

References for *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook*

JANUARY 3-9

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | JUDGES 15-16

“Betrayal—How Contemptible!”

w12 4/15 8 ¶4

Betrayal—An Ominous Sign of the Times!

⁴ First, consider conniving Delilah, with whom Judge Samson had fallen in love. Samson was intent on leading the fight against the Philistines on behalf of God's people. Perhaps knowing that Delilah had no loyal love for Samson, the five Philistine lords offered her a large bribe to find out the secret of his superior strength so that they could eliminate him. Mercenary Delilah accepted their offer, but her attempts to uncover Samson's secret failed three times. She then kept on pressuring him “with her words all the time and kept urging him.” Finally, “his soul got to be impatient to the point of dying.” So he told her that his hair had never been cut and that if it was, he would lose his power. Knowing that, Delilah had Samson's hair shaved off while he was asleep on her lap, and then she turned him over to his enemies to do to him whatever they wanted. (Judg. 16:4, 5, 15-21) How contemptible her action was! All because of her greed, Delilah betrayed someone who loved her.

w05 1/15 27 ¶5

Highlights From the Book of Judges

14:16, 17; 16:16. Applying pressure by weeping and nagging can damage a relationship.—Proverbs 19:13; 21:19.

w12 4/15 11-12 ¶15-16

Betrayal—An Ominous Sign of the Times!

¹⁵ How can those who are married remain loyal to their mates? God's Word says: “Re-

joice with the wife [or husband] of your youth” and, “See life with the wife [or husband] whom you love.” (Prov. 5:18; Eccl. 9:9) As both mates grow older, they must be “fully present” in their relationship, both physically and emotionally. That means being attentive *to each other*, spending time *with each other*, and drawing closer *to each other*. They have to focus on preserving their marriage and their relationship with Jehovah. To that end, couples need to study the Bible *together*, regularly work in the ministry *together*, and pray *together* for Jehovah's blessing.

REMAIN LOYAL TO JEHOVAH

¹⁶ There are members of the congregation who committed serious sins and who were reproved “with severity, that they may be healthy in the faith.” (Titus 1:13) For some, their conduct has required that they be disfellowshipped. For “those who have been trained by it,” the discipline has helped them to become spiritually restored. (Heb. 12:11) What if we have a relative or a close friend who is disfellowshipped? Now our loyalty is on the line, not to that person, but to God. Jehovah is watching us to see whether we will abide by his command not to have contact with *anyone* who is disfellowshipped.—**Read 1 Corinthians 5:11-13.**

Spiritual Gems

w05 3/15 27 ¶6

Samson Triumphs in the Strength of Jehovah!

Samson was single-minded in the pursuit of his objective, his fight against the Philistines. His staying at the house of a prostitute at Gaza was for the purpose of fighting against God's enemies. Samson

needed a lodging place for the night in an enemy city, and it could be found in the house of a prostitute. Samson had no immoral purpose in mind. He left the woman's house at midnight, grabbed the city gates and the two side posts, and carried them to the top of a mountain near Hebron, which was some 37 miles [60 km] away. This was done with divine approval and God-given strength.—Judges 16:1-3.

JANUARY 10-16

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | JUDGES 17-19

“Disobeying God's Law Leads to Problems”

it-2 390-391

Micah

1. A man of Ephraim. In violation of the eighth of the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:15), Micah took 1,100 silver pieces from his mother. When he confessed and returned them, she said: “I must without fail sanctify the silver to Jehovah from my hand for my son, so as to make a carved image and a molten statue; and now I shall give it back to you.” She then took 200 silver pieces to a silversmith, who made “a carved image and a molten statue” that afterward came to be in Micah's house. Micah, who had “a house of gods,” made an ephod and teraphim and empowered one of his sons to act as priest for him. Although this arrangement was ostensibly to honor Jehovah, it was grossly improper, for it violated the commandment forbidding idolatry (Ex 20:4-6) and bypassed Jehovah's tabernacle and his priesthood. (Jg 17:1-6; De 12:1-14) Later, Micah took Jonathan, a descendant of Moses' son Gershom, into his home, hiring

this young Levite as his priest. (Jg 18:4, 30) Mistakenly feeling satisfied with this, Micah said: “Now I do know that Jehovah will do me good.” (Jg 17:7-13) But Jonathan was not of Aaron's lineage and thus was not even qualified for priestly service, which only added to Micah's error.—Nu 3:10.

it-2 391 ¶2

Micah

Shortly thereafter, Micah and a company of men pursued the Danites. Upon catching up with them and being asked what was the matter, Micah said: “My gods that I made you have taken, the priest too, and you go your way, and what do I have anymore?” At that, the sons of Dan warned of possible assault if Micah continued following them and voicing protest. Seeing that the Danites were much stronger than his band, Micah returned home. (Jg 18:22-26) The Danites thereafter struck down and burned Laish, building the city of Dan on its site. Jonathan and his sons became priests to the Danites, who “kept the carved image of Micah, which he had made, set up for themselves all the days that the house of the true God [the tabernacle] continued in Shiloh.”—Jg 18:27-31.

Spiritual Gems

w15 12/15 10 ¶6

A Living Translation of God's Word

⁶ The evidence for retaining God's name in the Bible has not diminished but grown. The 2013 revision of the *New World Translation* includes the name 7,216 times, which is 6 more than the 1984 edition. Five of the additional instances are found at 1 Samuel 2:25; 6:3; 10:26; 23:14, 16. These were restored primarily because the Dead Sea

Scrolls, which predate the Hebrew Masoretic text by over 1,000 years, contain the name in these verses. Also, one occurrence at Judges 19:18 was restored as a result of further study of ancient manuscripts.

JANUARY 17-23

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | JUDGES 20-21

“Keep Inquiring of Jehovah”

w11 9/15 32 ¶2

Can You Be Like Phinehas When You Face Challenges?

Following the tragic rape and murder of a Levite's concubine by the men of Gibeah, of the tribe of Benjamin, the other tribes set out to wage war against the Benjamites. (Judg. 20:1-11) They prayed for Jehovah's help before fighting, but they were defeated twice, with significant losses. (Judg. 20:14-25) Would they conclude that their prayers were ineffective? Was Jehovah truly interested in seeing them respond to the wrong that had been done?

w05 1/15 27 ¶9

Highlights From the Book of Judges

20:17-48—Why did Jehovah let the Benjamites defeat the other tribes twice, even though the former needed to be punished? By allowing the faithful tribes to suffer great losses at first, Jehovah tested their determination to root out evil from Israel.

w11 9/15 32 ¶4

Can You Be Like Phinehas When You Face Challenges?

What lesson might we learn from this? Some problems faced in the congregation

persist despite the elders' diligent efforts and prayers for God's help. If this occurs, elders do well to remember Jesus' words: “Keep on asking [or praying], and it will be given you; keep on seeking, and you will find; keep on knocking, and it will be opened to you.” (Luke 11:9) Even if an answer to prayer seems delayed, overseers can be assured that Jehovah will respond in his own due time.

Spiritual Gems

w14 5/1 11 ¶4-6

Did You Know?

How were slings used in ancient warfare?

The sling was the weapon that David used to slay the giant Goliath. David apparently learned to use this weapon during his years as a shepherd boy.—1 Samuel 17:40-50.

The sling is depicted in both the Egyptian and the Assyrian art from Bible times. The weapon consisted of an open pocket of leather or cloth attached to two straps or cords. The slinger would place in this pouch a smooth or rounded stone measuring two to three inches (5 to 7.5 cm) in diameter and weighing perhaps nine ounces (250 g). He would then whirl the sling above his head and release one of the cords, causing the stone to fly out with great force and accuracy.

Excavations in the Middle East have yielded great numbers of slingstones from wars in ancient times. Skilled warriors may have slung stones at speeds of 100 to 150 miles an hour (160 to 240 km/h). Scholars disagree on whether the sling had the range of a bow, but a sling could certainly prove just as lethal.—Judges 20:16.

JANUARY 24-30

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | RUTH 1-2

"Pursue Loyal Love"

w16.02 14 ¶5

Imitate Jehovah's Close Friends

⁵ Ruth could easily have reasoned that she had a family there in Moab—a mother and other relatives who would take a young widow in and help provide for her. Moab was her homeland. Its culture was her culture, its language her language, its people her people. Naomi could promise her no such advantages in Bethlehem. In fact, she advised Ruth to stay in Moab. Naomi feared that she could provide neither a husband nor a home for her daughters-in-law. What would Ruth do? Note the contrast between her and Orpah, who "returned to her people *and her gods*." (Ruth 1:9-15) Did Ruth want to return to the false gods of her people? No, she did not.

w16.02 14 ¶6

Imitate Jehovah's Close Friends

⁶ It seems that Ruth had come to know about Jehovah God, perhaps from her late husband or from Naomi. Jehovah was not like the gods of Moab. Ruth knew that Jehovah deserved her love and worship. Knowledge, though, was not enough. Ruth had to make a decision. Would she choose Jehovah as her God? Ruth made a wise choice. "Your people will be my people," she told Naomi, "and your God my God." (Ruth 1:16) Ruth's love for Naomi is heartwarming to think about, but far more important was her love for Jehovah. The landowner Boaz later praised Ruth for seeking refuge under

Jehovah's wings. (Read Ruth 2:12.) That may remind us of a baby bird taking refuge under the wings of a powerful, protective parent. (Ps. 36:7; 91:1-4) Jehovah became such a parent to Ruth. He rewarded her for her faith, and she never had any reason to regret her decision.

Spiritual Gems

w05 3/1 27 ¶1

Highlights From the Book of Ruth

1:13, 21—Did Jehovah make life bitter for Naomi and cause her calamity? No, and Naomi did not charge God with any wrongdoing. In view of all that had happened to her, however, she thought that Jehovah was against her. She felt bitter and disillusioned. Moreover, in those days the fruitage of the belly was considered a divine blessing and barrenness, a curse. Lacking grandchildren and with two sons dead, Naomi might have felt justified in thinking that Jehovah had humiliated her.

JANUARY 31–FEBRUARY 6

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | RUTH 3-4

"Establish and Maintain a Good Reputation"

w12 10/1 22 ¶5

"An Excellent Woman"

Boaz spoke, and no doubt his gentle, soothing tone comforted Ruth. He said: "Blessed may you be of Jehovah, my daughter. You have expressed your loving-kindness better in the last instance than in the first instance, in not going after the young fellows whether lowly or rich." (Ruth 3:10) "The first instance" referred to Ruth's

loyal love in accompanying Naomi back to Israel and caring for her. “The last instance” was the present one. Boaz noted that a young woman like Ruth might easily have sought a husband among much younger men, whether rich or poor. Rather, she wanted to do good not only to Naomi but also to Naomi’s deceased husband, to carry on the dead man’s name in his homeland. It is not hard to see why Boaz was moved by this young woman’s unselfishness.

w12 10/1 23 ¶1

“An Excellent Woman”

How satisfying it must have been for Ruth to contemplate what Boaz had said—that she was known among all the people as “an excellent woman”! No doubt her eagerness to get to know Jehovah and to serve him had much to do with that reputation. She had also shown great kindness and sensitivity toward Naomi and her people, willingly adapting to ways and customs that were surely unfamiliar to her. If we imitate Ruth’s faith, we will seek to treat others and their ways and customs with deep respect. If we do, we too may find that we develop a reputation for excellence.

w12 10/1 24 ¶3

“An Excellent Woman”

Boaz married Ruth. Thereafter, we read: “Jehovah granted her conception and she bore a son.” The women of Bethlehem blessed Naomi and praised Ruth for being better to Naomi than seven sons would have been. Later, we learn, Ruth’s son became an ancestor of the great King David. (Ruth 4:11-22) David, in turn, was an ancestor of Jesus Christ.—Matthew 1:1.

Spiritual Gems

w05 3/1 29 ¶3

Highlights From the Book of Ruth

4:6—In what way could a repurchaser “ruin” his inheritance by doing the repurchasing? First of all, if the one falling into poverty had sold his land inheritance, a repurchaser would have to put out money to buy the land at a price determined by the number of years remaining till the next Jubilee. (Leviticus 25:25-27) Doing so would reduce the value of his own estate. Moreover, should a son be born to Ruth, that son, rather than any of the repurchaser’s current near relatives, would inherit the purchased field.

FEBRUARY 7-13

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | 1 SAMUEL 1-2

“Open Your Heart to Jehovah in Prayer”

1a 55 ¶12

She Opened Her Heart to God in Prayer

¹² Hannah thus set an example for all of God’s servants when it comes to prayer. Jehovah kindly invites his people to speak to him openly, without reservation, pouring out their concerns before him as a trusting child would to a loving parent. (**Read Psalm 62:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:17.**) The apostle Peter was inspired to write these comforting words about prayer to Jehovah: “Throw all your anxiety upon him, because he cares for you.”—1 Pet. 5:7.

w07 3/15 16 ¶4

How Hannah Found Peace

What can we learn from all of this? When we pray to Jehovah about our concerns, we

can let him know how we feel and make heartfelt requests. If we can do no more to resolve the problem, we should leave the matter in his hands. There is no better course to follow.—Proverbs 3:5, 6.

Spiritual Gems

w05 3/15 21 ¶5

Highlights From the Book of First Samuel

2:10—Why did Hannah pray that Jehovah “give strength to his king” when there was no human king over Israel? That the Israelites would have a human king was foretold in the Mosaic Law. (Deuteronomy 17:14-18) In his deathbed prophecy, Jacob said: “The scepter [a symbol of royal authority] will not turn aside from Judah.” (Genesis 49:10) Moreover, concerning Sarah—the ancestress of the Israelites—Jehovah said: “Kings of peoples will come from her.” (Genesis 17:16) Hannah, then, was praying about a future king.

FEBRUARY 14-20

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | 1 SAMUEL 3-5

“Jehovah Is Considerate”

w18.09 24 ¶3

Almighty yet Considerate

³ Samuel began “ministering to Jehovah” at the tabernacle at a very early age. (1 Sam. 3:1) One night after Samuel had retired, something most unusual happened. (**Read 1 Samuel 3:2-10.**) He heard a voice call him by name. Thinking that it was the voice of the aged High Priest Eli, Samuel obediently ran to him and said: “Here I am, for you called me.” Eli denied doing so. When the same thing happened two more times, Eli

realized that it was God who was calling Samuel. So he told the boy how to respond, and Samuel obeyed. Why did Jehovah, by means of his angel, not reveal himself to Samuel on the first occasion? The Bible does not say, but the way events unfolded suggests that consideration for young Samuel was an important factor. How so?

w18.09 24 ¶4

Almighty yet Considerate

4 Read 1 Samuel 3:11-18. Jehovah’s Law commanded children to respect the aged, especially a chieftain. (Ex. 22:28; Lev. 19:32) Can you imagine Samuel going up to Eli in the morning and boldly telling him God’s stinging judgment message? Of course not! Indeed, the account tells us that Samuel “was afraid to tell Eli of the vision.” However, God made clear to Eli that He was calling Samuel. As a result, Eli took charge of the situation and told Samuel to speak. “[Do not] hide from me a single word of all that he said to you,” Eli commanded. Samuel obediently “told him everything.”

Spiritual Gems

w05 3/15 21 ¶6

Highlights From the Book of First Samuel

3:3—Did Samuel actually sleep in the Most Holy? No, he did not. Samuel was a Levite of the nonpriestly family of the Kohathites. (1 Chronicles 6:33-38) As such, he was not permitted to “come in to see the holy things.” (Numbers 4:17-20) The only part of the sanctuary that Samuel had access to was the tabernacle courtyard. That is where he must have slept. Apparently, Eli also slept somewhere in the courtyard. The expression “where the ark of God was” evidently refers to the tabernacle area.

FEBRUARY 21-27

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | 1 SAMUEL 6-8

“Who Is Your King?”

it-2 163 ¶1

Kingdom of God

A Human King Requested. Nearly 400 years from the time of the Exodus and over 800 years from the making of God's covenant with Abraham, the Israelites requested a human king to lead them, even as the other nations had human monarchs. Their request constituted a rejection of Jehovah's own kingship over them. (1Sa 8: 4-8) True, the people properly expected a kingdom to be established by God in harmony with his promise to Abraham and to Jacob, already cited. They had further basis for such hope in Jacob's deathbed prophecy concerning Judah (Ge 49:8-10), in Jehovah's words to Israel after the Exodus (Ex 19:3-6), in the terms of the Law covenant (De 17:14, 15), and even in part of the message God caused the prophet Balaam to speak (Nu 24:2-7, 17). Samuel's faithful mother Hannah expressed this hope in prayer. (1Sa 2:7-10) Nevertheless, Jehovah had not fully revealed his “sacred secret” regarding the Kingdom and had not indicated when his due time for its establishment would arrive nor what the structure and composition of that government would be—whether it would be earthly or heavenly. It was therefore presumptuous on the part of the people now to demand a human king.

w11 1/1 27 ¶1

He Endured Despite Disappointments

Note how Jehovah responded when Samuel took the matter to him in prayer: “Listen to

the voice of the people as respects all that they say to you; for it is not you whom they have rejected, but it is I whom they have rejected from being king over them.” How comforting for Samuel, yet how awful an insult those people had flung at Almighty God! Jehovah told his prophet to warn the Israelites of the high price they would pay for having a human king. When Samuel complied, they insisted: “No, but a king is what will come to be over us.” Ever obedient to his God, Samuel went and anointed the king whom Jehovah chose.—1 Samuel 8: 7-19.

w10 1/15 30 ¶9

Jehovah's Way of Ruling Vindicated!

⁹ History demonstrated the truth of Jehovah's warning. Being ruled by a human king led to serious problems for Israel, especially when that king proved unfaithful. With that example of Israel in mind, it is not surprising that throughout the ages, government in the hands of humans who do not know Jehovah has failed to bring permanent good results. True, some politicians invoke God's blessing on their efforts to achieve peace and security, but how can God bless those who do not submit to his way of ruling?—Ps. 2:10-12.

Spiritual Gems

w02 4/1 12 ¶13

Why Be Baptized?

¹³ Conversion must take place prior to our baptism as Witnesses of Jehovah. Conversion is a voluntary act performed freely by one who has made a wholehearted decision to follow Christ Jesus. Such individuals reject their former wrong course and determine to do what is right in God's sight.

In the Scriptures, Hebrew and Greek verbs pertaining to conversion have the sense of turning back, turning around. This action denotes a turning to God from a wrong way. (1 Kings 8:33, 34) Conversion calls for “works that befit repentance.” (Acts 26:20) It requires that we abandon false worship, act in harmony with God’s commandments, and render exclusive devotion to Jehovah. (Deuteronomy 30:2, 8-10; 1 Samuel 7:3) Conversion results in changes in our thinking, objectives, and disposition. (Ezekiel 18:31) We “turn around” as ungodly traits are replaced by the new personality. —Acts 3:19; Ephesians 4:20-24; Colossians 3:5-14.

FEBRUARY 28–MARCH 6

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | 1 SAMUEL 9-11

“Saul Started Out Humble and Modest”

w20.08 10 ¶11

Walk Humbly and Modestly With Your God

¹¹ Reflect on what happened to *King Saul*. He started out as a modest young man. He was aware of his limitations and even hesitated to take on more responsibility. (1 Sam. 9:21; 10:20-22) Yet, in time Saul became presumptuous. He revealed this bad trait soon after he became king. On one occasion, he lost patience while waiting for the prophet Samuel. Instead of modestly trusting in Jehovah to act in behalf of the people, Saul offered up a burnt sacrifice even though he was not authorized to do so. As a result, Saul lost Jehovah’s favor and eventually the kingship. (1 Sam. 13:8-14) We are wise if we learn from this warning example and avoid acting presumptuously.

w14 3/15 9 ¶8

How to Maintain the Spirit of Self-Sacrifice

⁸ King Saul of Israel serves as a warning for us about how selfishness can eat away at our spirit of self-sacrifice. Saul began his kingship with a modest and humble view of himself. (1 Sam. 9:21) He refused to punish Israelites who spoke out against his kingship, even though he could have felt justified in defending his God-given position. (1 Sam. 10:27) King Saul accepted the guidance of God’s spirit by leading Israel in a successful battle against the Ammonites. Afterward, he humbly gave Jehovah the credit for the victory.—1 Sam. 11:6, 11-13.

w95 12/15 10 ¶1

The Ammonites—A People That Repaid Kindness With Hostility

Again the Ammonites had repaid Jehovah’s kindness with hostility. Jehovah did not ignore this vicious threat. “The spirit of God became operative upon Saul on his hearing these words [of Nahash], and his anger got very hot.” Under the direction of God’s spirit, Saul mustered a force of 330,000 fighting men that so thoroughly routed the Ammonites that “there were not left over among them two together.”—1 Samuel 11:6, 11.

Spiritual Gems

w05 3/15 22 ¶8

Highlights From the Book of First Samuel

9:9—What is significant about the expression “the prophet of today used to be called a seer in former times”? These words may indicate that as the prophets became more prominent in the days of Samuel and during the era of the kings in Israel, the word “seer” came to be replaced

by the term “prophet.” Samuel is considered the first of the line of the prophets.—Acts 3:24.