

References for *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook*

MAY 6-12

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | 2 CORINTHIANS 4-6

“We Do Not Give Up”

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

w04 8/15 25 ¶16-17

Tired but Not Tiring Out

¹⁶ Caring for our spiritual health is, of course, highly important. When we have an intimate relationship with Jehovah God, we may get physically tired, but never will we tire of worshiping him. Jehovah is the one “giving to the tired one power; and to the one without dynamic energy he makes full might abound.” (Isaiah 40:28, 29) The apostle Paul, who personally experienced the truthfulness of these words, wrote: “We do not give up, but even if the man we are outside is wasting away, certainly the man we are inside is being renewed from day to day.”—2 Corinthians 4:16.

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

(2 Corinthians 4:17) For though the tribulation is momentary and light, it works out

for us a glory that is of more and more surpassing greatness and is everlasting;

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Endurance

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

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

Digging for Spiritual Gems

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

w12 2/1 28-29

“Bring a Smile to Jehovah’s Face”

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

special assignment in the ministry. That assignment is something to be highly esteemed.

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

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

w09 11/15 21 ¶7

Keep Growing in Brotherly Love

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

Bible Reading

(2 Corinthians 4:1-15) Therefore, since we have this ministry through the mercy that was shown us, we do not give up. ² But we have renounced the shameful, under-

handed things, not walking with cunning or adulterating the word of God; but by making the truth manifest, we recommend ourselves to every human conscience in the sight of God. ³ If, in fact, the good news we declare is veiled, it is veiled among those who are perishing, ⁴ among whom the god of this system of things has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, so that the illumination of the glorious good news about the Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine through. ⁵ For we are preaching, not about ourselves, but about Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus’ sake. ⁶ For God is the one who said: “Let the light shine out of darkness,” and he has shone on our hearts to illuminate them with the glorious knowledge of God by the face of Christ. ⁷ However, we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the power beyond what is normal may be God’s and not from us. ⁸ We are hard-pressed in every way, but not cramped beyond movement; we are perplexed, but not absolutely with no way out; ⁹ we are persecuted, but not abandoned; we are knocked down, but not destroyed. ¹⁰ Always we endure in our body the death-dealing treatment that Jesus suffered, that the life of Jesus may also be made manifest in our body. ¹¹ For we who live are ever being brought face-to-face with death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus may also be made manifest in our mortal flesh. ¹² So death is at work in us, but life in you. ¹³ Now because we have the same spirit of faith as that of which it is written: “I exercised faith, therefore I spoke”; we too exercise faith and therefore we speak, ¹⁴ knowing that the One who raised Jesus up will raise us up also with Jesus and will present us together with you. ¹⁵ For all these things are for your sake, so that the increase

of the undeserved kindness should abound even more because many more are offering thanksgiving to the glory of God.

MAY 13-19

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | 2 CORINTHIANS 7-10

“Our Relief Ministry”

(2 Corinthians 8:1-3) Now we want you to know, brothers, about the undeserved kindness of God that has been granted to the congregations of Mac·e·do·ni·a. ² During a great test under affliction, their abundance of joy and their deep poverty made the riches of their generosity abound. ³ For it was according to their means, yes, I testify, it was even beyond their means,

w98 11/1 25 ¶1

“God Loves a Cheerful Giver”

First, Paul told the Corinthians about the Macedonians, whose response to the relief effort was exemplary. “During a great test under affliction,” Paul wrote, “their abundance of joy and their deep poverty made the riches of their generosity abound.” The Macedonians did not need prodding. On the contrary, Paul said that “they of their own accord kept begging us with much entreaty for the privilege of kindly giving.” The cheerful generosity of the Macedonians is all the more remarkable when we consider that they themselves were in “deep poverty.”—2 Corinthians 8:2-4.

kr 209 ¶1

The Ministry of Relief

IT IS about 46 C.E., and Judea is in the grip of famine. The Jewish disciples of Christ living there lack the means to pay the sky-high prices demanded for the meager supply of grain available. They are hungry, staring starvation in the face. However, they are about to experience the protection of Jehovah's hand in

a way that no other disciples of Christ have ever felt it before. What is about to happen?

(2 Corinthians 8:4) while they on their own initiative kept earnestly begging us for the privilege of kindly giving, to have a share in the relief ministry for the holy ones.

kr 209-210 ¶4-6

The Ministry of Relief

⁴ In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul explained that Christians have a twofold ministry. Although Paul's letter was directed to anointed Christians, today his words apply to Christ's “other sheep” as well. (John 10:16) One part of our ministry is “the ministry of the reconciliation,” that is, our preaching and teaching work. (2 Cor. 5:18-20; 1 Tim. 2:3-6) The other part involves a ministry that we perform in behalf of fellow believers. Specifically, Paul referred to a “relief ministry.” (2 Cor. 8:4) As to the expressions “*ministry* of the reconciliation” and “relief *ministry*,” in both instances the word “ministry” is a translation of a form of the Greek word *di-a-ko-ni'a*. Why is that significant?

⁵ By using the same Greek word for both activities, Paul grouped relief work with other forms of ministry that were carried out in the Christian congregation. He had stated earlier: “There are different ministries, and yet there is the *same* Lord; and there are different activities, . . . But [they] are performed by the very *same* spirit.” (1 Cor. 12:4-6, 11) In fact, Paul linked the various congregational ministries with “sacred service.” (Rom. 12:1, 6-8) No wonder he felt that it was appropriate to give part of his time “to minister to the holy ones!”—Rom. 15:25, 26.

⁶ Paul helped the Corinthians to see why relief work was part of their ministry and worship to Jehovah. Note his reasoning: Christians who provide relief do so because they are “submissive to the good news about the Christ.” (2 Cor. 9:13) Hence, moved by their desire to

put Christ's teachings into practice, Christians help fellow believers. The kind acts that they perform in behalf of their brothers, stated Paul, are nothing less than expressions of "the surpassing undeserved kindness of God." (2 Cor. 9:14; 1 Pet. 4:10) Thus, in commenting on serving our brothers in need, which includes relief work, *The Watchtower* of December 1, 1975, rightly stated: "We should never doubt that Jehovah God and his Son Jesus Christ give real importance to this kind of service." Yes, relief work is a valuable form of sacred service. —Rom. 12:1, 7; 2 Cor. 8:7; Heb. 13:16.

(2 Corinthians 9:7) Let each one do just as he has resolved in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

kr 196 ¶10

How Kingdom Activities Are Financed

¹⁰ First, we make voluntary contributions because we love Jehovah and want to do "what is pleasing in his eyes." (1 John 3:22) Jehovah is indeed pleased with a worshipper who gives freely from his heart. Let us examine the apostle Paul's words about Christian giving. **(Read 2 Corinthians 9:7.)** A true Christian is not a reluctant or forced giver. Rather, he gives because he has "resolved in his heart" to do so. That is, he gives after he has considered a need and how he can fill it. Such a giver is dear to Jehovah, for "God loves a cheerful giver." Another translation reads: "God loves people who love to give."

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(2 Corinthians 9:15) Thanks be to God for his indescribable free gift.

w16.01 12 ¶2

Be Compelled by God's "Indescribable Free Gift"

² Paul knew that all the magnificent promises of God were guaranteed through the perfect

sacrifice of Christ. **(Read 2 Corinthians 1:20.)** Thus, that "indescribable free gift" would include all the goodness and loyal love that Jehovah would extend to us through Jesus. Indeed, that gift is so awe-inspiring that it cannot be fully described in human terms. How should receiving such an extraordinary gift affect us? And in what practical ways should this gift motivate us as we prepare to observe the Memorial of Christ's death on Wednesday, March 23, 2016?

(2 Corinthians 10:17) "But the one who boasts, let him boast in Jehovah."

g99 7/8 20-21

Is It Wrong to Be Proud?

In the Christian Greek Scriptures, the verb *kau-kha'o-mai*, translated "take pride, exult, boast," is used in both a negative and a positive sense. Paul says, for example, that we may "exult, based on hope of the glory of God." He also recommends: "He that boasts, let him boast in Jehovah." (Romans 5:2; 2 Corinthians 10:17) This means taking pride in Jehovah as our God, a sentiment that may lead us to exult over his good name and reputation.

Bible Reading

(2 Corinthians 7:1-12) Therefore, since we have these promises, beloved ones, let us cleanse ourselves of every defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. ² Make room for us in your hearts. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one. ³ I do not say this to condemn you. For I have said before that you are in our hearts to die together and to live together. ⁴ I have great freeness of speech toward you. I have great boasting in regard to you. I am filled with comfort; I am overflowing with joy in all our affliction. ⁵ In fact, when

we arrived in Mac-e-do'ni-a, our bodies got no relief, but we continued to be afflicted in every way—there were fights on the outside, fears within. ⁶ But God, who comforts those who are downhearted, comforted us by the presence of Titus; ⁷ and not only by his presence but also by the comfort he received because of you, as he reported back to us about your longing for me, your deep sorrow, and your earnest concern for me; so I rejoiced even more. ⁸ For even if I saddened you by my letter, I do not regret it. Even if I did at first regret it (seeing that the letter saddened you, though only for a little while), ⁹ now I rejoice, not because you were just saddened, but because you were saddened into repenting. For you were saddened in a godly way, so that you suffered no harm because of us. ¹⁰ For sadness in a godly way produces repentance leading to salvation, leaving no regret; but the sadness of the world produces death. ¹¹ For see what a great earnestness your being saddened in a godly way produced in you, yes, clearing of yourselves, yes, indignation, yes, fear, yes, earnest desire, yes, zeal, yes, righting of the wrong! In every respect you demonstrated yourselves to be pure in this matter. ¹² Although I wrote to you, I did not do it for the one who did the wrong, nor for the one who was wronged, but so that your earnestness for us might be made evident among you in the sight of God.

MAY 20-26

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | 2 CORINTHIANS 11-13

“Paul’s ‘Thorn in the Flesh’”

(2 Corinthians 12:7) just because of receiving such extraordinary revelations. To keep me from becoming overly exalted, I was giv-

en a thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan, to keep slapping me, so that I might not be overly exalted.

w08 6/15 3-4

Powerful Despite Weaknesses

Another faithful servant asked Jehovah to remove “a thorn in the flesh,” a nagging problem. The apostle Paul entreated God three times to be set free from this trial. Whatever it was, like an irritating thorn, it could have robbed Paul of his joy in Jehovah’s service. Paul likened it to being constantly slapped. Jehovah’s answer was: “My undeserved kindness is sufficient for you; for my power is being made perfect in weakness.” Jehovah did not take away that thorn in the flesh. Paul had to contend with it, but he added: “When I am weak, then I am powerful.” (2 Cor. 12:7-10) What did he mean?

(2 Corinthians 12:8, 9) Three times I begged the Lord about this, that it would depart from me. ⁹ But he said to me: “My undeserved kindness is sufficient for you, for my power is being made perfect in weakness.” Most gladly, then, I will boast about my weaknesses, in order that the power of the Christ may remain over me like a tent.

w06 12/15 24 ¶17-18

Jehovah Gives “Holy Spirit to Those Asking Him”

¹⁷ In response to Paul’s prayers, God told him: “My undeserved kindness is sufficient for you; for my power is being made perfect in weakness.” Paul said: “Most gladly, therefore, will I rather boast as respects my weaknesses, that the power of the Christ may like a tent remain over me.” (2 Corinthians 12:9; Psalm 147:5) Hence, Paul experienced that through Christ, God’s powerful protection was spread over him like a tent. Today, Jehovah answers our prayers in a similar manner. He spreads his protection like a shelter over his servants.

¹⁸ Of course, a tent does not stop the rains from falling or the winds from blowing, but it does provide some protection from those elements. Likewise, the shelter provided by “the power of the Christ” does not stop trials from befalling us or hardships from being brought against us. Yet, it does give spiritual protection against the harmful elements of this world and the attacks of its ruler, Satan. (Revelation 7:9, 15, 16) Therefore, even if you are dealing with a trial that does not ‘depart from you,’ you can be certain that Jehovah is aware of your struggle and that he has responded to “the sound of your outcry.” (Isaiah 30:19; 2 Corinthians 1:3, 4) Paul wrote: “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 in order for you to be able to endure it.”—1 Corinthians 10:13; Philippians 4:6, 7.

(2 Corinthians 12:10) So I take pleasure in weaknesses, in insults, in times of need, in persecutions and difficulties, for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am powerful.

w18.01 9 ¶8-9

“He Gives Power to the Tired One”

⁸ **Read Isaiah 40:30.** No matter how qualified we may be, we are limited in what we can accomplish in our own strength. That is a lesson we all must learn. Although he was a capable man, the apostle Paul had limitations that prevented him from doing everything he wanted to do. When he expressed his concerns to God, he was told: “My power is being made perfect in weakness.” Paul got the point. He concluded: “When I am weak, then I am powerful.” (2 Cor. 12:7-10) What did he mean by that?

⁹ Paul realized that there was only so much he could do without help from a higher source. God’s holy spirit could supply the power that Paul lacked. Not only that, but God’s spirit could empower Paul to perform tasks that he

would never have been able to complete in his own power. The same is true of us. If the strength we have comes from Jehovah, we will be strong indeed!

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(2 Corinthians 12:2-4) I know a man in union with Christ who, 14 years ago—whether in the body or out of the body, I do not know; God knows—was caught away to the third heaven. ³ Yes, I know such a man—whether in the body or apart from the body, I do not know; God knows— ⁴ who was caught away into paradise and heard words that cannot be spoken and that are not lawful for a man to say.

w18.12 8 ¶10-12

Questions From Readers

“The third heaven” mentioned at 2 Corinthians 12:2 is likely the Messianic Kingdom in the hands of Jesus Christ and the 144,000, the “new heavens.”—2 Pet. 3:13.

It is “the third heaven” because the Kingdom is a superlative, an elevated, form of rulership.

The “paradise” into which Paul was “caught away” in vision likely refers to (1) the physical Paradise to come on earth, (2) the spiritual paradise that will exist then, which will be more extensive than the spiritual paradise that exists now, and (3) “the paradise of God” in heaven that will coexist in the new world.

(2 Corinthians 13:12) Greet one another with a holy kiss.

it-2 177

Kiss

The “Holy Kiss.” Among early Christians there was the “holy kiss” (Ro 16:16; 1Co 16:20; 2Co 13:12; 1Th 5:26) or “kiss of love” (1Pe 5:14), possibly bestowed on individuals of the same sex. This early Christian form of greeting may

correspond to the ancient Hebrew practice of greeting one with a kiss. Though the Scriptures provide no details, the “holy kiss” or “kiss of love” evidently reflected the wholesome love and unity prevailing in the Christian congregation.—Joh 13:34, 35.

Bible Reading

(2 Corinthians 11:1-15) I wish you would put up with me in a little unreasonableness. But, in fact, you are putting up with me! ² For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy, for I personally promised you in marriage to one husband that I might present you as a chaste virgin to the Christ. ³ But I am afraid that somehow, as the serpent seduced Eve by its cunning, your minds might be corrupted away from the sincerity and the chastity that are due the Christ. ⁴ For as it is, if someone comes and preaches a Jesus other than the one we preached, or you receive a spirit other than what you received, or good news other than what you accepted, you easily put up with him. ⁵ For I consider that I have not proved inferior to your superfine apostles in a single thing. ⁶ But even if I am unskilled in speech, I certainly am not in knowledge; indeed we made it clear to you in every way and in everything. ⁷ Or did I commit a sin by humbling myself that you might be exalted, because I gladly declared the good news of God to you without cost? ⁸ Other congregations I deprived by accepting provisions in order to minister to you. ⁹ Yet, when I was present with you and I fell into need, I did not become a burden on anyone, for the brothers who came from Mac-e-do’ni-a abundantly supplied my needs. Yes, in every way I kept myself from becoming a burden to you and will continue to do so. ¹⁰ As surely as the truth of Christ is in me, I will not stop this boasting in the

regions of A-cha’ia. ¹¹ For what reason? Because I do not love you? God knows I do. ¹² But what I am doing I will continue to do, in order to eliminate the pretext of those who are wanting a basis for being found equal to us in the things about which they boast. ¹³ For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no wonder, for Satan himself keeps disguising himself as an angel of light. ¹⁵ It is therefore nothing extraordinary if his ministers also keep disguising themselves as ministers of righteousness. But their end will be according to their works.

MAY 27–JUNE 2

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | GALATIANS 1-3

“I Resisted Him Face-to-Face”

(Galatians 2:11-13) However, when Ce’phas came to Antioch, I resisted him face-to-face, because he was clearly in the wrong. ¹² For before certain men from James arrived, he used to eat with people of the nations; but when they arrived, he stopped doing this and separated himself, fearing those of the circumcised class. ¹³ The rest of the Jews also joined him in putting on this pretense, so that even Bar’na-bas was led along with them in their pretense.

w17.04 27 ¶16

Do You Share Jehovah’s Sense of Justice?

¹⁶ **Read Galatians 2:11-14.** Peter gave in to the snare of fear of man. (Prov. 29:25) Despite his firsthand knowledge of Jehovah’s thinking on the matter, Peter feared the opinion of the circumcised Jewish members of the congregation in Jerusalem. The apostle Paul, who was also present at that meeting in Jerusalem in 49 C.E., confronted Peter in Antioch and exposed his hypocrisy. (Acts 15:12;

Gal. 2:13, ftn.) How would the Gentile Christians who were personally affected by Peter's mistake respond to the injustice? Would they allow themselves to be stumbled? Would Peter lose precious privileges because of his mistake?

(Galatians 2:14) But when I saw that they were not walking in step with the truth of the good news, I said to Ce'phas before them all: "If you, though you are a Jew, live as the nations do and not as Jews do, how can you compel people of the nations to live according to Jewish practice?"

w13 3/15 5 ¶12

For Those Loving Jehovah, "There Is No Stumbling Block"

¹²Peter manifested fear of man, stumbling badly at times; yet, he remained loyal to Jesus and Jehovah. For example, he publicly denied his Master, not just once, but three times. (Luke 22:54-62) Later, Peter failed to act in a Christian manner, treating Gentile believers as if they were somehow not as good as circumcised Jewish Christians. The apostle Paul, however, saw the matter clearly—there was no room for class distinctions in the congregation. Peter's attitude was wrong. Before Peter's conduct could sour the brotherhood, Paul acted by counseling Peter directly, face-to-face. (Gal. 2:11-14) Was Peter's pride so wounded that he quit the race for life? No. He seriously considered Paul's counsel, applied it, and kept on in the race.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Galatians 2:20) I am nailed to the stake along with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who is living in union with me. Indeed, the life that I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and handed himself over for me.

w14 9/15 16 ¶20-21

Serve God Loyally Despite "Many Tribulations"

²⁰What about subtle attacks? For instance, how can we counteract feelings of discouragement? One of the most powerful ways to do so is to meditate on the ransom. That is what the apostle Paul did. He knew how he felt at times—miserable. But he also knew that Christ died, not for perfect people, but for sinners. And Paul was one of those sinners. In fact, he wrote: "I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved *me* and handed himself over for *me*." (Gal. 2:20) Yes, Paul accepted the ransom. He recognized that the ransom applied to him personally.

²¹That same viewpoint—seeing the ransom as a *personal* gift from Jehovah—can help you tremendously. This does not mean that discouragement will instantly vanish. To an extent, some of us may have to battle this subtle attack until the new world. But remember: The prize will go to those who do not give up. We are ever closer to the glorious day when God's Kingdom will establish peace and restore all faithful humans to perfection. Be determined to enter into that Kingdom—even if through many tribulations.

(Galatians 3:1) O senseless Ga-la'tians! Who has brought you under this evil influence, you who had Jesus Christ openly portrayed before you as nailed to the stake?

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Galatians, Letter to the

Paul's exclamation, "O senseless Galatians," is no evidence that he had in mind only a certain ethnic people who sprang exclusively from Gallic stock in the northern part of Galatia. (Ga 3:1) Rather, Paul was rebuking certain ones in the congregations there for allowing themselves to be influenced by an ele-

ment of Judaizers among them, Jews who were attempting to establish their own righteousness through the Mosaic arrangement in place of the 'righteousness due to faith' provided by the new covenant. (2:15–3:14; 4:9, 10) Racially, "the congregations of Galatia" (1:2) to whom Paul wrote were a mixture of Jews and non-Jews, the latter being both circumcised proselytes and non-circumcised Gentiles, and no doubt some were of Celtic descent. (Ac 13: 14, 43; 16:1; Ga 5:2) All together, they were addressed as Galatian Christians because the area in which they lived was called Galatia. The whole tenor of the letter is that Paul was writing to those with whom he was well acquainted in the southern part of this Roman province, not to total strangers in the northern sector, which he apparently never visited.

Bible Reading

(Galatians 2:11-21) However, when Ce'phas came to Antioch, I resisted him face-to-face, because he was clearly in the wrong. ¹² For before certain men from James arrived, he used to eat with people of the nations; but when they arrived, he stopped doing this and separated himself, fearing those of the circumcised class. ¹³ The rest of the Jews also joined him in putting on this pretense, so that even Bar'na-bas was led along with them in their pretense. ¹⁴ But when I saw that they were not walking in step with the truth of the good news, I said to Ce'phas before them all: "If you, though you are a Jew, live as the nations do and not as Jews do, how can you compel people of the nations to live according to Jewish practice?" ¹⁵ We who are Jews by birth, and not sinners from the nations, ¹⁶ recognize that a man is declared righteous, not by works of law, but only through faith in Jesus Christ. So we have put our faith in Christ Jesus, so that we

may be declared righteous by faith in Christ and not by works of law, for no one will be declared righteous by works of law. ¹⁷ Now if we have also been found sinners while seeking to be declared righteous by means of Christ, is Christ then sin's minister? Certainly not! ¹⁸ If the very things that I once tore down I build up again, I demonstrate that I am a transgressor. ¹⁹ For through law I died toward law, so that I might become alive toward God. ²⁰ I am nailed to the stake along with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who is living in union with me. Indeed, the life that I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and handed himself over for me. ²¹ I do not reject the undeserved kindness of God, for if righteousness is through law, Christ actually died for nothing.