

- Song 128 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- "We Do Not Give Up": (10 min.)



4:16-18

Imagine two families living in the same dilapidated apartment building. One family is understandably in despair. Strangely, the other family is happy. Why? The second family will soon move to a beautiful new home.

Although "all creation keeps on groaning together and being in pain together until now," God's servants have a hope that sustains them. (Ro 8:22) We know that our present troubles, even those that have plagued us for decades, are "momentary and light" when compared to an eternity in God's new world.

Focusing on future Kingdom blessings will help us have a measure of joy and not give up.

- (2 Corinthians 4:16-18) Therefore, we do not give up, but even if the man we are outside is wasting away, certainly the man we are inside is being renewed from day to day. 17 For though the tribulation is momentary and light, it works out for us a glory that is of more and more surpassing greatness and is everlasting; 18 while we keep our eyes, not on the things seen, but on the things unseen. For the things seen are temporary, but the things unseen are everlasting.
- (Romans 8:22) For we know that all creation keeps on groaning together and being in pain together until now.

2Co 4:16—Jehovah renews us "from day to day" (w04 8/15 25 ¶16-17)

(2 Corinthians 4:16) 16 Therefore, we do not give up, but even if the man we are outside is wasting away, certainly the man we are inside is being renewed from day to day.

*** w04 8/15 p. 25 pars. 16-17 Tired but Not Tiring Out ***

16 Caring for our spiritual health is, of course, highly important. When we have an intimate relationship with Jehovah God, we may get physically tired, but never will we tire of worshiping him. Jehovah is the one "giving to the tired one power; and to the one without dynamic energy he makes full might abound." (Isaiah 40:28, 29) The apostle Paul, who personally experienced the truthfulness of

these words, wrote: "We do not give up, but even if the man we are outside is wasting away, certainly the man we are inside is being renewed from day to day."—2 Corinthians 4:16.

17 Notice the expression "from day to day." This implies availing ourselves of Jehovah's provisions on a daily basis. A missionary who faithfully served for 43 years had to face periods of physical tiredness and discouragement. But she did not tire out. She says: "I have made it a practice to rise early so that before starting any work, I can spend time in prayer to Jehovah and read his Word. This daily routine has helped me to endure until now." We can indeed count on Jehovah's sustaining power if we regularly, yes "from day to day," pray to him and meditate on his lofty qualities and his promises.

- (Isaiah 40:28, 29) Do you not know? Have you not heard? Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth, is a God for all eternity. He never tires out or grows weary. His understanding is unsearchable. 29 He gives power to the tired one And full might to those lacking strength.
- (2 Corinthians 4:16) Therefore, we do not give up, but even if the man we are outside is wasting away, certainly the man we are inside is being renewed from day to day.

2Co 4:17—Present suffering is "momentary and light" (it-1 724-725)

(2 Corinthians 4:17) 17 For though the tribulation is momentary and light, it works out for us a glory that is of more and more surpassing greatness and is everlasting;

*** it-1 pp. 724-725 Endurance ***

It is also important never to lose sight of the Christian hope, eternal life in a sinless state. Not even death at the hands of persecutors can nullify this hope. (Ro 5:4, 5; 1Th 1:3; Re 2:10) The suffering of the present will pale into insignificance when compared with the fulfillment of that grand hope. (Ro 8:18-25) Against the backdrop of eternity, any suffering, though intense at the time, is "momentary and light." (2Co 4:16-18) A person's remembering the temporary nature of trials and holding fast to the Christian hope can prevent his giving in to despair and becoming unfaithful to Jehovah God.

- (Romans 5:4, 5) endurance, in turn, an approved condition; the approved condition, in turn, hope, 5 and the hope does not lead to disappointment; because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the holy spirit, which was given to us.
- (1 Thessalonians 1:3) for we continually remember your faithful work, your loving labor, and your endurance because of your hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father.
- (Revelation 2:10) Do not be afraid of the things you are about to suffer. Look! The Devil will keep on throwing some of you into prison so that you may be fully put to the test, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Prove yourself faithful even to death, and I will give you the crown of life.
- (Romans 8:18-25) For I consider that the sufferings of the present time do not amount to anything in comparison with the glory that is going to be revealed in us. 19 For the creation is waiting with eager expectation for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not by its own will, but through the one who subjected it, on the basis of hope 21 that the creation itself will also be set free from

enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God. 22 For we know that all creation keeps on groaning together and being in pain together until now. 23 Not only that, but we ourselves also who have the firstfruits, namely, the spirit, yes, we ourselves groan within ourselves while we are earnestly waiting for adoption as sons, the release from our bodies by ransom. 24 For we were saved in this hope; but hope that is seen is not hope, for when a man sees a thing, does he hope for it? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we keep eagerly waiting for it with endurance.

- (2 Corinthians 4:16-18) Therefore, we do not give up, but even if the man we are outside is wasting away, certainly the man we are inside is being renewed from day to day. 17 For though the tribulation is momentary and light, it works out for us a glory that is of more and more surpassing greatness and is everlasting; 18 while we keep our eyes, not on the things seen, but on the things unseen. For the things seen are temporary, but the things unseen are everlasting.

2Co 4:18—We should focus on future Kingdom blessings

(2 Corinthians 4:18) 18 while we keep our eyes, not on the things seen, but on the things unseen. For the things seen are temporary, but the things unseen are everlasting.

Digging for Spiritual Gems:

2Co 4:7—What is “this treasure in earthen vessels”? (w12 2/1 28-29)

(2 Corinthians 4:7) 7 However, we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the power beyond what is normal may be God’s and not from us.

*** w12 2/1 pp. 28-29 “Bring a Smile to Jehovah’s Face” ***

David Splane of the Governing Body examined that Scriptural theme. (2 Corinthians 4:7) What is the treasure? Is it knowledge or wisdom? “No,” answered the speaker. “The treasure that the apostle Paul spoke of is ‘this ministry’ of ‘making the truth manifest.’” (2 Corinthians 4:1, 2, 5) Brother Splane reminded the students that the five months they had spent studying was in preparation for a special assignment in the ministry. That assignment is something to be highly esteemed.

The speaker explained that the “earthen vessels” refer to our fleshly bodies. He contrasted a vessel made of earth with one made of gold. Vessels of gold are not used often. Vessels made of earth, on the other hand, are meant for work. If we placed a treasure in a vessel of gold, we might focus as much on the vessel as on the treasure it contains. “You students don’t want to draw attention to yourselves,” said Brother Splane. “As missionaries, you want to direct people to Jehovah. You are modest earthen vessels.”

- (2 Corinthians 4:7) However, we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the power beyond what is normal may be God’s and not from us.
- (2 Corinthians 4:1, 2) Therefore, since we have this ministry through the mercy that was shown us, we do not give up. 2 But we have renounced the shameful, underhanded things, not walking with cunning or adulterating the word of God;

but by making the truth manifest, we recommend ourselves to every human conscience in the sight of God.

- (2 Corinthians 4:5) For we are preaching, not about ourselves, but about Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake.

2Co 6:13—How can we obey the admonition to “open [our] hearts wide”? (w09 11/15 21 ¶7)

(2 Corinthians 6:13) 13 So in response—I speak as to my children—you too open your hearts wide.

*** w09 11/15 p. 21 par. 7 Keep Growing in Brotherly Love ***

7 What about us? How can we “widen out” in displaying brotherly love? Individuals in the same age bracket or of the same ethnic background may naturally be attracted to one another. And those with similar preferences in recreation often spend much time together. But if the interests that we share with some Christians separate us from others, we need to “widen out.” It would be wise to ask ourselves: ‘Do I seldom share in the ministry or social activities with brothers and sisters outside my intimate group? At the Kingdom Hall, do I limit my contact with those newly associated because I believe that they have to earn my friendship over time? Do I greet both older and younger ones in the congregation?’

What has this week’s Bible reading taught you about Jehovah?

What other spiritual gems have you discovered in this week’s Bible reading?

**Bible Reading:) 2Co 4:1-15 (th study 12)
4 min. or less) •**

(2 Corinthians 4:1-15) 4 Therefore, since we have this ministry through the mercy that was shown us, we do not give up. 2 But we have renounced the shameful, underhanded things, not walking with cunning or adulterating the word of God; but by making the truth manifest, we recommend ourselves to every human conscience in the sight of God. 3 If, in fact, the good news we declare is veiled, it is veiled among those who are perishing, 4 among whom the god of this system of things has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, so that the illumination of the glorious good news about the Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine through. 5 For we are preaching, not about ourselves, but about Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake. 6 For God is the one who said: “Let the light shine out of darkness,” and he has shone on our hearts to illuminate them with the glorious knowledge of God by the face of Christ.

7 However, we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the power beyond what is normal may be God's and not from us. 8 We are hard-pressed in every way, but not cramped beyond movement; we are perplexed, but not absolutely with no way out; 9 we are persecuted, but not abandoned; we are knocked down, but not destroyed. 10 Always we endure in our body the death-dealing treatment that Jesus suffered, that the life of

Jesus may also be made manifest in our body. 11 For we who live are ever being brought face-to-face with death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may also be made manifest in our mortal flesh. 12 So death is at work in us, but life in you.

13 Now because we have the same spirit of faith as that of which it is written: "I exercised faith, therefore I spoke"; we too exercise faith and therefore we speak, 14 knowing that the One who raised Jesus up will raise us up also with Jesus and will present us together with you. 15 For all these things are for your sake, so that the increase of the undeserved kindness should abound even more because many more are offering thanksgiving to the glory of God.

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Apply Yourself to Reading and Teaching: (10 min.) Discussion. Play the video Accurate Reading, and then discuss study 5 of the Teaching brochure.**

- **Talk: (5 min. or less) w04 7/1 30-31—Theme: Should a Baptized Christian Pursue a Courtship With a Publisher Who Is Not Baptized? (th study 7)**

*** w04 7/1 Questions From Readers ***

The principle found at 2 Corinthians 6:14 is a valuable guide for Christians in all areas of life and has often been quoted as providing wise counsel for Christians seeking a marriage mate. (Matthew 19:4-6) A dedicated, baptized Christian wisely does not seek a marriage mate among those who are unbelievers, since the values, goals, and beliefs of unbelievers are so different from those of a true Christian.

What, though, of individuals who study the Bible and associate with the Christian congregation? What of those who are unbaptized publishers? Are they unbelievers? No. Individuals who have accepted the truth of the good news and are progressing steadily toward baptism should not be called unbelievers. (Romans 10:10; 2 Corinthians 4:13) Before his baptism Cornelius was called "a devout man and one fearing God."—Acts 10:2.

Would it be wise, then, for a dedicated Christian to pursue courtship and marriage with someone who has been accepted as an unbaptized publisher, since, strictly speaking, Paul's counsel recorded at 2 Corinthians 6:14 could not apply in that case? No, that is not wise. Why not? Because of the direct counsel Paul gave regarding Christian widows. Paul wrote: "She is free to be married to whom she wants, only in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 7:39) In harmony with that counsel, dedicated Christians are urged to seek marriage mates only among those who are "in the Lord."

What is the meaning of the expression "in the Lord" and the related expression "in Christ"? Paul speaks of individuals who were "in Christ" or "in the Lord" at Romans 16:8-10 and Colossians 4:7. If you read those verses, you will see that such ones are 'fellow workers,'

'approved ones,' 'beloved brothers,' 'faithful ministers,' and 'fellow slaves.'

When does one become a "slave in the Lord"? That happens when he willingly does what a slave has to do and disowns himself. Jesus explains: "If anyone wants to come after me, let him disown himself and pick up his torture stake and continually follow me." (Matthew 16:24) A person begins to follow Christ and fully subject himself to the will of God when he dedicates himself to God. Thereafter, he offers himself for baptism and becomes an ordained minister with an approved standing before Jehovah God. So, then, to 'marry in the Lord' means to marry someone who has demonstrated that he is truly a believer, a dedicated "slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ."—James 1:1.

A person who is studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses and who is making fine spiritual progress is to be commended. However, he has not yet dedicated himself to Jehovah and committed himself to a life of service and sacrifice. He is still making necessary changes. He needs to complete the major changes involved in becoming a dedicated, baptized Christian before contemplating another major life change, such as marriage.

Would it be advisable for a Christian to pursue courtship with someone who seems to be making good progress in his Bible study—perhaps with the intention of waiting until he gets baptized before marrying him? No. The motives of a Bible student could well become confused if he is aware that a dedicated Christian wants to marry him but will not do so until he is baptized.

For the most part, an individual is an unbaptized publisher only for a limited period of time, until he progresses to the point of baptism. So the above counsel to marry only in the Lord is not unreasonable. What, though, if someone is of marriageable age, has been brought up in a Christian family, has been active in the congregation for a number of

years, and serves as an unbaptized publisher? Well, what has held him back from giving his life to Jehovah in dedication? Why does he hesitate? Does he have doubts? While he is not an unbeliever, he cannot be spoken of as being "in the Lord."

Paul's counsel on marriage is for our benefit. (Isaiah 48:17) When both prospective mates have dedicated themselves to Jehovah, their commitment to each other in marriage has a solid, spiritual foundation. They share the same values and the same goals. This greatly contributes to a happy union. Moreover, by 'marrying in the Lord,' one shows loyalty to Jehovah, and that leads to enduring blessings, for "with someone loyal [Jehovah] will act in loyalty."—Psalm 18:25.

- (2 Corinthians 6:14) Do not become unevenly yoked with unbelievers. For what fellowship do righteousness and lawlessness have? Or what sharing does light have with darkness?
- (Matthew 19:4-6) In reply he said: "Have you not read that the one who created them from the beginning made them male and female 5 and said: 'For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother and will stick to his wife, and the two will be one flesh'? 6 So that they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has yoked together, let no man put apart."
- (Romans 10:10) For with the heart one exercises faith for righteousness, but with the mouth one makes public declaration for salvation.
- (2 Corinthians 4:13) Now because we have the same spirit of faith as that of which it is written: "I exercised faith, therefore I spoke"; we too exercise faith and therefore we speak,
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- (Acts 10:2) He was a devout man who feared God together with all his household, and he made many gifts of mercy to the people and made supplication to God continually.
- (2 Corinthians 6:14) Do not become unevenly yoked with unbelievers. For what fellowship do righteousness and lawlessness have? Or what sharing does light have with darkness?
- (1 Corinthians 7:39) A wife is bound as long as her husband is alive. But if her husband should fall asleep in death, she is free to be married to whomever she wants, only in the Lord.
- (Romans 16:8-10) Give my greetings to Am·pli·a'tus, my beloved in the Lord. 9 Greet Ur·ba'nus, our fellow worker in Christ, and my beloved Sta'chys. 10 Greet A·pel'les, the approved one in Christ. Greet those from the household of A·ris·tob'u·lus.
- (Colossians 4:7) Tych'i·cus, my beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow slave in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me.
- (Matthew 16:24) Then Jesus said to his disciples: "If anyone wants to come after me, let him disown himself and pick up his torture stake and keep following me.
- (James 1:1) James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the 12 tribes that are scattered about: Greetings!
- (Isaiah 48:17) This is what Jehovah says, your Repurchaser, the Holy One of Israel: "I, Jehovah, am your God, The One teaching you to benefit yourself, The One guiding you in the way you should walk.
- (Psalm 18:25) With someone loyal you act in loyalty; With the blameless man you deal blamelessly;

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

Song 143

- **Doing the Very Best I Can: (8 min.) Play the video.**

Then ask the audience the following questions:

How did Brother Foster give his all to Jehovah when he was young and strong?

How did his circumstances change?

How is he giving Jehovah his all in his changed circumstances?

What lessons have you learned from his experience?

• **Local Needs: (7 min.)**

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.)

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.)

2y chap. 65

Teaching While Traveling to Jerusalem

(Matthew 8:19-22) And a scribe came up and said to him: "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." 20 But Jesus said to him: "Foxes have dens and birds of heaven have nests, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay down his head." 21 Then another of the disciples said to him: "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father." 22 Jesus said to him: "Keep following me, and let the dead bury their dead."

(Luke 9:51-62) As the days were drawing near for him to be taken up, he resolutely set his face to go to Jerusalem. 52 So he sent messengers ahead of him. And they went and entered a village of Sa-mar'i-tans to make preparations for him. 53 But they did not receive him, because he was determined to go to Jerusalem. 54 When the disciples James and John saw this, they said: "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven and annihilate them?" 55 But he turned and rebuked them. 56 So they went to a different village. 57 Now as they were going along the road, someone said to him: "I will follow you wherever you go." 58 But Jesus said to him:

"Foxes have dens and birds of heaven have nests, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay down his head." 59 Then he said to another: "Be my follower." The man said: "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father." 60 But he said to him: "Let the dead bury their dead, but you go and declare abroad the Kingdom of God." 61 And still another said: "I will follow you, Lord, but first permit me to say good-bye to those in my household." 62 Jesus said to him: "No man who has put his hand to a plow and looks at the things behind is well-suited for the Kingdom of God."

(John 7:2-10) However, the Jewish Festival of Tabernacles was near. 3 So his brothers said to him: "Leave here and go into Ju-de'a, so that your disciples may also see the works you are doing." 4 For no one does anything in secret when he seeks to be known publicly. If you are doing these things, show yourself to the world." 5 His brothers were, in fact, not exercising faith in him. 6 So Jesus said to them: "My time has not yet arrived, but your time is always at hand. 7 The world has no reason to hate you, but it hates me, because I bear witness about it that its works are wicked. 8 You go up to the festival; I am not yet going up to this festival, because my time has not yet fully come." 9 So after he told them these things, he remained in Gal'i-lee. 10 But when his brothers had gone up to the festival, then he also went up, not openly but in secret.

Paragraph 1 on Page 154

(John 5:18) This is why the Jews began seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath but he was also calling God his own Father, making himself equal to God.

(John 7:1) After this Jesus continued traveling about in Gal'i-lee, for he did not want to do so in Ju-de'a because the Jews were seeking to kill him.

Paragraph 3 on Page 154

(John 7:3, 4) So his brothers said to him: "Leave here and go into Ju-de'a, so that your disciples may also see the works you are doing. 4 For no one does anything in secret when he seeks to be known publicly. If you are doing these things, show yourself to the world."

Paragraph 4 on Page 154

(John 7:5-8) His brothers were, in fact, not exercising faith in him. 6 So Jesus said to them: "My time has not yet arrived, but your time is always at hand. 7 The world has no reason to hate you, but it hates me, because I bear witness about it that its works are wicked. 8 You go up to the festival; I am not yet going up to this festival, because my time has not yet fully come."

Paragraph 5 on Page 154

(Luke 9:54) When the disciples James and John saw this, they said: "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven and annihilate them?"

Paragraph 6 on Page 154

(Matthew 8:19, 20) And a scribe came up and said to him: "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." 20 But Jesus said to him: "Foxes have dens and birds of heaven have nests, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay down his head."

Paragraph 1 on Page 155

(Luke 9:59, 60) Then he said to another: "Be my follower." The man said: "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father." 60 But he said to him: "Let the dead bury their dead, but you go and declare abroad the Kingdom of God."

Paragraph 2 on Page 155

(Luke 9:61, 62) And still another said: "I will follow you, Lord, but first permit me to say good-bye to those in my household." 62 Jesus said to him: "No man who has put his hand to a plow and looks at the things behind is well-suited for the Kingdom of God."

◇ How do Jesus' four half brothers feel about him?

◇ Why do the Samaritans turn Jesus away, and what do James and John want to do?

◇ What three conversations does Jesus have on the road, and what is he emphasizing about service to God?

• Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)

- Song 65 and Prayer