

- Song 125 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (1 min.)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

"Humility Is Better Than Pride": (10 min.)

Humility helped Gideon to promote peace (Jg 8:1-3; w00 8/15 25 ¶3)



(Judges 8:1-3) Then the men of E'phra·im said to him: "What have you done to us? Why did you not call us when you went to fight against Mid'i-an?" And they quarreled bitterly with him. 2 But he said to them: "What have I done compared with you? Are not the gleanings of E'phra·im better than the grape harvest of Abi-e'zer? 3 It was into your hand that God gave Mid'i-an's princes O'reb and Ze'eb, and what have I done compared with you?" When he spoke this way, they calmed down.

*** w00 8/15 p. 25 How Do You Handle Differences? ***

Gideon, heavily involved in battle against Midian, called on the tribe of Ephraim to help. However, after the battle was over, Ephraim turned on Gideon and complained bitterly that he had not called on them at the outset of the fighting. The record states that "they vehemently tried to pick a quarrel with him." Gideon said in response: "What now have I done in comparison with you? Are not the gleanings of Ephraim better than the grape gathering of Abiezer? It was into your hand that God gave Midian's princes Oreb and Zeeb, and what have I been able to do in comparison

with you?" (Judges 8:1-3) By his well-chosen, calming words, Gideon avoided what could have been a disastrous intertribal war. Those of the tribe of Ephraim may have had a problem with self-importance and pride. However, that did not stop Gideon from working to bring about a peaceful outcome. Can we do similarly?

- (Judges 8:1-3) 8 Then the men of E'phra·im said to him: "What have you done to us? Why did you not call us when you went to fight against Mid'i-an?" And they quarreled bitterly with him. 2 But he said to them: "What have I done compared with you? Are not the gleanings of E'phra·im better than the grape harvest of Abi-e'zer? 3 It was into your hand that God gave Mid'i-an's princes O'reb and Ze'eb, and what have I done compared with you?" When he spoke this way, they calmed down.

Humility caused Gideon to seek Jehovah's glory rather than his own (Jg 8:22, 23; w17.01 20 ¶15)

(Judges 8:22, 23) Later the men of Israel said to Gid'e-on: "Rule over us, you and your son and your grandson as well, for you saved us out of the hand of Mid'i-an." 23 But Gid'e-on said to them: "I will not rule over you, nor will my son rule over you. Jehovah is the one who will rule over you."

*** w17 January pp. 20-21 par. 15 Why Modesty Still Matters ***

15 Gideon is an excellent example of modesty in action. When Jehovah's angel first appeared to him, Gideon readily acknowledged his modest background and credentials. (Judg. 6:15) After he accepted Jehovah's assignment, Gideon made sure that he thoroughly understood what was required, and he looked to Jehovah for guidance. (Judg. 6:36-40) Gideon was bold and courageous. Yet, he

acted with caution and shrewdness. (Judg. 6:11, 27) He did not seize upon his assignment to gain prominence. Rather, as soon as he could, he gladly returned to his former place.—Judg. 8:22, 23, 29.

- Paragraph 15
- (Judges 6:15) Gid'e-on answered him: "Pardon me, Jehovah. How can I save Israel? Look! My clan is the least in Ma-nas'seh, and I am the most insignificant in my father's house."
- (Judges 6:36-40) Then Gid'e-on said to the true God: "If you are saving Israel by means of me, just as you have promised, 37 here I am laying a fleece of wool on the threshing floor. If there is dew on the fleece only but all the ground around it is dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by means of me, just as you have promised." 38 And that is how it happened. When he rose up early the next day and wrung the fleece, he squeezed off enough dew from the fleece to fill a large banquet bowl with water. 39 However, Gid'e-on said to the true God: "Do not let your anger burn against me, but let me ask just once more. Let me, please, make just one more test with the fleece. Please let the fleece alone be dry while there is dew all over the ground." 40 So that is what God did that night; only the fleece was dry, and there was dew all over the ground.
- (Judges 6:11) Later Jehovah's angel came and sat under the big tree that was in Oph'rah, which belonged to Jo'ash the Abi-ez'rite. His son Gid'e-on was beating out wheat in the winepress in order to hide it from Mid'i-an.
- (Judges 6:27) So Gid'e-on took ten men of his servants and did just as Jehovah told him. But he feared the household of his father and the men of the city too

much to do it by day, so he did it at night.

- (Judges 8:22, 23) Later the men of Israel said to Gid'e-on: "Rule over us, you and your son and your grandson as well, for you saved us out of the hand of Mid'i-an." 23 But Gid'e-on said to them: "I will not rule over you, nor will my son rule over you. Jehovah is the one who will rule over you."
- (Judges 8:29) So Jer-ub-ba'al the son of Jo'ash returned to his home and stayed there.

Pride resulted in Abimelech bringing harm upon himself and others (Jg 9:1, 2, 5, 22-24; w08 2/15 9 ¶9)

(Judges 9:1, 2) In time A-bim'e-lech the son of Jer-ub-ba'al went to his mother's brothers in She'chem, and he said to them and to all the family of his grandfather: 2 "Please ask all the leaders of She'chem, 'Which is better for you, for all 70 sons of Jer-ub-ba'al to rule over you or for one man to rule over you? And remember that I am your own bone and flesh.'"

(Judges 9:5) After that he went to his father's house at Oph'rah and killed his brothers, the sons of Jer-ub-ba'al, 70 men, on one stone. The only survivor was Jo'tham, the youngest son of Jer-ub-ba'al, because he hid.

(Judges 9:22-24) A-bim'e-lech ruled over Israel for three years. 23 Then God let hostility develop between A-bim'e-lech and the leaders of She'chem, and they dealt treacherously with A-bim'e-lech. 24 This was so that the violence done to the 70 sons of Jer-ub-ba'al might be avenged, so as to place responsibility for their blood on their brother A-bim'e-lech for killing them and on the leaders of She'chem for helping him to kill his brothers.

*** w08 2/15 p. 9 par. 9 Walk in Jehovah's Ways ***

9 To be God's friends, we must be "humble in mind." (1 Pet. 3:8; Ps. 138:6) The importance of humility is shown in Judges chapter 9. Gideon's son Jotham said: "Once upon a time the trees went to anoint a king over them." The olive tree, the fig tree, and the vine were mentioned. They represented worthy individuals who did not seek to rule over their fellow Israelites. But the bramble—useful only as fuel—represented the kingship of proud Abimelech, a murderer eager to dominate others. Though he 'played the prince over Israel three years,' he met an untimely death. (Judg. 9:8-15, 22, 50-54) How much better it is to be "humble in mind"!

- (1 Peter 3:8) Finally, all of you have unity of mind, fellow feeling, brotherly affection, tender compassion, and humility.
- (Psalm 138:6) Though Jehovah is high, he takes note of the humble, But the haughty he knows only from a distance.
- (Judges 9:1-57) omitted due to length
- (Judges 9:8-15) "Once there were trees that went to anoint a king over them. So they said to the olive tree, 'Rule over us.' 9 But the olive tree said to them, 'Must I give up my oil, which they use to glorify God and men, to go and wave over the other trees?' 10 Then the trees said to the fig tree, 'Come and rule over us.' 11 But the fig tree said to them, 'Must I give up my sweetness and my good fruitage to go and wave over the other trees?' 12 Next the trees said to the vine, 'Come and rule over us.' 13 The vine replied to them, 'Must I give up my new wine that makes God and men rejoice to go and wave over the trees?' 14 Finally all the other trees said to the bramble, 'Come and rule over us.'

15 At this the bramble said to the trees, 'If you are really anointing me as king over you, come and seek refuge under my shadow. But if not, let fire come out of the bramble and consume the cedars of Leb'a-non.'

- (Judges 9:22) A·bim'e-lech ruled over Israel for three years.
- (Judges 9:50-54) A·bim'e-lech then went to The'bez; he camped against The'bez and captured it. 51 There was a strong tower in the middle of the city, and all the men and women and all the city leaders fled there. They shut themselves in and climbed onto the roof of the tower. 52 A·bim'e-lech made his way to the tower and attacked it. He approached the entrance of the tower to set it on fire. 53 Then one of the women dropped an upper millstone on A·bim'e-lech's head and crushed his skull. 54 He quickly called the attendant bearing his weapons and said to him: "Draw your sword and put me to death, so that they may not say about me, 'A woman killed him.'" So his attendant ran him through, and he died.

How can humility help us when we respond to an irate householder?

Spiritual Gems:

Jg 8:27—Did Gideon worship the ephod that he made? (it-1 753 ¶1)

(Judges 8:27) 27 Gid'e-on made it into an eph'od and exhibited it in his city Oph'rah; and all Israel committed spiritual prostitution with it there, and it served as a snare to Gid'e-on and to his household.

*** it-1 p. 753 Ephod, I ***

In spite of Gideon's good intentions to commemorate the victory Jehovah had given Israel and to honor God, the ephod "served as a snare to Gideon and to his household," because the Israelites committed spiritual immorality by worshiping it. (Jg 8:27) However, the Bible does not say that Gideon himself worshiped it; on the contrary, he is specifically named by the apostle Paul as one of the 'great cloud' of faithful pre-Christian witnesses of Jehovah.—Heb 11:32; 12:1.

- (Judges 8:27) Gid'e-on made it into an eph'od and exhibited it in his city Oph'rah; and all Israel committed spiritual prostitution with it there, and it served as a snare to Gid'e-on and to his household.
- (Hebrews 11:32) And what more will I say? For time will fail me if I go on to relate about Gid'e-on, Ba'rak, Samson, Jeph'thah, David, as well as Samuel and the other prophets.
- (Hebrews 12:1) So, then, because we have such a great cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also throw off every weight and the sin that easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

What spiritual gems from this week's Bible reading would you like to share regarding Jehovah, the field ministry, or something else?

**Bible Reading:) (4 min.)
Jg 8:28–9:6 (th study 5)**

(Judges 8:28-9:6) 28 Thus Mid'i-an was subdued before the Israelites, and they did not challenge them again; and the land had rest for 40 years in the days of Gid'e-on. 29 So Jer-ub-ba'al the son of Jo'ash returned to his home and stayed there. 30 Gid'e-on became father to 70 sons, for he had many wives. 31 His concubine in She'chem also bore him a son, and he named him A-bim'e-lech. 32 And Gid'e-on the son of Jo'ash died at a good old age and was buried in the tomb of Jo'ash his father in Oph'rah of the Abi-ez'rites. 33 As soon as Gid'e-on died, the Israelites again committed spiritual prostitution with the Ba'als, and they appointed Ba'al-be'rith as their god. 34 The Israelites did not remember Jehovah their God, who had rescued them from the hand of all their enemies around them; 35 nor did they show loyal love toward the household of Jer-ub-ba'al, that is Gid'e-on, in return for all the good that he had done for Israel. 9 In time A-bim'e-lech the son of Jer-ub-ba'al went to his mother's brothers in She'chem, and he said to them and to all the family of his grandfather: 2 "Please ask all the leaders of She'chem, 'Which is better for you, for all 70 sons of Jer-ub-ba'al to rule over you or for one man to rule over you? And remember that I am your own bone and flesh.'" 3 So his mother's brothers said this in his behalf to all the leaders of She'chem, and their hearts were inclined to follow A-bim'e-lech, for they said: "He is our own brother." 4 Then they gave him 70 pieces of silver from the house of Ba'al-be'rith, and A-bim'e-lech used it to hire idle and insolent men to accompany him. 5 After that he went to his father's house at Oph'rah and killed his brothers, the sons of Jer-ub-ba'al, 70 men, on one stone. The only survivor was Jo'tham, the youngest son of Jer-ub-ba'al, because he hid. 6 Then all the leaders of She'chem and all Beth-mil'lo gathered together and made A-bim'e-lech king, close by the big tree, by the pillar that was in She'chem.

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

Return Visit: (3 min.) Use the sample conversation. (th study 9)

Return Visit

Question: What Bible promise gives us hope?

Scripture: Re 21:3, 4

- (Revelation 21:3, 4) 3 With that I heard a loud voice from the throne say: "Look! The tent of God is with mankind, and he will reside with them, and they will be his people. And God himself will be with them. 4 And he will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away."

Link: How can we understand the Bible?

FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:

- Iffi lesson 02 point 2; wp21.2 14

Return Visit: (4 min.) Begin with the sample conversation. Offer the Enjoy Life Forever! brochure, and start a Bible study. (th study 13)

Return Visit

Question: What Bible promise gives us hope?

Scripture: Re 21:3, 4

- (Revelation 21:3, 4) 3 With that I heard a loud voice from the throne say: "Look! The tent of God is with mankind, and he will reside with them, and they will be his people. And God himself will be with them. 4 And he will wipe out every tear

from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away."

Link: How can we understand the Bible?

FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:

- Iffi lesson 02 point 2; wp21.2 14

Bible Study: (5 min.) Iffi lesson 02 point 4 (th study 13)

*** Iffi lesson 2 point 4 ***

4. The Bible offers the hope of everlasting life in perfect conditions

Look at the following list of promises found in the Bible. Which ones especially appeal to you? Why?

Read the scriptures cited next to those promises, and consider these questions:

- Do you feel that these scriptures give hope? Could they give hope to your family and friends?

Picture living in a world where

NO ONE WILL . . .
 EVERYONE WILL . . .

- feel pain, weaken with age, or have to die.—Isaiah 25:8.

- (Isaiah 25:8) He will swallow up death forever, And the Sovereign Lord Jehovah will wipe away the tears from all faces. The reproach of his people he

will take away from all the earth, For Jehovah himself has spoken it.

- see dead loved ones resurrected, brought back to life on earth.—John 5:28, 29.

- (John 5:28, 29) Do not be amazed at this, for the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice 29 and come out, those who did good things to a resurrection of life, and those who practiced vile things to a resurrection of judgment.

- get sick or live with a disability.—Isaiah 33:24; 35:5, 6.

- (Isaiah 33:24) And no resident will say: "I am sick." The people dwelling in the land will be pardoned for their error.
- (Isaiah 35:5, 6) At that time the eyes of the blind will be opened, And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. 6 At that time the lame will leap like the deer, And the tongue of the speechless will shout for joy. For waters will burst forth in the wilderness, And streams in the desert plain.

- enjoy good health and youthful energy.—Job 33:25.

- (Job 33:25) Let his flesh become fresher than in youth; Let him return to the days of his youthful vigor.'

- experience injustice.—Isaiah 32:16, 17.

- (Isaiah 32:16, 17) Then justice will reside in the wilderness, And righteousness will dwell in the orchard. 17 The result of true righteousness will be peace, And the fruitage of true righteousness will be lasting tranquillity and security.

- have plenty to eat, a comfortable home, and satisfying work.—Psalm 72:16; Isaiah 65:21, 22.

- (Psalm 72:16) There will be an abundance of grain on the earth; On the top of the mountains it will overflow. His fruit will flourish as in Leb'a-non, And in the cities people will blossom like the vegetation of the earth.

- (Isaiah 65:21, 22) They will build houses and live in them, And they will plant vineyards and eat their fruitage. 22 They will not build for someone else to inhabit, Nor will they plant for others to eat. For the days of my people will be like the days of a tree, And the work of their hands my chosen ones will enjoy to the full.

- suffer as a result of war.—Psalm 46:9.

- (Psalm 46:9) He is bringing an end to wars throughout the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; He burns the military wagons with fire.

- experience complete peace.—Psalm 37:11.

- (Psalm 37:11) But the meek will possess the earth, And they will find exquisite delight in the abundance of peace.

- be plagued by troubling thoughts or memories.—Isaiah 65:17.

- (Isaiah 65:17) For look! I am creating new heavens and a new earth; And the former things will not be called to mind, Nor will they come up into the heart.

- live forever in ideal conditions.—Psalm 37:29.

(Psalm 37:29) The righteous will possess the earth, And they will live forever on it.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

Song 108

Organizational Accomplishments: (5 min.)
Play the Organizational Accomplishments
video for December.

Local Needs: (10 min.)

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.)

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.)

Paragraph 9

(Revelation 16:14) They are, in fact, expressions inspired by demons and they perform signs, and they go out to the kings of the entire inhabited earth, to gather them together to the war of the great day of God the Almighty.

(Revelation 16:16) And they gathered them together to the place that is called in Hebrew Armageddon.

(Revelation 17:14) These will battle with the Lamb, but because he is Lord of lords and King of kings, the Lamb will conquer them. Also, those with him who are called and chosen and faithful will do so."

(Revelation 19:19, 20) And I saw the wild beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to wage war against the one seated on the horse and against his army. 20 And the wild beast was caught, and along with it the false prophet that performed in front of it the signs with which he misled those who received the mark of the wild beast and those who worship its image. While still alive, they both were hurled into the fiery lake that burns with sulfur.

- *** (Micah 5:5) 5 And he will bring peace. Should the As·syr'i·an invade our land and tread on our fortified towers, We will raise up against him seven shepherds, yes, eight princes of mankind.

Paragraph 10

(Matthew 24:9) "Then people will hand you over to tribulation and will kill you, and you will be hated by all the nations on account of my name.

(1 John 5:19) We know that we originate with God, but the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one.

(Revelation 12:17) So the dragon became enraged at the woman and went off to wage war with the remaining ones of her offspring, who observe the commandments of God and have the work of bearing witness concerning Jesus.

- *** (Revelation 20:7-9) 7 Now as soon as the 1,000 years have ended, Satan will be released from his prison, 8 and he will go out to mislead those nations in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Ma'gog, to gather them together for the war. The number of these is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they advanced over the whole earth and encircled the camp of the holy ones and the beloved city. But fire came down out of heaven and consumed them.

Paragraph 11

(Ezekiel 38:8-12) ““You will be given attention after many days. In the final part of the years you will invade the land whose people have been restored from the ravages of the sword, collected together out of many peoples onto the mountains of Israel, which had long been lying devastated. The inhabitants of this land were restored from the peoples, and all of them dwell in security. 9 You will come against them like a storm, and you will cover the land like clouds, you and all your troops and many peoples with you.” 10 “This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: ‘In that day thoughts will come into your heart, and you will devise an evil plan. 11 You will say: “I will invade the land of unprotected settlements. I will come against those living in security, without disturbance, all of them living in settlements unprotected by walls, bars, or gates.” 12 It will be to take much spoil and plunder, to attack the devastated places that are now inhabited and a people regathered from the nations, who are accumulating wealth and property, those who are living in the center of the earth.

Paragraph 12

(Ezekiel 33:27-29) “This is what you should say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: “As surely as I am alive, those living in the ruins will fall by the sword; those in the open field, I will give as food to the wild beasts; and those in the strongholds and the caves will die by disease. 28 I will make the land an utterly desolate wasteland, and its arrogant pride will be brought to an end, and the mountains of Israel will be desolated, with no one passing through. 29 And they will have to know that I am Jehovah when I make the land an utterly desolate wasteland because of all the detestable things that they have done.”’

(Ezekiel 36:34-36) The desolate land that was lying desolate for everyone passing by to see will be cultivated. 35 And people will say: “The desolate land has become like the garden of E'den, and the cities that were in ruins and desolate and torn down are now fortified and inhabited.” 36 And the nations that are left remaining around you will have to know that I myself, Jehovah, have built what was torn down, and I have planted what was desolate. I myself, Jehovah, have spoken, and I have done it.’

Paragraph 13

(Proverbs 1:33) But the one listening to me will dwell in security And be undisturbed by the dread of calamity.”

(Proverbs 10:22) It is the blessing of Jehovah that makes one rich, And He adds no pain with it.

Paragraph 14

(Haggai 2:7) ““And I will shake all the nations, and the precious things of all the nations will come in; and I will fill this house with glory,’ says Jehovah of armies.

(John 6:44) No man can come to me unless the Father, who sent me, draws him, and I will resurrect him on the last day.

(Ephesians 4:23, 24) And you should continue to be made new in your dominant mental attitude, 24 and should put on the new personality that was created according to God's will in true righteousness and loyalty.

(Ephesians 5:1, 2) Therefore, become imitators of God, as beloved children, 2 and go on walking in love, just as the Christ also loved us and gave himself for us as an offering and a sacrifice, a sweet fragrance to God.

(Romans 12:1, 2) Therefore, I appeal to you by the compassions of God, brothers, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, a sacred service with your power of reason. 2 And stop being molded by this system of things, but be transformed by making your mind over, so that you may prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

(1 John 5:3) For this is what the love of God means, that we observe his commandments; and yet his commandments are not burdensome,

(Proverbs 27:11) Be wise, my son, and make my heart rejoice, So that I can make a reply to him who taunts me.

- Concluding Comments (3 min.)
- Song 22 and Prayer