

- Song 47 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (1 min.)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

“At Once I Prayed”: (10 min.)

[Play the video Introduction to Nehemiah.]

Nehemiah prayed before answering the king's question (Ne 2:2-4; w08 2/15 3 ¶5)

(Nehemiah 2:2-4) So the king said to me: “Why do you look so gloomy when you are not sick? This can be nothing but gloominess of heart.” At this I became very frightened. 3 Then I said to the king: “Long live the king! Why should I not look gloomy when the city, the place where my forefathers are buried, lies in ruins, and its gates have been consumed by fire?” 4 The king then said to me: “What is it that you are seeking?” At once I prayed to the God of the heavens.

*** w08 2/15 p. 3 par. 5 Keep Jehovah Before You Constantly ***

5 At times, we may need to pray quickly for God's help. On one occasion, Persian King Artaxerxes noticed that his cupbearer Nehemiah was gloomy. “What is this that you are seeking to secure?” asked the king. “At once [Nehemiah] prayed to the God of the heavens.” Nehemiah could not linger in that apparently silent prayer. Yet, God answered it, for Nehemiah was given the king's support to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. (Read Nehemiah 2:1-8.) Yes, even a brief, silent prayer can be effective.

- (Nehemiah 2:1-8) 2 In the month of Ni'san, in the 20th year of King Ar·ta·xerx'es, wine was set before him, and as usual I took up the wine and gave it to the king. But I had never been gloomy in his presence. 2 So the king said to me: “Why do you look so gloomy when you are not sick? This can be nothing but gloominess of heart.” At this I became very frightened. 3 Then I said to the king: “Long live the king! Why

should I not look gloomy when the city, the place where my forefathers are buried, lies in ruins, and its gates have been consumed by fire?” 4 The king then said to me: “What is it that you are seeking?” At once I prayed to the God of the heavens. 5 I then said to the king: “If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor with you, send me to Judah, to the city where my forefathers are buried, so that I may rebuild it.” 6 Then the king, with his royal consort sitting beside him, said to me: “How long will your journey be, and when will you return?” So it pleased the king to send me, and I gave him a set time. 7 Then I said to the king: “If it pleases the king, let letters be given me for the governors of the region Beyond the River, granting me safe passage until I reach Judah, 8 as well as a letter to A'saph the keeper of the Royal Park, so that he may give me timber for beams for the gates of the Fortress of the House and for the walls of the city and for the house where I will go.” So the king gave them to me, for the good hand of my God was upon me.

Nehemiah's request was favorably heard by the king (Ne 2:5, 6)

(Nehemiah 2:5, 6) I then said to the king: “If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor with you, send me to Judah, to the city where my forefathers are buried, so that I may rebuild it.” 6 Then the king, with his royal consort sitting beside him, said to me: “How long will your journey be, and when will you return?” So it pleased the king to send me, and I gave him a set time.

FOR MEDITATION: What could we do if we are asked to give an impromptu explanation of our beliefs?—be 177 ¶4.

*** be study 27 p. 177 par. 4 Extemporaneous Delivery ***

When you are called on for impromptu explanations of your beliefs, what can help you make your comments effective? Imitate Nehemiah, who silently prayed before he answered a question posed by King Artaxerxes. (Neh. 2:4) Next, quickly formulate a mental outline. The basic steps might be listed in this way: (1) Select one or two points that the explanation should include (you may choose to use points found in Reasoning From the Scriptures). (2) Decide which scriptures you will use to support those points. (3) Plan how to begin your explanation tactfully so that the inquirer will be willing to listen. Then start to talk.

Spiritual Gems:

Ne 2:4—Was this a last-minute prayer of desperation, and what is the lesson for us? (w86 2/15 25)

(Nehemiah 2:4) 4 The king then said to me: “What is it that you are seeking?” At once I prayed to the God of the heavens.

*** w86 2/15 p. 25 True Worship Triumphs ***

◆ 2:4—Was this a last-minute prayer of desperation?

No, for Jerusalem’s devastated condition had been the subject of Nehemiah’s prayers “day and night” for quite some time. (1:4, 6) When afforded the opportunity to tell King Artaxerxes

about his desire to rebuild Jerusalem’s walls, Nehemiah again prayed, thus doing what he already had done repeatedly. Jehovah’s favorable answer resulted in a commission to rebuild the city’s walls.

Lesson for Us: Nehemiah looked to Jehovah for direction. When faced with weighty decisions, we, too, should “persevere in prayer” and act in harmony with Jehovah’s guidance.—Romans 12:12.

- Nehemiah 2:4) The king then said to me: “What is it that you are seeking?” At once I prayed to the God of the heavens.
- (Nehemiah 1:4) As soon as I heard these words, I sat down and began to weep and mourn for days, and I kept fasting and praying before the God of the heavens.
- (Nehemiah 1:6) please, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to listen to the prayer of your servant that I am praying to you today, day and night, concerning your servants the Israelites, all the while confessing the sins that the people of Israel have committed against you. We have sinned, both I and the house of my father.
- (Romans 12:12) Rejoice in the hope. Endure under tribulation. Persevere in prayer.

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.)

Ne 2:11-20 (th study 2)

(Nehemiah 2:11-20) 11 At length I came to Jerusalem, and I stayed there for three days. 12 I rose up by night, I and a few men with me, and I did not tell anyone what my God had put into my heart to do for Jerusalem, and there was no animal with me except the one I was riding. 13 And I went out at night through the Valley Gate, passing in front of the Fountain of the Big Snake to the Gate of the Ash Heaps, and I inspected the walls of Jerusalem that were broken down and its gates that had been consumed by fire. 14 And I passed along to the Fountain Gate and to the King's Pool, and there was not enough space for the animal I was riding to pass. 15 But I continued up the valley by night, and I kept inspecting the wall, after which I came back and entered through the Valley Gate, and then I returned. 16 The deputy rulers did not know where I had gone and what I was doing, for I had not yet said anything to the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the deputy rulers, and the rest of the workers. 17 Finally I said to them: "You can see what a terrible situation we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, so that this disgrace will not continue." 18 Then I told them of how the good hand of my God was upon me and also of the words that the king had spoken to me. At this they said: "Let us get up and build." So they strengthened themselves for the good work. 19 Now when San·bal'lat the Hor'o·nite, To·bi'ah the Am'mon·ite official, and Ge'shem the Arabian heard of it, they began to mock us and show us their contempt and say: "What are you doing? Are you rebelling against the king?" 20 However, I replied: "The God of the heavens is the One who will grant us success, and we his servants will get up and build; but you have neither share nor claim nor memorial in Jerusalem."

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

Initial Call: (3 min.) Begin with the sample conversation topic. Tell the person about our website, and leave a jw.org contact card. (th study 16)

Initial Call

Question: How do we know that our suffering is not punishment from God?

Scripture: Jas 1:13

(James 1:13) 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.

Link: Why do we suffer?

FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:

- T-34

Return Visit: (4 min.) Begin with the sample conversation topic. Offer a publication from the Teaching Toolbox. (th study 3)

Return Visit

Question: Why do we suffer?

Scripture: 1Jo 5:19

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

Link: How does God feel about our suffering?

FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:

- T-33

Bible Study: (5 min.) Iff lesson 11 Dig Deeper introduction and point 4 (th study 11)

Learn how to make your Bible reading more interesting. See how to prepare well so that you get the most out of your Bible study.

4. Learn to enjoy Bible reading

It may not be easy to begin reading the Bible. However, we can “form a longing” to do so, just as someone can develop a taste for a new food. Read 1 Peter 2:2, and then discuss this question:

- Do you think that if you read the Bible every day, it could become something you would enjoy and look forward to doing?

Play the VIDEO to see how some people started to enjoy reading the Bible. Then discuss the questions that follow.

VIDEO: Youths Learning to Love God’s Word (5:33)

- In the video, what challenges did the young people overcome?
- What helped them stick to their goal of Bible reading?
- How did they make their Bible reading more interesting?

Tips to help you get started:

- Choose a reliable, modern-language translation. Try the New World Translation if it is available in your language.
- First read portions that appeal to you the most. For ideas, see the chart “Get Started Reading the Bible.”
- Keep track of what you read. Use the “Track Your Bible Reading” chart in this publication.

- Use the JW Library® app. With it, you can read and listen to the Bible anywhere, using a smartphone or other such device.

- Use the appendixes in the New World Translation. They include maps, charts, and a glossary that can make your reading more interesting.

- (1 Peter 2:2) 2 As newborn infants, form a longing for the unadulterated milk of the word, so that by means of it you may grow to salvation,

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

Song 44

Become Jehovah’s Friend—Does Jehovah Answer Prayers?: (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video. Then ask the audience, What does this video teach us about prayer?

What does this video teach us about prayer?

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.)**Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.)**

Iff lesson 51

(James 1:26) If any man thinks he is a worshipper of God but does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he is deceiving his own heart, and his worship is futile.

(1 Thessalonians 5:11) Therefore, keep encouraging one another and building one another up, just as you are in fact doing.

(Proverbs 15:1) A mild answer turns away rage, But a harsh word stirs up anger.

(Ephesians 4:29) Let a rotten word not come out of your mouth, but only what is good for building up as the need may be, to impart what is beneficial to the hearers.

(Proverbs 16:28) A troublemaker causes dissension, And a slanderer separates close friends.

(Luke 6:45) A good man brings good out of the good treasure of his heart, but a wicked man brings what is wicked out of his wicked treasure; for out of the heart's abundance his mouth speaks.

(Philippians 4:8) Finally, brothers, whatever things are true, whatever things are of serious concern, whatever things are righteous, whatever things are chaste, whatever things are lovable, whatever things are well-spoken-of, whatever things are virtuous, and whatever things are praiseworthy, continue considering these things.

(Proverbs 13:20) The one walking with the wise will become wise, But the one who has dealings with the stupid will fare badly.

(Proverbs 12:18) Thoughtless speech is like the stabs of a sword, But the tongue of the wise is a healing.

(James 3:2) For we all stumble many times. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able to bridle also his whole body.

(Galatians 5:22, 23) On the other hand, the fruitage of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control. Against such things there is no law.

(1 Corinthians 15:33) Do not be misled. Bad associations spoil useful habits.

(Ecclesiastes 3:1) There is an appointed time for everything, A time for every activity under the heavens:

(Ecclesiastes 3:7) A time to rip apart and a time to sew together; A time to be silent and a time to speak;

(Ecclesiastes 7:16) Do not be overly righteous, nor show yourself excessively wise. Why should you bring ruin to yourself?

(Ecclesiastes 7:21, 22) Also, do not take to heart every word that people say; otherwise, you may hear your servant calling down evil on you; 22 for you well know in your heart that many times you yourself have called down evil on others.

(Ephesians 4:31, 32) Put away from yourselves every kind of malicious bitterness, anger, wrath, screaming, and abusive speech, as well as everything injurious. 32 But become kind to one another, tenderly compassionate, freely forgiving one another just as God also by Christ freely forgave you.

(Matthew 17:5) While he was still speaking, look! a bright cloud overshadowed them, and look! a voice out of the cloud said: "This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved. Listen to him."

• Concluding Comments (3 min.)

• Song 102 and Prayer