

References for *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook*

APRIL 1-7

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | 1 CORINTHIANS 7-9

“Singleness—A Gift”

(1 Corinthians 7:32) Indeed, I want you to be free from anxiety. The unmarried man is anxious for the things of the Lord, how he may gain the Lord's approval.

w11 1/15 17-18 ¶3

Make the Most of Your Singleness

³ A single person often has more time and greater personal freedom than a married person does. (1 Cor. 7:32-35) These are unique advantages that may allow him to expand his ministry, widen out in love for others, and draw closer to Jehovah. A number of Christians, therefore, have come to appreciate the benefits of singleness and have decided to “make room for it,” at least for a time. Others may not have initially planned for singleness, but when their circumstances changed, they prayerfully reflected on their situation and realized that with Jehovah's help they too could be settled in their heart. Thus, they accepted their changed circumstances and made room for singleness.—1 Cor. 7:37, 38.

(1 Corinthians 7:33, 34) But the married man is anxious for the things of the world, how he may gain the approval of his wife, ³⁴ and he is divided. Further, the unmarried woman, as well as the virgin, is anxious for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in her body and in her spirit. However, the married woman is anxious for the things of the world, how she may gain the approval of her husband.

w08 7/15 27 ¶1

Highlights From the Letters to the Corinthians 7:33, 34—What is meant by “the things of the world” for which a married man or woman

is anxious? Paul is referring to the mundane things in life with which married Christians need to be concerned. These include food, clothing, and housing, but exclude the bad things of this world, which Christians shun.—1 John 2:15-17.

(1 Corinthians 7:37, 38) But if anyone stands settled in his heart and has no necessity, but has authority over his own will and has made the decision in his own heart to remain unmarried, he will do well. ³⁸ So also, whoever marries does well, but whoever does not marry will do better.

w96 10/15 12-13 ¶14

Singleness—A Door to Undistracted Activity

¹⁴ A single Christian who uses his unmarried state to pursue selfish goals is not doing “better” than married Christians. He is remaining single, not “on account of the kingdom,” but for personal reasons. (Matthew 19:12) The unmarried man or woman should be “anxious for the things of the Lord,” be anxious to “gain the Lord's approval,” and be in “constant attendance upon the Lord without distraction.” This means devoting undivided attention to serving Jehovah and Christ Jesus. Only by so doing are unmarried Christian men and women doing “better” than married Christians.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(1 Corinthians 7:11) But if she does separate, let her remain unmarried or else be reconciled with her husband; and a husband should not leave his wife.

lvs 251

Endnotes

At times, some Christians have decided to separate from their mate even though no immorality has taken place. (1 Corinthians 7:11) In the following situations, a Christian may consider separation.

- Willful nonsupport: A husband refuses to provide for the family materially, to the point that the family is left without money or food.—1 Timothy 5:8.

- Severe physical abuse: Physical abuse to the point that a mate feels that his or her health or life is in danger.—Galatians 5:19-21.

- Absolute endangerment of a person's relationship with Jehovah: A husband or a wife makes it impossible for the mate to serve Jehovah.—Acts 5:29.

(1 Corinthians 7:36) But if anyone thinks he is behaving improperly by remaining unmarried, and if he is past the bloom of youth, then this is what should take place: Let him do what he wants; he does not sin. Let them marry.

w00 7/15 31 ¶2

You Can Remain Chaste in an Immoral World

Young people, then, should not rush into marriage when they first experience an awakening of sexual impulses. Marriage requires a commitment, and living up to such a responsibility calls for maturity. (Genesis 2:24) Better it is to wait until one is “past the bloom of youth”—the period when sexual feelings run strong and can distort one's judgment. (1 Corinthians 7:36) And how unwise and sinful it is for an adult desiring to marry to get involved in immoral relations simply because a prospective marriage partner is not available!

Bible Reading

(1 Corinthians 8:1-13) Now concerning food offered to idols: We know we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. ² If anyone thinks he knows something, he does not yet know it as he should know it. ³ But if anyone loves God, this one is known by him. ⁴ Now concerning the eating of food offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world and that there is no God but one. ⁵ For even though there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth, just as there

are many “gods” and many “lords,” ⁶ there is actually to us one God, the Father, from whom all things are and we for him; and there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things are and we through him. ⁷ However, not all have this knowledge. But some, because of their former association with the idol, eat food as something sacrificed to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. ⁸ But food will not bring us nearer to God; we are no worse off if we do not eat, nor better off if we eat. ⁹ But keep watching that your right to choose does not somehow become a stumbling block to those who are weak. ¹⁰ For if anyone should see you who have knowledge having a meal in an idol temple, will not the conscience of that one who is weak be emboldened to the point of eating food offered to idols? ¹¹ So by your knowledge the man who is weak is being ruined, your brother for whose sake Christ died. ¹² When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you are sinning against Christ. ¹³ That is why if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat at all, so that I will not make my brother stumble.

APRIL 8-14

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | 1 CORINTHIANS 10-13

“Jehovah Is Faithful”

(1 Corinthians 10:13) No temptation has come upon you except what is common to men. But God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear, but along with the temptation he will also make the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

w17.02 29-30

Questions From Readers

The apostle Paul wrote that Jehovah “will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear.”

(1 Cor. 10:13) Does this mean that Jehovah assesses in advance what we can bear and then chooses the trials we will face?

■ Consider the implications of such a view. One brother whose son committed suicide asked: ‘Did Jehovah assess in advance that my wife and I would be capable of enduring our son’s suicide? Did it happen because God had determined that we could endure it?’ Is there sound reason to believe that Jehovah maneuvers the events of our lives in such specific ways?

A further consideration of Paul’s words recorded at 1 Corinthians 10:13 leads us to this conclusion: There is no Scriptural reason to believe that Jehovah assesses in advance what we can bear and then, based on such an assessment, chooses which trials will befall us. Let us consider four reasons why we may draw that conclusion.

First, Jehovah gave humans the gift of free will. He wants us to choose our own course in life. (Deut. 30:19, 20; Josh. 24:15) If we choose the right course, we can look to Jehovah to guide our steps. (Prov. 16:9) But if we choose a wrong course, we will have to face the consequences. (Gal. 6:7) Were Jehovah to choose which trials would come upon us, would he not, in effect, be diminishing the gift of free will?

Second, Jehovah does not shield us from “time and unexpected events.” (Eccl. 9:11) Tragic accidents—perhaps with dire consequences—may occur because we are in the wrong place at the wrong time. Jesus spoke of a tragedy involving 18 people who were killed when a tower fell on them, and he indicated that those fatalities were not as a result of God’s will. (Luke 13:1-5) Is it not unreasonable to think that God would determine in advance who lives and who dies as a result of random events?

Third, each one of us is personally involved in the issue of integrity. Recall that Satan has challenged the integrity of all those serving Jehovah, claiming that we would not remain loyal

to Jehovah when exposed to trials. (Job 1:9-11; 2:4; Rev. 12:10) If Jehovah prevented us from facing certain trials because he deemed them to be more than we could bear, would that not add weight to Satan’s charge that we serve God out of self-interest?

Fourth, Jehovah does not have to foreknow everything that happens to us. The idea that God chooses beforehand which trials we will face implies that he must know everything about our future. But such a view is not Scriptural. God certainly *can* foreknow the future. (Isa. 46:10) But the Bible shows that he is selective when it comes to foreknowing future events. (Gen. 18: 20, 21; 22:12) He thus balances his power of foreknowledge with his respect for our free will. Is that not what we would expect from the God who values our freedom and who always exercises his attributes in perfect balance?—Deut. 32:4; 2 Cor. 3:17.

How, then, are we to understand Paul’s words: “God . . . will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear”? Paul here describes what Jehovah does, not *before*, but *during* trials. The apostle’s words assure us that no matter what trials may arise in our life, Jehovah will sustain us if we trust in him. (Ps. 55:22) Paul’s comforting words are based on two fundamental truths.

First, the trials we face are “common to men.” Our trials, then, are common to human experience. Such trials are not beyond our capacity to bear—provided we rely on God. (1 Pet. 5:8, 9) In the context of 1 Corinthians 10:13, Paul refers to the tests that Israel faced in the wilderness. (1 Cor. 10:6-11) None of those trials were beyond human experience or above the ability of faithful Israelites to bear. Paul four times says that “some of them” disobeyed. Sadly, some Israelites gave in to wrong desires because they failed to rely on God.

Second, “God is faithful.” The record of God’s dealings with his people demonstrates that he gives his loyal love to “those who love him

and keep his commandments.” (Deut. 7:9) That record also shows that God always keeps his promises. (Josh. 23:14) In view of his past record of faithfulness, those who love him and obey him can trust that he will keep this twofold promise regarding trials they may face: (1) He will not allow any trial to develop to a point that would make it impossible to bear, and (2) “he will . . . make the way out” for them.

How does Jehovah make the way out for those who rely on him in the face of trials? Of course, if it be his will, he can simply remove a trial. But recall Paul’s words: “He [Jehovah] will also make the way out *so that you may be able to endure it.*” Hence, in many cases, he makes “the way out” by providing what we need so that we can endure trials successfully. Consider some of the ways that Jehovah may make the way out for us:

- He “comforts us in all our trials.” (2 Cor. 1: 3, 4) Jehovah can soothe our mind, our heart, and our emotions by means of his Word, his holy spirit, and the spiritual food dispensed by the faithful slave.—Matt. 24:45; John 14:16, ftn., Rom. 15:4.
- He may guide us by means of holy spirit. (John 14:26) When trials arise, the spirit can help us to remember Bible accounts and principles and then discern the wise steps to take.
- He can use his angels in our behalf.—Heb. 1:14.
- He can help us through fellow worshippers who by their words and deeds can be “a strengthening aid” to us.—Col. 4:11, ftn.

What, then, may we conclude about the meaning of Paul’s words recorded at 1 Corinthians 10:13? Jehovah does not pick and choose the trials we face. But when trials do arise in our life, we can be certain of this: If we fully trust in Jehovah, he will never allow our trials to go beyond the limit of human endurance; he will always make a way out so that we can endure them. What a comforting thought that is!

(1 Corinthians 10:13) No temptation has come upon you except what is common to men. But God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear, but along with the temptation he will also make the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

(1 Corinthians 10:13) No temptation has come upon you except what is common to men. But God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear, but along with the temptation he will also make the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(1 Corinthians 10:8) Neither let us practice sexual immorality, as some of them committed sexual immorality, only to fall, 23,000 of them in one day.

w04 4/1 29

Questions From Readers

Why does 1 Corinthians 10:8 say that 23,000 Israelites fell in one day for committing fornication, while Numbers 25:9 gives the figure as 24,000?

There are several factors that may account for the difference in the figures given in these two verses. The simplest one could be that the actual number is somewhere between 23,000 and 24,000, thus allowing it to be rounded off in either direction.

Consider another possibility. The apostle Paul cited the account of the Israelites at Shittim as a warning example to Christians in ancient Corinth, a city notorious for its licentious way of life. He wrote: “Neither let us practice fornication, as some of them committed fornication, only to fall, twenty-three thousand of them in one day.” Singling out those who were put to death by Jehovah because they committed fornication, Paul gave the number as 23,000.—1 Corinthians 10:8.

Numbers chapter 25, however, tells us that “Israel attached itself to the Baal of Peor; and the anger of Jehovah began to blaze against Israel.” Then, Jehovah commanded Moses to execute “all the head ones of the people.” Moses, in turn, ordered the judges to carry out that command. Finally, when Phinehas acted quickly to put to death the Israelite who brought a Midianite woman into the camp, “the scourge was halted.” The account ends with the statement: “Those who died from the scourge amounted to twenty-four thousand.”—Numbers 25:1-9.

The figure given in Numbers evidently included “the head ones of the people” executed by the judges and those executed directly by Jehovah. There might well have been a thousand of those head ones who died at the hands of the judges, bringing the number to 24,000. Whether these head ones, or ringleaders, committed fornication, participated in the festivities, or gave consent to those who did, they were guilty of having “an attachment with the Baal of Peor.”

Regarding the word “attachment,” one Bible reference work explains that it can mean “to bind one’s self to a person.” The Israelites were a people dedicated to Jehovah, but when they formed “an attachment with the Baal of Peor,” they broke their dedicated relationship with God. Some 700 years later, through the prophet Hosea, Jehovah said of the Israelites: “They themselves went in to Baal of Peor, and they proceeded to dedicate themselves to the shameful thing, and they came to be disgusting like the thing of their love.” (Hosea 9:10) All those who did so were deserving of adverse divine judgment. Thus, Moses reminded the sons of Israel: “Your own eyes are the ones that saw what Jehovah did in the case of the Baal of Peor, that every man who walked after the Baal of Peor was the one whom Jehovah your God annihilated from your midst.”—Deuteronomy 4:3.

(1 Corinthians 11:5, 6) but every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered shames her head, for it is one and the same as if she were a woman with a shaved head. **6** For if a woman does not cover herself, she should have her hair cut off; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or shaved, she should be covered.

(1 Corinthians 11:10) That is why the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head, because of the angels.

w15 2/15 30

Questions From Readers

Does a female Kingdom publisher need to wear a head covering if she conducts a Bible study in the presence of a male publisher?

■ In a “Questions From Readers” item published in *The Watchtower* of July 15, 2002, it was stated that a sister should cover her head if she conducts a Bible study in the presence of a male publisher, whether he is baptized or not. Further consideration of the matter suggests that a modification to this direction is appropriate.

If the male publisher who accompanies the sister while she conducts an established Bible study is baptized, the sister would certainly want to wear a head covering. She thus shows respect for Jehovah’s arrangement of headship within the Christian congregation because she is fulfilling a role that would normally be the responsibility of the brother. (1 Cor. 11:5, 6, 10) Alternatively, she could ask the brother to conduct the study if he is qualified and able to do so.

On the other hand, if a sister is accompanied on an established Bible study by an *unbaptized* male publisher who is not her husband, she would not Scripturally be required to wear a head covering. Nevertheless, the conscience of some sisters may move them to wear a head covering even in such circumstances.

Bible Reading

(1 Corinthians 10:1-17) Now I want you to know, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea ² and all got baptized into Moses by means of the cloud and of the sea, ³ and all ate the same spiritual food ⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they used to drink from the spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock meant the Christ. ⁵ Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, for they were struck down in the wilderness. ⁶ Now these things became examples for us, in order for us not to desire injurious things, as they desired them. ⁷ Neither become idolaters, as some of them did; just as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink. Then they got up to have a good time." ⁸ Neither let us practice sexual immorality, as some of them committed sexual immorality, only to fall, 23,000 of them in one day. ⁹ Neither let us put Jehovah to the test, as some of them put him to the test, only to perish by the serpents. ¹⁰ Neither be murmurers, as some of them murmured, only to perish by the destroyer. ¹¹ Now these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for a warning to us upon whom the ends of the systems of things have come. ¹² So let the one who thinks he is standing beware that he does not fall. ¹³ No temptation has come upon you except what is common to men. But God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear, but along with the temptation he will also make the way out so that you may be able to endure it. ¹⁴ Therefore, my beloved ones, flee from idolatry. ¹⁵ I speak as to men with discernment; judge for yourselves what I say. ¹⁶ The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of the Christ? The loaf that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of the Christ? ¹⁷ Because there is one loaf,

we, although many, are one body, for we are all partaking of that one loaf.

APRIL 22-28

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | 1 CORINTHIANS 14-16

"God Will Be 'All Things to Everyone'"

(1 Corinthians 15:24, 25) Next, the end, when he hands over the Kingdom to his God and Father, when he has brought to nothing all government and all authority and power. ²⁵ For he must rule as king until God has put all enemies under his feet.

w98 7/1 21 ¶10

"Death Is to Be Brought to Nothing"

¹⁰ "The end" is the end of the Thousand Year Reign of Christ, when Jesus humbly and loyally hands over the Kingdom to his God and Father. (Revelation 20:4) God's purpose "to gather all things together again in the Christ" will have been fulfilled. (Ephesians 1:9, 10) First, though, Christ will have destroyed "all government and all authority and power" opposed to God's Sovereign will. This involves more than the destruction wrought at Armageddon. (Revelation 16:16; 19:11-21) Paul says: "[Christ] must rule as king until God has put all enemies under his feet. As the last enemy, death is to be brought to nothing." (1 Corinthians 15:25, 26) Yes, all traces of Adamic sin and death will have been removed. Of necessity, then, God will have emptied the "memorial tombs" by bringing the dead back to life.—John 5:28.

(1 Corinthians 15:26) And the last enemy, death, is to be brought to nothing.

kr 237 ¶11

The Kingdom Carries Out God's Will on Earth

²¹ What, though, of the common outcome of sickness, the inevitable result of sin—death? That is our "last enemy," the one foe against which all imperfect humans sooner or later prove

powerless. (1 Cor. 15:26) But is death such a daunting adversary to Jehovah? Notice what Isaiah foretold: “He will swallow up death forever, and the Sovereign Lord Jehovah will wipe away the tears from all faces.” (Isa. 25:8) Can you picture that time? No more funerals, no more cemeteries, no more tears of grief! Quite the contrary—there will be tears of joy as Jehovah fulfills his thrilling promise to bring back the dead! **(Read Isaiah 26:19.)** At last, countless wounds inflicted by death will heal.

(1 Corinthians 15:27, 28) For God “subjected all things under his feet.” But when he says that ‘all things have been subjected,’ it is evident that this does not include the One who subjected all things to him. ²⁸ But when all things will have been subjected to him, then the Son himself will also subject himself to the One who subjected all things to him, that God may be all things to everyone.

w12 9/15 12 ¶17

Peace for a Thousand Years—And Beyond!

¹⁷ There can be no better description of the grand climax than the words “that God may be all things to everyone.” What does that mean? Think back to the time in Eden when the perfect humans, Adam and Eve, were a part of Jehovah’s peaceful and harmonious universal family. Jehovah, the Universal Sovereign, ruled directly over all his creation, angelic and human. They were able to communicate with him personally, worship him, and be blessed by him. He was “all things to everyone.”

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(1 Corinthians 14:34, 35) let the women keep silent in the congregations, for it is not permitted for them to speak. Rather, let them be in subjection, as the Law also says. ³⁵ If they want to learn something, let them ask their husbands at home, for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the congregation.

w12 9/1 9, box

Did the Apostle Paul Forbid Women to Speak?

“Let the women *keep silent* in the congregations,” wrote the apostle Paul. (1 Corinthians 14:34) What did he mean? Was he belittling their intelligence? No. In fact, he often referred to the wholesome teaching of women. (2 Timothy 1:5; Titus 2:3-5) In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul advised not only women but also individuals who had the gift of tongues and prophecy to “keep silent” when another believer was speaking. (1 Corinthians 14:26-30, 33) Likely some Christian women were so enthusiastic about their newfound faith that they interrupted the speaker to ask questions, as was the custom in that part of the world. In order to avoid such disorder, Paul encouraged them to “question their own husbands at home.”—1 Corinthians 14:35.

(1 Corinthians 15:53) For this which is corruptible must put on incorruption, and this which is mortal must put on immortality.

it-1 1197-1198

Incorruption

United with Jesus in the likeness of his resurrection, his joint heirs also are resurrected not merely to everlasting life as spirit creatures but to immortality and incorruption. Having lived, served faithfully, and died in corruptible human bodies, they now receive incorruptible spirit bodies, as Paul clearly states at 1 Corinthians 15:42-54. Immortality therefore evidently refers to the quality of the life they enjoy, its endlessness and indestructibility, whereas incorruption apparently relates to the organism or body that God gives them, one that is inherently beyond decay, ruin, or destruction. It therefore appears that God grants them the power to be self-sustaining, not dependent upon outside sources of energy as are his other creatures, fleshly and spirit. This is a stirring evidence of God’s confidence in them. Such independent and indestructible existence, however, does not remove them from God’s control; and they, like

Jesus, continue subject to their Father's will and directions.—1Co 15:23-28; see immortality; soul.

Bible Reading

(1 Corinthians 14:20-40) Brothers, do not become young children in your understanding, but be young children as to badness; and become full-grown in your understanding. ²¹ In the Law it is written: “‘With the tongues of foreigners and with the lips of strangers I will speak to this people, and even then they will refuse to listen to me,’ says Jehovah.” ²² Therefore, tongues are not a sign for the believers but for the unbelievers, whereas prophecy is not for the unbelievers but for the believers. ²³ So if the whole congregation comes together to one place and they all speak in tongues, but ordinary people or unbelievers come in, will they not say that you have lost your minds? ²⁴ But if you are all prophesying and an unbeliever or an ordinary person comes in, he will be reproved and closely examined by them all. ²⁵ The secrets of his heart then become evident, so that he will fall facedown and worship God, declaring: “God is really among you.” ²⁶ What is to be done, then, brothers? When you come together, one has a psalm, another has a teaching, another has a revelation, another has a tongue, and another has an interpretation. Let all things take place for building up. ²⁷ And if someone speaks in a tongue, let it be limited to two or three at the most, and in turns, and someone must interpret. ²⁸ But if there is no interpreter, he must keep silent in the congregation and speak to himself and to God. ²⁹ Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others discern the meaning. ³⁰ But if another one receives a revelation while sitting there, let the first speaker keep silent. ³¹ For you can all prophesy one at a time, so that all may learn and all may be encouraged. ³² And gifts of the spirit of the prophets are to be controlled by the proph-

ets. ³³ For God is a God not of disorder but of peace. As in all the congregations of the holy ones, ³⁴ let the women keep silent in the congregations, for it is not permitted for them to speak. Rather, let them be in subjection, as the Law also says. ³⁵ If they want to learn something, let them ask their husbands at home, for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the congregation. ³⁶ Was it from you that the word of God originated, or did it reach only as far as you? ³⁷ If anyone thinks he is a prophet or is gifted with the spirit, he must acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are the Lord's commandment. ³⁸ But if anyone disregards this, he will be disregarded. ³⁹ So, my brothers, keep striving to prophesy, and yet do not forbid the speaking in tongues. ⁴⁰ But let all things take place decently and by arrangement.

APRIL 29–MAY 5

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | 2 CORINTHIANS 1-3

“Jehovah—‘The God of All Comfort’”

(2 Corinthians 1:3) Praised be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of tender mercies and the God of all comfort,

w17.07 13 ¶4

“Weep With Those Who Weep”

⁴ Our Father of tender mercies has himself experienced the loss of loved ones, such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and King David. (Num. 12: 6-8; Matt. 22:31, 32; Acts 13:22) God's Word assures us that Jehovah has eagerly anticipated—has had an earnest longing for—the time when he will bring them back to life. (Job 14:14, 15) They will be happy and in vibrant health. Consider, too, that God's dearly beloved Son—“the one he was especially fond of”—died an agonizing death. (Prov. 8:22, 30) Words cannot express the pain Jehovah must have suffered.—John 5: 20; 10:17.

(2 Corinthians 1:4) who comforts us in all our trials so that we may be able to comfort others in any sort of trial with the comfort that we receive from God.

w17.07 15 ¶14

“Weep With Those Who Weep”

¹⁴ Understandably, then, it can be difficult to know what to say to someone who is overwhelmed by grief. Nevertheless, the Bible states that “the tongue of the wise is a healing.” (Prov. 12:18) Many have found comforting thoughts to share from the brochure *When Someone You Love Dies*. Often, though, the most helpful thing you can do is to “weep with those who weep.” (Rom. 12:15) “Tears have become the language of my heart,” admits Gaby, whose husband died. “That is why I get some comfort when friends cry with me. At that moment, I don’t feel quite so alone in my grief.”

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(2 Corinthians 1:22) He has also put his seal on us and has given us the token of what is to come, that is, the spirit, in our hearts.

w16.04 32

Questions From Readers

What are the “token” and the “seal” that each anointed Christian receives from God?—2 Cor. 1:21, 22; ftn.

■ **Token:** According to one reference work, the Greek term translated “token” at 2 Corinthians 1:22 was “a legal and commercial technical term” meaning “*first instalment, deposit, down payment, pledge*, that pays a part of the purchase price in advance, and so secures a legal claim to the article in question, or makes a contract valid.” In the case of anointed ones, the full payment, or reward, is described at 2 Corinthians 5:1-5 as involving the putting on of an incorruptible heavenly body. The reward also includes receiving the gift of immortality.—1 Cor. 15:48-54.

In modern Greek, a related expression is used for an engagement ring. This is a fitting illustration for those who will become part of Christ’s figurative wife.—2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 21:2, 9.

■ **Seal:** In the past, a seal was used as a signature to prove ownership, authenticity, or agreement. In the case of the anointed, they are “sealed,” or branded, figuratively by holy spirit as God’s possession. (Eph. 1:13, 14) This seal is not made permanent, though, until either sometime before the person dies faithful or sometime before the outbreak of the great tribulation.—Eph. 4:30; Rev. 7:2-4.

(2 Corinthians 2:14-16) But thanks be to God, who always leads us in a triumphal procession in company with the Christ and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him in every place! ¹⁵ For to God we are a sweet fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; ¹⁶ to the latter ones an odor of death leading to death, to the former ones a fragrance of life leading to life. And who is adequately qualified for these things?

w10 8/1 23

Did You Know?

What did the apostle Paul have in mind when he spoke of “a triumphal procession”?

■ Paul wrote: “God . . . leads us in a triumphal procession in company with the Christ and makes the odor of the knowledge of him perceptible through us in every place! For to God we are a sweet odor of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the latter ones an odor issuing from death to death, to the former ones an odor issuing from life to life.”—2 Corinthians 2:14-16.

The apostle was referring to the Roman practice of holding a celebratory procession to honor a general for his victory over enemies of the State. At such events, both the spoils and the prisoners of war were put on display and bulls were led

to the sacrifice while the victorious general and his army received public acclaim. At the end of the procession, the bulls were sacrificed and many of the prisoners were likely executed.

The metaphor of the “sweet odor of Christ” signifying life for some and death for others is “probably drawn from the Roman practice of burning incense along the way of the procession,” says *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. “The fragrance that signified triumph to the victors reminded the captives of the execution that likely awaited them.”

Bible Reading

(2 Corinthians 3:1-18) Are we starting to recommend ourselves again? Or do we need, like some men, letters of recommendation to you or from you? ² You yourselves are our letter, inscribed on our hearts and known and being read by all mankind. ³ For you are shown to be a letter of Christ written by us as ministers, inscribed not with ink but with the spirit of a living God, not on stone tablets but on fleshly tablets, on hearts. ⁴ We have this sort of confidence toward God through the Christ. ⁵ Not that we of ourselves are adequately qualified to consider that anything comes from us, but our being adequately qualified comes from God, ⁶ who has indeed adequately qualified us to be ministers of a new covenant, not of a written code, but of spirit; for the written code condemns to death, but the spirit makes alive. ⁷ Now if the code that administers death and that was engraved in letters on stones came with such glory that the sons of Israel could not gaze at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, a glory that was to be done away with, ⁸ why should the administering of the spirit not be with even greater glory? ⁹ For if the code administering condemnation was glorious, how much more glorious would be the administering of righteousness! ¹⁰ In fact, even

what had once been made glorious has been stripped of glory because of the glory that excels it. ¹¹ For if what was to be done away with was brought in with glory, how much greater would be the glory of what remains! ¹² Since we have such a hope, we are using great freedom of speech, ¹³ and not doing what Moses did when he would put a veil over his face so that the sons of Israel might not gaze intently at the end of what was to be done away with. ¹⁴ But their minds were dulled. For to this present day, the same veil remains unlifted when the old covenant is read, because it is taken away only by means of Christ. ¹⁵ In fact, to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies upon their hearts. ¹⁶ But when one turns to Jehovah, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷ Now Jehovah is the Spirit, and where the spirit of Jehovah is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ And all of us, while we with unveiled faces reflect like mirrors the glory of Jehovah, are transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another, exactly as it is done by Jehovah the Spirit.