

References for *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook*

JULY 2-8

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | LUKE 6-7

"Measure Out Generously"

(Luke 6:37) "Moreover, stop judging, and you will by no means be judged; and stop condemning, and you will by no means be condemned. Keep on forgiving, and you will be forgiven."

nwtsty study note on Lu 6:37

Keep on forgiving, and you will be forgiven: Or "Keep on releasing, and you will be released." The Greek term rendered "to forgive" literally means "to let go free; to send away; to release (for example, a prisoner)." In this context, when used in contrast with judging and condemning, it conveys the idea of acquitting and forgiving, even when punishment or retribution might seem warranted.

w08 5/15 9-10 ¶13-14

Keep On Doing Good

¹³ Matthew's Gospel quotes Jesus as saying: "Stop judging that you may not be judged." (Matt. 7:1) According to Luke, Jesus said: "Stop judging, and you will by no means be judged; and stop condemning, and you will by no means be condemned. Keep on releasing, and you will be released." (Luke 6:37) The first-century Pharisees judged others harshly, in keeping with unscriptural traditions. Any of Jesus' listeners who did that were to "stop judging." Instead, they were to "keep on releasing," that is, forgiving the shortcomings of others. The apostle Paul gave similar counsel regarding forgiveness, as noted above.

¹⁴ By extending forgiveness, Jesus' disciples would move people to respond with a forgiving spirit. "With what judgment you are judging, you will be judged," said Jesus, "and with the measure that you are measuring out, they will

measure out to you." (Matt. 7:2) With respect to our treatment of others, we reap what we sow. —Gal. 6:7.

(Luke 6:38) Practice giving, and people will give to you. They will pour into your laps a fine measure, pressed down, shaken together, and overflowing. For with the measure that you are measuring out, they will measure out to you in return."

nwtsty study note on Lu 6:38

Practice giving: Or "Keep giving." The form of the Greek verb used here can be rendered "to give" and denotes continuous action.

(Luke 6:38) Practice giving, and people will give to you. They will pour into your laps a fine measure, pressed down, shaken together, and overflowing. For with the measure that you are measuring out, they will measure out to you in return."

nwtsty study note on Lu 6:38

your laps: The Greek word literally means "your bosom (chest)," but in this context it likely refers to the fold formed over the belt by the loose-fitting cloth of the outer garment. 'Pouring into the lap' may refer to a custom of some vendors to fill this fold with the goods that had been purchased.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Luke 6:12, 13) On one of those days he went out to the mountain to pray, and he spent the whole night in prayer to God. ¹³ And when it became day, he called his disciples to him and chose from among them 12, whom he also named apostles:

w07 8/1 6 ¶1

True Spirituality—How Can You Find It?

Jesus often spent extended periods of time in prayer. (John 17:1-26) For instance, before he

chose the 12 men who would become his apostles, Jesus “went out into the mountain to pray, and he continued *the whole night* in prayer to God.” (Luke 6:12) Although not necessarily spending the whole night in prayer, those who are spiritually-minded follow Jesus’ example. Before making major decisions in life, they take ample time to pray to God, seeking the direction of the holy spirit in making choices that will deepen their spirituality.

(Luke 7:35) All the same, wisdom is proved righteous by all its children.”

nwtsty study note on Lu 7:35

its children: Or “its results.” Here **wisdom** is personified and depicted as having children. In the parallel account at Mt 11:19, wisdom is depicted as having “works.” Wisdom’s children, or works—that is, the evidence produced by John the Baptist and Jesus—prove that the accusations against them are false. Jesus is, in effect, saying: ‘Look at the righteous works and conduct, and you will know that the charge is false.’

Bible Reading

(Luke 7:36-50) Now one of the Pharisees kept asking him to dine with him. So he entered the house of the Pharisee and reclined at the table. ³⁷ And look! a woman who was known in the city to be a sinner learned that he was dining in the house of the Pharisee, and she brought an alabaster jar of perfumed oil. ³⁸ Taking a position behind him at his feet, she wept and began to wet his feet with her tears, and she wiped them off with the hair of her head. Also, she tenderly kissed his feet and poured the perfumed oil on them. ³⁹ Seeing this, the Pharisee who had invited him said to himself: “If this man were really a prophet, he would know who and what kind of woman it is who is touching him, that she is a sinner.” ⁴⁰ But in reply Jesus said to him: “Simon, I have something to say to you.”

He said: “Teacher, say it!” ⁴¹ “Two men were debtors to a certain lender; the one was in debt for 500 de-nar’i-i, but the other for 50. ⁴² When they did not have anything to pay him back with, he freely forgave them both. Therefore, which one of them will love him more?” ⁴³ In answer Simon said: “I suppose it is the one whom he forgave more.” He said to him: “You judged correctly.” ⁴⁴ With that he turned to the woman and said to Simon: “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet. But this woman wet my feet with her tears and wiped them off with her hair. ⁴⁵ You gave me no kiss, but this woman, from the hour that I came in, did not stop tenderly kissing my feet. ⁴⁶ You did not pour oil on my head, but this woman poured perfumed oil on my feet. ⁴⁷ Because of this, I tell you, her sins, many though they are, are forgiven, because she loved much. But the one who is forgiven little, loves little.” ⁴⁸ Then he said to her: “Your sins are forgiven.” ⁴⁹ Those reclining at the table with him started to say among themselves: “Who is this man who even forgives sins?” ⁵⁰ But he said to the woman: “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

JULY 9-15

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | LUKE 8-9

“Be My Follower—What Is Needed?”

(Luke 9:57, 58) Now as they were going along the road, someone said to him: “I will follow you wherever you go.” ⁵⁸ But Jesus said to him: “Foxes have dens and birds of heaven have nests, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay down his head.”

it-2 494

Nest

When a certain one of the scribes said to Jesus: “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you are about to go,” Jesus replied: “Foxes have dens

and birds of heaven have roosts, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay down his head.” (Mt 8:19, 20; Lu 9:57, 58) Here Jesus pointed out that to be his follower the man would have to forsake the idea of having the comforts and conveniences commonly enjoyed, and must put his trust completely in Jehovah. This principle is reflected in the model prayer he taught his disciples: “Give us today our bread for this day,” and his statement: “Thus, you may be sure, none of you that does not say good-bye to all his belongings can be my disciple.”—Mt 6:11; Lu 14:33.

(Luke 9:59, 60) Then he said to another: “Be my follower.” The man said: “Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father.” ⁶⁰ But he said to him: “Let the dead bury their dead, but you go and declare abroad the Kingdom of God.”

nwtsty study notes on Lu 9:59, 60

bury my father: The wording likely does not mean that the man had just lost his father in death and was asking only to make funeral arrangements. Had this been the case, it is unlikely that he would have been there talking to Jesus. In the ancient Middle East, a death in the family would be followed very quickly by a funeral, generally on the same day. So the man’s father may have been ailing or elderly, not dead. And Jesus would not have told the man to abandon a sick and needy parent, so there must have been other family members who could care for such vital needs. (Mr 7:9-13) The man was saying, in effect, ‘I will follow you, but not as long as my father still lives. Wait until my father dies and I have buried him.’ In Jesus’ view, however, the man was missing an opportunity to put the interests of the Kingdom of God first in his life.—Lu 9:60, 62.

Let the dead bury their dead: As shown in the study note on Lu 9:59, the father of the man to whom Jesus is talking was likely ailing or elderly, not dead. Therefore, Jesus is evidently saying: ‘Let those who are spiritually dead bury

their dead,’ that is, the man should let his other relatives care for his father until he died and needed to be buried. By following Jesus, the man would put himself on the way to eternal life and not be among those who were spiritually dead before God. In his reply, Jesus shows that putting **the Kingdom of God** first in one’s life and declaring it far and wide are essential to remaining spiritually alive.

(Luke 9:61, 62) And still another said: “I will follow you, Lord, but first permit me to say good-bye to those in my household.” ⁶² Jesus said to him: “No man who has put his hand to a plow and looks at the things behind is well-suited for the Kingdom of God.”

nwtsty media Plowing

Plowing was often done in the autumn when rains softened soil that had been baked hard by the sun during the hot summer months. (See App. B15.) Some plows consisted of a simple pointed piece of wood, perhaps metal-tipped, attached to a beam and pulled by one or more animals. After the soil was plowed, the seed was sown. In the Hebrew Scriptures, the familiar work of plowing was often alluded to in illustrations. (Jg 14:18; Isa 2:4; Jer 4:3; Mic 4:3) Jesus frequently used agricultural activities to illustrate important teachings. For example, he referred to the work involved in plowing to emphasize the importance of being a wholehearted disciple. (Lu 9:62) If a plowman became distracted from the work at hand, he would make crooked furrows. Similarly, a disciple of Christ who gets distracted or turns aside from carrying out his responsibilities becomes unfit for God’s Kingdom.

w12 4/15 15-16 ¶11-13

Maintain a Complete Heart Toward Jehovah

¹¹ To make the lesson from Jesus’ brief illustration stand out clearly, let us add some color and details to this word picture. A field laborer is

busy plowing. While plowing, though, he cannot stop thinking about his home where there are family, friends, food, music, laughter, and shade. He longs for them. After plowing a good stretch of land, the laborer's desire for those pleasant things in life becomes so overwhelming that he turns around to look at "the things behind." Though there is still much work to be done before the field is planted, the laborer is distracted and his work suffers. Of course, the laborer's master is disappointed by the worker's lack of perseverance.

¹² Now consider a parallel with a modern-day situation. The farmer could represent any Christian who seems to be doing well but actually is in spiritual danger. For comparison's sake, let us imagine a brother who keeps busy in the ministry. However, though attending meetings and sharing in field service, he cannot stop thinking of certain aspects of the world's way of life that he finds appealing. Deep down in his heart, he longs for them. Eventually, after he carries out his ministry for several years, his desire for some things of this world becomes so overwhelming that he turns back and looks at "the things behind." Though there is still much work to be done in the ministry, he does not keep "a tight grip on the word of life," and his share in theocratic activities suffers. (Phil. 2:16) Jehovah, "the Master of the harvest," is saddened by any such lack of endurance.—Luke 10:2.

¹³ The lesson is obvious. It is commendable if we share regularly in such wholesome and satisfying activities as attending congregation meetings and participating in field service. But serving Jehovah with a complete heart involves more. (2 Chron. 25:1, 2, 27) If deep down in his heart a Christian continues to love "the things behind"—that is, certain aspects of the world's way of life—he is in danger of losing his good standing with God. (Luke 17:32) Only if we truly "abhor what is wicked [and] cling to what is good" will we be "well fitted for the kingdom of God." (Rom. 12:9; Luke 9:62) All of us,

therefore, need to make sure that nothing in Satan's world, no matter how useful or pleasant it may seem to be, holds us back from being wholehearted in caring for Kingdom interests. —2 Cor. 11:14; **read *Philippians 3:13, 14*.**

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Luke 8:3) Jo-an'na the wife of Chu'za, Herod's man in charge; Su-san'na; and many other women, who were ministering to them from their belongings.

nwtsty study note on Lu 8:3

were ministering to them: Or "were supporting (providing for) them." The Greek word *di-a-ko-ne'o* can refer to caring for the physical needs of others by obtaining, cooking, and serving food, and so forth. It is used in a similar sense at Lu 10:40 ("attend to things"), Lu 12:37 ("minister"), Lu 17:8 ("serve"), and Ac 6:2 ("distribute food"), but it can also refer to all other services of a similar personal nature. Here it describes how the women mentioned in verses 2 and 3 supported Jesus and his disciples, helping them to complete their God-given assignment. By doing so, these women glorified God, who showed his appreciation by preserving in the Bible a record of their merciful generosity for all future generations to read. (Pr 19:17; Heb 6:10) The same Greek term is used about women at Mt 27:55; Mr 15:41.

(Luke 9:49, 50) In response John said: "Instructor, we saw someone expelling demons by using your name, and we tried to prevent him, because he is not following with us." ⁵⁰ But Jesus said to him: "Do not try to prevent him, for whoever is not against you is for you."

w08 3/15 31 ¶2

Highlights From the Book of Luke

9:49, 50—Why did Jesus not prevent a man from expelling demons, even though the man was not following him? Jesus did not prevent

the man because the Christian congregation had not yet been formed. Hence, it was not required that the man physically accompany Jesus in order to exercise faith in Jesus' name and expel demons.—Mark 9:38-40.

Bible Reading

(Luke 8:1-15) Shortly afterward he traveled from city to city and from village to village, preaching and declaring the good news of the Kingdom of God. And the Twelve were with him, ² as were certain women who had been cured of wicked spirits and sicknesses: Mary who was called Mag'da-lene, from whom seven demons had come out; ³ Jo-an'na the wife of Chu'za, Herod's man in charge; Su-san'na; and many other women, who were ministering to them from their belongings. ⁴ Now when a large crowd had gathered together with those who went to him from city to city, he spoke by means of an illustration: ⁵ "A sower went out to sow his seed. As he was sowing, some of them fell alongside the road and were trampled on, and the birds of heaven ate them up. ⁶ Some landed on the rock, and after sprouting, they dried up because they had no moisture. ⁷ Others fell among the thorns, and the thorns that grew up with them choked them. ⁸ But others fell on the good soil, and after sprouting, they produced 100 times more fruit." As he said these things, he called out: "Let the one who has ears to listen, listen." ⁹ But his disciples asked him what this illustration meant. ¹⁰ He said: "To you it is granted to understand the sacred secrets of the Kingdom of God, but for the rest it is in illustrations so that, though looking, they may look in vain, and though hearing, they may not get the sense. ¹¹ Now the illustration means this: The seed is the word of God. ¹² Those alongside the road are the ones who have heard, and then the Devil comes and

takes the word away from their hearts so that they may not believe and be saved. ¹³ Those on the rock are the ones who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy, but these have no root. They believe for a while, but in a season of testing, they fall away. ¹⁴ As for that which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, but by being carried away by anxieties, riches, and pleasures of this life, they are completely choked and bring nothing to maturity. ¹⁵ As for that on the fine soil, these are the ones who, after hearing the word with a fine and good heart, retain it and bear fruit with endurance.

JULY 16-22

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | LUKE 10-11

"The Parable of the Neighborly Samaritan"

(Luke 10:29-32) But wanting to prove himself righteous, the man said to Jesus: "Who really is my neighbor?" ³⁰ In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jer'i-cho and fell victim to robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went off, leaving him half-dead. ³¹ Now by coincidence a priest was going down on that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. ³² Likewise, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the opposite side.

nwtsty media

The Road From Jerusalem to Jericho

The road (1) shown in this short video likely follows a path similar to that of the ancient road that linked Jerusalem to Jericho. That road was over 20 km (12 mi) long and had a steep, 1 km (.6 mi) descent as it wound from Jerusalem to Jericho. Robberies in the wild and lonely terrain were so frequent that a garrison had to be stationed there to protect travelers. Roman Jericho

(2) was located where the road emerged from the wilderness of Judea. An older city of Jericho (3) was located nearly 2 km (just over 1 mi) from the Roman city.

w02 9/1 16-17 ¶14-15

“Without an Illustration He Would Not Speak to Them”

¹⁴ Second, recall the parable of the neighborly Samaritan. Jesus began by saying: “A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among robbers, who both stripped him and inflicted blows, and went off, leaving him half-dead.” (Luke 10:30) Significantly, Jesus used the road that went “from Jerusalem to Jericho” to make his point. When relating this parable, he was in Judea, not far from Jerusalem; so his listeners likely knew about the road in question. That particular road was notoriously dangerous, especially for someone traveling alone. It wound through lonely terrain, providing many lurking places for robbers.

¹⁵ Something else is noteworthy about Jesus’ reference to the road that went “down from Jerusalem to Jericho.” According to the story, first a priest and then a Levite were also traveling that road—although neither stopped to help the victim. (Luke 10:31, 32) The priests served at the temple in Jerusalem, and the Levites assisted them. Many priests and Levites resided in Jericho when they were not working at the temple, for Jericho was only 14 miles [23 km] from Jerusalem. Hence, they undoubtedly had occasion to travel that road. Note, too, that the priest and the Levite were going along the road “from Jerusalem,” thus heading away from the temple. So no one could rightly justify the indifference of these men by saying, ‘They avoided the injured man because he appeared to be dead, and touching a corpse would have made them temporarily unfit to serve at the temple.’ (Leviticus 21:1; Numbers 19:11, 16) Is it not clear that Jesus’ illustration reflected things that were familiar to his listeners?

(Luke 10:33-35) But a certain Sa-mar’i-tan traveling the road came upon him, and at seeing him, he was moved with pity. ³⁴ So he approached him and bandaged his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them. Then he mounted him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two de-nar’i-i, gave them to the innkeeper, and said: ‘Take care of him, and whatever you spend besides this, I will repay you when I return.’

nwtsty study notes on Lu 10:33, 34

a certain Samaritan: The Jews generally looked down on the Samaritans and refused to have any dealings with them. (Joh 4:9) Some Jews even used the term “Samaritan” as an expression of contempt and reproach. (Joh 8:48) One rabbi is quoted in the Mishna as saying: “He that eats the bread of the Samaritans is like one that eats the flesh of swine.” (*Shebith* 8:10) Many Jews would not believe the testimony of a Samaritan or accept a service from one. Aware of the scornful attitude generally held by Jews, Jesus made a strong point in this illustration that is often referred to as the parable of the good, or neighborly, Samaritan.

bandaged his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them: The physician Luke here carefully records Jesus’ illustration, describing wound treatment that was consistent with the methods of the day. Both oil and wine were commonly used as household remedies to treat wounds. Oil was sometimes used to soften wounds (compare Isa 1:6), and wine has certain medicinal value as an antiseptic and mild disinfectant. Luke also describes how the wounds were bandaged, or bound, preventing further aggravation.

an inn: The Greek word literally means “a place where all are received or taken in.” Travelers, along with their animals, could find accommodations at such places. The innkeeper offered basic provisions to travelers and, for a price, might look after those left in his care.

(Luke 10:36, 37) Who of these three seems to you to have made himself neighbor to the man who fell victim to the robbers?" ³⁷ He said: "The one who acted mercifully toward him." Jesus then said to him: "Go and do the same yourself."

w98 7/1 31 ¶2

A Samaritan Proves to Be a Good Neighbor

Jesus' parable shows that a truly upright person is one who not only obeys God's laws but also imitates his qualities. (Ephesians 5:1) For example, the Bible tells us that "God is not partial." (Acts 10:34) Do we imitate God in this regard? Jesus' stirring parable shows that our neighborliness should transcend national, cultural, and religious barriers. Really, Christians are instructed to "work what is good toward *all*"—not just toward people of the same social class, race, or nation and not just toward fellow believers.—Galatians 6:10.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Luke 10:18) At that he said to them: "I see Satan already fallen like lightning from heaven.

nwtsty study note on Lu 10:18

I see Satan already fallen like lightning from heaven: Jesus is evidently speaking prophetically, seeing the ouster of Satan from heaven as if it had already occurred. Re 12:7-9 describes the battle in heaven and associates Satan's fall with the birth of the Messianic Kingdom. Jesus was here highlighting the certain defeat of Satan and his demons in that future battle, for God had just empowered those 70 disciples, mere imperfect humans, to expel demons.—Lu 10:17.

w08 3/15 31 ¶11

Highlights From the Book of Luke

10:18—What was Jesus referring to when he told the 70 disciples: "I began to behold Satan already fallen like lightning from heaven"? Jesus was not stating that Satan had already

been ousted from heaven. That did not take place until shortly after Christ was installed as heavenly King in 1914. (Rev. 12:1-10) Although we cannot be dogmatic, by referring to a future event in the past tense, Jesus was evidently emphasizing that it would certainly happen.

(Luke 11:5-9) Then he said to them: "Suppose one of you has a friend and you go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves, ⁶ because one of my friends has just come to me on a journey and I have nothing to offer him.' ⁷ But that one replies from inside: 'Stop bothering me. The door is already locked, and my young children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything.' ⁸ I tell you, even if he will not get up and give him anything because of being his friend, certainly because of his bold persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs. ⁹ So I say to you, keep on asking, and it will be given you; keep on seeking, and you will find; keep on knocking, and it will be opened to you.

nwtsty study notes on Lu 11:5-9

Friend, lend me three loaves: In Middle Eastern culture, hospitality is a duty in which people love to excel, as reflected in this illustration. Even though the guest arrived unexpectedly **at midnight**, a detail that may reflect the uncertainties of travel at that time, the host felt strongly compelled to give him something to eat. He even felt obligated to disturb his neighbor at that hour to borrow food.

Stop bothering me: The neighbor in this illustration was reluctant to help, not because he was unfriendly, but because he had already gone to bed. Homes in those days, especially those of the poor, often consisted of only one large room. If the man of the house were to get up, he would likely disturb the whole family, including sleeping children.

bold persistence: The Greek word used here can literally be rendered "lack of modesty"

or “shamelessness.” However, in this context, it denotes a persistent boldness or insistence. The man in Jesus’ illustration does not feel ashamed or hold back from asking persistently for what he needs, and Jesus tells his disciples that their prayers should likewise be persistent. —Lu 11:9, 10.

Bible Reading

(Luke 10:1-16) After these things the Lord designated 70 others and sent them out by twos ahead of him into every city and place where he himself was to go. ² Then he said to them: “Yes, the harvest is great, but the workers are few. Therefore, beg the Master of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest. ³ Go! Look! I am sending you out as lambs in among wolves. ⁴ Do not carry a money bag or a food pouch or sandals, and do not greet anyone along the road. ⁵ Wherever you enter into a house, say first: ‘May this house have peace.’ ⁶ And if a friend of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if there is not, it will return to you. ⁷ So stay in that house, eating and drinking the things they provide, for the worker is worthy of his wages. Do not keep transferring from house to house. ⁸ “Also, wherever you enter into a city and they receive you, eat what is set before you ⁹ and cure the sick ones in it and tell them: ‘The Kingdom of God has come near to you.’ ¹⁰ But wherever you enter into a city and they do not receive you, go out into its main streets and say: ¹¹ ‘We wipe off against you even the dust that sticks to our feet from your city. Nevertheless, know this, that the Kingdom of God has come near.’ ¹² I tell you that it will be more enduring for Sod’om in that day than for that city. ¹³ “Woe to you, Cho-ra’zin! Woe to you, Beth-sa’i-da! because if the powerful works that have taken place in you had taken place in Tyre and Si’don, they would long ago have repented, sitting in sackcloth and ash-

es. ¹⁴ Consequently, it will be more enduring for Tyre and Si’don in the judgment than for you. ¹⁵ And you, Ca-per’na-um, will you perhaps be exalted to heaven? Down to the Grave you will come! ¹⁶ “Whoever listens to you listens to me. And whoever disregards you disregards me also. Moreover, whoever disregards me disregards also Him who sent me.”

JULY 23-29

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | LUKE 12-13

“You Are Worth More Than Many Sparrows”

(Luke 12:6) Five sparrows sell for two coins of small value, do they not? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God.

nwtsty study note on Lu 12:6

sparrows: The Greek word *strou·thi’on* is a diminutive form meaning any small bird, but it often referred to sparrows, the cheapest of all birds sold as food.

(Luke 12:7) But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Have no fear; you are worth more than many sparrows.

nwtsty study note on Lu 12:7

even the hairs of your head are all numbered: The number of hairs on the human head is said to average more than 100,000. Jehovah’s intimate knowledge of such minute details guarantees that he is keenly interested in each follower of Christ.

(Luke 12:7) But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Have no fear; you are worth more than many sparrows.

cl 241 ¶4-5

Nothing Can “Separate Us From God’s Love”

⁴ First, the Bible directly teaches that God sees worth in each of his servants. For example, Jesus said: “Do not two sparrows sell for a coin

of small value? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father's knowledge. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Therefore have no fear: you are worth more than many sparrows." (Matthew 10:29-31) Consider what those words meant to Jesus' first-century listeners.

⁵ We may wonder why anyone would buy a sparrow. Well, in Jesus' day the sparrow was the cheapest of the birds sold as food. Notice that for one coin of small value, a purchaser got two sparrows. But Jesus later stated that if a person was prepared to spend two coins, he got, not four sparrows, but *five*. The extra bird was added as though it had no value at all. Perhaps such creatures were worthless in the eyes of men, but how did the Creator view them? Said Jesus: "Not one of them [not even the one added in] goes forgotten before God." (Luke 12: 6, 7) Now we may begin to see Jesus' point. If Jehovah places such value on a single sparrow, of how much greater worth is a human! As Jesus explained, Jehovah knows every detail about us. Why, the very hairs of our head are numbered!

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Luke 13:24) "Exert yourselves vigorously to get in through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will seek to get in but will not be able.

nwtsty study note on Lu 13:24

Exert yourselves vigorously: Or "Keep on struggling." Jesus' admonition emphasizes the need for taking whole-souled action in order to get in through the narrow door. For this context, various reference works have suggested such renderings as "Exert maximum effort; Make every effort." The Greek verb *a-go-ni'zo-mai* is related to the Greek noun *a-gon'*, which was often used to refer to athletic contests. At Heb 12:1, this noun is used figuratively for the Christian "race" for life. It is also used in

the more general sense of a "struggle" (Php 1: 30; Col 2:1) or a "fight" (1Ti 6:12; 2Ti 4:7). Forms of the Greek verb used at Lu 13:24 are rendered "competing in a contest" (1Co 9:25), "exerting [oneself]" (Col 1:29; 4:12; 1Ti 4:10), and "fight" (1Ti 6:12). Because the background of this expression is connected with competition in the athletic games, some have suggested that the effort Jesus encouraged may be compared to an athlete's exerting himself vigorously with all his power to win the prize, straining every nerve, as it were.

(Luke 13:33) Nevertheless, I must go on today, tomorrow, and the following day, because it cannot be that a prophet should be put to death outside of Jerusalem.

nwtsty study note on Lu 13:33

it cannot be: Or "it is inconceivable (unthinkable)." While no Bible prophecy explicitly states that the Messiah would die in Jerusalem, this idea may be inferred from Da 9:24-26. Additionally, it would be expected that if the Jews were to kill a prophet, and especially the Messiah, it would be in that city. The 71-member Sanhedrin, the high court, met in Jerusalem, so those accused of being false prophets would be tried there. Jesus may also have had in mind that Jerusalem was where the regular sacrifices were offered to God and where the Passover lamb was slaughtered. As things worked out, Jesus' words came true. He was brought before the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem and condemned. And it was in Jerusalem, just beyond the city walls, that he died as the "Passover lamb."—1Co 5:7.

Bible Reading

(Luke 12:22-40) Then he said to his disciples: "That is why I say to you, stop being anxious about your lives as to what you will eat or about your bodies as to what you will wear. ²³ For the life is worth more than food and the body more than clothing. ²⁴ Consider the

ravens: They neither sow seed nor reap; they have neither barn nor storehouse; yet God feeds them. Are you not worth much more than birds? ²⁵ Who of you by being anxious can add a cubit to his life span? ²⁶ If, therefore, you cannot do such a small thing, why be anxious about the remaining things? ²⁷ Consider how the lilies grow: They neither toil nor spin; but I tell you that not even Sol'o-mon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. ²⁸ Now if this is how God clothes the vegetation in the field that today exists and tomorrow is cast into an oven, how much more will he clothe you, you with little faith! ²⁹ So stop seeking what you will eat and what you will drink, and stop being in anxious suspense; ³⁰ for all these are the things the nations of the world are eagerly pursuing, but your Father knows you need these things. ³¹ Instead, keep seeking his Kingdom, and these things will be added to you. ³² "Have no fear, little flock, for your Father has approved of giving you the Kingdom. ³³ Sell your belongings and give gifts of mercy. Make money pouches that do not wear out, a never-failing treasure in the heavens, where no thief gets near and no moth consumes. ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there your hearts will be also. ³⁵ "Be dressed and ready and have your lamps burning, ³⁶ and you should be like men waiting for their master to return from the marriage, so when he comes and knocks, they may at once open to him. ³⁷ Happy are those slaves whom the master on coming finds watching! Truly I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at the table and will come alongside and minister to them. ³⁸ And if he comes in the second watch, even if in the third, and finds them ready, happy are they! ³⁹ But know this, if the householder had known at what hour the thief would come, he would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁰ You also, keep ready,

because at an hour that you do not think likely, the Son of man is coming."

JULY 30–AUGUST 5

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | LUKE 14-16

"The Parable of the Lost Son"

(Luke 15:11-16) Then he said: "A man had two sons. ¹² And the younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that should come to me.' So he divided his belongings between them. ¹³ A few days later, the younger son gathered all his things together and traveled to a distant country and there squandered his property by living a debauched life. ¹⁴ When he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred throughout that country, and he fell into need. ¹⁵ He even went and attached himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to herd swine. ¹⁶ And he longed to be filled with the carob pods that the swine were eating, but no one would give him anything.

nwtsty study notes on Lu 15:11-16

A man had two sons: Some aspects of the illustration of the prodigal son (also known as "the lost son") are unique. It is one of the longest that Jesus gave. An outstanding feature is the family relationships he describes. In other illustrations, Jesus often referred to inanimate things, such as different kinds of seed or soil, or to the formal relationship between a master and his slaves. (Mt 13:18-30; 25:14-30; Lu 19:12-27) In this illustration, however, Jesus highlights the intimate relationship between a father and his sons. Many who hear this account may not have had such a kind, warmhearted father. This illustration portrays the deep compassion and love that our heavenly Father has for his earthly children, both those who remain with him and those who return to him after going astray.

the younger one: According to the Mosaic Law, the firstborn received a double share. (De 21:17) So if the older son in this illustration was the firstborn, it would mean that the inheritance of the younger son was half that of his older brother.

squandered: The Greek word used here literally means “to scatter (in different directions).” (Lu 1:51; Ac 5:37) At Mt 25:24, 26, it is rendered “winnow.” Here it is used in the sense of being wasteful, spending foolishly.

a debauched life: Or “a wasteful (reckless; wild) life.” A related Greek word is used with a similar meaning at Eph 5:18; Tit 1:6; 1Pe 4:4. Since the Greek word may also include the idea of a spendthrift, or wasteful, lifestyle some Bible translations use the expression “with prodigal living.”

to herd swine: These animals were unclean according to the Law, so this was a degrading, despicable occupation for a Jew.—Le 11:7, 8.

carob pods: The fruit or pods of the carob have a shiny, leathery shell of a purplish-brown color and, in harmony with the literal meaning of their name in Greek (*ke-ra'ti-on*, “small horn”), have a curved horn shape. Carob pods are widely used till this day as food for horses, cattle, and pigs. The degradation to which the young man had sunk was accentuated by his willingness even to eat the food of swine.—See study note on Lu 15:15.

(Luke 15:17-24) “When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired men have more than enough bread, while I am dying here from hunger! ¹⁸ I will get up and travel to my father and say to him: “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Make me as one of your hired men.”’ ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him and was moved with pity, and he ran and

embraced him and tenderly kissed him. ²¹ Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy of being called your son.’ ²² But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quick! bring out a robe, the best one, and clothe him with it, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. ²³ Also bring the fattened calf, slaughter it, and let us eat and celebrate, ²⁴ for this son of mine was dead but has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.’ And they started to enjoy themselves.

nwtsty study notes on Lu 15:17-24

against you: Or “in your sight.” The Greek preposition *e-no'pi-on*, literally meaning “before; in the sight of,” is used in a similar way at 1Sa 20:1 in the *Septuagint*. In that verse, David asks Jonathan: “How have I sinned *against* your father?”

hired men: When he returned home, the younger son planned to ask his father to be accepted, not as a son, but as a hired man. Such a man was not part of the estate, as were the slaves, but was an outsider who was hired, often for just a day at a time.—Mt 20:1, 2, 8.

tenderly kissed him: Or “affectionately kissed him.” The Greek term rendered “tenderly kissed” has been understood to be an intensive form of the verb *phi-le'o*, sometimes rendered “to kiss” (Mt 26:48; Mr 14:44; Lu 22:47) but more often having the meaning “to have affection for” (Joh 5:20; 11:3; 16:27). By greeting him in such a warm, friendly manner, the father in the illustration shows his willingness to welcome back his repentant son.

called your son: Some manuscripts add: “Make me as one of your hired men,” but the current main text reading has support in various early, authoritative manuscripts. Some scholars consider that the extra expression was added to make the verse harmonize with Lu 15:19.

robe . . . ring . . . sandals: This robe was not merely a simple article of clothing but **the best**

one—perhaps a richly embroidered vestment of the sort presented to an honored guest. The act of putting a ring on the hand of his son shows the favor and affection of the father as well as the dignity, honor, and status accorded this restored son. A ring and sandals were not usually seen on slaves. Thus, the father was making it clear that his son was being welcomed back as a full-fledged member of the family.

(Luke 15:25-32) “Now his older son was in the field, and as he returned and got near the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ So he called one of the servants to him and asked what was happening. ²⁷ He said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father slaughtered the fattened calf because he got him back in good health.’ ²⁸ But he became angry and refused to go in. Then his father came out and began to plead with him. ²⁹ In reply he said to his father, ‘Look! These many years I have slaved for you and never once did I disobey your orders, and yet you never once gave me a young goat to enjoy with my friends. ³⁰ But as soon as this son of yours arrived who squandered your belongings with prostitutes, you slaughtered the fattened calf for him.’ ³¹ Then he said to him, ‘My son, you have always been with me, and all the things that are mine are yours. ³² But we just had to celebrate and rejoice, for your brother was dead but has come to life; he was lost and has been found.’”

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Luke 14:26) “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

nwtsty study note on Lu 14:26

hate: In the Bible, the term “hate” has several shades of meaning. It may denote a feeling of

hostility that is motivated by malice, prompting someone to harm others. Or it may refer to an intense feeling of dislike for or strong aversion to someone or something, thus causing a person to avoid having anything to do with that person or thing. Or the term may simply mean to love to a lesser degree. For example, when Jacob is said to have “hated” Leah and loved Rachel, the meaning is that he loved Leah less than he loved Rachel (Ge 29:31, ftn.; De 21:15, ftn.), and the term is used in this sense in other ancient Jewish literature. Therefore, Jesus did not mean that his followers were to feel hostility or loathing toward their families and toward themselves, as this would contradict the rest of the Scriptures. (Compare Mr 12:29-31; Eph 5:28, 29, 33.) In this context, the term “hate” could be rendered “love to a lesser degree.”

(Luke 16:10-13) The person faithful in what is least is faithful also in much, and the person unrighteous in what is least is unrighteous also in much. ¹¹ Therefore, if you have not proved yourselves faithful in connection with the unrighteous riches, who will entrust you with what is true? ¹² And if you have not proved yourselves faithful in connection with what belongs to another, who will give you something for yourselves? ¹³ No servant can be a slave to two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will stick to the one and despise the other. You cannot be slaves to God and to Riches.”

w17.07 8-9 ¶7-8

Seeking Riches That Are True

⁷ **Read Luke 16:10-13.** The steward in Jesus’ illustration made friends for personal benefit. However, Jesus urged his followers to make friends in heaven for unselfish purposes. The verses that follow the illustration connect the use of “unrighteous riches” with faithfulness to God. Jesus’ point was that we can ‘prove ourselves faithful’ with, or control, those riches once we obtain them. How so?

⁸ An obvious way to prove ourselves faithful with our material things is by contributing financially to the worldwide preaching work that Jesus foretold would take place. (Matt. 24:14) A young girl in India kept a small money box and gradually added coins, even giving up toys to do so. When the box was full, she handed the money over to be used for the preaching work. A brother in India who has a coconut farm contributed a large number of coconuts to the Malayalam remote translation office, reasoning that since the office needs to buy coconuts, his supplying them directly will help his contribution to go further than it would if he gave cash. That is practical wisdom. Likewise, brothers in Greece regularly contribute olive oil, cheese, and other foods for the Bethel family.

Bible Reading

(Luke 14:1-14) On another occasion he went to eat a meal in the house of one of the leaders of the Pharisees on the Sabbath, and they were closely watching him. ² And look! a man who had dropsy was in front of him. ³ So in response Jesus asked those versed in the Law and the Pharisees: “Is it lawful to cure on the Sabbath or not?” ⁴ But they kept silent. With that he took hold of the man, healed him, and sent him away. ⁵ Then he said to them: “Who of you, if his son or bull falls into a well, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?” ⁶ And they were not able to reply to this. ⁷ He then told the invited men an illustration when he noticed how they were choosing the most prominent places for themselves. He said to them: ⁸ “When you are invited by someone to a marriage feast, do not recline in the most prominent place. Perhaps someone more distinguished than you may also have been invited. ⁹ Then the one who invited you both will come and say to you, ‘Let this man have your place.’ Then you will proceed with shame to take

the lowest place. ¹⁰ But when you are invited, go and recline in the lowest place, so that when the man who invited you comes, he will say to you, ‘Friend, go on up higher.’ Then you will have honor in front of all your fellow guests. ¹¹ For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.” ¹² Next he said also to the man who had invited him: “When you spread a dinner or an evening meal, do not call your friends or your brothers or your relatives or your rich neighbors. Otherwise, they might also invite you in return, and it would become a repayment to you. ¹³ But when you spread a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; ¹⁴ and you will be happy, because they have nothing with which to repay you. For you will be repaid in the resurrection of the righteous ones.”