different choices, he might not have been arrested. He could have become bitter with the men in the district of Asia who had abandoned him, and he might have adopted a cynical attitude toward his other friends. But Paul did not do any of those things. Even with

the threat of death hanging over him, Paul did not lose sight of the big issue—that of bringing glory to Jehovah. And he continued to think about how he could encourage others. He relied on Jehovah through regular prayer. Rather than focus excessively on those who had abandoned him, he expressed deep gratitude for the loving support of his friends who loyally helped him in practical ways. In addition, Paul continued to study God's Word. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 4:13) Most important, he had absolute confidence that Jehovah and Jesus loved him. *w21.03 18 ¶17-18*

Wednesday, December 14

Just as the weeds are collected and burned with fire, so it will be in the conclusion of the system of things.

—Matt. 13:40.

At some time during the second century C.E., the true Christian congregation began to be overrun by false Christians, who had adopted pagan teachings and who were hiding the truths found in God's Word. From that time until the late 19th century, there was no organized group of God's servants on earth. The weeds of false Christianity flourished and hid the identity of true Christians. (Matt. 13:36-43) Why is that fact significant? It indicates that what we read in Daniel chapter 11 about the king of the north and the king of the south could not apply to rulers or kingdoms that held power from sometime in the 2nd century to the second half of the 19th century. There was no organized group of God's people for them to attack. However, we can expect that the king of the north and the king of the south would reappear in the late 19th century. *w20.05 3 ¶15*

Thursday, December 15

A nation has come up into my land.—Joel 1:6.

Joel foretells that a plague of locusts will devastate the land of Israel, devouring everything in sight! (Joel 1:4) For many years, we have applied that prophecy symbolically to the way in which Jehovah's people, like an unstoppable swarm of locusts, engage in their preaching activity. We understood that this activity has devastating effects on the "land," or the people who are under the control of the religious leaders. However, when we consider the prophecy in its context, we see that a different understanding is appropriate. Notice Jehovah's promise with regard to the plague of locusts: "I will drive the northerner [the locusts] far away from you." (Joel 2:20) If the locusts represent Jehovah's Witnesses as they obey Jesus' command to preach and make disciples, why would Jehovah promise to drive them away? (Ezek. 33:7-9; Matt. 28:19, 20) Clearly, Jehovah is driving away, not his faithful servants, but something or someone who is hostile to his people. *w20.04 3 ¶3-5*

Friday, December 16

If any one of you is lacking in wisdom, let him keep asking God.—Jas. 1:5.

How should we react if we feel that Jehovah does not answer our prayer immediately? James says that we should "keep asking" God. Jehovah is not annoyed when we keep asking him for wisdom. He will not reproach us. Our heavenly Father "gives generously" when we pray for the wisdom to endure our trials. (Ps. 25:12, 13) He sees our trials, he has empathy, and he is eager to

help us. Certainly, that is a cause for joy! How, though, does Jehovah give us wisdom? By means of his Word. (Prov. 2:6) To gain that wisdom, we must study God's Word and Bible-based publications. But we need to do more than just accumulate knowledge. We must put God's wisdom to work in our life by acting on his advice. James wrote: "Become doers of the word and not hearers only." (Jas. 1:22) When we apply God's counsel, we become more peaceable, reasonable, and merciful. (Jas. 3:17) Those qualities help us to deal with any trial without losing our joy. *w21.02 29 ¶10-11*

Saturday, December 17

Each respective member . . . contributes to the growth of the body.—Eph. 4:16.

A Bible student is more likely to make steady progress toward baptism when he receives help from others in the congregation. Each publisher can contribute to the increase of the congregation. A pioneer notes: "It has been said that it takes a village to raise a child. I think the same is true about making disciples; it usually takes a congregation to bring someone into the truth." Family members, friends, and teachers all play a role in helping a child to progress to maturity. They do this by encouraging the child and teaching him important lessons. Similarly, publishers can advise, encourage, and set a good example for Bible students, helping them to progress to baptism. (Prov. 15:22) Why should the publisher who conducts the Bible study welcome the help that other publishers can give the student? Because many can contribute to the student's spiritual progress. *w21.03 8 ¶1-3*

Sunday, December 18

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

All Christians, young and old, must resist the pressure to live a double life. The apostle John pointed out that we cannot be walking in the truth and at the same time be living an immoral life. (1 John 1:6) If we are to have God's approval now and in the future, we need to behave as if everything we do were under a spotlight. In a sense, there is no such thing as a secret sin because everything we do is visible to Jehovah. (Heb. 4:13) We have to reject the world's view of sin. In John's day, apostates claimed that a person could deliberately follow a course of sin and still have a relationship with God. Today, we are living among people who have a similar view. Many claim to believe in God, but they do not agree with Jehovah's view of sin, especially when it involves the subject of sex. What Jehovah views as sinful conduct they call a personal preference, or an alternative lifestyle. *w20.07 22 ¶7-8*

Monday, December 19

*Love . . . in deed and truth.
—1 John 3:18.*

Do you speak up for your spiritual sisters when they need it? Consider the following scenario. Some publishers see that a sister in a divided home often arrives late to the meetings and leaves right away at the end. They note that she seldom brings her children along. So they question why she does not take a more forceful stand with her unbelieving husband, and they criticize her. However, the reality is that the sister is doing the best she can.

She does not have complete control over her schedule; nor does she have the final say over her children. If you commend the sister and mention to others what she is doing well, you may stop the negative talk. Elders know that it matters to Jehovah how such ones are treated. (Jas. 1:27) They therefore imitate Jesus' reasonableness, not making rules when it would be more appropriate to make exceptions. (Matt. 15:22-28) Elders who take the initiative to render aid make their sisters feel supported. *w20.09 24-25 ¶17-19*

Tuesday, December 20

[God] has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what is to happen.—Dan. 2:28.

The prophet Daniel always humbly looked to Jehovah for guidance. For instance, when he was used by Jehovah to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Daniel did not take credit for the interpretation. Rather, he modestly gave all the glory and credit to Jehovah. (Dan. 2:26-28) What is the lesson for us? If brothers enjoy listening to our talks or if we have a measure of success in the ministry, we want to remember to give all the glory to Jehovah. We should modestly acknowledge that we could not do these things without Jehovah's help. (Phil. 4:13) When we have this attitude, we are also imitating Jesus' fine example. Jesus depended on Jehovah. (John 5:19, 30) He never tried to grab authority from his heavenly Father. Philippians 2:6 tells us that Jesus "gave no consideration to a seizure, namely, that he should be equal to God." As a submissive Son, Jesus understood his limitations and respected his Father's authority. *w20.08 11 ¶12-13*

Wednesday, December 21

Run in such a way that you may win.—1 Cor. 9:24.

Some who are running on the road to life are dealing with personal circumstances that others cannot see and may not understand. If you live with limitations and feel that you are misunderstood, you may be able to draw strength from the example of Mephibosheth. (2 Sam. 4:4) He had to deal with being infirm, and he was misjudged by King David. Yet, he did not allow himself to become negative; he appreciated the positive things in his life. He was thankful for the kindness David had shown him in the past. (2 Sam. 9:6-10) So when David misjudged him, Mephibosheth saw the complete picture. He did not allow David's mistake to make him bitter. And he did not blame Jehovah for what David had done. Mephibosheth focused on what he could do to support Jehovah's appointed king. (2 Sam. 16:1-4; 19:24-30) Jehovah had Mephibosheth's excellent example recorded in His Word for our benefit.—Rom. 15:4. *w20.04* 26 ¶3; 30 ¶18-19

Thursday, December 22

*We are God's fellow workers.
—1 Cor. 3:9.*

Some in the congregation may be appointed to serve as missionaries, special pioneers, or regular pioneers. They have made preaching and disciple-making their full-time career. Although these full-time evangelizers usually have few material things, Jehovah has rewarded them with a life filled with blessings. (Mark 10:29, 30) We treasure these dear brothers and sisters, and

we are grateful that they are part of the congregation! Are appointed brothers and those in the full-time ministry the only ones to have a place in the congregation? Not at all! Every publisher of the good news is important to God and to the congregation. (Rom. 10:15; 1 Cor. 3:6-8) In fact, one of the most important goals of the congregation is to make disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Matt. 28:19, 20; 1 Tim. 2:4) All who are associated with the congregation, both baptized and unbaptized publishers, try to make this work a priority.—Matt. 24:14. *w20.08* 21 ¶7-8

Friday, December 23

*I am with you all the days until the conclusion of the system of things.
—Matt. 28:20.*

As shown in the words of today's text, when we face challenges, Jesus will support us. In fact, Jesus' words are a source of strength for us. Why? Because some days are difficult for us to endure. For instance, when a loved one dies, we must deal with that pain not just for a few days but likely for many years. Others must deal with the difficult days that come with old age. Still others face days on which they are overwhelmed by feelings of depression. Even so, we find the strength to go on because we know that Jesus is with us "all the days," including the darkest days, of our life. (Matt. 11:28-30) God's Word assures us that Jehovah helps us by means of his angels. (Heb. 1:7, 14) For example, angels give us support and guidance as we preach the "good news of the Kingdom" to people of "every nation and tribe and tongue."—Matt. 24:13, 14; Rev. 14:6. *w20.11* 13-14 ¶6-7

Saturday, December 24

The thoughts of a man's heart are like deep waters, but the discerning man draws them out.—Prov. 20:5.

We want our student to understand that what he is learning comes from God's inspired Word. (1 Thess. 2:13) How can we do that? Encourage the student to talk about the things he is learning. Instead of always explaining Bible texts to the student, ask him to explain some of them to you. Help the student to see how God's Word applies to him personally. Ask leading and viewpoint questions that draw him out—what he thinks and feels about the scriptures he reads. (Luke 10:25-28) For example, ask him: "How has this scripture helped you to see one of Jehovah's qualities?" "How can you benefit from this Bible truth?" "How do you feel about what you just learned?" What matters most is, not how much a student knows, but how much he loves and applies what he knows. Let the Bible do the teaching. You must be humble if you are to improve your teaching skills. *w20.10* 15 ¶5-6

Sunday, December 25

Sow your seed in the morning and do not let your hand rest until the evening.—Eccl. 11:6.

We can be sure that the Kingdom-preaching work will be completed with no delay. Consider what happened in the days of Noah. Jehovah proved that he is the perfect Time-keeper. Some 120 years in advance, Jehovah fixed the time for the Flood to begin. Decades later, Jehovah commissioned Noah to build the ark. For perhaps 40 or 50 years before the Flood began, Noah continued to work hard. Despite facing

an unresponsive audience, he kept preaching the warning message until Jehovah said that it was time to enter the ark. Then, right on time, "Jehovah shut the door." (Gen. 6:3; 7:1, 2, 16) Soon Jehovah will bring the Kingdom-preaching work to a conclusion; he will "shut the door" on Satan's system of things and usher in a righteous new world. Until then, may we imitate Noah and others who have not let their hand rest. May we stay focused, be patient, and maintain strong faith in Jehovah and his promises. *w20.09* 13 ¶18-19

Monday, December 26

Let all things take place decently and by arrangement.—1 Cor. 14:40.

Without the clear-cut role of headship, Jehovah's family would become disorganized and unhappy. For example, no one would know who should make final decisions and who should take the lead in carrying out those decisions. If God's arrangement for headship is such a good thing, why do so many women today feel oppressed by it? Because many men ignore Jehovah's standards for the family and choose instead to follow local customs or traditions. They may also abuse their wives to satisfy some selfish desire. For example, a husband might dominate his wife in an attempt to boost his self-respect or to prove to others that he is a "real man." He may reason that he cannot force his wife to love him, but he can make her fear him. And he may use that fear as a way to control her. That type of thinking and conduct clearly deprives women of the honor and respect to which they are entitled, and it is directly opposite to what Jehovah wants.—Eph. 5:25, 28. *w21.02* 3 ¶6-7

Tuesday, December 27

Throw all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you.—1 Pet. 5:7.

Christians who are under pressure can find relief when they turn to Jehovah in earnest prayer. In answer to your prayers, you can receive “the peace of God that surpasses all [human] understanding.” (Phil. 4:6, 7) Jehovah calms our anxious thoughts by means of his powerful holy spirit. (Gal. 5:22) When approaching Jehovah in prayer, open your heart to him. Be specific. Tell him what the problem is, and explain to him how you feel about it. If there is a possible solution, ask him for the wisdom to find it and the strength to implement it. If the answer to your problem is beyond your control, ask Jehovah to help you not to be unduly worried about it. When you are specific in your prayers, in time you will see more clearly how Jehovah has answered them. If the answer does not come immediately after you have been praying, do not give up. Jehovah wants you to be not only specific but also persistent in your prayers. —Luke 11:8-10. *w21.01* 3 ¶6-7

Wednesday, December 28

[Jesus] said to them: “Not all men make room for the saying, but only those who have the gift.”

—Matt. 19:11.

The congregation today includes married couples and families. Yet, it also includes many brothers and sisters who are not married. How should we view those who are single? Consider how Jesus viewed singleness. During his earthly ministry, Jesus did not marry. He remained single and focused his time

and attention on his assignment. Jesus never taught that it was a requirement to get married or to be single. However, he did say that some Christians would choose not to marry. (See study note on Matthew 19:12.) Jesus respected those who were not married. He did not view single people as inferior or lacking in some way. Like Jesus, the apostle Paul carried out his ministry as a single person. Paul never taught that it would be wrong for a Christian to marry. He recognized that this was a personal matter. *w20.08* 28 ¶7-8

Thursday, December 29

God is love.—1 John 4:16.

The apostle John had a long, eventful life. He faced all types of challenges that could have weakened his faith. But he always did his best to observe Jesus’ commandments, including the order to love his brothers and sisters. As a result, John was sure that Jehovah and Jesus loved him and that they would give him the strength to overcome any trial. (John 14:15-17; 15:10) Nothing that Satan or his system did could stop John from feeling, expressing, and showing love. Like John, we live in a world dominated by Satan, the hateful god of this system. (1 John 3:1, 10) While he wants us to stop loving our brothers and sisters, he cannot make that happen unless we allow him to do so. May we be determined to love our brothers and sisters, to express that love by what we say, and to prove that love by what we do. Then we will have the satisfaction of being part of Jehovah’s family, and life will truly be worth living.—1 John 4:7. *w21.01* 13 ¶18-19

Friday, December 30

God . . . supplies endurance.

—Rom. 15:5.

Life in this world controlled by Satan can be hard to deal with, even overwhelming at times. (2 Tim. 3:1) But we do not need to be anxious or afraid. Jehovah knows what we are going through. When we fall, he promises to hold on to us with his strong right hand. (Isa. 41:10, 13) With full confidence in his support, we can gain strength from the Scriptures and overcome any challenge. Our videos and audio dramas and the series “Imitate Their Faith” help bring Bible events to life. Before you watch, listen to, or read these accounts, ask Jehovah to help you find specific points that you can apply. Imagine yourself in the place of the main character. Meditate on what these dear servants of Jehovah did and how he helped them to overcome difficulties. Then apply the lessons to your own situation. Thank Jehovah for the help he is already giving you. And show that you appreciate the help by looking for opportunities to encourage and support others. *w21.03 19 ¶22-23*

Saturday, December 31

Sons are an inheritance from

Jehovah.—Ps. 127:3.

If you are a married couple and would like to have children, ask yourselves: ‘Are we the kind of humble, spiritually-minded people whom Jehovah would choose to care for a precious new life?’ (Ps. 127:4) If you are already a parent, ask yourself: ‘Am I teaching my children the value of hard work?’ (Eccl. 3:12, 13) ‘Do I do my best to protect my children from the physical and moral dangers that they may encounter?’ (Prov. 22:3) You cannot shield your children from all challenges. But you can progressively and lovingly prepare them for the realities of life by teaching them how to turn to God’s Word for advice. (Prov. 2:1-6) For example, if a relative chooses to reject true worship, help your children to learn from God’s Word why it is so important to remain loyal to Jehovah. (Ps. 31:23) Or if death claims a loved one, show your children how to use God’s Word to cope with grief and to find peace.—2 Cor. 1:3, 4; 2 Tim. 3:16. *w20.10 27 ¶7*