

## **Improving Our Skills in the Ministry: Discontinuing Unproductive Bible Studies**

Conductor: I've really enjoyed our Bible studies, Tony. Even though it's been a challenge for you to study every week, we always have good discussions.

Student (Tony): Yeah. I like what you show me from the Bible, it's so different from my church.

Conductor: As we considered before, Jehovah wants people to come to an accurate knowledge of truth. Like it says at 1 Timothy 2:4. But there's more to it than that.

Student (Tony): What do you mean?

Conductor: Well, imagine for a moment that you lived along the coast where there's a danger of tsunamis. If you heard a tsunami warning, would you be saved if you just recognized the warning, and knew how to evacuate?

Student (Tony): No. I'd have to get out of the danger zone.

Conductor: Exactly. So, do we truly benefit if we *only learn* what Jehovah requires of us?

Student (Tony): No. I guess not.

Conductor: Jesus gave an excellent illustration about the need to *apply* what we learn. It's found at Matthew chapter 13, verses 18 through 23. Would you please read that for us Tony?

Student (Tony): Sure. It says: "Now listen to the illustration of the man who sowed .....As for the one sown upon the fine soil, this is the one hearing the word and getting the sense of it, who really does bear fruit and produces, this one 100 times more, that one 60, the other 30."

Conductor: Thank you. So, of all the situations Jesus describes, which one do you think resembles yours the most?

Student (Tony): Umm. I don't really know

E&OE

## Improving Our Skills in the Ministry: Discontinuing Unproductive Bible Studies

Conductor: Well, let's look again at the example of the one sown upon the fine soil. According to verse 23, how did he respond after hearing the word?

Student (Tony): He got the sense of it and produced fruit.

Conductor: Right. So, he **responded** to what he learned, and **made the needed changes**. What about the other three in Jesus illustration?

Student (Tony): Something prevented them from responding.

Conductor: Exactly.

Student (Tony): You know, I want to do what Jehovah wants. But it's hard these days. Pressures from every side. I mean, you know, how it is. The job, the bills, the kids, the boss.

Conductor: It's challenging to seek God's kingdom first, and to balance all of our other responsibilities. But it is possible.

Assistant: I remember when I first started studying. Everybody opposed me, even my wife. Not only that, I drank a lot. I had to make a lot of changes. *But I prayed to Jehovah, specifically, about what I needed to work on. So, I **started coming to meetings right away**. Being with the congregation helped me to apply what I was learning.* I really could see how Jehovah was blessing my efforts. He became my father, and my friend. I really tried to apply James 4:8 it says: "Draw close to God....."

Student (Tony): ".....and he will draw close to you". Yeah, I remember that verse. So how long did it take for you to become a witness?

Assistant: Well, each person is different. For me, from the time I started studying until I dedicated my life to Jehovah, and got baptized, it was a couple of years. I'm so happy I started attending meetings, and never looked back.

## **Improving Our Skills in the Ministry: Discontinuing Unproductive Bible Studies**

Student (Tony): I'm not sure I'm ready for that kind of commitment. Maybe someday.

Conductor: We appreciate your honesty. For now, though, it's best that we discontinue the Bible study. *I'll stop by from time to time to see how you're doing, and to share a scriptural thought.* But keep thinking about Jehovah's warm invitation and his promise at James 4:8. *Talk to him, specifically, about your challenges and the changes you want to make to please him. And you know the schedule for our meetings at the Kingdom Hall. We'd love to see you there.* If you'd like to resume the study at some point, let me know. You have my contact information.

Student (Tony): Thanks. I appreciate that.

Conductor: Let's say a prayer.